

Job Description and Person Specification

Job details

Job title: Consultation and Engagement Specialist

Grade: PS7

Reports to: Consultation and Engagement Lead

Responsible for: N/A

Directorate and Service area: Chief Executive's – Communications and Policy

Purpose of the job

The Consultation and Engagement Specialist supports and delivers a comprehensive and effective programme of consultation and engagement activities with residents, partners, community organisations and other stakeholders, to inform the Council's decision-making when reviewing, shaping and improving services, strategies and policies.

The postholder will provide colleagues with specialist advice on consultation and engagement methods to maintain, develop and enhance engagement best practice and ensure legal compliance. Answerable and supported by the Consultation and Engagement Lead.

Principal responsibilities

1. To deliver and support consultation and engagement activities, operating across services with minimal supervision and management, by designing, coordinating/managing, collating, analysing, interpreting and delivering a portfolio of consultation and engagement that will provide evidence to support the development of services, strategic objectives and strategic documentation. This includes mechanisms of participation, forums, feedback sessions, questionnaires, and analysis reporting of these to help shape service improvement and delivery across the Council.
2. Be the conduit for consultation and engagement activities and provide robust specialist advice on consultation, engagement and involvement methods which include managing and developing various engagement tools, develop and deliver training, and help collate, prepare and analyse relevant statistical data in order to inform the production of council decision making reports, strategies and policies.
3. Support the corporate Consultation and Engagement Lead in providing specialist. technical and legal advice. Provide oversight and support to colleagues and other stakeholders on how to conduct meaningful consultation and engagement activities and campaigns within defined budgets and timeframes, whilst ensuring legal robustness and corporate requirements are met and mitigating the risk of challenge.
4. Challenge existing established and proposed approaches to consultation and engagement and, working with the Consultation and Engagement Lead and service directors, managers and Members, produce creative and cost-effective strategies, ideas and actions for enhanced participation.
5. Develop local resources, strategies, policies, procedures and templates to ensure that consultation and engagement can be carried out effectively to help achieve council programmes, including using national consultation and engagement information and principles to help shape local delivery, and look at ways to enhance the experience of those using the service.

6. Assist in developing, maintaining and enhancing effective and productive relationships or links with other local authorities, academic institutions and other partner stakeholders as necessary to provide an effective and robust consultation and engagement service.
7. Work to improve service availability, accessibility, customer led provision, co-production and inclusive practice and equity for all, including seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics, via a range of different effective media and tools, including the Council's website, Consultation and Engagement Hub, social media etc.
8. Support the production of consultation and engagement information to a diverse audience including the general public, local communities, seldom heard groups and organisations.
9. To make the best use out of web-based tools and software applications available to the organisation including consultation software, to support activities, and build and continually improve the offer of the consultation and engagement service.
10. Help manage and develop the Council's corporate reputation and participation standards for consistency and in support of the Council's Values.
11. Assist with the monitoring and evaluation of consultation and engagement work undertaken and help produce written reports to assess the effectiveness of the work
12. Under the direction of the Consultation and Engagement Lead, take an active role in securing efficiency and continuous improvement of the consultation and engagement service.

General responsibilities applicable to all jobs

1. Demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.
2. Comply with the Council's policies and procedures including (but not limited to) safeguarding, financial regulations, promotion of equalities, customer care, agreed audit actions and health and safety (ensuring that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons).
3. Understand the council's commitment to Corporate Parenting and take responsibility to support this commitment. Enable the council to be the best corporate parents possible to children and young people in our current and previous care.
4. Carry out any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

Special features of the post

This post is Politically Restricted.

Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 this post is classified as a politically restricted or sensitive post. Holders of such posts are disqualified from seeking election to or being a member of the House of Commons, the European Parliament, or a Local Authority, other than a Parish Council.

Working Hours

The role will require working flexible and anti-social hours. The post holder may be required to work evenings and weekends depending on the nature of the task. They may also be required to work additional hours during peak periods.

Person Specification

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
Education, Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to degree standard or equivalent, or relevant knowledge and experience 	
Experience and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of supporting the delivery of various consultation and engagement projects and activities, preferably within a similar organisation • Experience of analysing and presenting consultation and engagement data to support service development • Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods and experience of using a wide range of consultation and engagement methods in a relevant field • Knowledge of the implications and limitations of different approaches to consultation and engagement • Substantial experience of working in local or central government or another public sector organisation • Experience of working with elected members • Experience of working in a politically sensitive environment • Experience of managing relationships across a large-scale organisation and different levels of authority • Experience of working with, and supporting, diverse stakeholders and multi-agency working • Experience of using survey software tools and specialist web authoring software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of project management

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of appropriate communication and engagement techniques to support effective engagement with diverse stakeholders. • Knowledge of data protection, GDPR and accessibility requirements • Substantial understanding of laws governing consultation. Including key statutes, past and emerging case law • Understanding of the key principles of consultation, good practice and government guidelines • Substantial knowledge of the services provided by a large unitary authority, and the challenges faced in effective service delivery • Experience of providing good practice and legal advice to senior managers and Members, sometime on contentious issues • Experience of writing and influencing contents of strategies and policies across a large local authority or similar organisation. 	
Ability and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interpersonal skills, with ability to work with a wide variety of people and stakeholders of all levels • Strong decisive, negotiating, and problem-solving skills, with skill at managing relationships positively • Ability to use knowledge and expertise to influence decision making of senior managers and Members to ensure legal compliance with consultation and the authorities decision making processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think at a strategic level

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly organised, motivated, with the ability to prioritise workload (and deal with the pressures arising from this); work on own initiative with minimal supervision; and meet challenging deadlines • Excellent planning, numerical, research and analytical skills and with experience of applying statistical analysis, sometimes within tight timeframes • Excellent written and verbal communications skills • Ability to understanding and interpret complex material and developing this to make it easier to understand and digest based on the audience • Adhering to high quality and professional standards of work • Creative thinking, and with a strong eye for detail • Excellent IT skills, including Microsoft Office applications and an ability to quickly learn new software platforms 	
Equal Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs. 	
Additional Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work outside of normal office hours when needed. • Ability to drive with access to a vehicle. 	