



**Job Title:** Director of Strategy and Communications  
**Grade:** TBC – Chief Officer T&Cs  
**Responsible to:** Chief Operating Officer  
**Responsible for:** Strategy and Communications

## Job Purpose

The purpose of this role is to lead a strategic communications and policy service to elected members, senior managers and colleagues across the council. The Director of Strategy and Communications will ensure that the council has effective strategic communications arrangements in place, create and develop a strategic framework for the council by which a clear vision, missions and objectives are set, providing direction and inspiring action across the council and partners.

As a senior leader and strategic advisor, you will:

- Lead the development and delivery of a strategic communications service.
- Work alongside colleagues to ensure that communications activities support our customer experience strategy, including shaping our digital presence, web and social media channels.
- Lead long term planning activities including the council's ambitious corporate plan, contribution to other thematic strategies and ensuring budget and resource planning is integrated into business planning activities.
- Undertake long term horizon scanning and develop programmes of work to link into the national policy agenda, for example public service reform, ensuring Sheffield City Council is at the forefront of sector policy thinking.
- With colleagues ensure there are effective and innovative arrangements in place to engage communities in the development of council strategy and service design.
- With colleagues and partners lead the council's strategic response to diversity, equity and inclusion policy, including supporting the Council's statutory Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities
- Ensure the forward plans of the strategic leadership board, administration group leaders meeting and other officer delivery boards are aligned and reflective of council strategy and priority.
- Ensure there are effective arrangements in place to support the city council's role as a partner and city leader, including effective partnership governance.
- Drive strategic collaboration across council services and with partners to enable the organisation to adapt and respond to the evolving requirements and preferences of customers and communities across Sheffield.
- Promote the development and use of quantitative and qualitative data, insights and evidence on customers, communities and outcomes across the council to deliver high-quality and impactful services and strategies.

Additionally, working as part of the directorate leadership team (DLT) of the Chief Operating Officer the post holder will play a key role in fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within the organisation. At times the postholder may be required to deputise for the COO.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Specific Functional Accountabilities:**

#### **Strategy and Policy**

- Horizon scan for risks and opportunities – utilising contacts and intelligence to monitor and circulate public affairs updates, including political intelligence and regulatory changes, to ensure internal stakeholders are kept up to date on key matters, understand their relevance and impact, and plan accordingly. This includes regular briefings with the CEO, the Leader of the Council, Elected Members and colleagues.
- Lead the council's strategy and policy function including the council plan and oversight of an integrated finance and business planning function. Ensure that the forward plans of the strategic leadership board and administration leaders' briefing are effectively aligned.
- Develop, implement and maintain a coherent and integrated strategic policy framework for the council.
- Actively contribute to regional and city-wide networks, partnerships that help shape the strategic direction for Sheffield.
- Lead an external and public affairs function that ensures Sheffield City Council is active in sector and relevant national policy initiatives, with a focus on Sheffield being recognised and understood as a national and global city.
- Ensure effective partnership engagement and governance, ensuring the city goals are embedded across the council and its services.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive's Office and Leader's Office function effectively in support of the council's wider objectives

#### **Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Develop and implement a set of strategic equalities objectives on the basis of external and internal engagement and feedback.
- Ensure there are effective arrangements in place to monitor performance, delivery and impact in relation to equalities, diversity and inclusion strategy, in line with statutory requirements.
- Actively support and develop a city and region wide partnership network that contributes to a system wide response to equalities policy and embeds our commitment to be an anti-racist city.

#### **Strategic Communications**

- Lead, manage and develop the Communications and External Affairs function as a centre of excellence, committed to continuous improvement in providing expert advice and support to the organisation and key stakeholders.
- Develop and implement communications strategies for Sheffield City Council that focus on our council plan priorities, city goals and increases our influence, impact and reputation.

- Represent the council at relevant national, regional and local platforms and events as required including acting as a public spokesperson where appropriate.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- Ensure there are effective arrangements in place across the council to consult and engage with communities, stakeholders and residents in the development of council plans, policy and strategy.
- Work with colleagues to ensure innovative practice in co-production, customer insight and user experience design are central to the development of council services.
- Embed how the council uses data, feedback, local voices, and community insight to keep delivering on the expectations of its stakeholders.

### **General Duties:**

#### **Strategic and Corporate Responsibilities**

- As a Senior Manager of SCC, work to promote positive cultural change and a 'One Council' approach, embodying and promoting the values of the Council.
- Contribute to the strategic leadership of the Council by establishing, leading, developing and implementing effective strategies that will deliver for the City.
- Lead, participate in and contribute to key projects on corporate areas of activity involving Council-wide strategies, which promote innovation and creativity in the provision of council services, the city and the region.
- Develop and implement coherent strategies and policies to better meet the needs of all customers of the service.
- Ensure that all relevant statutory duties within the purview of the post and across the Council (where applicable) are effectively discharged.
- Proactively engage in and receive constructive peer challenge in order to improve and develop services.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the wider environments within which the Council operates, including political and economic impacts, technological advances and strategic commissioning to promote innovative service models and deliver the best value for public money.

#### **Innovation and Change**

- Utilise data to understand the changing needs of customers, challenge the status quo to ensure areas of responsibility are innovative and continuously improve by reviewing services, strategies and procedures.
- Effectively champion, engage with and manage change programmes, whilst motivating others to deliver.

#### **Political Awareness**

- Inform, support and advise elected members of the Council so that they can perform their responsibilities and ensure that decisions are appropriately informed, and services delivered according to Council priorities.
- Serve all Members equally with dignity, respect and courtesy, regardless of political group or position, creating and maintaining effective and productive relationships.
- Lead the development of corporate and service strategy aligning with political direction and decision making.

### **Partnership working**

- Identify, manage and engage with key stakeholders both internally and externally to the Council to deliver cohesive, integrated services across the city.
- Use innovative, creative thinking to build relationships and influence and negotiate complex and contentious issues as they arise.
- Ensure knowledge and information is shared across partners and stakeholders both internally and externally to enable common objectives to be achieved.

### **Resource Management:**

- Ensuring effective financial management, cost controls and income maximisation in a changing environment, fluctuating demands and priorities.
- Responsible for the effective management of all resources within a corporate context, ensuring that:
  - Arrangements are put in place to ensure the service has a clear framework to comply with the Council's financial regulations, Standing Orders, and financial policies, maintaining spending within approved limits and budgets.
  - The resources of the function are targeted at priorities and demonstrate value for money.
- Develop and implement sustainable workforce plans, management and staffing structures, including maintaining an on-call rota for out of hours communications support, emergency planning and business continuity.
- Recruit, manage, motivate, and develop employees ensuring their health, safety and wellbeing at work.

### **Performance Management**

- Pursue best practice and value for money for the service through the establishment of effective management and procurement, systems of governance and accountability, target setting and performance management.
- Produce Service Development Plans for the function and ensure that the plans are developed and implemented via a framework of customer and staff involvement.
- Conduct annual performance reviews in accordance with Council policy.

### **Customer Focus**

- Drive a customer ethos in all services areas ensuring that the use of data and insight informs activities and priorities which contribute to the councils customer experience strategy.
- Have a focus that is attuned to the national and regional agenda, understanding customers' changing needs.
- Ensure the development and delivery of good quality public services and a service-wide culture of customer responsiveness.

### **Other Policies – your responsibilities**

To undertake all duties and responsibilities in line with current Council Policies and Procedures, including those relating to health and safety; equalities, diversity and inclusion; safeguarding procedures; financial instructions; procurement and commissioning.

This is a senior post and you will be required to be flexible and responsive to unexpected demands. You may be required to undertake any other related duties and responsibilities as they arise from time to time, commensurate with the level of the post.

Responsibilities in relation to strategic resilience and business continuity are integral to the role of a senior public servant and you will be required to undertake all reasonable activity associated with such responsibilities including participation in relevant duty and on call rotas.

This is a politically restricted post.

**Issue date: December 2024**

## Person Specification Post Title: Director of Strategy and Communications

Minimum Essential Requirements	Assessment Method
<b>Section One: Specific Knowledge, Experience and Skills</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrable experience at a senior level in leading and managing strategy and communications functions in a public sector or similar organisational setting reflecting scope, scale and complexity.</li> <li>• Evidence of crisis management and resilience skills.</li> <li>• Evidence of handling complex organisational matters and challenging situations with diplomacy and tact.</li> <li>• Experience of working at a senior level in a complex environment, managing multiple projects with a range of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Production of board reports, policy briefings, presentations and strategic recommendations.</li> <li>• Knowledge of consultation and engagement techniques, the Gunning principles and the statutory framework in which they apply.</li> <li>• Knowledge of campaigns and marketing strategy.</li> <li>• Digital literacy and competency with strong insight and data analytic to understand audience behaviour, campaign performance, and media impact.</li> </ul>	Interview/ Application/ Assessment
<b>Section Two: General Knowledge, Experience and Skills</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good understanding of the public sector and the challenges faced particularly in local government.</li> <li>• Ability to effectively communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences</li> <li>• Creative, innovative and strategic thinking, able to think laterally and creatively.</li> <li>• Flexible, collaborative leadership style and proven motivational and supportive people management skills</li> <li>• Sound political astuteness, being ethical and compliant in practice, understanding of the Nolan principles and how they operate.</li> <li>• Able to build consensus and use influence within the organisation with a wide range of stakeholders, with strong interpersonal communications skills.</li> <li>• Experience of working within a political context and with elected councillors.</li> </ul>	Interview/ Application/ Assessment
<b>Section Three: Qualifications</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated to degree level or significant equivalent experience.</li> <li>• Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional body</li> <li>• Evidence of continuing professional development</li> </ul>	Interview/ Application/ Assessment

<b>Section Four: Our Values</b>	
<p>All colleagues are expected to demonstrate commitment to our values. Leaders and Managers are expected to role model behaviours in line with our values and nurture a culture where our values are brought to life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are at the heart of what we do</li> <li>• Openness and honesty are important to us</li> <li>• Together we get things done</li> </ul>	Interview

## Health Risks Specification

Risks that apply to this post:

<b>Fitness to Work</b>	<b>Potential health risks: please add Yes or No against each risk</b>
Working with computers	Yes
Working at heights	No
Confined spaces	No
Moving and handling includes people and objects	No

<b>Vocational Health Checks</b>	<b>Potential health risks: please add Yes or No against each risk</b>
Driver medicals, minibus, forklift trucks and HGV	No
Night Worker Questionnaires	No
School crossing warden	No

<b>Statutory Health Surveillance</b>	<b>Potential health risks: please add Yes or No against each risk</b>
Exposure to excessive noise levels	No
Exposure to excessive vibration levels	No
Exposure to skin irritants	No
Exposure to respiratory irritants	No

