

Job Description

Job Title - Media Officer – News & External affairs

Job number

Grade SO2

Overall purpose of the job

Please write one or two sentences about why the job exists. Focus on the achievement of the key end results of the job.

To work as a media officer for the council, promoting, enhancing, and supporting the work and reputation of the organisation through the provision of timely and high-quality communications.

Specifically, the post holder will lead the day-to-day running of the news desk and delivery of a communications service to the council, both internally and externally, through guidance, support, and recommendations. The role will work as part of a team to deliver a coordinated corporate service dedicated to a specific area of the business – news and external affairs, delivering part or all of the following functions:

- Media handling and responding to the demands of a 24/7 media landscape both in and outside working hours.
- Planning and delivering communications to support council activities to traditional or social media.
- Producing monitoring reports and presenting them to snr members and councillors to maintain effectiveness in communications.

To work as part of a team to lead and manage a coordinated multi-skilled corporate service to deliver the agreed outcomes for your area of the business.

- Driving innovation, creative thinking, and alternative ways of delivering outcomes in line with cross Council objectives.
- Delivering strategic plans linked to major reputational issues (serious case reviews, court cases or inquests) or major committee announcements.
- Managing resources within agreed procedures and budgets
- Supporting and deputising for Snr Comms/ Communications Managers on reputational issues and media handling.

Main accountabilities

Please list the accountabilities in descending order of priority. Please include 6-9 accountabilities.

| Main accountabilities | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | Support the Communications Manager to oversee the council's day-to-day media handling by analysing media traffic and media themes to determine key issues for the council to respond. To understand the media landscape to identify opportunities for media coverage or opportunities to promote policies or decisions. To ensure senior colleagues are made aware of issues and incidents of importance as they arise. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 2. | <p>Manage the news desk rota (this role and a communications officer on rotation) to ensure that activity is planned, colleagues are briefed, and appropriate cover is always available during business hours.</p> <p>Undertake work on the on-call rota comprising of Senior Communications Officer and Managers, taking calls from the media, senior officers or Members on emergency communications issues that can't wait until the next working day.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Prepare media/communications advice and support around key issues related to the council to senior officers and members, providing critical challenge by negotiation and influence to produce appropriate answers and media scripts to enable Members to best respond to emerging complex issues from the media.</p> <p>Lead on making ensure that a high and consistent standard of work is going out that adheres to the council's statutory responsibilities aimed at improving and enhancing the reputation of Cambridgeshire.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Support the Communication Manager to deliver media, training and coaching to senior officers and Members.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Collaborate with the campaigns/internal/web teams to ensure effective integration of PR, digital communications, internal communications, media and marketing activity.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Develop and deliver communications plans which are linked to maintaining the council's reputation or democratic operation, including PR, social media and internal communications in response to an emerging issue or committee report or motion.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Deliver and support media opportunities and interviews which help the council's business.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Develop and maintain constructive working relationships with services, Members, local communities, stakeholder groups – including the media, key partners, suppliers, and contractors.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Produce reports on performance indicators for the department, evaluate media coverage and support the provision of reports on their effectiveness - reporting to senior managers to develop effective feedback to key audiences, and to elected Members to give feedback on effectiveness.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities ensuring they are reflected in all the councils' communications activities, and of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.</p> |

Person Specification

Qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience

Minimum level of qualifications required for this job

| Qualifications Required | Subject | Essential/ Desirable |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Degree or equivalent professional qualification | Journalism or NCTJ qualification preferred | Essential |
| Sound communications experience in a media handling environment | Relevant and related | Essential |
| Evidence of continuous professional development from internal or externally provided learning | Relevant and related | Desirable |

| Identify | Describe | Essential/ Desirable |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Knowledge | | |
| Media relations or communications and their delivery | Experience of delivering successful communications in a fast paced, media facing role | Essential |
| Crisis management | Experience of delivering externally focussed crisis communications in large and complex organisation - which may include being part of a local authority resilience team or similar | Essential |
| Management or leadership skills | Knowledge & understanding | Desirable |
| A thorough understanding of the environment in which local government operates | Knowledge & understanding | Desirable |
| Skills | | |
| Working together | Think creatively about opportunities to work together, building rapport. Deliver results across team and organisational boundaries. | Essential |
| Respect | Identify areas for improvement to meet the diverse needs of customers and Colleagues. Challenge poor use of resources, delivering improvements. | Essential |
| Effective communication | Good, clear copy writing, with a flexible, adaptive style and strong attention to detail. Excellent verbal and written skills, as well as the ability to communicate | Essential |

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| | <p>effectively with a variety of internal and external customers.</p> <p>Ability to negotiate across different agencies, services, and groups.</p> <p>Effective interpersonal skills in groups, teams, and one-to-one situations.</p> <p>Visible communication of positive messages about Cambridgeshire County Council and the communications service.</p> <p>Ability to influence others set and review priorities, and take responsibility</p> <p>Ability to challenge others appropriately</p> | |
| Partnership working | Willingness to promote the wider activities of the council and work with partners | Essential |
| Strategic Thinking | Ability to see the big picture, interpret it and use it in the development of the post holders' key activities | Essential |
| Management skills | <p>Ability to plan, prioritise and review performance.</p> <p>Ability to use a media management system and manage activities</p> <p>Strong budgetary control skills.</p> | Desirable |
| Judgement and decision making | <p>Ability to exercise sensitivity and clear judgement over organisational issues.</p> <p>Ability to understand and analyse complex issues and to offer sound, strategic, professional and managerial advice.</p> <p>Demonstrable ability to learn from experience and to share that learning</p> | Essential |
| Coaching | Ability to coach individuals at a senior level | Desirable |
| Professional Resilience | Able to work under pressure with senior officers. | |
| Experience | | |
| Productive relationships | Proven ability in fostering positive and constructive relationships with and amongst team members, Members, media and with peers across and outside the organisation. | Essential |
| Customer focus | Clear understanding of the need to engage with communities and promote good customer relations. | Essential |

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| | . | |
| Presentation of information | Ability to prepare meaningful and concise written communications for a range of different channels and presentations and to participate in senior level meetings to achieve desired outcomes. | Essential |
| Delivering at pace | Experience of working at pace, to meet tight deadlines and delivering a professional service. | |
| Equal opportunities | Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs | |

Disclosure level

| | |
|--|------|
| What disclosure level is required for this post? | None |
|--|------|

Work type

| | |
|---|----------|
| What work type does this role fit into? (tick one box that reflects the main work type, the default workers type is flexible) | Flexible |
|---|----------|

Job description questionnaire

Page 1 and 2 of this document will form the job description and person specification for the post.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Job title: | Press Officer | Directorate/ Service area: | Strategy and Partnerships |
| Reports to (job title): | Senior Communications Manager | Section: | Communications |
| Presenting Manager: | Christine Birchall | Date of evaluation: | TBC |
| Supporting HR contact person: | Stewart Gletherow | Re-evaluation: | NO |

Job context

Give a short overview of the job context and the key objectives of the part of the organisation where the job is placed.

The communications function across CCC aims to tell the story of the organisation via its vision and seven ambitions, as delivered by its services and the decisions their Members take which make a difference to the people who live, work and visit our area.

Our role is to build and deliver a compelling narrative which is understandable, engaging, reaches the right audiences in the right ways at the right times, and by encouraging transparency, pride and advocacy – helps both councils achieve their ambitions, recruit and retain the very best employees and encourage participation in democracy itself.

The Media Officer will be the primary interface with the media and work across CCC – dealing with daily media enquiries, understanding the local government system and instrumental in the delivery of the council’s communications plans to support corporate objectives – working on their own initiative to handle all initial external media communications first contacts and dealing with each appropriately as part of managing a rota, managing sensitive and personal information – escalating issues as appropriate and ensuring answers are signed off in accordance to the council’s communications protocols

They will report into the Senior Communications Manager for news and external affairs supporting them to develop and deliver proactive and reactive media projects and will offer indirect management support to communications officers and assistant.

In addition they will need the ability to work on own initiative to take responsibility for news and external affairs, prepare content for committee reports, draft content for proactive and reactive media projects and issues, handle reputational management, use media platform and respond appropriately to journalists – engaging with staff and Members at all levels, and with partners and members of the local community.

They will also develop plans for and provide communications support for corporate or projects, and media opportunities.

Organisation chart (include grades)

Please provide an organisation chart which includes the manager of the post, its peers and direct reports.

See attached

Change of accountabilities (for re-evaluations only)

What are the major changes to the role?

These should clearly show the reason for this re-evaluation i.e. the:

- changes to the accountabilities;
- changes to the essential qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience; or
- changes to the team structure

Communication and influencing

| Contact | Nature of interpersonal skills used |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Internal | Briefing and advising |
| Head of service | Advising and supporting, |
| Committee Chair/Vice-Chair | Advising and supporting |
| Business managers/Principal comms | Supporting , briefing |
| External | |
| Media | Managing, advising, and negotiating |
| Suppliers | Negotiation and briefing |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Customers/clients(particularly on social media) | Advising and updating |
|---|-----------------------|

Supervision and work planning

What degree of forward planning is required in this job (daily, weekly, monthly, annual, etc)?

Daily – timely responses to media enquiries.

Daily media monitoring and updating of snr officers/members.

Weekly supporting the development of the communications plan including quarterly forward planning around key committee issues from the council or partners which relate to council activities (GCP/CPCA), and major national announcements– and planning likely responses.

Ongoing management and forward planning of the news desk /on call rota

Monthly participating in the on-call rota – with an ongoing understanding of major issues to brief other participants or deal with calls themselves.

Monthly preparation of feedback/impact reports.

Quarterly planning reports going back to CLT .

What level of supervision is this post subject to?

Day to day the post will manage their own work load, but will report into into a Snr Comms Manager, with clear links to other Comms Managers in the team depending on the area of media enquiry they are dealing with, they will and will support other communications officers with media handling training and advice.

What type of priorities is the post holder able to set themselves?

Own working priorities to deliver proactive and reactive communications activities against the council's priorities.

Management of news priorities and the order in which items are communicated to the media + negotiation with national, regional, and local media outlets on deadlines.

What kind of systems, procedures or 'rules' are set around the job?

Councils own Communications strategy 20021 – 25

Web and digital strategy

Social media strategy

Communications Protocol (CCC Constitution)

Local Government Publicity Code

Staff code of conduct

Communications annual service plan

Problems encountered

What types of problems are encountered in this job and what steps would you expect the post holder to take to find the solution (give 2 examples).

A chair or vice-chair of a committee has been approached by a journalist about a story and they'd like some advice on how to handle the enquiry. The post holder would be expected to offer help where they can –e.g offering advice around the issue and how to handle it from a

reputational point of view as well as reminding members and the media to follow CCC's media protocol. They would have the skills and experience to advise members and not be afraid of challenging the journalist or member who has been approached directly – without causing offence or breaking a relationship.

BBC Look East emails information about a client who alleges they will be affected because of a withdrawal of services – and want a statement as the story is about to be broadcast. The post holder would be expected to spot the importance of this story amongst other email traffic, call back to get a precis of all the most important issues within the story, negotiate appropriately on the timing of the story - know which part of the council to talk to (and the appropriate level of staff) in order draft an outline response which sets out the council's position, brief the most appropriate comms manager and – if a timing change cannot be made - be tenacious in getting sign off f/awareness of the response

At what point does the post holder escalate a problem to a more senior employee?

Where a response needs to be developed on a new or significant issue affecting the council which needs the approval of an executive director or Committee chair

Where a social media issue starts to 'flame' e.g when monitoring the corporate platform a small issue is gathering momentum and can't be simply answered with information readily to hand.

Where a national new story looks to have local implications, or a very local story is picked up by a national news organisation.

Decision making

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|--|--|
| Does the post holder makes a decision based on | a set process to resolve the problem |
| | a solution based on their past experience |
| | seek more information to determine the extent of the problem |

Please give an example to illustrate the approach to decision making specified above.

Seeking out information from across the organisation to provide answers to media questions or responses to social media posts which support the council's ambition and priorities - using pre existing comms plans, similar responses made to other enquiries, or via the relationships built with key officers across the council.

Freedom to act

Please give two examples of areas that the post holder has discretion over.

Creating and drafting appropriate communications for committee reports or motions using the corporate media platform and working with report authors.

Responding to routine responses /requests from media or elected Members on areas within their sphere of expertise, and to the media at events

Impact

Financial impacts of the role

| Financial measure (e.g. income, expenditure, capital budget) | Amount (£) | Role (Direct control, joint control, advisory/influencing role) |
|--|-------------|---|
| Campaign expenditure | £0 - £100k | influence |
| Systems capital and revenue | £100 – 200k | influence |
| | | |

Statistical Information

Is there any statistical information that can add to the understanding of the job? E.g. it is useful to know whether a Payroll Officer deals with is 50 or 50,000 payslips.

The council's media team deals with around 2,000 media enquiries a year, corporate social media accounts which interact with around directly 50,000 followers and are responsible for the launch of approximately 12 major campaigns.

Our website is visited annually by about 5 million people, we deliver internal communications to more than 4,000 staff

Physical effort and/or strain

Describe whether the job requires physical effort and/or strain more than is normally experienced in a routine office environment

No

Working environment

Does the job require working outdoors, or being exposed to objectionable, uncomfortable or unfavourable working conditions?

Un social hours – working evenings and weekends on a rota basis roughly 1 week in eight, , supporting media at council meetings, elections, events or consultations. Direct liaison with members of the public during times of crisis. Some local travelling is necessary.

Declarations

All roles – Manager

JDQ completed by: Sarah Silk and Christine Birchall

By submitting this JDQ to panel I confirm that the relevant Director/Assistant Director has given consent for this post to be evaluated/re-evaluated.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Signed: | Date: |
| Print name Christine Birchall | |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Re-evaluations only – Current Post Holder | |
| Current post holder – by signing this form I confirm that I have been involved in completing the JDQ and confirm that it is an accurate reflection of my current role. | |
| Signed: | Date: |
| Print name: | |

HR Advisory - Prior to submitting the job to panel please provide the Hay Lines of this posts Line Manager and Direct Reports.

| Job title | Hay Line | | | Score |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| | Know How | Problem Solving | Accountability | |
| | | | | |
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HR Advisory - Advice given to the manager

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|---|
| Use this section to record any relevant background information and advice that you have given to the manager. |
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