

Council Communication That Builds Trust

Six things every council can do - *and how
we can support your council in 2026*



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COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALISTS IN CONNECTING COUNCILS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES



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We help local councils solve communications, community engagement and data protection problems.

Communication Strategy
Surveys and Consultations
Social Media
Crisis Communication
Internal Communication

Data Protection Compliance
FOI and EIR Compliance
Data Protection Audits
AI tools and Best Practice
And so much more...

Why you should work with Breakthrough Communications...



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“Very informative, helpful and I feel enthused and excited about our social media presence!”

C. MacIntyre (via Trustpilot)



“Excellent workshop for Town and Parish councillors and officers on developing an effective communications strategy.”

P. Taylor (via Google Reviews)



“An extremely well organised and structured workshop.. expertly led. Anyone looking to develop a Community Communications Strategy would benefit from their input.”

S. Whitelaw (via Google Reviews)



“Very interesting and informative AI training sessions led by an excellent speaker”



“Fantastic training session on AI for Council Communications and Community Engagement. Really recommend this engaging and thought provoking training opportunity to any local council considering implementing AI into their organisations. I gained plenty of useful hints and tips and best practice recommendations.”

K. Bell (via Trustpilot)

“High quality support”



“I recently received advice that was not only professional but also clear, well-informed, and tailored to our specific situation.

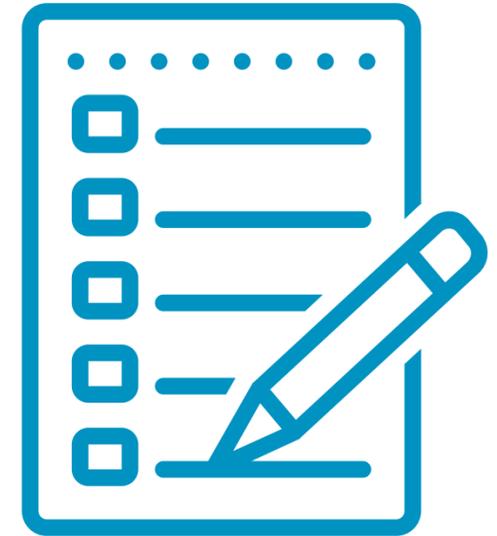
The guidance was delivered with clarity, making it easy to understand our options and next steps.

It’s refreshing to receive high-quality support. I wouldn’t hesitate to seek advice again or recommend it to others looking for trustworthy, professional guidance.”

D. Abbott (via Trustpilot)

What we'll cover today

- ✓ **Why communication matters more than ever** – and how it's shaping trust, understanding, and residents' day-to-day experience of your council.
- ✓ **The barriers and challenges holding many councils back** – what's getting in the way of building trust, and what can be done about it.
- ✓ **The Six Stage Communications Framework that every council can use to cut through the overwhelm** – a simple framework that makes consistent and clear communication easier to deliver.
- ✓ **Be one of the first to get access to an exclusive new communication toolkit designed for councils like yours** – Make council communications easier, save time and effort, and hit the ground running in 2026.



The reality facing parish and town councils in 2025...



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The reality: **Your council is doing more than ever, and more than residents can ever see...**

Managing parks and play areas, allotments, cemeteries, public spaces, village halls and so much more...

Managing residents' and councillors' expectations

Trying to communicate and engage, often with limited resources

Running events, supporting local groups, awarding grants

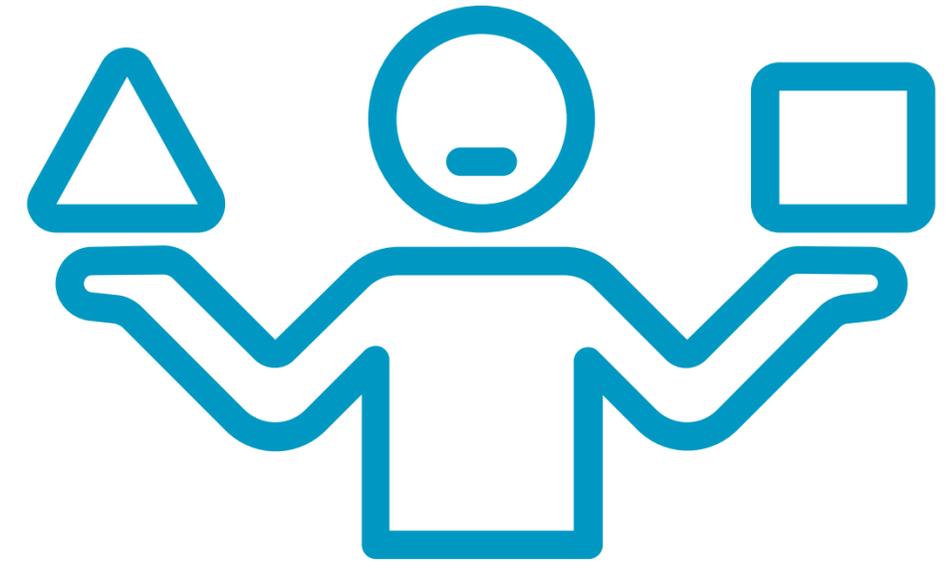
Navigating planning applications, liaising with principal authorities, managing contractors

Responding to complaints, fielding questions, attending meetings, writing reports and minutes

Working evenings and weekends, often part-time, covering multiple responsibilities

The disconnect: **A growing gap between what you do, and what people think you do**

- There's a gap between what councils do and what residents think you do. They see the precept on their council tax bill, but not where it goes.
- They notice when something's wrong (even if it's not your fault), but not when everything's working.
- When they don't see the work, they fill the gap with assumptions. Assumptions lead to complaints. Complaints lead to conflict. Conflict erodes trust and reputation.



Lack of time, against a backdrop of ever-increasing community expectations.

- 79% of councils have no dedicated communications role.
- For many councils, the function of communication and community engagement is usually tagged onto someone's already full job.
- 6 out of 10 councils spend less than 3 hours per week communicating.
- For larger councils with a communications officer role, it's still a challenge to stay ahead of negative engagement, to always be proactive, show the council's value, and respond to an increasingly demanding public.
- You're not failing. You're stuck, without the tools or time to change it.



What councils have been telling us about communications challenges and opportunities



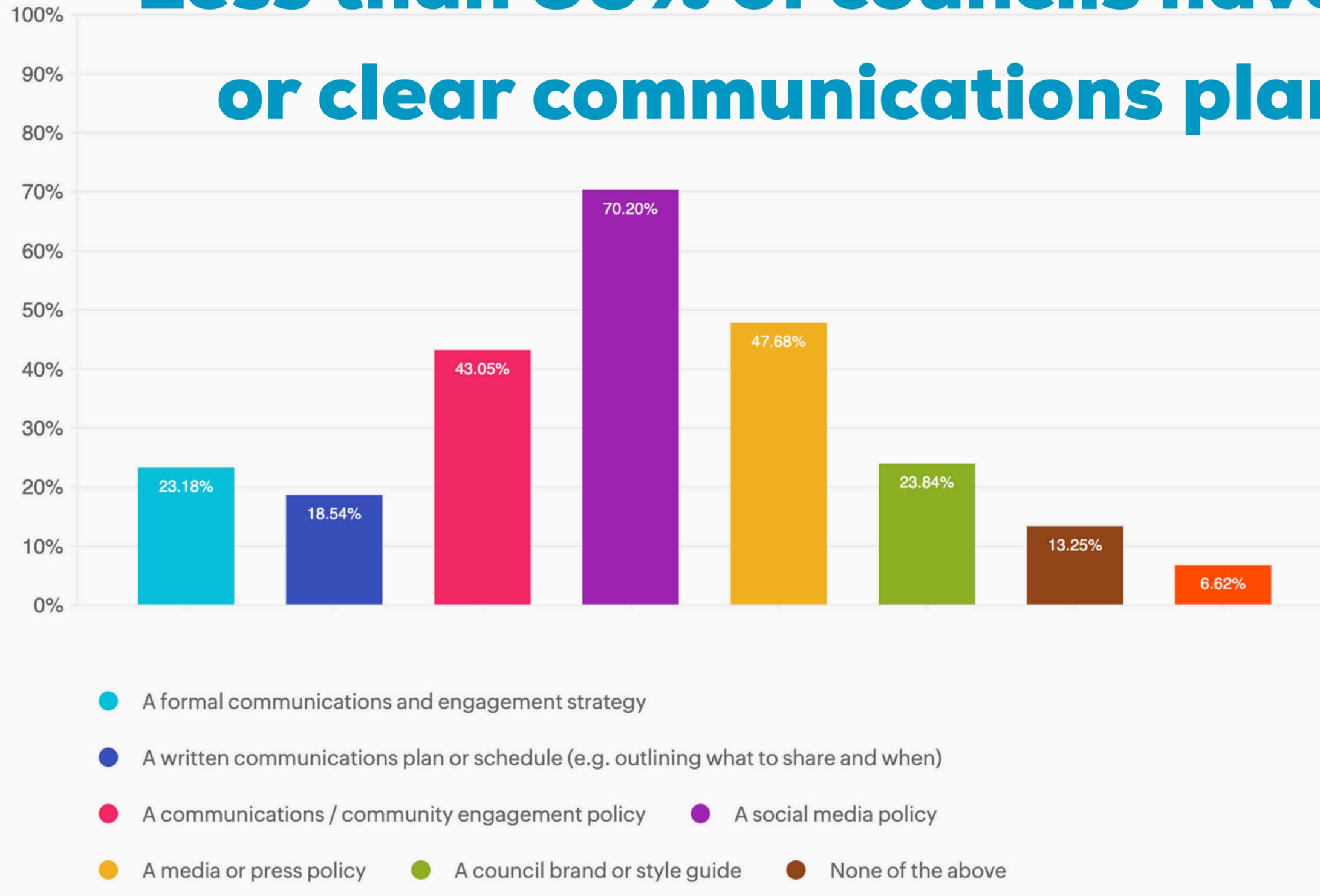
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We asked. You answered.

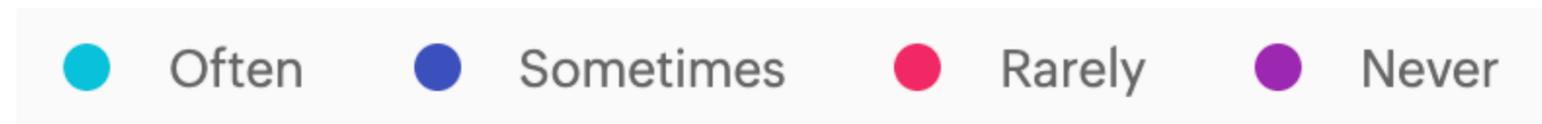
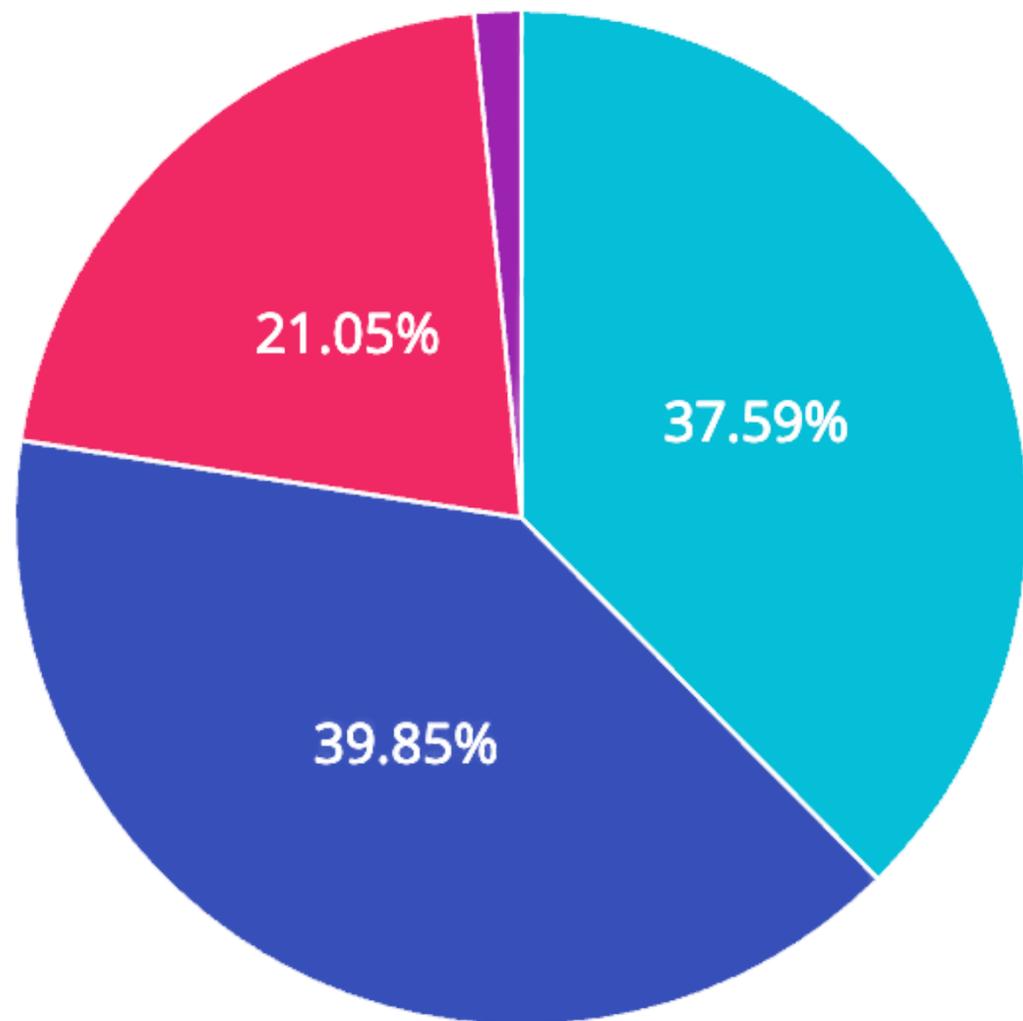
- We've been carrying out a national survey, inviting clerks and officers to share the challenges and realities of council communications.
- We wanted to understand what's really happening 'on the ground' with council communication and community engagement.
- We also wanted to know what tools, resources and support councils need to communicate in a way that builds trust with the community.
- The responses so far have been very honest, detailed and clear, with common challenges impacting parish and town councils large and small.
- Today, we're sharing what you told us – *and what we're doing about it.*



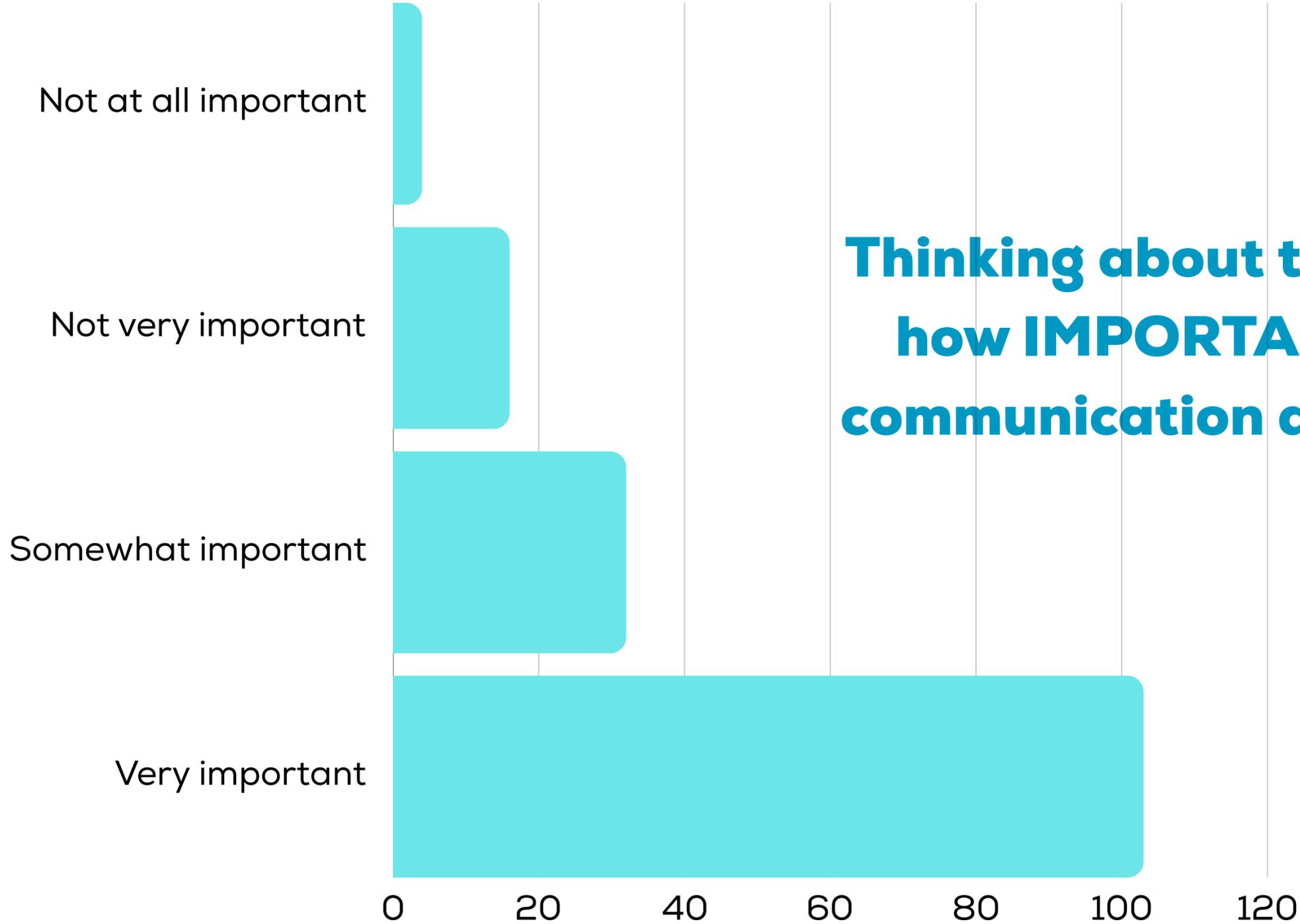
Less than 30% of councils have a strategy or clear communications plan in place



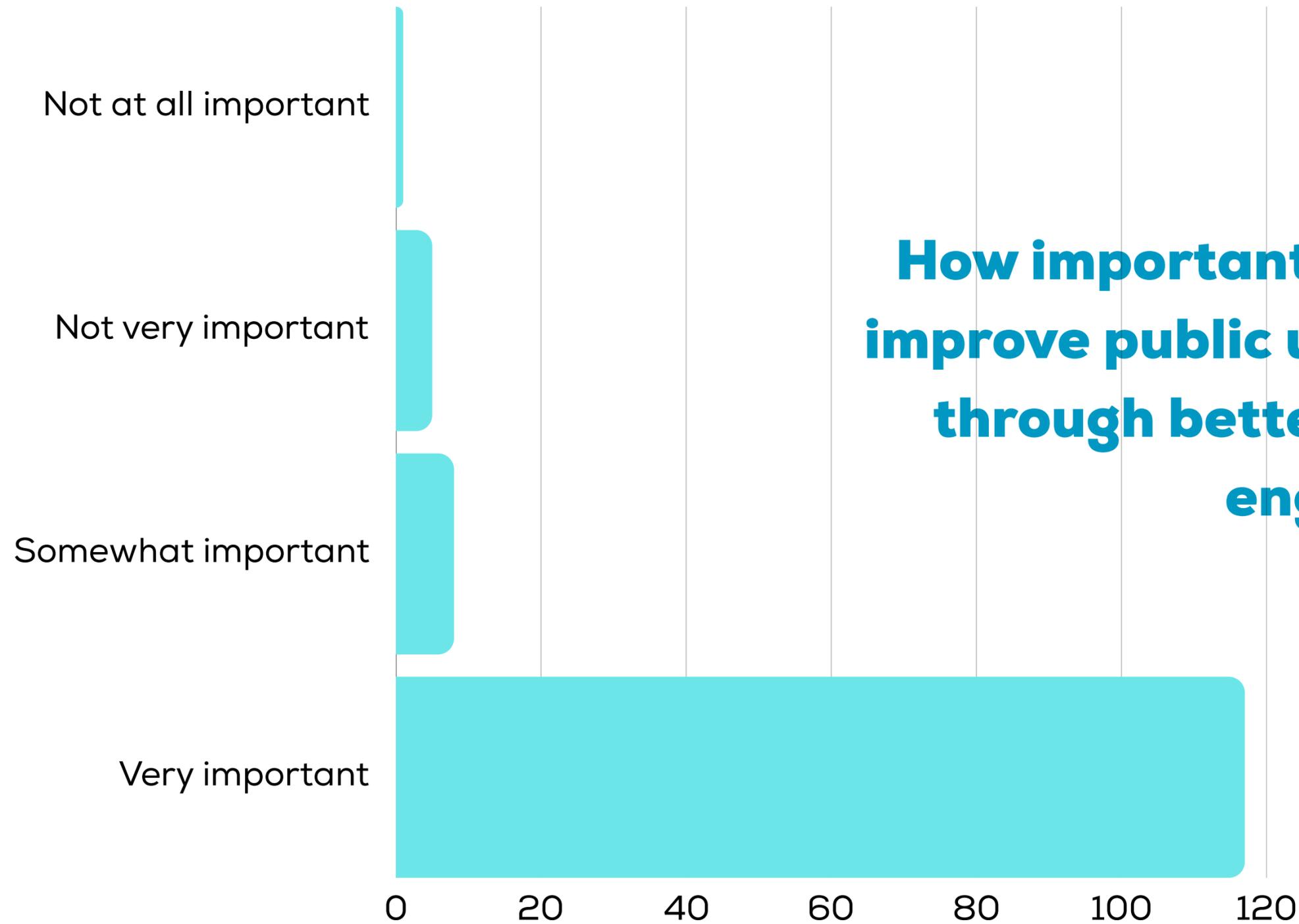
When communicating, how often do you worry about saying something wrong or attracting criticism?



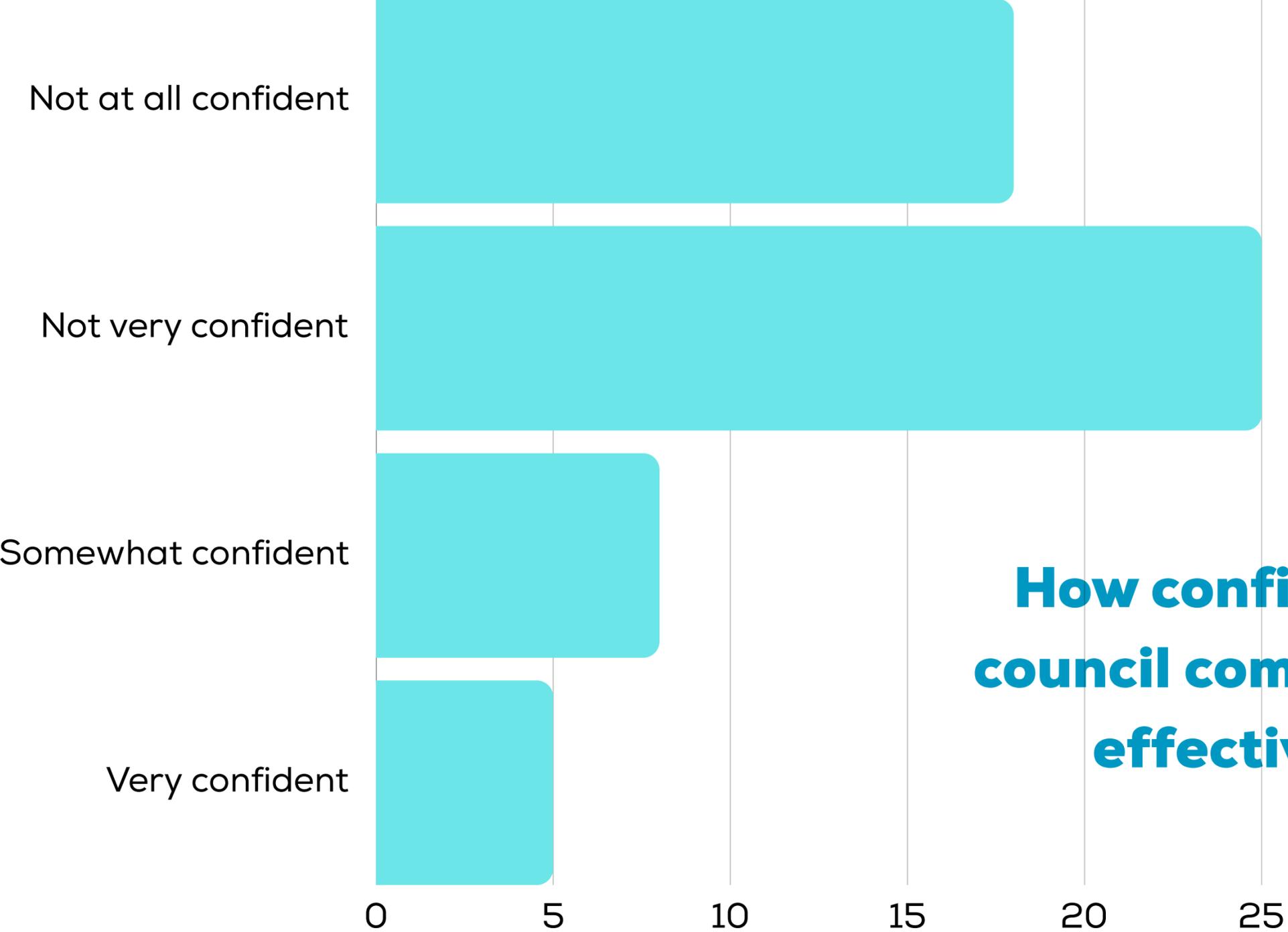
**Thinking about the next 12-24 months,
how IMPORTANT is it for you to get
communication and engagement right?**



How important is it for your council to improve public understanding and trust through better communication and engagement?



How confident are you that your council communicates and engages effectively with residents?



Councils *want* to communicate, but time and confidence holds you back

- Councils told us the hardest part is finding the time to communicate, with the concern of negative engagement and criticism ever-present.
- Councils don't want applause. They just want the work to be understood. But 64% of councils only have three hours or less each week for communications, which by itself is not enough to change the story.
- 68% of councils said communication feels stressful. They want to do more, yet for most capacity isn't there.
- **Councils told us that the importance of communication is 9 out of 10. Confidence in delivering it? Just 5.8 out of 10.**



The **BIG TRUTH** about trust



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The BIG Truth: Communication = Trust

- Your council's reputation isn't shaped by what you do.
- It's shaped by how you're seen, heard, and felt.
- Trust can be built over time through clear explanations, consistency in communications, timely updates, effective council 'storytelling' that shows impact, and respectful two-way dialogue.
- If we can get communication right, everything else gets easier over time. Fewer complaints, more support and buy-in, and ultimately a stronger community.



So, what is it that's holding your council back?

"We're not always certain of what to say or how to say it"

"We just don't have time"

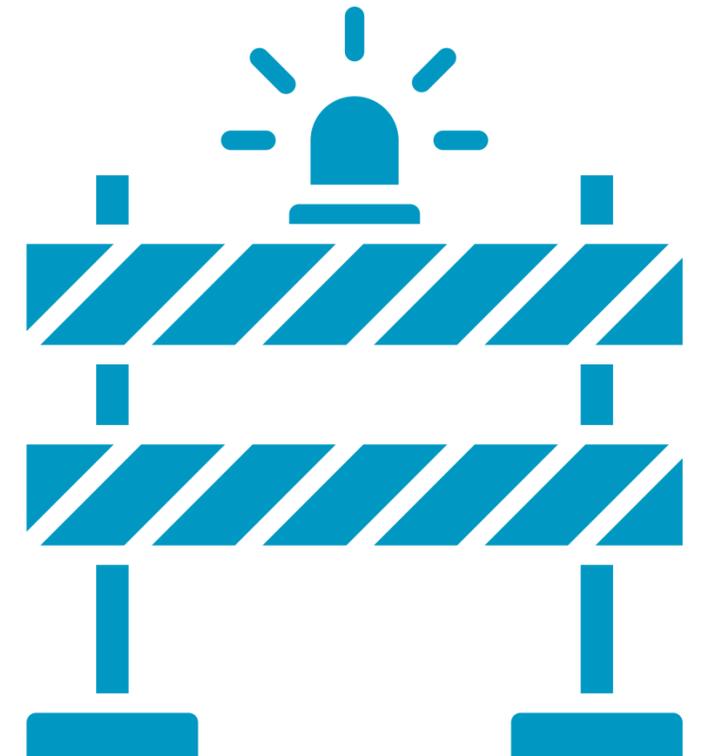
"There's endless platforms and tools to choose from"

"One negative comment can knock your confidence"

"We're often reacting, there's no space to plan"

"We don't know what approach will work best"

- **This isn't about skill. You know your community. You know your council. What's missing is structure, tools, best practice and added support – and the confidence to make it happen.**



The Six Steps for Council Communication Success

1. PLAN

- **Decide what matters most**
- **Focus your message**

2. CREATE

- **Turn plans into content**
- **Repurpose for different channels**

3. SHARE

- **Pick the right channels**
- **Reach the right people**

4. LISTEN

- **Collect insight fast**
- **Spot what the community cares about**

5. RESPOND

- **Handle criticism calmly**
- **Keep conversations constructive**

6. IMPROVE

- **Track what is working**
- **Build confidence through clarity**

Stage 1: Plan

Create clarity before you create content,
so that every message has purpose.

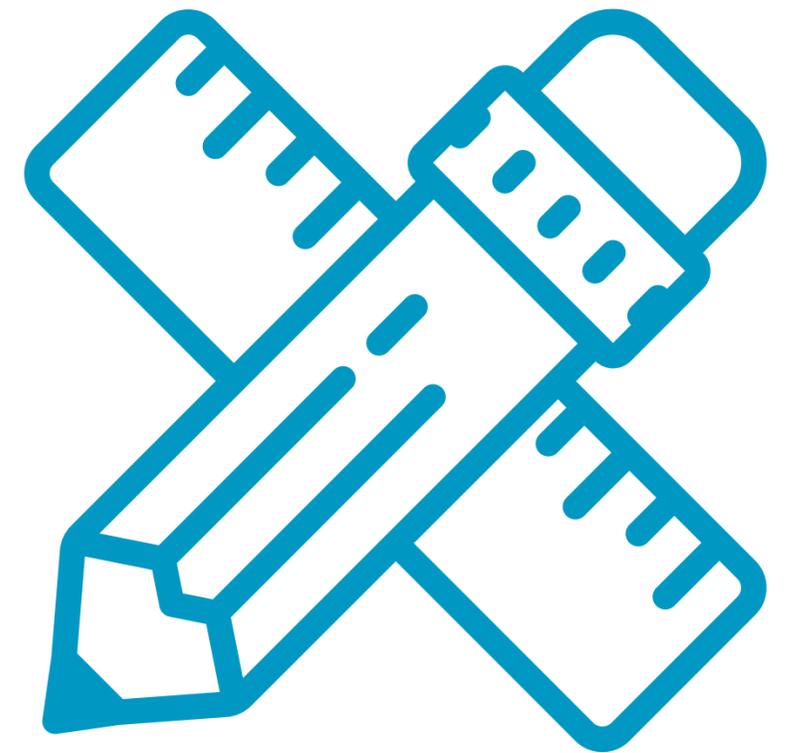
- Get instant direction by identifying what really matters to residents and what stories deserve your attention right now.
- Replace guesswork with a simple, repeatable method that helps you decide what to communicate and when, even when time is tight.
- Build a clear pathway for your communication so you feel ahead of the conversation instead of reacting to the noise.



Stage 2: Create

Turn your news, updates and information into messages people understand

- Use an easy structure that helps you write posts and updates in minutes, not hours, even if you feel unsure about what to say.
- Share the why behind your work so residents can see the value and impact behind the scenes.
- Cut through confusion by crafting messages that are clearer, kinder and more compelling.



Stage 3: Share

Get your message in front of the right people
without stress or overwhelm

- Know exactly where to share your updates so you are not spread thin across endless platforms.
- Use simple rules that help you choose the right places and formats for the message you want to get across.
- Spend less time posting everywhere and more time sharing what will actually reach people.



Stage 4: Listen

Understand what your community cares about in just a few minutes.

- Use quick and practical approaches to gather insights that guide your decisions and show you what truly matters to local people.
- Create a small but powerful feedback loop so residents feel heard, even when you cannot act on everything.
- Bring clarity to your priorities by spotting emerging themes before they turn into complaints or conflict.



Stage 5: Respond

Handle criticism and misinformation with confidence and calm

- Use a simple method that helps you respond to difficult comments in a way that protects trust and reduces tension.
- Feel more in control by knowing exactly how to acknowledge concerns, clarify misunderstandings and move the conversation forward.
- Shift negative exchanges into constructive dialogue that strengthens your reputation instead of damaging it.



Stage 6: Improve

Focus on the right numbers and information that shows big progress

- Track only the metrics that matter so you can see what is working without drowning in data or vanity numbers.
- Spot quick wins and repeatable successes that make communication easier each month.
- Build a sense of momentum by measuring progress in visibility, engagement and positive community moments.



Our Six Step Communications Framework

1. PLAN

- Know exactly what to communicate each week and each month.

2. CREATE

- Stop spending an hour writing a single post or news article.

3. SHARE

- Reach more residents with less effort.

4. LISTEN

- Better understand issues before they become complaints.

5. RESPOND

- Confidently handle negativity without the stress.

6. IMPROVE

- Make communication easier for your council, and more effective.

The Six Steps Framework works, *but the existing challenges remain...*

The Six Steps Communications Framework genuinely adds value:

- They give you a proven structure that creates clarity, consistency and trust.
- They make communication manageable by breaking the work into simple actions.

But, the same challenges remain in your council:

- You still lack the time, capacity and thinking-space required to utilise these steps fully and reliably, especially when juggling lots of other responsibilities.
- You still need practical tools, templates and ongoing support to apply the steps quickly and confidently, without starting from scratch each time.

And getting communication right *matters now more than ever..*

- There's increased uncertainty with devolution and Local Government Reorganisation causing confusion in communities and councils.
- Council workloads are rising, expectations are climbing and residents want answers faster than ever.
- Most councils will want to also start communicating out the impact of their budget, before council tax demands hit doormats.
- **If nothing changes, negative engagement rises, trust erodes and your workload increases.**



So, what if the Six Steps Framework could be adapted and easily used in your council?

- Imagine having the Six Steps Framework already built out for your council, with tools that cut thinking time and stop you constantly having to reinvent the wheel.
- Imagine turning each step into quick, practical templates, prompts, checklists and actions you can complete even on your busiest days.
- Imagine removing the friction, so communication becomes something you can deliver with confidence, not pressure.
- **Resulting in less pressure and firefighting, and instead more certainty, control and confidence in communicating.**





The Local Council Communications Toolkit

Low Cost. Easy to Implement. Designed for Councils.

Practical Examples, Templates, Prompts, Checklists,
Case Studies, Training, Advice and Guidance.

Who is the Council Communications Toolkit service for?

For small and medium councils WITHOUT a communications officer:

- The toolkit gives you ready-made structure, templates and messaging support so you can communicate clearly and consistently without needing extra time, headspace or specialist skills.

For medium and large councils WITH a communications officer:

- The toolkit strengthens your existing capacity with proven processes, time-saving templates, resources and best-practice guidance that make it easier to stay proactive, handle demand and deliver higher-quality communication with confidence. You'll also have access to our regular Council Communications Practitioners' Events

What's included in the Council Communications Toolkit?

12 months of access for everyone in the council to:

- ✓ Regularly-updated best practice templates and resources, including examples from other parish and town councils **Worth £300**
- ✓ Step-by-step how-to guides, checklists and prompts **Worth £300**
- ✓ In-depth case studies of "what good looks like" **Worth £250**
- ✓ On-demand, bitesize training videos **Worth £200**
- ✓ Regular live training events and masterclasses **Worth £150**
- ✓ 1-2-1 professional advice or drop-in clinics **Worth £200**

For you:
£495
+vat

Total value: £1,400. Usual cost: £695.

Saving you time. Every time. Including...

1. PLAN

- Yearly, quarterly and monthly plan tool
- Clarity and priority planning

2. CREATE

- Council Message Builder Tool
- Council AI Mega Prompts
- Templates and Best Practice Examples

3. SHARE

- Channel decision rules
- Platform posting guides

4. LISTEN

- The Community Pulse Taker
- Quick Feedback Tool
- Insight Capture

5. RESPOND

- Negative feedback response tool
- Tone and writing guides
- Urgent crisis comms support

6. IMPROVE

- “What’s Working?” dashboard
- Monthly data review prompts



The Local Council Communications Toolkit

Be among the first to benefit – for just £495

- The first 30 councils to register will save £200 with discount code KICKSTART.
- You'll also be invited to help shape the service through a January Focus Group event.

Every pre-registration signup in December will also include:

- Pre-Christmas access to our New Year Message Builder Tool.
- Pre-Christmas access to our 2026/27 Council Budget Message Builder Tool.
- Free Communications Health Check and Action Plan and two hours of 1-2-1 support.