

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 24 AUGUST 2020**  
**REPORT ON: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2018-2021**  
**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**REPORT NO: 89-2020**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To give an update on the Council's Communication Strategy 2018-2021 and associated action plan.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the progress being made on the strategy; and
- (ii) Agree the 2020/2021 Action Plan.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 Dundee City Council produces a corporate communication strategy every three years, with the last published in 2018. The main purpose of the strategy is to set out how the Council communicates externally and internally, delivering on a vision to provide modern, multi-channel communications that support the strategic priorities of the Council and its partners.

4.2 Effective communications are essential to achieving the ambitions set out in the Council Plan, and ensuring that people in Dundee and beyond have a clear understanding and appreciation of the Council's operations, priorities and challenges.

4.3 The strategy is being delivered against the backdrop of an ever-changing communications landscape. Social media and digital channels are redefining the way people consume information, interact with large organisations and share opinions.

4.4 The strategy seeks to embrace and harness new channels for communicating, with a shift to "digital by default" communications in keeping with the Council's Digital Strategy, while continuing to use more "traditional" channels to reach those who don't have ready digital access or skills.

4.5 It also supports the processes and partnerships required to deliver emergency communications like those required during the response, recovery and renewal phases of the Coronavirus pandemic.

4.5 Key achievements over the past 12 months include:

- Providing clear and effective communications to the general public and the Council workforce from the start of the Covid-19 crisis, from updates on changes to services and the reasons for these to campaigns highlighting the support available to the most vulnerable in Dundee communities.

- Created a suite of materials signposting Protecting People services, covering topics from child and adult protection to gender-based violence and alcohol/drug use. In addition to online distribution, thousands of physical leaflets were placed in school lunch bags and food insecurity parcels to reach digitally excluded audiences during lockdown. This work was the culmination of an increased focus on raising awareness of public protection issues and sources of help across the city.
- Worked closely with and supported communications teams from partner organisations across a range of activities during the pandemic, including the development of shared posters and other materials.
- Continued rapid growth of our social media channels, increasing the audiences that we communicate and engage directly with. Notable increases have been seen on Facebook (up 39% to 13,871 page likes) and LinkedIn (32% increase to 7,299 followers), reflecting the value and relevance of content delivered. Across the four main social media channels, the Council now has almost 54,000 followers.
- Harnessing these audiences to successfully carry out a number of consultation exercises, including the Low Emission Zone and pre-budget Conversation with the city.
- The Communications Team winning an OSCA Award for innovation and improvement, reflecting creative multichannel communications including increased use of video and infographics. The team was also nominated for best comms/digital team at the national @comms2point0 Awards.
- An Internal Audit of the Communications Strategy which concluded that there is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives and that the controls are being consistently applied. A number of good practice points were identified.
- An 11 percentage point increase - to 64%, the highest figure since 2011 - in the number of respondents to the annual Citizen Survey who believe the Council communicates well. An increase was also recorded for the 'promotes services well' category - again now at the highest level since 2011.
- Delivering a programme of City Marketing activity, including a joint initiative with VisitScotland and a bespoke campaign, Discover Dundee, targeting Scotland and the north of England. Short social media clips created as part of this were viewed over 200,000 times. Campaign activity to showcase Dundee and V&A Dundee was recognised with a prestigious Platinum award at the HSMAI Adrian Awards in New York.
- The launch of a new "extranet" - OneDundee On The Move - which has extended access to corporate information and policies to employees who do not have day-to-day access to IT facilities. This service has to date been accessed by almost 900 users, viewing 1000s of pages every month, and continues to be promoted. Overall more than 3,100,000 pages were viewed on OneDundee last year.
- The launch of a new social media policy which empowers our people to harness these powerful communications channels while mitigating the potential risks.
- Embedding social media into our Customer Services, which allows people to engage with the Council in a different and convenient way. The "answer once for everyone" nature of social media is being harnessed to reduce call volumes.
- Increased collaborative working across a wide range of projects and organisations, including the Tay Cities Deal, Dundee Drugs Commission, Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership, Leisure and Culture Dundee, Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative, Protecting People and the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc.

4.6 Appendix 2 is the action plan which underpinned the delivery of the strategy's first two years, with updates on delivery. A new action plan set out in Appendix 3, based on 2020-2021 priorities, feedback from stakeholders and learnings from the work undertaken so far, will continue to drive our corporate Communication Strategy.

- 4.7 Activity over the coming year will primarily focus on supporting the delivery of the city and Council's Covid-19 recovery plans, such as the review of the Council and City plans in light of the pandemic, support for young people and the impact of Brexit. Sector-specific activity will include delivering a calendar of effective City Marketing activity to support the Tourism and Culture sectors' recovery plans.
- 4.8 Other key projects for the coming year include reviewing and updating the Council's emergency communications plan reflecting learning from the Coronavirus pandemic; and ensuring the corporate websites meet new accessibility standards.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

The Council Management Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

David Martin  
Chief Executive

Steven Bell  
Service Manager, Communications

DATE: 31 July 2020



# Communication Strategy Action Plan - for 2018-2019

This document to be renewed every 12 months following the annual review of the Communication Strategy

## Key areas by theme:

### 1 – Customer service

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
The Council's digital communications channels are effectively used as a two-way/customer service tool	There are strong links between the website and customer service, but this is not replicated on social media. There is growing evidence that the public wants to use social media for complaints, requests for service etc.	Pilot customer service access to Twitter and Facebook pages (with training) for 9-5 service.	Complete	S Bell/J Kopel	Social and digital
		Investigate web site "live chat" function	Ongoing	S Bell/IT	Social and digital

### 2 – External/digital

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
Dundee City Council corporate site is a "portal" to various services in the area and broad range of information	Council site is largely corporate-focused, although it does signpost other areas. A vast array of other sites are owned and managed by service areas and partners	Audit and reassess range of sites currently hosted or managed by Dundee City Council	Audit carried out and assessment of site requirement ongoing	S Bell	Social and digital
		Expand range of "civic" content hosted on site	Complete	F Christison	Social and digital

Council's social media policy is fit for purpose	Council currently has a social media policy, but it is some years old and in need to review in light of proliferation of new platforms, accounts and staff	Consult on, draft and launch new social media policy	Complete	S Bell	Style and standards; social and digital, internal communications
A suite of general and niche newsletters is distributed to appropriate audiences	System allows this but not currently used	Trial a general purpose newsletter and look to expand	On hold, pending the outcomes of trials elsewhere	S Bell/ F Christison	Social and digital
Deliver all communications messages through the most effective channels	Good website growth and strong presence on existing social media channels, particularly Twitter  Many newsletters produced but circulations/readerships unknown	Keep social media channels under review and add new as required  Audit reach of current suite of newsletters and focus on most effective/new areas	Ongoing. Reached 25,000 Twitter followers in Jan 2019.  Ongoing. Surveys under way to research audience.	F Christison  S Bell	Social and digital  Our vision; social and digital, internal communications; evaluation
Social media accounts can be accessed from corporate centre	Many accounts held across service areas, but there is limited access to logins	Audit of accounts and request for logins/passwords	Complete	F Christison	Social and digital
Impact of Council marketing spend is maximised and broader messaging is co-ordinated and targeted	Marketing and other promotional campaigns created in different areas of the Council. Branding is inconsistent	Communications service to consult on and co-ordinate all marketing initiatives across the Council	Complete. Brand guidelines created, Comms officer now part of Brand Dundee group	S Bell/ Exec Directors	The bigger picture, design, evaluation

3 – Communications service					
OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
Team members keep their technical skills up to date in the fast-changing world of internal and external communications	Variety of level of skills and experience in technical fields such as social media and digital media creation	Training in photography and video to be delivered	Complete	S Bell	Our vision; social and digital
		Training in social media to be provided	Complete	S Bell	Our vision; social and digital
		Training in digital animation to be provided	Complete	S Bell	Our vision; social and digital; design
Team has the IT/equipment necessary to deliver modern digital content	Some key equipment borrowed from others/owned by staff. Low-cost/free temporary software solutions have been found to deliver digital content	Deliver an integrated picture desk solution	Complete	R Watson	The media
		Audit existing social media tools and deliver best solution.	Ongoing. Pilot in Angus to be reviewed before rollout in 2019	S Bell/ F Christison	Our vision; social and digital
		Provide hardware and software for video editing	Complete	S Bell	Our vision; social and digital
		Create a digital calendar of events and content for planning purposes	Complete	Communications service	Our vision; social and digital
Our key marketing campaigns and messages are evaluated to ensure effectiveness	We currently do little evaluation. While achieving this can be difficult, social media provides some metrics	Implement OASIS tool to measure and maximise effectiveness	Complete. OASIS tool in use from Jan 2019	S Bell	Evaluation

Elected members and senior officials are trained in dealing with media and aware of support services provided by communications service	Varying levels of confidence dealing with media. Also varied understanding of how service can support communications activity	Provide training sessions to elected members and senior officials as required	Complete	S Bell	The media; our vision; internal communications
		Provide regular internal updates on changes in services provided by service and raise awareness	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision; internal communications
The communications service provides the most effective and streamlined service to internal and external customers	Internal processes have evolved over time and are in need of review. Clients currently may have to deal with multiple members of staff	Carry out "service design" review and look to introduce a consistent, one point of contact model	Improvements made but formal redesign now 2019/20	S Bell/S Kyle	Our vision; the bigger picture
The service maximises the opportunities provided by collaborative working	Pan-regional and Scotland-wide initiatives are ad hoc. Work is repeated in different areas	Co-ordinate a pan-Tay Cities area communications practitioners group	Complete	S Bell	The bigger picture

#### 4 – Internal

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	
Online access to corporate information and staff services provided to the widest number of people possible	Hundreds of Council staff currently don't have easy access to One Dundee and All Staff email communications. This has contributed to feedback reflected in staff survey	Provide external access to One Dundee for staff to use personal devices	Complete	S Bell/B McLeary	Internal communication; social and digital
		Create an opt-in database of personal email addresses to receive All Staff emails	Ongoing	S Bell/ J Robertson	Internal communication; social and digital
		Launch and promote these new services under a 'One Dundee, wherever you are' banner	Complete	S Bell	Internal communication; social and digital

Every service area produces a quarterly newsletter for their workforce	Internal newsletters are sporadic in geography and frequency	Calendar of issue dates distributed to all service areas	Complete	B Soutar	Internal communication
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# Communication Strategy Action Plan - for 2019-2020

This document to be renewed every 12 months following the annual review of the Communication Strategy

## Key areas by theme:

### 1 – Customer service

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
The Council's digital communications channels are effectively used as a two-way/customer service tool	Social media is increasingly being used by the public as a customer service channel. Training is being undertaken to pilot the use of Twitter and Facebook by CS staff	Assess pilot customer service access to Twitter and Facebook pages (with training) for 9-5 service and embed into day-to-day operations.	Complete	S Bell/J Kopel	Social and digital
		Investigate web site "live chat" function	Ongoing	S Bell/IT	Social and digital

### 2 – External/digital

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
A co-ordinated, impactful and effective approach is taken to the marketing of Dundee as a place to visit, live, work, study and invest	A significant focus has been placed on Dundee over the past year, including international media attention tied to the opening of V&A Dundee. A number of organisations and agencies are engaged in various initiatives to promote the city	Work with stakeholders on a strategic, inclusive approach to city marketing	Ongoing. Engagement with stakeholders undertaken and major programme of campaign activity launched during 2019/2020	A Calder/S Bell	The bigger picture; design
		Contribute to the delivery of a calendar of marketing activity which delivers tangible outcomes		S Bell	The bigger picture; design

A suite of general and niche newsletters is distributed to appropriate audiences	System allows this but not currently used	Trial a general purpose newsletter and look to expand	On hold, pending the outcomes of trials elsewhere	S Bell/F Christison	Social and digital
Deliver all communications messages through the most effective channels	The Council delivers communications across a range of platforms. The past year has seen an increased focus on the use of video/animation and infographics as appropriate. The growth of following across platforms indicates that users are receiving relevant content	Keep social media channels under review and add new as required	Ongoing	S Bell/F Christison	Social and digital; design
A calendar of regular, effective marketing campaigns is delivered to support the priorities of the Council and its partners	Marketing campaigns are delivered on an ad hoc basis. While there will always be an element of this, forward planning will allow better use of resources and avoid clashes	Create and maintain calendar in consultation with services	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision; the bigger picture; design, evaluation
Social media accounts can be accessed from corporate centre	The number of accounts linked to the Council continues to grow. An audit of accounts has been carried out and appropriate logs/passwords now held	Introduce a social media management tool to support our growing use of these platforms, ensuring maximum impact from campaigns and providing oversight of content	Not now being progressed	S Bell	Social and digital
		Maintain login list and carry out checks to ensure it is up-to-date	Complete	F Christison	Social and digital

Employees are aware of and follow the Council's social media policy and guidance	A new social media policy and guidance document has been created. It is a significant departure from the previous policy and embraces the power of these platforms as a communications tool	Create and deliver a communications plan which ensures that staff across the Council are aware of the policy/guidance and its contents	Complete	S Bell/K Ritchie	Style and standards; social and digital; internal communications
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### 3 – Communications service

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
Team members keep their technical skills up to date in the fast-changing world of internal and external communications	Growing level of skills and experience in technical fields such as social media and digital media creation. The skills mix has significantly increased during 2018/2019 and knowledge-sharing is taking place regularly	Calendar of in-house training and skills development to be created and implemented	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision
		Seek opportunities to learn from best practice of other agencies	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision; the bigger picture
Our key marketing campaigns and messages are evaluated to ensure effectiveness, and that the impact is shared with clients	OASIS framework has been implemented from 2018/2019 for key campaigns. Engagement metrics are being used more often to assess effectiveness of communications activity	Embed the use of engagement metrics (eg click-throughs, likes/shares) into day-to-day communications activity	Ongoing	S Bell/ Communications service	Evaluation
		Ensure that campaign outcomes are shared with clients	Ongoing	S Bell	Evaluation

Elected members and senior officials are trained in dealing with media in all its forms	All elected members/ senior officials have been offered media training	Provide in-house training sessions to elected members and senior officials on how to make best use of social media	Now 2020/21	S Bell/M Thomas	The media; social and digital
The communications service provides the most effective and streamlined service to internal and external customers	Internal processes have evolved over time and the range of services offered by the communications team has broadened significantly. Clients currently may have to deal with multiple members of staff	Carry out "service design" review and look to introduce a consistent, one point of contact model  "What we do" page with contact details and other relevant resources to be created on Intranet	Now 2020/21  Complete	S Bell/S Kyle  S Bell	Our vision; the bigger picture  Our vision; internal communication; social and digital
The service maximises the opportunities provided by collaborative working	A pan-regional communications group has been created and meets quarterly. DCC is also represented at the National Communications Group and other relevant bodies	Seek opportunities for pan-Tayside collaboration, including shared use of resources where appropriate  Ensure that partner agencies are aware of our campaigns and how to support them	Ongoing  Ongoing	S Bell  S Bell	The bigger picture; design  The bigger picture, design, social and digital
Services are supported to create their own, well-presented documents where appropriate	While the design team continues to create highly-visual documents, the demand on this service is increasing. Some services have discovered that they can create their own, well-presented	Provide templates for services to create their own Word documents, with training and support from the design team as required	Complete	K Laidlay	Design

	documents (particularly for internal audiences) using Word, with designers adding a cover etc.				
<b>4 – Internal</b>					
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>CURRENT POSITION</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>STRATEGIC THEMES</b>
Online access to corporate information and staff services provided to the widest number of people possible	Intranet access is being extended to those who don't currently use the Council network, alongside the extension of our All Staff email list	Promote the use of the extranet and related resources throughout the Council under the One Dundee, Wherever You Are banner	Complete	S Bell/K Ritchie	Internal communication; social and digital
Feedback on communications from the 2019 Staff Survey is evaluated and acted upon to make improvements	Communications is one of the key areas in the Council staff survey. This provides valuable insights into our current communications, and offers suggestions for further development	Create and deliver a Corporate action plan as required  Assist service areas to deliver communications actions in line with their feedback	Now 2020/21  Now 2020/21	S Bell  S Bell/ Exec Directors	Internal communication  Internal communication



# Communication Strategy Action Plan - for 2020-2021

This document to be renewed every 12 months following the annual review of the Communication Strategy

## Key areas by theme:

### 1 – Customer service

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
The Council's digital communications channels are effectively used as a two-way/customer service tool	Social media is increasingly being used by the public as a customer service channel. CS staff have now been trained to monitor and respond to customer service queries on social media	Roll out monitoring of complaints which are made via social media and embed into our existing complaints procedure. Ensure teams know processes for collation/response	30/06/2020	S Bell/B Findlay	Social and digital
		Investigate web site "live chat" function	Ongoing	S Bell/IT	Social and digital

### 2 – External/digital

OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
A co-ordinated, impactful and effective approach is taken to the marketing of Dundee as a place to visit, live, work, study and invest. This should reflect and support the Tourism and Culture sectors' recovery plans	A significant focus has been placed on Dundee over the past two years, including international media attention tied to the opening of V&A Dundee. A number of organisations and agencies are engaged in various initiatives to promote the city. The tourism/hospitality and cultural sectors have been acutely affected by Covid-19	Work with stakeholders on a strategic, inclusive approach to city marketing in line with new Tourism / Cultural sector recovery plans	Ongoing.	A Calder/S Bell	The bigger picture; design
		Contribute to the delivery of a calendar of marketing activity which delivers tangible outcomes	Engagement with stakeholders undertaken and major programme of campaign activity being developed with Tourism Leadership Group	S Bell/J Caswell	The bigger picture; design

A suite of general and niche newsletters is distributed to appropriate audiences	System allows this but not currently used	Trial a general purpose newsletter and look to expand	On hold, pending the outcomes of trials elsewhere	S Bell/F Christison	Social and digital
Deliver all communications messages through the most effective channels	The Council delivers communications across a range of platforms. The past year has seen an increased focus on the use of video/animation and infographics as appropriate. The growth of following across platforms indicates that users are receiving relevant content	Keep social media channels under review and add new as required  Explore the potential of Facebook Groups as a means of engaging with new audiences	Ongoing  31/03/2021	S Bell/F Christison  P Turner/ F Christison	Social and digital  Social and digital
A calendar of regular, effective marketing campaigns is delivered to support the priorities of the Council and its partners	Marketing campaigns are delivered on an ad hoc basis. While there will always be an element of this, forward planning will allow better use of resources and avoid clashes	Create and maintain calendar in consultation with services	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision; the bigger picture; design, evaluation
The Council's websites meet new requirements for accessibility	New legislation is being implemented which requires all Council sites to meet a set standard for accessibility.	Review Corporate and other websites against new standard and make any improvements required. Support services with bespoke websites. Audit and remove outdated sites which are no longer required.	30/09/2020	S Bell/F Christison/ J Lawson	Social and digital

3 – Communications service					
OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
Team members keep their technical skills up to date in the fast-changing world of internal and external communications	Growing level of skills and experience in technical fields such as social media and digital media creation. The skills mix has significantly increased and knowledge-sharing is taking place regularly	Calendar of in-house training and skills development to be created and implemented	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision
		Seek opportunities to learn from best practice of other agencies	Ongoing	S Bell	Our vision; the bigger picture
Our key marketing campaigns and messages are evaluated to ensure effectiveness, and that the impact is shared with clients	OASIS framework has been implemented from 2018/19 for key campaigns. Engagement metrics are being used more often to assess effectiveness of communications activity	Embed the use of engagement metrics (eg click-throughs, likes/shares) into day-to-day communications activity	Ongoing	S Bell/ Communications service	Evaluation
		Ensure that campaign outcomes are shared with clients	Ongoing	S Bell	Evaluation
Elected members and senior officials are trained in dealing with media in all its forms	All elected members/ senior officials have been offered media training	Provide in-house training sessions to elected members and senior officials on how to make best use of social media	31/03/2021	S Bell/M Thomas	The media; social and digital

<p>The communications service provides the most effective and streamlined service to internal and external customers</p>	<p>Internal processes have evolved over time and the range of services offered by the communications team has broadened significantly. Clients currently may have to deal with multiple members of staff. A new process for requesting design work has been implemented</p>	<p>Carry out “service design” review and look to introduce a consistent, one point of contact model</p>	<p>31/12/2020</p>	<p>S Bell/S Kyle</p>	<p>Our vision; the bigger picture</p>
<p>The service maximises the opportunities provided by collaborative working</p>	<p>A pan-regional communications group has been created and meets quarterly. DCC is also represented at the National Communications Group and other relevant bodies</p>	<p>Seek opportunities for pan-Tayside collaboration, including shared use of resources where appropriate</p> <p>Ensure that partner agencies are aware of our campaigns and how to support them</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>S Bell</p> <p>S Bell</p>	<p>The bigger picture; design</p> <p>The bigger picture, design, social and digital</p>
<p>The team have a clear emergency communications plan which reflects and supports the Council’s generic emergency plan</p>	<p>A plan was created in 2017 and maintained since, but should now undergo a full review</p>	<p>Review existing emergency communications plan and update as required. Ensure that this captures learning from Covid-19 pandemic</p>	<p>31/12/2020</p>	<p>S Bell/S Blythe</p>	<p>Our Vision; the bigger picture</p>

4 – Internal					
OUTCOMES	CURRENT POSITION	ACTION REQUIRED	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER	STRATEGIC THEMES
The Council's workforce is well engaged and informed about its values and priorities.	The forthcoming staff survey will provide insights into how information is distributed through the Council	Create and implement and internal communications plan which meets the needs of the organisation and its people	31/10/2020	M Boyle	Internal communication
Online access to corporate information and staff services provided to the widest number of people possible	Intranet access has been extended to those who don't currently use the Council network	Grow the use of the extranet and related resources throughout the Council under the One Dundee, Wherever You Are banner	Ongoing	S Bell/F Christison	Internal communication; social and digital



# Communication Strategy 2018-21



A photograph of two men in dark blue suits and ties standing in an office. The man on the left is smiling and looking towards the man on the right. They are in a modern office environment with large windows in the background. A woman is partially visible sitting at a desk in the background. The overall scene is professional and collaborative.

# Communication Strategy Update

## 2018-21

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# Introduction

## Communication is at the heart of everything we do as a Council.

It's fundamental to keeping citizens, staff and stakeholders informed during times of change. It drives the dialogue which shapes priorities and empowers communities. And it underpins collaboration with our many partner agencies.

Of course, never was the importance of good communication more evident than over the past few months, as the Coronavirus pandemic challenged our communities, our services and our people in ways we could never have imagined.

The crisis underlined the importance of the Council's continued focus on delivering effective communications through innovation and improvement, both in the way information is conveyed and in the channels used to reach more and more people.

As the Chartered Institute of Public Relations reflected this year: "In the public sector, communications fulfils a duty and is essential in delivering information and services to the most vulnerable and communicating change."

The OSCA Award-winning corporate communications team, and the wider Council, have embraced these changes in order to best support the delivery of the goals set out in the Council Plan and the Dundee Partnership's City Plan, and now the city's recovery strategy.

A new Social Media Policy is supporting and empowering teams across the Council to engage with citizens like never before. Corporate channels showcasing services, disseminating information in impactful ways

and providing immediate feedback now reach over 50,000 users.

The outcomes are demonstrable, in operational and human terms. Beyond the experiences of Covid-19, good communications have played a significant part in Dundee having the highest proportion of local EU nationals applying for settled status, and drove a spike in applications for postal ballots ahead of the General Election, to give just two examples.

In line with the [Council's Digital Strategy](#), communications have supported the growth of digital skills, encouraged the use of online services and extended access to information to members of the workforce who don't have day-to-day IT access.

Strong partnerships have been developed, with neighbouring councils, other public sector bodies and the business community, to support crisis communications, deliver wider initiatives and amplify our collective voice in line with Best Value.

The recent [Citizen Survey](#) reflected an 11 percentage point increase – to the highest level since 2011 - in the number of people who believe Dundee City Council communicates well.





# Coronavirus (COVID-19)



**The outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19) starkly illustrated the importance of clear, effective and timely communications with service users, Council staff and other stakeholders.**

In the early days of the pandemic, daily updates were created to ensure that all audiences had a single point of information as significant changes to services and working practices were introduced at pace.

This daily briefing format has continued throughout the response and recovery phases, and has been one of the most read articles on both the corporate internet and staff intranet throughout. By early July this had been read over 50,000 times.

The circumstances of lockdown meant that digital was the primary form of communication. The extensive audiences built on social media allowed key messages to be shared widely, through a suite of graphics, videos and links to the website.



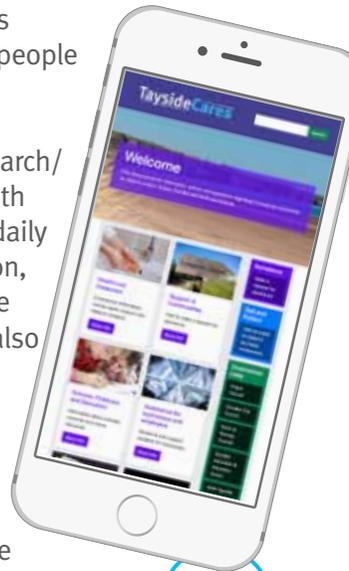
A Coronavirus (COVID-19) page was added to the Council website in early March, and quickly grew into a section covering all aspects of the crisis response. This included a services affected page



which was updated daily by the communications team to reflect the fast-moving impact of the pandemic on Council services, as well as areas focused on business advice, schools information, support for vulnerable people and more.

Users on the corporate website in March/April increased by 17% compared with the previous month. Alongside the daily update, the main Coronavirus section, schools information, recycling centre updates and welfare services were also among the most-read content.

The Council communications and IT teams also led a Tayside-wide project to create a new online hub – **Tayside Cares** – to signpost people



to services including support for those shielding. This was promoted by the three councils and other relevant agencies across their branding and social media channels.

A new Firmstep process was created to allow members of the public to request support online. This could be accessed from both Tayside Cares and the corporate website, and was accompanied by an extensive FAQ about the support available to vulnerable people.

Dundee City Council's social media platforms saw significant increases in usage from the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. On Facebook, followers have increased by 16%, with record levels of engagement during the first week of lockdown. Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn have also grown significantly in following and engagement over the period since mid-March.

There was also a noticeable trend towards citizens using social media as a customer service channel, to request information about services or flag up issues in their community.

While digital was the primary method of communication, there was a need to ensure that critical information got to people who may not have access to these channels. This involved a range of strategies, from distributing thousands of leaflets through foodbanks and children's lunch bags, to radio advertising campaigns.

External communications activity through the recovery phase so far has included daily information on the safe resumption of services and the creation of signage to encourage social distancing and good hygiene in public areas such as the city centre.



## Case Study Keeping the workforce informed

Following the introduction of lockdown, use of the Corporate intranet increased significantly, and was throughout the prime channel for council-wide staff information.

Through OneDundee on the Move, which was launched last year, this information was available to any member of staff with an internet-enabled device (Council-issued or personal).

Page views on the Intranet were up 24% year on year in March, with the largest growth being seen in the "one the move" version which saw a seven-fold increase in usage compared with an average month. The three most-read features on the intranet were all Covid-19 related, and there was significant use of online learning resources. Information distributed to employees included regular updates from the chief executive, arrangements for staff and health and safety advice. The daily briefing was also shared with all staff via the intranet, and a weekly summary of key updates was issued through the Allstaff email system.

Employees report feeling informed by the Council. Results from the wellbeing Pulse surveys showed that only around 12% of respondents felt they needed more corporate information.

As part of the recovery and renewal phase, an animation for employees returning to their workplace was created, and consistent signage for Council buildings was deployed alongside FAQs addressing key issues for the workforce.





# Social and Digital Media

**The growth of the Council's social media audience and engagement shows no sign of letting up during 2019/20, reflecting an encouraging interest in the information and content being shared.**

While Twitter continues to be the largest channel, the last 12 months have seen huge growth in users following the authority's Facebook (up 39% in 2019 to 13,871 followers) and LinkedIn (32% increase to 7299 followers) accounts. Beyond bald numbers, these figures indicated new audiences the Council can engage with – the latter for example being primarily a business-oriented community.

Similarly, evidence suggests that younger people have driven the growth in our Instagram following. This reached 3000 around Christmas 2019 (compared with 1600 at the start of the year), and while a smaller audience than other platforms, it's worth noting that it's the third-largest total of the 24 Scottish local authorities which have Instagram accounts.

This cross-platform growth has been achieved by focusing the most relevant content on each channel, engaging rather than broadcasting, and presenting information more visually – for example through infographics or animated videos.

The power – and ultimately value - of these accounts lies in audience engagement. During 2019/20, a number of consultations and surveys were run at least in part through our social media channels – and delivered large numbers of responses at a very low cost.

Around 1200 people responded to an online survey seeking the public's views on proposals for a low emission zone in central Dundee. And 1300 took part in the Conversation with the City budget survey – up on the previous year despite running for a much shorter time period.

We continue to focus on the engagement and outcomes from our social media activity – tracking how many people respond to a survey or click through to a website, for example. This allows us to provide up-to-the-minute data to services on interest in, and engagement with, campaigns and announcements.

**“engaging rather than broadcasting, and presenting information more visually”**

The past 12 months have also seen social media rolled out to customer services, supported by the communications team. More and more people are using these Council channels to ask questions, request services and report problems – in line with research which indicates that 18 million people in the UK have used social media to seek customer service assistance.

Over the next 12 months, building in particular on the customer service experience and demands during Coronavirus, there will be a focus on expanding the number of social media channels customer service support is delivered on.

The past year has also seen the launch of a new Social Media Policy and handbook, designed to be an easy-to-read guide for anyone who uses these platforms – whether in their professional or personal lives – to help them get the most out of social media whilst avoiding the pitfalls that can exist online.

**18 million people in the UK have used social media to seek customer service assistance**



## Case Study - Green Waste

Communication is an essential tool in promoting change. When people see the benefits or understand the underpinning reasoning they are far more likely to alter often long-standing habits and expectations.

The promotion of the city council's new green waste charging scheme, which started in March 2020, required the communications team and colleagues in Environment to tailor a campaign mixing social media messaging with direct communication to residents.

The campaign had two clear goals – to make citizens aware of the charge and the reasons behind it, and to encourage people requiring the service to sign up.

In a four month lead-up, a series of letters outlined the background to the £35 per-bin per-year charge, and the process of applying for a permit.

The letters also detailed the council's general recycling policies and encouraged residents to play a part in meeting ambitious national targets.

Meanwhile, social media was used to promote an online Q&A which reduced

demand on customer services from citizens seeking further information.

Analysis was carried out on audience trends for Facebook and Twitter, with social media posts about the scheme timed to maximise engagement and action. Engagement activity included dialogue with citizens who had questions or feedback.

This multi-channel approach, led by social media and the substantial audiences we now have across these platforms, helped generate a total of 12,700 applications by mid-February.

Evaluation of this year's campaign will be used in planning for the renewals process next year.



# Marketing and Design

The way that people consume information is changing rapidly, and over recent years the skillset of the Council's design team has evolved to meet this.

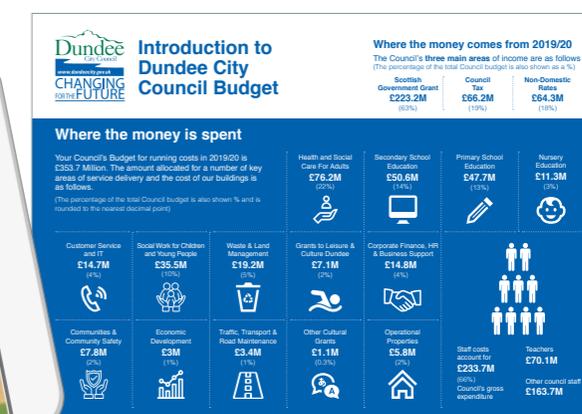
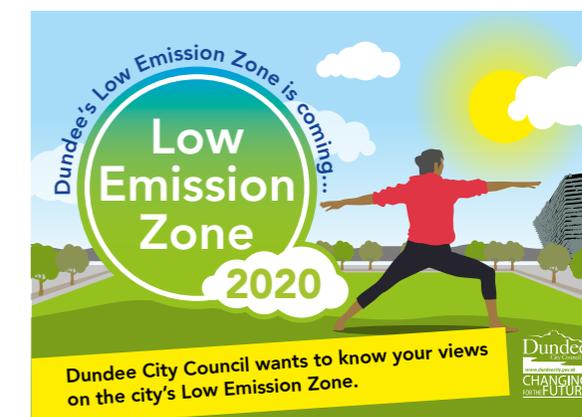


While there is still demand for more traditional materials such as posters and leaflets, the design jobs handled every month increasingly include innovative visuals such as infographics, animations and web design.

The team have delivered a significant number of branding or rebranding exercises over the last year, creating high-impact visuals for the Take Pride In Your City campaign, the Low Emission Zone, the World Community Development Conference 2019 and many more, as well as the suite of assets which supported public information during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Infographics provide an accessible way to tell a data-driven story, and are being used more and more to share information not just with citizens but decision-makers too. Key documents produced in 2019 included a visual summary of the benefits of the Dundee Airport PSO and

“innovative visuals such as infographics, animations and web design”



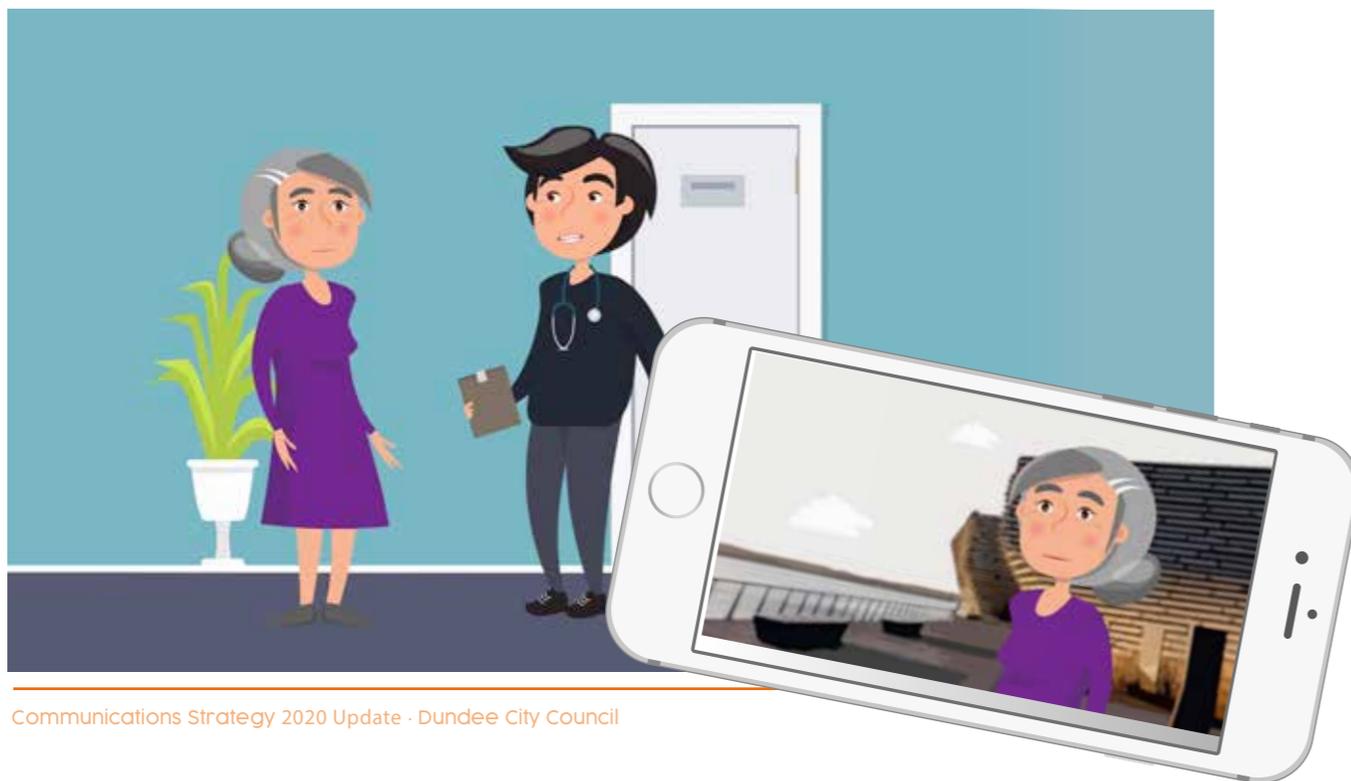
a number-driven graphic demonstrating the successes of the V&A Dundee project.

Perhaps the biggest shift in communications in recent years has been to video content. This is the fastest-growing area of digital content consumption, with an estimated 31 million Britons viewing video via a mobile device alone in 2019.

Creating video can be very expensive if commissioned externally – from between £600 and £1200 for a short media clip to around

£5000 for a three-minute animation. Investment in in-house skills and technology allows our team to create dozens of broadcast-quality videos, from reactive and news-led interviews to marketing videos and animations promoting services.

A series of poignant animated videos, allowing personal stories to showcase the benefits of the Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey project while maintaining the privacy of clients, is being released throughout 2020.



## Case Study - Promoting Dundee

Dundee has enjoyed a prolonged period in the tourism spotlight. Following the opening of V&A Dundee, record-breaking visitor numbers have been recorded, and the buzz about the city has spread far and wide through media coverage.

This was reflected in the awarding of a Platinum prize at the international HSMIA Adrian Awards. There were more than 1,100 entries for the awards with all submissions eligible to win at Gold, Silver and Bronze levels. Gold winning entries which were judged to be exceptional received Platinum status.

During 2019/20, Dundee was identified as being the top Staycation City in the UK. In line with this, and to help continue attracting visitors, a short term marketing campaign was launched.

Created following feedback from sessions with industry stakeholders, the aims of this were to encourage people to discover Dundee's cultural and other attractions, and to stay for one or more nights.

A graduate trainee was recruited to help create impactful content on social media,

building capacity to deliver planned activity and respond quickly to opportunities such as the Staycation award.

The multi-media campaign launched during the peak booking period in early 2020 encouraged people in key geographies and demographics to discover Dundee for themselves. And the message certainly got out there – one campaign video alone was viewed more than 79,000 times, our most-watched ever piece of content.







# Working with the Media

In recent years, the national media spotlight has been on Dundee like never before.

As has been well documented, the opening of V&A Dundee and Waterfront regeneration has attracted interest from TV, radio and print journalists as far afield as the United States, continental Europe and the Far East.

Meanwhile, the work undertaken on major initiatives such as the Drugs Commission and Living Wage have resulted in Dundee becoming a focal point for issues of national interest.

Dundee also has a very healthy local media presence. There can be few – if any – cities of its size which have two local daily papers,

two radio stations and offices of the two main broadcasters.

That provides robust scrutiny of the Council and its partners, and also a platform across the publications' print and digital channels to share information about priorities and delivery against them, and showcase services.

A number of activities support this. The communications team answers significant numbers queries from journalists (including a 24/7 reactive service) and organises press calls or briefings.

## “Dundee becoming a focal point for issues of national interest”



During 2019, 913 media inquiries were handled and 294 news releases issued. Increasingly, in line with the changing demands of the media, the team also proactively distributes multi-media content which includes video interviews and audio clips.

A particular focus over the past year has been showcasing the great work that goes on in our schools. Every quarter the communications team works with the Evening Telegraph to produce ChalkTalk magazine which is created by pupils, and includes details of projects, photographs from activities and articles written by the young people themselves.

The success of this has also led to a weekly joint venture with the paper, Tele Takeover, which is giving pupils in all of our schools the chance to create content and find out more about careers in journalism.

**“showcasing the great work that goes on in our schools”**



## Case Study - Challenge Poverty Week

While Challenge Poverty Week, in October, was a largely social-media driven national campaign, it provided an opportunity to partner with the news media in Dundee to shine a light on one of the city’s most significant issues.

Over the course of the week, daily articles were published in the Evening Telegraph, which between its print and digital channels reaches significant numbers of Dundonians.

These focused on themes as diverse as period poverty, funeral costs, Living Wage, childhood hunger and the financial challenges associated with serious illness. Opinion articles in the paper, reflecting a desire to “challenge poverty together”, also helped to drive the conversation and galvanise public opinion.

In addition, media coverage was secured in the Courier and Sunday Post and on the BBC, STV and Planet Radio.

The campaign was also, of course, reflected on our social media channels, with a series

of posts highlighting the issues and the work taking place in Dundee.

This proved hugely successful, with the posts reaching over 40,000 people over the course of the week and attracting high levels of engagement and interaction.





# Partnership Working

**As the delivery of public services evolves, so the need to work closely with partners to ensure clear and consistent communications increases.**

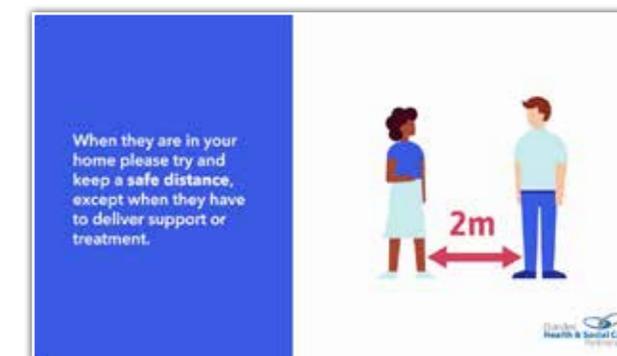
The Council plays a key or leadership communications role in a number of critical projects, from actions following the Drugs Commission to the Tay Cities Deal, the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc to the Eden Project.

This ever-expanding network of partnerships, within Dundee and beyond, has provided opportunities for the Council to collaborate on communications, share best practice and amplify messaging.

Often this is complex work, ensuring that the needs of all partners are met and that agreement is reached on proactive and reactive communications.

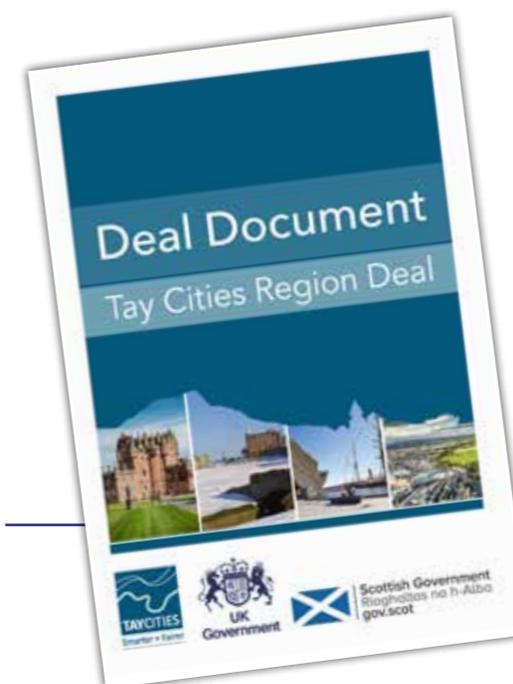
A number of groups have been established to deliver this, including a pan-Tayside communications group and Tay Cities Deal communications group. In addition, the Council is an active member of the National Communications Group Scotland and the National Resilience Communications Group.

The Communications Division also works closely with NHS Tayside and the Third Sector in supporting the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership, which in the last year has ranged from creating videos to delivering a staff communications survey.



There are also close working relationships with Leisure and Culture Dundee, across public relations and marketing, in line with the co-ordinated communications approach which is a priority for the city and the Council.

Through the Dundee Partnership, we've worked with other agencies to raise awareness of the City Plan objectives, and used our collective channels to reach as large an audience as possible.



A particular focus in recent years has been public protection. Working with partner agencies locally and nationally, the Council's communications team created a child protection campaign with the slogan If Not You, Who?, and has also run social media activity across a range of themes.

At the request of Chief Officers, during the Coronavirus lockdown we created a suite of materials signposting Protecting People services, covering topics from child and adult protection to gender-based violence and alcohol/drug use. In addition to online distribution, thousands of physical leaflets were placed in school lunch bags and food insecurity parcels to reach digitally excluded audiences during lockdown.

Throughout the pandemic, the Council's communications team worked closely with and supported communications teams from partner organisations across a range of activities, from the development of shared posters and other materials to a scheme issuing explanatory letters to people who were exempt from wearing a face covering in public places.

Our partnership support also has a clear financial value – it's likely that the communications services provided to a range of partners, from crisis and major events support to marketing and video content creation, would cost well in excess of £100,000 per year if procured externally.



**“use our collective channels to reach as large an audience as possible.”**

## Case Study Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc

Communications teams from local and national government agencies and the private sector came together to support the launch of the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc in 2019.

The partners – Michelin, Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Dundee City Council - staged a number of media events, which attracted local and national interest and established the MSIP brand and purpose.

The Council team – with agreement from the partners - also ran the company's social media presence for an interim period and advising on the branding and creation of its website.

A series of eye-catching web posts, including photographs, videos and graphics, have helped define the company's "tone of voice" and swell its online following to well over 2000 in the space of a couple of months.

Content was produced to showcase the Innovation Parc at MIPIM UK, the country's leading property event, and other promotional events.

Working together ensured that partners' roles in the delivery of MSIP were well understood, public and internal messaging was clear and consistent, and awareness of the new company reached the maximum audience possible.



# Engaging with our people



A key principle of the Council's Communication Strategy is ensuring that our workforce is kept informed and engaged.

At a corporate level, that has meant launching a number of new policies and guides, supporting engagement activity such as the Digital Champions, and taking the workforce through major projects like Best Value.

The launch of the Extranet – One Dundee on the Move – has as outlined elsewhere in this report made it easier than ever for our workforce to keep up-to-date with corporate news and policies.

More and more Council information is shared digitally, so it's important that all our employees have access to this if they choose to, regardless of whether they use IT in their day-to-day work.

One Dundee on the Move also allows all colleagues to check payslips and request leave ►►

**NEW**  
**One Dundee**  
on the move

ACCESS THE INTRANET FROM ANY PC OR MOBILE DEVICE

- Check your payslip or book annual leave
- Keep up-to-date with the latest news
- Available 24-7, wherever you are

Also available as an Android app!

**LOG ON AT** - [onedundee.dundeeccity.gov.uk](https://onedundee.dundeeccity.gov.uk)

24/7, wherever they are, via any computer or mobile device.

The new service was launched in August, with a poster campaign and training sessions organised through the Digital Champions. Further promotion will take place in the coming months.

In its first six months, over 1000 individual members of our workforce accessed the Extranet, viewing well over 20,000 different pages.

Areas with significant levels of interest include the Learning Hub, Council job vacancies, news features and pay and benefits.

The early success of the On The Move version, and the subsequent workforce challenges posed by Coronavirus, has further contributed to the growth of One Dundee as a workforce communications hub.

More and more content is being added to the site – from news features and blogs to the recently-created Our Progress section – and a

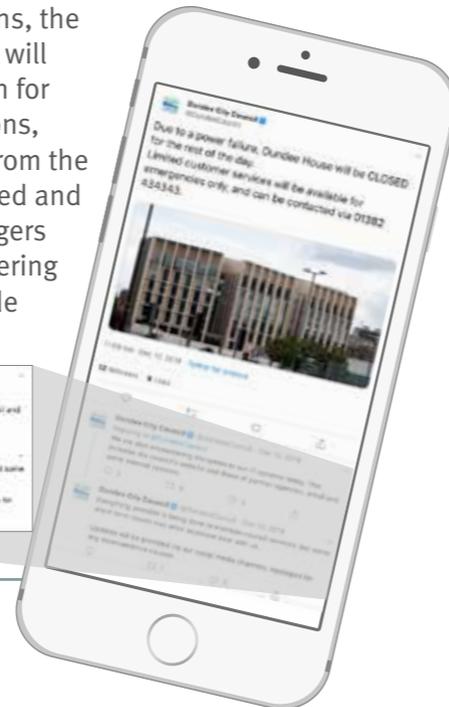


redesign took place in 2019 to make it more user-friendly.

Social media also provides an opportunity to share information with our people. This worked effectively during power issues at Dundee House, when we were able to quickly provide updates to staff on office closures and alternative working arrangements.

Of course, digital is only one part of our communications approach. We've run poster campaigns, created briefings for managers and supported the delivery of training materials to help get useful information to all corners of the organisation.

Over the next 12 months, the communications team will develop a specific plan for internal communications, ensuring that results from the staff survey are reflected and acted upon and managers are supported in delivering and discussing cascade information.



## Case Study - Best Value

A multi-channel approach was adopted to ensure that employees across the Council were aware of the Best Value audit process and how it related to the authority's vision, values and priorities.

This included regular updates in the Chief Executive's blog, frequent AllStaff emails and weekly bite-sized blogs published on OneDundee.

A new section, Our Progress, was created on the intranet to give employees a one-stop resource for information on what the Council and individual services have achieved. This included a Q&A on Best Value.

Social media was also used to promote progress being made by the organisation using the #YourDundeeYourServices hashtag.

A Team Dundee Conference allowed colleagues to discuss Best Value and become better informed, while leadership events discussed the process and evidence gathering, and captured feedback.

An information pack was distributed to Executive Directors with links to case studies, examples and stories, Council Plan service update blogs and service director emails to staff to further raise awareness.

Managers were asked to cascade information through their teams, and to encourage discussion and feedback. Posters were also distributed throughout key buildings.

While the communications around Best Value are ongoing, early analysis suggests it has successfully reached thousands of colleagues.



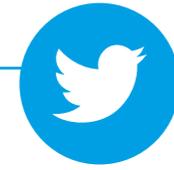
**3,145,519**



pages viewed on OneDundee in 12 months

**27%**

(2,537,494 in 2018/19)



**28,641**

followers on Twitter

**13%**

(25,221 in 2018/19)

**24**

media releases issued every month (average)



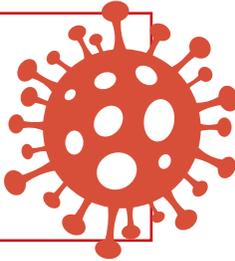
**39%**

increase in Facebook likes in one year



**675**

COVID-19 related assets designed



# COMMUNICATIONS

**913**

media inquiries handled in 2019



**53,942**

total social media followers



**42**

jobs sent to print every month (average)



**201,300**

views of 'Discover Dundee' video



**1,300**

responses to budget consultation



**10%**



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