

ROLE PROFILE

Job Title: Head of Communications

Service Group: Corporate Core

Accountable to: Director of Strategy

Grade: L

JE Code: JE0118

Purpose of job

To improve outcomes for service users, and increase awareness of and satisfaction with council services, decisions and performance through the management of the council's communications team, strategy and activities across the council, and with partners.

To design the direction of effective communications and consultation plans which engage partners, members, the workforce and the wider public, and which protect and promote the good reputation of the council.

Key Objectives

1	Create and implement a communications and engagement strategy for Milton Keynes Council which makes a positive contribution to key corporate outcomes, which promotes a positive and professional local, regional and national reputation for the council and which sets best practice for service level communications plans.
2	Guide and co-ordinate innovative communications and consultation plans across the council so that they make a positive contribution to key service outcomes, as well as to the council's corporate vision and priorities.
3	Create and implement a consistent corporate visual identity for the council so audiences can feel well informed about its role and value
4	Work effectively with partners to deliver communications strategies for the borough as a whole, e.g. other public authorities and organisations, including groups involved in tourism and the development of the 'MK offer', so that strategies and tactics are aligned to deliver maximum impact in terms of reach, message and cost effectiveness
5	Promote a co-ordinated, professional and value for money approach to communications and engagement activity across all council services by connecting activities, suggesting opportunities for rationalisation, and setting and monitoring benchmarks. Act as advisor for the communications and consultation budgets of service groups, so that activities provide value for money.

Scope

Reputation is the sum of impressions held by an organisation's stakeholders. It can change behaviours, influence how an organisation is assessed/measured, and determine whether an organisation is considered as providing value for money.

By protecting and promoting the good reputation of the council, and ensuring the council runs approachable, professional and accessible communications and consultation activities, this role will influence how the council is seen, and it will have considerable impact on the borough, specifically on Milton Keynes citizens, on partner organisations, on potential investors and on local businesses.

The role reports to the Director of Strategy on a day to day basis. Daily contact is with the Chief Executive, Members and Assistant Directors, to whom the role holder will provide advice on communications strategy, tactics and presentation, acting as a point of negotiation between disparate parties as appropriate.

The role provides communications leadership and support to all service groups across the council and specific leadership and support to the Public Access, Finance & HR, Organisational Transformation, and Corporate Core groups, and for special projects across the Council.

Regular, autonomous formal and informal liaison with external stakeholders, such as senior executives of local partner organisations, discussing, agreeing, and negotiating the content of corporate and partnership strategies for specific topic areas, and where appropriate representing the Director of Strategy.

Communication with external media contacts to influence positive media coverage.

Occasional evening or weekend duties, relating to the launch of specific campaigns/public events, crisis communications, or out of hours media handling.

Directly manage the staff and resources of the Communications & Engagement Team.

The budget directly controlled will be £400,000, made up of £350,000 staff costs and the remainder revenue, plus additional ad hoc project spend of up to £100,000. There are no capital projects.

The total value of programmes influenced, by guiding management elsewhere in the Council for their communications and consultation spend is in excess of £1m. (NB There is no income line for communications/consultation.)

Work Profile

Design the direction and strategy for the council's internal and external communications and consultation activities, including branding, marketing, media relations, customer communication and engagement, stakeholder liaison, consultation, and reputation management, ensuring maximum support for the council from all audiences, utilising a mix of skills and experience.

Create and develop effective relationships with relevant stakeholders, including elected members and senior officer colleagues to ensure activities are produced in consultation with relevant parties, with no surprises, maximising the impact of joint activity and budgets and supporting corporate/team/service/project aims and objectives. Act as advisor for the

communications and consultation budgets of service groups, so that activities provide value for money.

Develop relationships and organise relevant areas of strategy and partner organisations, to ensure all activity is high impact and relevant to all partner priorities.

Create and evaluate a 'SMART', accurate and equalities-appropriate forward service plan for each year of all planned communications and consultation activity and allocate resources accordingly, in conjunction with the Communications & Engagement Team and in line with the council's transforming organisational structure.

Establish, develop, operate and monitor an effective performance management framework to ensure the cost effective and high impact delivery of programmes and strategies - on message, on time and on budget.

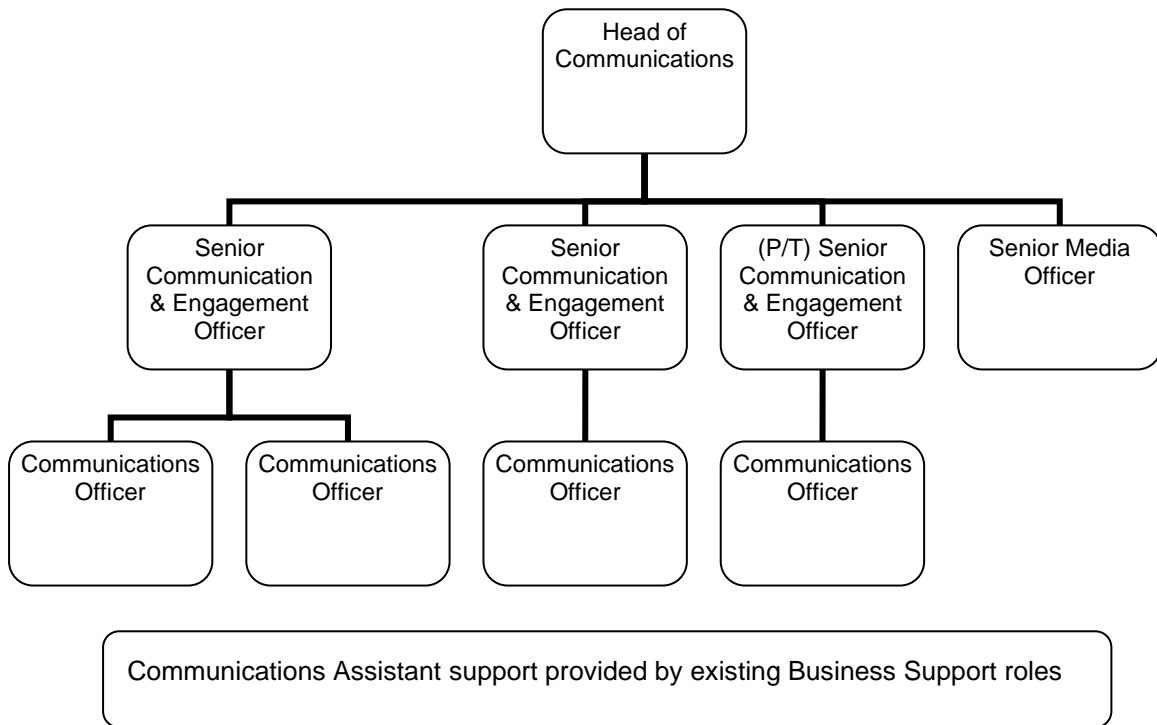
Recruit, train and develop team members to ensure their best performance is delivered.

Promote the council's vision and values within the service, corporately and with external partners. Act as an ambassador for the organisation in order to spread a positive reputation.

Develop professional competence by attending relevant skills courses and learning events in order to remain innovative, and aware of new, cost effective ways of delivering activity. Encourage innovation within a portfolio of relevant and accessible communications and consultation products.

Contribute to, and follow 'MK Approach' principles and practices for project and activity management.

Structure chart



Person specification

PERSON SPECIFICATION	EVIDENCE SPECIFIC TO ROLE	Required		Level			Method of Assessment interview, testing, reference
		Essential	Desirable	Awareness	Significant	Extensive	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE							
Technical knowledge and qualifications	Degree in relevant discipline, equivalent professional qualification (CIM certificate level or equivalent) or equivalent experience.						Application form
	Extensive knowledge and understanding of the communications sector, including a minimum 5 years experience in positions which have been devoted full time to communications, PR, journalism, marketing, engagement or consultation.	X				X	
	Extensive evidence of successfully leading and delivering communications strategies and services in a complex organisation (public, private or voluntary sector)	X				X	
	Familiarity with the restraints and legislation within which local authority communications and consultation work is conducted.		X		X		
	Evidence of understanding the nature and sensitivities of working within local government, or within organisations partnering local government,		X	X			Application form Testing Interview

	including evidence of problems encountered and overcome in this area						
	Evidence of having developed and maintained effective relationships with internal and external bodies	X				X	Application form Interview
Planning and organising work	A track record in devising and implementing a range of strategies embracing activities across the communications/consultation mix.	X				X	Interview
	Evidence of delivering activity in organisations (public, private or voluntary sector) and in managing competing demands and deadlines.	X				X	
	Evidence of effective personal and managed team work plans and delivery to deadlines	X				X	
Planning capacity and resources	Evidence of effective personal and managed team work plans, including managing cross-departmental and virtual teams or agencies, and planning resources effectively. Ability to translate concepts into practical plans. Ability to analyse and evaluate. Demonstrate success in planning budgets accurately.	X				X	Application form Interview
Influencing and interpersonal skills	Ability to build effective relationships and achieve co-operation from others as demonstrated by evidence of success in working productively colleagues, agencies, partners, using influencing and negotiating skills, and having developed and maintained effective relationships with internal and external bodies High degree of integrity.						

	Political awareness and sensitivity – to have a knowledge of local government services or the capacity to develop significant political awareness. Promotes equality and diversity. Highly developed oral and written skills. Ability to write effective reports and make presentations to large and small groups using a variety of electronic and other media						
PROBLEM-SOLVING							
Using initiative to overcome problems	Demonstrate the ability to find innovative solutions to problems in a high-profile context						
Managing risk	Ability to judge and manage risk, demonstrated by taking appropriate decisions in context, and of successful outcomes.						
Managing change	Demonstrate proven record of success in promoting continuous improvement, initiating and managing and responding positively to change	X				X	Interview
ACCOUNTABILITY and RESPONSIBILITY							
Undertakes tasks without supervision	Ability to write effective reports and make presentations to large and small groups using a variety of electronic and other media						Interview
Managing people	Demonstrate the ability to find creative solutions to problems in a high-profile context						Interview Testing

Other information

- Able to travel to meet service delivery requirements
- Available to undertake work outside of normal working hours

Team context of skill and evidence levels

Head of Service	Degree or equivalent professional experience (diploma); extensive experience in high profile communications (expect min 5 years); evidence of setting strategy and leading a team in the delivery of that strategy; ability to guide senior management and partners on communications approach
Senior Officer	Degree or equivalent professional experience (certificate); significant experience in delivering communications or consultation, including sole accountability for specific projects or programmes (expect min 3 years); evidence of setting communications delivery plans and making a contribution to communications strategy; ability to guide senior management and partners on communications approach
Officer	A-level or equivalent professional experience (certificate); some experience of delivering communications or consultation, including sole accountability for a specific project (expect min one year); evidence of contributing towards communications plans; ability to report on specific communications for senior management
Assistant	A-level or equivalent professional experience (introductory certificate); experience in delivering communications or consultation; a demonstrable understanding of the communications process; ability to understand and gather evidence to be used in communications reports

SPOKEN ENGLISH FLUENCY DUTY REQUIREMENT - The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for this post.

Signed Job holder	Signed Line Manager	Signed Service Head	Date