Communication Strategy 2022-27



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ILO-MO VIDEO PHOTO PORTRAIT

Introduction

Meaningful communication is at the heart of everything we do at Dundee City Council.

Communicating well is the responsibility of everyone as we seek to promote awareness of Council services and priorities, engage with citizens, encourage positive behaviour change and collaborate across our workforce. This strategy is designed to be a useful tool for the corporate leadership team, heads of service, all employees and councillors. It sets out a framework for council communications and gives strategic direction to all communications activity undertaken on behalf of the authority.

It is extensively shaped by learning from the Coronavirus pandemic, a crisis which demonstrated like never before the critical importance of effective communication.

Our commitment is to use a multi-channel approach to reach the widest possible audience of customers and stakeholders we serve, including residents, employees, businesses, community partners, visitors to the city and other agencies.

This approach has contributed to the percentage of Dundee residents who believe the Council communicates well reaching its highest level since 2011, according to the most recent Citizen Survey.

Externally, we will focus on the priorities contained within the City and Council Plans, working with partners across Dundee to develop co-ordinated, effective, efficient services that meet the needs of our communities and deliver better outcomes for all.

All communications activities must demonstrably promote work carried out to achieve the objectives outlined in those plans. Internal communications will be inclusive and two-way, as the council continues to go through major changes, including the introduction of new technologies which are transforming the way we interact and collaborate.

We will seek to provide communications services on the most cost-effective basis, for example by continuing our shift towards the digital communications which proved so effective in sharing key messages during the pandemic.

At the heart of that is our corporate website, which receives hundreds of thousands of page views every month, and the huge social media following across multiple channels which has developed over the last four years.

However, we also commit to delivering inclusive communications, which are more resource intensive but also vital to ensuring all of our citizens are informed and empowered.

The challenge for an organisation with around 150,000 customers and a large range of services is how it communicates clearly and simply in a complex and constantly changing environment, with ever increasing financial pressures.

This strategy sets out how we will address that challenge.

Aims, Vision and Objectives

Aims

The ultimate aim of our communications is that all employees, residents, partners and stakeholders have a clear understanding and a positive perception of our vision, aims, values, services and achievements, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and engagement.



Vision

What are we trying to do?

To deliver on its priorities, the Council must be able to communicate with a wide range of organisations, individuals and partners.

We therefore need to...

- make the council easy to understand and talk to
- ensure that everyone understands our targets, and what the outcomes will be – showing people what success looks like
- coordinate and direct communications so that all parts of the council are working towards shared objectives in line with the City and Council plans.
- ensure employees and partners understand their contribution through clear objectives, milestones and deadlines



- make sure people know the outcome of the changes the council makes, and the context for those changes
- ensure openness and transparency
- make people feel better informed
- ensure that people feel proud of Dundee as a place to live, work and visit, and also that employees feel proud to work for the council.



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The visual element of this brand – our corporate identity - is generally understood by staff and customers.

and what we stand for.

Dundee CHANG City Council WWW.dundeecity.gov.uk FOR THE

Our brand is an important communications tool, made up of these components:

- Our overall purpose what are we here for?
- Our values what drives us to do the things we do?
- Our key messages what are we saying about what we offer?
- People need to understand who we are • Our service delivery – what do we provide, compared with what we promise?
- Our behaviour how do we treat our customers and our staff?

It is important that we bring these elements together in a unified approach across all communications channels, so that we are consistent in tone, look and feel. People need to understand who we are and what we stand for.

Objectives

- To secure and strengthen the reputation of the council in the community as an effective and efficient provider of highguality outcomes, focused on our values and priorities
- To build and maintain a professional corporate identity for consistent and coordinated use throughout the organisation
- To promote the reputation of the **council** as an effective, efficient and listening organisation focused on the public and their needs
- To ensure that communications are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels to give maximum support to the council's strategic priorities
- To ensure all employees understand the priorities of the council and feel valued and able to contribute to major changes affecting services they provide
- To ensure that our communications activities reflect the full diversity of the community and help ensure equality of access to all our services.





Delivering on our objectives



Corporate communications capacity will be focused on the council's key messages and ensuring that the most appropriate level of resource is available for priorities and activities supporting the delivery of the City and Council Plans.

Our communications activity can be broken down into distinct areas:



Digital and Social Media



The pandemic demonstrated the value of digital platforms as the most effective means of sharing information with a wide audience, particularly when regular updates are required.

Social media platforms have become an integral part of our communications strategy. Through its investment in digital communications, the council has built a substantial social media audience with which it can engage directly – almost 70,000 users across corporate Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Tiktok accounts.

In addition, services are empowered to create their own accounts where a need is identified. In parallel with the development of this Communications Strategy, we continue to promote and, where necessary, update our social media policy and guidance handbook.

We embrace the opportunities that social media can deliver in terms of reputation enhancement, engaging with the public using their medium of choice, greater twoway dialogue and the insights that social media can provide, and as an opportunity to reduce cost versus other communications channels. We utilise the penetration of social media in dealing with crisis communications, providing regular news updates on our digital channels to create a channel shift away from phone calls to service centres during busy periods.

This two-way communication allows for key information to be shared across a range of demographics, and instant feedback to be received and shared with services. It can assist with running surveys and consultations, delivering crisis communications, responding to customers and promoting the range of services the council offers.

The diversity of those platforms allows the communications team to deliver information in relatable and effective ways, including the use of videos and animations, infographics, podcasts and quick-fire polls.

Now that this large audience has been established, a key priority for the coming years will be to promote social media engagement, and thereby ensure that as



many users as possible see the updates the council is publishing. This will be achieved by providing engaging content, encouraging appropriate dialogue and using analytics to assess the best times and platforms for sharing important information.

We recognise the value of our website as a source of information, as a point for customer transactions and as a convenient alternative to face-to-face and telephone contact. Around 400,000 pages are viewed on the website every month.

We are committed to continually reviewing and developing the corporate site to make it even easier to find the information residents and stakeholders need, to report faults and incidents, to provide feedback and to conduct many different types of transactions, all in a 24/7 environment. Work also continues to be undertaken to ensure that the website is as accessible as possible to people with disabilities.

The Council also supports a number of targeted websites, with a number of them such as the Dundee.com tourism promotion site, the Tay Cities website and Invest Dundee performing important roles. A review will be undertaken of all council sites with a view to rationalising any sites that aren't delivering value for money or that are no longer required/out of date.

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Traditional Media and PR —



While the publishing landscape continues to evolve, traditional print and broadcast outlets remain important channels by which information can be disseminated to Dundee's citizens, including those who don't have access to web and social media platforms.

We will work to maintain and further improve positive print and broadcast coverage through our media relations service, recognising the proven link between the public's sense of feeling informed and feeling satisfied. We will take every opportunity to use these channels to promote the work of the council, its policies and achievements with engaging written content, interview opportunities and quality photography/videos created by our in-house team. When issuing news releases to the media, we will follow a clear process which informs stakeholders first, and will work to ensure that employees hear about important announcements affecting them from the council before they are in the press.

The council also provides a reactive media service, which provides timely statements and responses to journalists' enquiries 24/7, in line with the changing demands of round-the-clock web publishing.





Our communications will be:

Community-focused: we will foster a sense of community spirit that is supportive. By championing certain types of behaviour or attitudes we can strengthen communities. We will promote community empowerment and participation.

Challenging: our communications can be inspiring to generate behavioural change. If we need to be frank with the public on issues, we'll use forthright language to encourage people to address and change their behaviour and challenge those around them.

Informative: our work should demonstrate how services make a positive impact on people and communities. Helping people to help themselves will assist in making our communities more resilient and capable.

Inspiring: enlightening to residents and businesses about what already exists and what we are planning to do in Dundee. We will reinforce our vision for the future through reference to the City and Council Plans, inspire our communities with our ideas and work collaboratively.

Creative: we will use the full range of creative skills to ensure our messages are compelling, whether through video, photography, design or in writing.

Responsive: we will be quick to respond in times of an incident or an issue occurring to assist the public, services and partners.

Practical: whether responding to an emergency situation or to assist people in acquiring a service, communications needs to provide realistic and reassuring advice using language easily understood by people.



Marketing and Design



We will maintain and develop our programme of multi-media and integrated campaigns that underpin the council's values and priorities, delivering eye-catching graphics and messages developed by our in-house design team.

These campaigns are another important way of sharing information with digitally disadvantaged audiences, and the council's approach to this has been shaped by feedback from the city's Fairness Commissioners.

In line with the proposals for the Public Sector Equality Duty, and the feedback from the Social Renewal Advisory Board, we will work to embed inclusivity in our corporate communications. This will build on the work already undertaken with the Fairness Commissioners and in improving website/ document accessibility.

unications. This will build on the lready undertaken with the Fairness issioners and in improving website/ ient accessibility. that corporate communications materials, in whatever format they are issued, are available in accessible and inclusive formats. This will include using plain English and designs which are easy to read and understand for all.

DUNDEE'S VOICE

Where possible, our inclusive

communications will include the use of no

or low-cost external sites such as bus stop

display screens and council-owned poster

be identified where appropriate to ensure that information is shared as widely and

In addition, we are committed to ensuring

frames. Marketing budgets will need to

effectively as possible, using print and

broadcast advertising as necessary.

Our campaigns will be bold and eyecatching, aimed at ensuring as big an impact as possible. And they will be measured – we use the OASIS planning tool to ensure communications campaigns have a defined outcome that can be evaluated:

- **Objective**: our campaigns will have a clear intended outcome.
- Audience: we will define the audiences for each campaign to ensure we reach the relevant people.
- **Strategy**: before we do any creative work we will define the strategy for each campaign which will guide us throughout the life of the campaign.
- Implementation: our execution will be creative, bold and eye-catching. It will maximise the opportunity to change behaviour and achieve the outcome.
- Scoring: we will set out how we will evaluate our work for each campaign in advance, with the most significant measures being those that demonstrate the outcome.





Leadership Panel

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Internal communications

Internal communications play a vital role in ensuring staff keep in touch with the council's plans and priorities, and the challenges ahead.

As we focus on the employee experience and work to support colleagues to deliver quality outcomes, everyone needs to understand how their actions contribute to the overall achievement of priorities.

Through the pandemic, the council used a range of means to keep in touch with its employees, including the Intranet and its onthe-move version, emails, employee surveys and the use of Teams for video meetings, calls and chats.

We must continue that development, ensuring that staff and partners working on council priorities are included, engaged and that they receive messaging in a format that works for them.

Building on our experiences, a twin-pronged approach to employee communications will be developed. Key information will be shared corporately through the existing channels, using blogs, news articles, targeted emails and the weekly round-up newsletter to provide updates on matters affecting all employees. In line with our People Strategy, an annual employee survey and quarterly "pulse" surveys will be conducted to improve engagement with the workforce and address issues emerging from the feedback.

At the same time, managers will be encouraged and supported to communicate effectively with their teams. Communication is everyone's job, and managers play a crucial role in ensuring understanding of priorities in their areas, building a team ethos and receiving feedback from the workforce.





The cascading of corporate, service and team-level information, and receiving feedback on it, is the responsibility of every line manager. Regular team meetings, briefings and quality one-to-one conversations are essential to ensuring that all council employees feel valued, informed, engaged and motivated.

To deliver this, we will require to build communications skills across the organisation, supported by an in-house communications resource that is empowered to identify and solve communications problems, and resourced to implement solutions.

We will build on the good practice already being rolled out in areas of the council, from regular team meetings to video blogs produced by heads of service, and provide support to managers to play their part in cascade communications.

Another key strategic priority will be harnessing the power of the Office 365 suite as a communications tool. Building on the successful roll-out of the Outlook email client and Microsoft Teams, the Communications and IT services will help services to make the most of its myriad communications functions. These range from creating quick team or

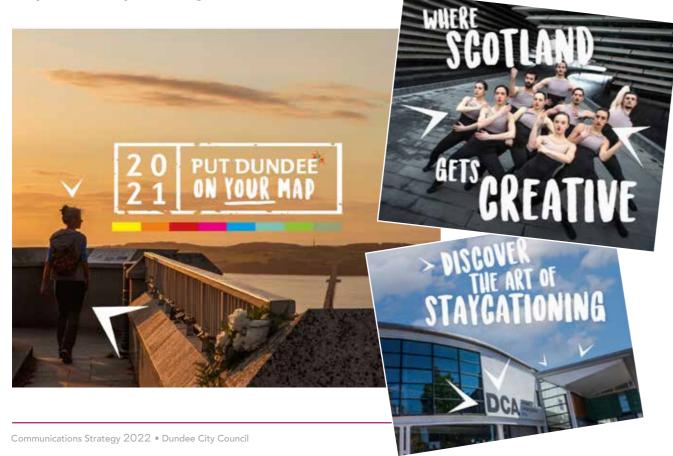
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City Marketing

Over the past two years, the City Council has worked closely with the local tourism sector to create and deliver a national marketing strategy aimed at increasing numbers of visitors and encouraging tourists to stay in the city for longer.



This quickly required to be adapted in response to the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, and was aligned to the city's tourism recovery strategy as attraction operators and hospitality providers sought to rebuild and harness the potential for staycation growth.

The result was Put Dundee on your Map, an impactful, multi-channel campaign which highlighted the breadth of Dundee's offering, from culture to outdoor activities, food and drink to quality accommodation and much more.

It was created in conjunction with the city's Tourism Leadership group and industry organisation VisitDundee. A marketing sub-group, including representative from across the industry, manages the campaign and helps to develop the creative content. Funding for the campaign comes from the city's marketing budget.

By being ready to launch the campaign as soon as restrictions on travel lifted in 2020, the city was able to maximise the potential for staycations, and feedback from VisitScotland showed that Dundee had outperformed other Scottish cities for overnight stays. The reach of the campaign has also been amplified, from first focusing on Scottish markets to targeting areas served by direct flights, including Northern Ireland and the south-east of England.

Metrics are closely monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the digital and traditional media elements of the campaign, adapting as necessary for maximum impact. These metrics show that the activity has consistently outperformed industry benchmarks.

The focus for the next period will be on delivering a successful third year of the Put Dundee on your Map campaign, and on working with the industry to develop future activity in line with Dundee's next Tourism Strategy. This work will also seek to identify opportunities for regional collaboration and to maximise the potential offered to Dundee as the centre of Scotland's Tay Country.

Partnership working

The ambitions outlined in Dundee's City Plan can only be achieved with clear, consistent communication by all partners. We will collaborate with partners to maximise the impact of these communications and to extend messaging to further audiences.

Areas where partnership is key to the delivery of communications outcomes include the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership, Tay Cities Deal, Protecting People, Living Wage, city marketing and many, more.

The collective communications effort during the pandemic has strengthened working relationships between communications teams, and demonstrated what can be achieved through collaboration.



Clear and consistent sharing of information which reflects

The potential to extend audiences, using all of our channels to reach as many people as possible

Making the best use of resources by reducing duplication, identifying roles and sharing campaign budgets.

> This partnership approach is our blueprint for the future. Delivering on that means teams continuing to work closely together through existing structures, such as the Tayside Local Resilience Partnership, Tay Cities governance, the national public sector communications group and others.

It will require all agencies to play their part, accepting that resources are finite and workloads ever increasing. We will work with communications teams and leadership across agencies to develop and embed this partnership way of working, including clear understanding of resources, roles and responsibilities.

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Covid Response

The pandemic placed a particular focus on the importance of communications, and Dundee City Council's Communication team worked closely with partners to keep the public (and employees) updated throughout the lockdowns and recovery periods despite the challenges of home working and hugely increased workloads.

Throughout an unprecedented and rapidlyevolving situation, with restrictions and public health messages changing almost daily, the team worked with the local resilience partnership, national Government, the health and social care partnership and a range of other organisations to co-ordinate and amplify vital messaging in clear and engaging ways, with a particular focus on targeting vulnerable groups.

Key actions included creating (in just a week!) and maintaining the Tayside Cares website and social media channels as a trusted point of information for the public for Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Councils and the NHS.

In partnership with Dundee's Fairness Commissioners, we explored effective ways of getting messages across to vulnerable

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and digitally excluded audiences, from the language and visuals used to the channels of distribution.

The team also developed a pioneering scheme giving people unable to wear face coverings an exemption letter, predating the national Distance Aware scheme by more than a year.



Creative approaches to delivering key messages included putting contact information for lifeline services in lunch bags for young people, creating a series of radio adverts and launching a zero-cost partnership with ClearChannel which led to important public information being shared on digital bus stop signs more than 2 million times.

Daily and weekly information round-ups were distributed to keep public, partners and employees informed, aligned to a suite of social media assets. In addition, over 120 posters were created, with non-branded versions also distributed for use by businesses and the third sector, maximising the impact and value of the design work.

Communication was highlighted by citizens in the Council's 2022/23 budget consultation as one of the top areas in which the Council had performed well. The team's approach to pandemic messaging was also praised by the Scottish Government for the consistency of the Council's Covid-19 messaging, branding and FAQ materials, aligning national information and resources to local requirements and priorities.





Low Emission Zone

The Low Emission Zone is a significant development for Dundee, and its creation, launch and implementation requires significant communications support - from advice to behaviour change - across a number of disparate audiences.

Working closely with the national LEZ communications group and local partners, the communications team developed a bespoke strategy to ensure that all stakeholders had the opportunity to help shape the LEZ proposal, understood what had been agreed and were encouraged to take action to ensure compliance.

Communication activity focuses on:

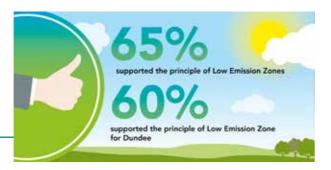
- Raising awareness and understanding of the Dundee LEZ;
- "Get ready"/"be prepared" considerations and implications with messages including vehicle compliance, the geographical boundaries of the LEZ and timelines for enforcement;
- Context, including the benefits of the LEZ such as air quality improvement;
- working with stakeholders to provide up-to-date, impartial, uncomplicated,

evidence-based information to the public, businesses and transport sector to support the introduction of the Dundee LEZ; and

• delivering clear, consistent and timely information to key audiences.

A particular focus is being put on using communications channels which would reach vehicle owners, such as "drive time" radio shows, roadside bus shelters and pay and display parking tickets, as well as engagement with the media, business and resident-focused communications and amplifying of national messaging.





Digital channels are also being used, including a bespoke web page on the Council website, Dundee-specific information being added to the national website, and sharing of information on social media channels. A suite of graphics was created to support this.

Low Emissio

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This information is also being shared by neighbouring local authorities, to help target people who live outwith the city but travel in for work or leisure purposes.



Engagement with DC Thomson Schools and Family Team

For the past two years, reporters at The Courier and Evening Telegraph newspapers have been organised into themed teams dealing with specific topics.

A Schools and Family Team has been created as part of these developments, which have also seen content delivered on a 'digital first' basis though website and social media channels.

The reporters' focus on school and family issues has led to a number of new opportunities for the council to obtain coverage.

Dundee City Council's communications team engages directly with these reporters so that in-depth features about the city's schools and children's social work services can be highlighted on these platforms.

There is more use of video on these digital outlets and potential stories are carefully chosen so that they can have the greatest impact as content for the news outlet, as well as providing a positive showcase for council initiatives.

Attendance projects at city primary schools, the progress of digital education and a mentor recruitment campaign to help careexperienced young people are among the areas that have benefited from this approach.

Requests from the Schools Team for interviews with conveners and senior officers are also received by city council communications officers about a range of education-related matters.

New ways of working developed through the pandemic mean that these sessions can be conducted through online resources.

Regular contact is also made by the reporters seeking reaction and responses to breaking news stories and events, ensuring

reports pupes Lacey Cestle, Otiver Cameroe

that the council is represented in coverage.

Hybrid working

The communications team has been working closely with colleagues in People Services on the launch of the council's Hybrid Working Policy.

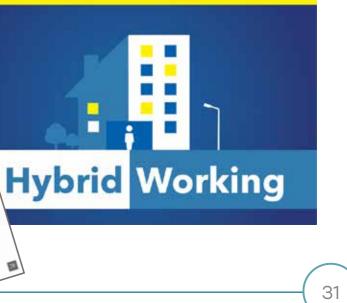
This was a significant policy development which enabled the workforce to deliver services efficiently and effectively, adopt new ways of working and enjoy a better a work/ life balance.

Minecraft lessons give pupils head start in national competition

HYBRID WORKIN

A series of communications were distributed all staff across the council explaining the policy and how it will operate, while a new section on OneDundee was created to provide resources.

The communications team also created the visuals for the Policy programme, and helped draft information to support managers who will be responsible for implementing hybrid working in their teams.



Virtual Flower and Food Festival

When the Covid pandemic put paid to in-person events, the communications team came up with a novel approach to continuing the city's popular annual Flower and Food Festival.

Working closely with colleagues from the environment team, a "virtual" festival was created to offer the public an online taste of what would normally be offered.

This allowed the usual exhibitors and committees to get involved and showcase their produce and gave local entertainers a different venue for people to view their talented work.

Celebrity chefs and TV gardening celebrities contributed to our virtual feast offering cooking and gardening hints and tips to viewers and also a gardening Q&A session. Local organisations provided videos and photos highlighting the projects they had been working on and school bands supplied numerous videos.

A virtual marguee on the website provided everything that is usually present at the live event and best of all it was free! Meanwhile. a children's section offered colouring sheets, puzzles and 'how to' guides for budding young gardeners to follow.

Exhibitors and community groups submitted content for image galleries for our popular categories - craft/sewing/knitting, flowers/ plants, vegetables and some delicious looking home baking. All of this helped to keep the festival "community" together during its enforced hiatus.

The virtual festival took place for the third time in 2022, and was as popular as previous years which saw thousands of page views and lots of engagement on social media channels.

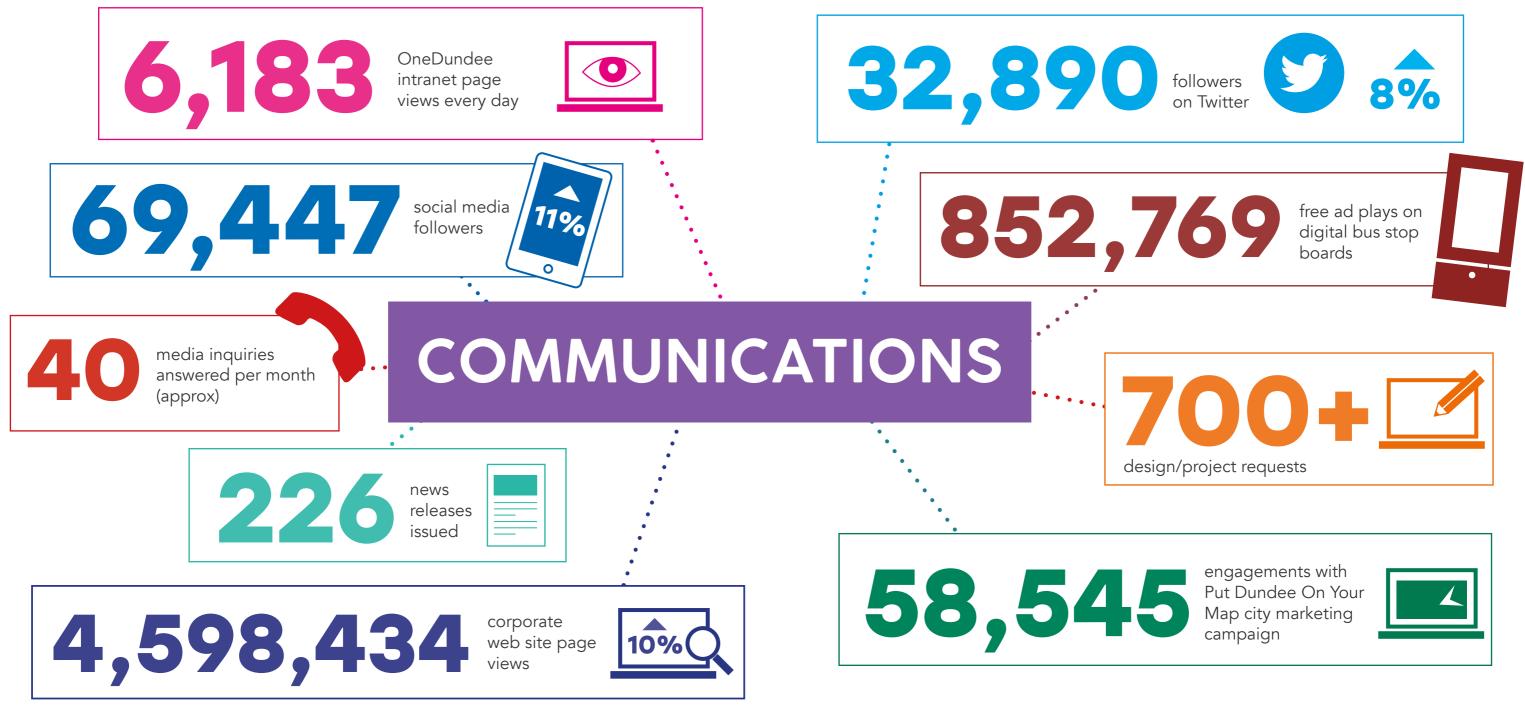




Year One Action Plan

Action	Area	Responsibility	Measure/KPI	Due date
Identify and implement a metric for monitoring the level of engagement with Dundee City Council corporate social media accounts	Digital and Social Media	Communications manager	Metric in place and reported on through annual report	January 31, 2023
Focus on the development of TikTok and Instagram as platforms to connect with younger audiences.	Digital and Social Media	Communications manager	Increase in followers of 20% on each platform over the next year	September 30, 2023
In conjunction with IT and services, undertake a review/ rationalisation of council- hosted websites to ensure best use of resources and maximum audience impact	Digital and Social Media	Communications manager, IT manager, service managers	Reduce number of websites by appropriate amount	September 30, 2023
Organise a series of sessions with Fairness Commissioners to analyse and improve inclusive communications	Traditional media and PR; Marketing and design; Partnership working	Communications manager	Hold minimum 2x sessions per year	March 31, 2023

Create an annual calendar of campaigns to ensure clarity of activity and use of resources	Digital and social media; Marketing and design	Communications manager, Digital communications officer, Design team leader	Calendar is created and in use	December 31, 2022
Deliver a council leadership event focused on internal communications and the role that all managers play in ensuring employees are informed and engaged	Internal communications	Communications manager, Joint Heads of People	Hold event and assess feedback from participants	September 30, 2023
Work with services to harness the benefits of Office 365 as a communications tool, including the development of service-level intranet pages for the sharing of local information	Internal communications	Communications manager, IT manager, heads of service	At least one service- or team-level intranet created in each service area	March 31, 2023
Evaluate feedback from employee surveys in the shaping of future approaches to workforce communications	Internal communications	Communications manager, Joint Heads of People	Monitoring of feedback from surveys	August 31, 2023
Deliver a year of effective marketing activity under the Put Dundee on your Map campaign, supporting tourism outcomes for the attraction and hospitality industries	City marketing	Communications manager, team leader city promotion	55,000 engagements with campaigns during 22/23	September 30, 2023





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