

Job Description

Job Title: Communications Business Partner Public Affairs and Policy
POSCODE: [To be assigned]
Grade:P4

Overall purpose of the job

The Communications Business Partner is a senior strategic advisor and delivery lead for corporate communications. This role is responsible for designing and delivering integrated communication approaches and strategies that support the council's vision, strategic framework and transformation priorities.

The postholder will maintain and strengthen the council's reputation, engage stakeholders, communities and staff, influence behaviours and ensure transparency across all communications activity. The role provides high-level leadership in media relations, digital engagement, internal communication, campaigns, crisis response, public affairs and strategic stakeholder management.

Operating within the Policy, Insight and Change service, the role champions communication as a driver of organisational effectiveness, service improvement and public value. It is fully aligned to the council's strategic direction, communicating the council's Strategic Framework and its CARE values — Collaborative, Accountable, Respectful and Excellence — placing people and outcomes at the heart of everything we do.

The postholder will play a key role in advancing the council's digital-first approach to service delivery and engagement, ensuring that communication is designed for a modern, accessible and responsive organisation. As a key contributor to the council's Future Council programme, the role will ensure communication underpins major organisational change, including the move toward local government reorganisation (LGR). It will support a shared sense of purpose, transparency and trust in how services are reshaped to remain sustainable, effective and citizen-focused.

The role also acts as an architect regarding the culture within the team, role modelling and embedding CARE values through leadership behaviour, practice sharing and peer development across the wider organisation. Communications Business Partners are expected to be respected and trusted experts in their profession, leading by example, quality assuring and setting standards for excellence across the organisation's communications activity.

They will provide quality assurance across communications products and outputs, ensuring consistency, accessibility and effectiveness. They will lead on communications that support local democracy, councillor visibility and decision-making transparency, working closely with governance teams and elected members.

The role also champions innovation in communication, identifying and testing new approaches and technologies to improve how the council engages and delivers information to its audiences.

To lead a business unit and a suite of talent to deliver the agreed communication forward plan in the following ways:

- Delivering outcomes in line with the council’s strategic framework, vision and seven ambitions
- Using expertise, knowledge and experience to direct and encourage the communications team to enable excellence
- Contributing to the council’s care values
- Working closely with policy, insight and change team
- Driving innovation, creative thinking and alternative ways of delivering outcomes in line with delivering the council’s vision across its seven ambitions
- Leading the development and delivery of strategic plans
- Support the Head of Communications with managing resources within agreed procedures and budgets
- Contributing to a 24 hour on call communications service and emergency communications out of hours

Communications Business Partner – Public Affairs and Policy

The Public Affairs and Campaigns Business Partner leads on stakeholder engagement and strategic amplification, particularly around Local Government Reorganisation and place shaping. The role also shapes and delivers campaigns that project the council’s credibility and drives awareness, action, and change across a range of subject areas and places. They provide insight on the political landscape to support informed decision-making. This post ensures the organisation’s voice is amplified and heard where it matters most.

Main accountabilities

Main accountabilities	
1.	Lead the development and delivery of cross-council reputation, communication, campaign, digital content, internal communications and public affairs multi-media strategies that align with corporate objectives and transformation plans, embedding communications as a core enabler of strategic and operational delivery.
2.	Act as a strategic advisor to senior management, senior leaders and elected members, to develop trusted relationships and provide expert counsel on complex or politically sensitive matters, and ensuring communications align with governance, legislative requirements, reputational standards and providing communications support to committees.
3.	Own and implement the council’s reputation management approach, providing strategic media oversight, managing issues and crises and leading and participating in the 24/7 out-of-hours communications rota.
4.	Lead the council’s public affairs activity, including the coordination of democratic communications, horizon scanning, and using communications to influence relationships with government, partners and stakeholders to shape policy and protect the council’s interests.

5.	Facilitate cross-organisational communication networks, campaign groups and strategic forums, promoting collaborative working, shared ownership of messaging and integration of communication into programme delivery. Support with communications local democracy and the organisation's governance processes, such as committees and Full Council.
6.	Support the council's organisational change and service transformation agenda, ensuring communication plays a critical role in shaping and delivering changes that improve service quality, efficiency and user experience. Support the relevant officer boards and workstreams.
7.	Use insight, data and behavioural science to plan and deliver campaigns that influence public behaviour, build trust and improve outcomes for residents, communities and council services.
8.	Mentor and develop communications staff and wider colleagues, creating a culture of high performance, learning and innovation in communication practice across the organisation.
9.	Provide, leadership, support and line management within the Communications team, creating a culture of high performance, learning and innovation in communication practice across the organisation
10.	Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.
11.	Ability to contribute to our organisational commitment to becoming a Net Zero organisation by 2030.

Person Specification

Qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience

Minimum level of qualifications required for this job

Qualifications Required	Subject	Essential/ Desirable
Degree or equivalent	Any relevant subject related	Essential
Post graduate level qualification or equivalent	Any relevant subject related	Desirable
Relevant professional qualification or membership	e.g CIPR/CIM	Desirable

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills and experience required for this job

Identify	Describe	Essential/ Desirable
Knowledge and Experience		

Leadership and management	Proven experience of leading and developing high performing teams.	Essential
Productive relationships	Experience of working in a political environment and of the development and use of high levels of political awareness Proven ability to foster positive and constructive relationships with a variety of different stakeholders and colleagues.	Essential
Financial management	Successful management of budgets and evidence of pro-active identification and implementation of efficiencies and savings.	Essential
Customer focus	Clear understanding of the need to engage with communities and promote good customer relations.	Essential
Change management	Knowledge and experience of successful service change and organisational development. Knowledge and experience of how to effect cultural and behavioural change. Knowledge and experience of leading wide ranging service change projects. Excellent business and service planning knowledge and experience. Knowledge and experience of successful service change and organisational development. Knowledge and experience of how to effect cultural and behavioural change. Knowledge and experience of leading wide ranging service change projects.	Essential
Communications and Marketing	Experience of developing and delivering communications and marketing strategies to support and deliver against strategic objectives within a complex organisation. Experience in using a range of communications and marketing technology/ software.	Essential
Strategic planning	Experience of strategic communications leadership, planning and delivery across digital, media and internal channels	Essential
Local Government knowledge	Expert knowledge of local government and the political, partner and community context	Essential
Subject Matter Knowledge	Public affairs, media law and the Local Government Publicity Code	Desirable

Skills		
Excellence and Accountability	<p>Review current practice both in own work and in the work of my team.</p> <p>Ability to identify and deliver best practice and drive improvement to meet the diverse needs of customers and colleagues.</p> <p>Review, identify and challenge with evidence collation poor use of built and natural resources, delivering improvements.</p> <p>Demonstrate a solution focused approach to and accountability for work.</p>	Essential
Effective communication	<p>Excellent communication skills including strong report writing and presentation.</p> <p>Ability to persuade and negotiate at all levels and across different agencies, services and groups.</p> <p>Strong and effective interpersonal skills in groups, teams and one-to-one situations.</p> <p>Strategic influencing and advisory skills with senior officers.</p> <p>Ability to develop high-quality writing, editing and content development across multiple platforms.</p> <p>Ability to prepare meaningful and concise reports and presentations and to manage and participate in senior level meetings to achieve desired outcomes.</p>	Essential
Partnership working and Collaboration	<p>Lead on promotion of the wide activities of the council and share responsibility for the Council across service boundaries, especially in the public domain.</p> <p>Ability to think creatively about opportunities to work together, building rapport.</p> <p>Ability to deliver results across team and organisational boundaries.</p> <p>Ability to facilitate networks, communities of practice or cross-functional working groups.</p> <p>Ability to engage in positive dialogue to achieve desired outcomes.</p>	Essential
Strategic Thinking	<p>Ability to see the big picture, interpret it and develop relevant strategies, plans and deliverables.</p>	Essential

	<p>Ability to think strategically across organisational, functional and unit boundaries.</p> <p>Ability to manage complex projects and align communications with organisational change</p>	
Leadership	<p>Ability to lead, develop and motivate colleagues and partners in relation to multi-team service delivery.</p> <p>Leads by example. Role modelling organisational behaviours and values.</p>	Essential
Management skills	<p>Ability to plan, prioritise and review performance.</p> <p>Strong management skills and expertise in the use of management information systems to specify and monitor performance.</p> <p>Strong financial management and budgetary control skills.</p>	Essential
Judgement and effective decision making	<p>Ability to exercise sensitivity and clear judgement over organisational issues and developments and to arrive at a balanced view.</p> <p>Demonstrable ability to learn from experience and to share that learning through future actions to improve service and staff performance.</p> <p>Excellent business and service planning knowledge and experience.</p>	Essential
Resilience	<p>Demonstrates professional resilience when under pressure and working with senior stakeholders in the organisation.</p> <p>Working evenings and weekends as part of emergency on call rota.</p>	Essential
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (applies to all roles).	Ability to demonstrate awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and how this applies to this role.	Essential
Net Zero (applies to all roles).	Ability to contribute towards our commitment of becoming a net zero organisation.	Essential

Disclosure level

What disclosure level is required for this post?	None	Standard
	Enhanced	Enhanced with barred list checks

Work type

What work type does this role fit into? (tick one box that reflects the main work type, the default work type is hybrid)	Fixed	Hybrid	Field	Remote	Mobile
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