

Awareness Days

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	14 December, 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Lee Dillon
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	23 November 2023
Report Author:	Martin Dunscombe
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4458

1 Purpose of the Report

To provide an overview of the programme of Awareness Days which it is proposed West Berkshire Council supports in 2024.

2 Recommendation

To review and approve the programme of Awareness Days which will be supported in 2024.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There is no specific budget allocated to delivering communications activity in support of awareness days. This will be managed within existing resources.
Human Resource:	None
Legal:	There is no legal duty to undertake communications activity in support of specific awareness days.
Risk Management:	None
Property:	None

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Policy:	This programme aligns with the Council's commitment to communicate and engage with our communities.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			Some Awareness Days will highlight positive action and messaging in relation to equality and representation.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:	x			Some Awareness Days will highlight health and wellbeing issues which will involve promoting health advice and support and aiding understanding of these issues.
ICT Impact:				None
Digital Services Impact:				None
Council Strategy Priorities:				The programme of awareness days will provide opportunities to inform or educate residents about issues which relate to the Council Strategy.

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Core Business:	x			The programme of awareness days will provide opportunities to inform or educate residents about issues which relate to the Council's core business.
Data Impact:				None
Consultation and Engagement:	In preparing the 2024 Awareness Day programme the following have been invited to comment on which initiatives should be supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillors• Service Directors• Communications Steering Group (including members of the Communications team and representatives from all services and corporate functions).			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Awareness Day Programme 2024 sets out the awareness days, weeks and months which will be acknowledged and supported by West Berkshire Council in the forthcoming calendar year.
- 4.2 The Awareness Day Programme 2024 should be approved to allow the Communications Steering Group to plan for, prepare and deliver communications in support of these during the year ahead.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Awareness Day Programme 2024 has been produced to confirm which of these initiatives will be supported over the coming year.
- 5.2 A large number of awareness days, weeks and months are held nationally and internationally each year. The purpose of these is to raise awareness of issues, encourage participation in activities or otherwise to celebrate or acknowledge certain events, communities, and services. Whilst not all of these are relevant to the work of local authorities, many of them are given the broad scope of council services and responsibilities.
- 5.3 It is not possible to be involved in every awareness day nor would it be appropriate to do so. It is considered that supporting too many would be detrimental as each would have less impact and crowd out those which are most important. In addition, there is not the capacity within the Communications team or frontline teams to create relevant, local content and events for each of these.

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- 5.4 Implementation of the Awareness Day Programme is a small part of a much broader communications strategy which is led by the Communications team. The scope of work undertaken by the team includes support for delivery of the Council Strategy and communicating the progress of this, supporting the delivery of frontline services, delivering campaigns and other proactive communications activity to inform and engage residents in the work of the Council, and providing a service to local and national media organisations. Accordingly, the Awareness Day Programme will be progressed in the context of this wider body of work and may be subject to change depending on organisational priorities or other local or national events – such as a general election campaign or extreme weather events impacting on planned activities.
- 5.5 The Awareness Day Programme 2024 is based on similar programmes of activity undertaken in recent years. It has been produced by the Communications Team Manager in dialogue with the Communications Steering Group (which includes members from all Council departments) and with feedback invited from all councillors. This feedback was considered in producing the proposed programme, alongside considerations in relation to capacity to deliver it, any duplication of themes and how closely it supports service provision and delivery of the Council Strategy 2023-27.
- 5.6 In delivering this programme a flexible approach is proposed in recognition of who will lead on planning and delivering the awareness day and where it will be shared. Some will be produced and implemented by the Communications team and others by services themselves. Similarly, this communication may be targeted at specific groups by services themselves or shared across corporate channels for issues which have a wider relevance to local people.
- 5.7 Delivery of the Awareness Day Programme will be reviewed regularly by the Communications Steering Group. Alongside this a programme of religious festivals and events is also being drawn up to enable the Council to mark days important to faith communities across the district.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 The Council is not required to support awareness days and could choose not to feature this in its communications plan. However, doing so would mean opportunities are missed to raise awareness of issues which are important to residents and to the Council.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Approval is sought for the Awareness Day 2024 programme.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Awareness Day Programme 2024

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Officer details:

Name: Martin Dunscombe
Job Title: Communications Team Manager
Tel No: 01635 519125
E-mail: martin.dunscombe@westberks.gov.uk
