



Sheffield City Council Job Description

Head of Communications

Directorate:	Strategic Enabling Services (SES)
Service Area:	Strategy and Communications
Grade:	<i>DG6/7 TBC Subject to Review</i>
Responsible To:	Director of Strategy and Communications
Responsible For:	Communications Service

Job Purpose

- To provide strategic and operational leadership of the communications function for the authority.
- To ensure that the people of Sheffield and other stakeholders are well informed about the work of the council its priorities and how to access services.
- To work with colleagues across the council to ensure an effective digital presence and support the councils ambitions as set out in the customer experience strategy.
- To ensure effective internal communications with staff at all levels.
- To provide communications and reputation management advice to the Leader, elected Members and senior officers across the authority.
- Working collaboratively with colleagues and partners to deliver effective communications campaigns in support of key council and city objectives.
- To play a key role in devising and articulating a coherent narrative for Sheffield and Sheffield City Council.
- To inform, educate, enthuse, collaborate with and listen to people across the city, and other audiences beyond, helping to connect the Council with the people and communities of the city.

Duties and Responsibilities

Specific Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategic Contribution

- Lead the Communications function, giving direction and leadership, providing appropriate support to and developing the function to meet current and future business needs.
- As Head of Communications, to be the organisation's professional communications lead, providing high level, strategic communications advice to elected members and senior officers.
- Through the use of a wide variety of channels and approaches, ensure that the people of Sheffield and other stakeholders are well informed about the work of the council and how to access services.
- Informed by data-driven intelligence and through working collaboratively with colleagues and partners, ensure the delivery effective, high-quality communications campaigns in support of council and city objectives.
- Ensure the provision of an effective internal communications function for the organisation enabling staff to be kept well-informed and engaged with the most important issues for them at work.
- Maintain and enhance the overall reputation of the council, including through the provision of an effective media relations function.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders to listen to, understand and promote the voice of Sheffield residents in the work of the council, including by actively supporting engagement and involvement activity through communications work.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues in other public, private and voluntary sector organisations in Sheffield, with colleagues across the region, and with counterparts in Core Cities and other sector groupings to ensure that Sheffield City Council supports the communication of shared priorities, campaigns and other activity.
- Working closely with the Emergency Planning Shared Service and the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, ensure that effective arrangements are maintained for communications support during an emergency or major incident, including the council's 'warn and inform' duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

General Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategic and Corporate Responsibility

- As a Senior Manager of SCC, work to promote a positive culture and a 'One Council' approach, embodying and promoting the values of the Council.
- 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, leveraging your specialist skills and making contributions where you can.
- Be aware of and implement best practice in service delivery.
- Ensure that all relevant statutory duties within the purview of this post and across the Council are effectively discharged.
- Ensure that services are delivered in a customer focused way.
- Proactively engage in and receive constructive peer challenge in order to improve and develop services.
- As a member of the service's senior management team, to provide senior level support to the smooth and effective running of local and national elections/referenda.
- This is a senior post and you will be required to be flexible and responsive to unexpected demands. You will be required to participate fully in the Council's emergency planning arrangements, including participating in on-call rotas. 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.

Reputation Management

- Promote, protect, enhance and develop the reputation of the Council and the services for which the post holder is responsible by delivering real voice and choice to customers.
- Establish, develop and maintain effective and cooperative communication, working relationships and arrangements with all internal and external stakeholders.
- Optimise the potential of the service and to ensure that initiatives, strategies and policies are presented positively and ensure fair and equal access for our customers.
- Maintain consistently excellent standards throughout the services falling within the remit of the post.
- Ensure effective and proactive relationships with regional and governmental and professional bodies in the interests of Sheffield.

Resource Management

- Be 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 for ensuring compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Policies;
 - That the service business is conducted in a manner that meets the highest standards of financial management;
 - The resources of the function are targeted at priorities and demonstrate value for money.
- Ensure compliance with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and maintain spending within approved levels.
- Manage the service budget (where applicable) and deliver value for money by diligent monitoring and efficient working practices.
- Develop and implement a robust and sustainable management and staffing structure.
- Ensure the service's activities, duties and responsibilities are delivered in accordance with agreed Council policies and procedures, in particular equality of opportunity and health and safety.
- Lead on Service Business Continuity Planning and ensure that your leadership team know this plan and are able to direct staff to follow the Business Continuity Plan as required.

Performance Management

- Produce Service 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.
- Establish and maintain standards and performance indicators for the service together with the associated monitoring and reporting systems, ensuring these are actively communicated, promoted and implemented.
- Develop and promote positive employee management to harness skills and abilities, develop potential, and increase motivation through effective performance management.

Safeguarding and other Policies – your responsibilities

- Lead on Service Business Continuity Planning and ensure that your leadership team know this plan and can direct staff to follow the Business Continuity Plan. You will also support with Incident Response to provide co-ordination of critical incidents, should these occur.

- 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.
- To undertake any other duties in agreement with the post holder and manager.

This is a politically restricted post

Issue date: December 2024

Person Specification

Post Title: Head of Communications

Minimum Essential Requirements	Assessment Method
Specific Knowledge, Experience and Skills	
An experienced communications professional, with a proven track record of delivering clear communications outcomes in a complex organisation of a similar scale.	AF/AC/I
An excellent working knowledge of communications tools and techniques, including digital and social channels, and an understanding of how these can be effectively utilised in a public sector context	AF/I
Confident in providing evidence-based communications advice on high profile and/or contentious issues and an understanding of the political environment in which this advice will be received	AF/AC/I
Ability to identify the need for, plan and execute communications strategies, including developing short and long term communications plans for the organisation	AF/AC
An influential and persuasive communicator who recognises the value of working with stakeholders and can gain commitment across groups to achieve shared objectives. Able to establish credibility and presence in groups across a wide spectrum of people.	AF/AC/I
Able to describe and explain progress, and to persuade others of a course of action in the case of changing circumstances or emerging challenges	AF/AC/I
Demonstrating judgement when building relationships, being proactive in developing and maintaining constructive and ethical relationships.	AF/I
Passionate about working in partnership with others, and a track record of collaborating to deliver shared outcomes	AF/I
Skilled in the development and management of large budgets, including the ability to generate income from a range of external and internal sources	AF/I
General Knowledge, Experience and Skills	
Inspiring others – providing a sense of vision and mission, that energises others to deliver the councils priorities and values..	AF/I
Experience of working at senior level in cross-functional teams in order to progress corporate objectives. Produce board reports, briefings, presentations and correspondence and manage complaints.	AF/I
External and customer focus – having a focus that is attuned to the national and regional agenda, understanding customers' changing needs; working collaboratively by breaking down barriers with partners and internally between departments.	AF/AC/I

Experience of leading and managing change whilst effectively motivating, empowering and generating commitment of employees. This is to include analysing and conceptualising problems, formulating and executing appropriate solutions and negotiating successful outcomes.	AF/AC/I
Experience of working effectively in a political environment, working with elected members and in cooperation with the public sector, third sector and private sector partners and stakeholders.	AF/I
Managing organisational resources (financial, human and infrastructure) – running the business responsibly and assuring quality of service delivery.	AF/AC/I
Evidence of success in establishing effective performance measures and a performance culture that has achieved significant outcomes for service users.	AF/I
Excellent communication skills, including the ability to promote understanding to a variety of audiences using a variety of communication channels and media.	AC/I
Political judgement and skills in relationships and to be proactive in developing and maintaining constructive and ethical relationships.	AC/I
Ability to understand financial and legal/contractual information and to develop innovate strategies to maximise service provision within tight financial limits and to maximise funding available.	AC/I
Ability to work to deadlines and cope with pressures and setbacks.	AC/I
Ensure high professional standards are maintained and compliance with appropriate procedures and statutory requirements with evidence of continuous professional development.	AF/AC/I
Essential Qualifications	
Educated to degree level in a relevant subject, or demonstration of significant experience or relevant qualifications to the duties of the post.	AF
Behaviours – our ways of working	
Collaboration: working with others, both internally and through partners, harnessing different skills, experience and perspectives to achieved shared commitment to service delivery.	AC/I
Communication: Clear about priorities, communicates directly and honestly and promotes understanding, invites participation and seeks feedback.	AC/I

Innovation: Positively seeks to do things better. Leads on opportunities, challenges and changes. Encourages creativity, stretches and develops others.	AC/I
Ensuring fairness: Understands and works to the values set out in the Corporate Plan, values people as individuals, show respect and positive regard for others	AC/I

Key: AF- Application Form, AC - Assessment Centre Activities, I – Interview

Health Risks Specification: Head of Communications

Please see the tasks where there are some potential, residual health risks for the job

Task	Potential Health Risk if X
ICT/Computer user	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving and handling of clients	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular manual handling objects/ furniture/equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working at heights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise/Vibration exposure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confined Spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
LGV/PCV driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minibus driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fork Lift Truck driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Crossing Warden Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substances covered by COSHH	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respiratory and Skin Sensitisers	<input type="checkbox"/>

