

ITEM No ...8.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2024
REPORT ON: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2022-27 UPDATE
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 322-2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To give an update on progress during 2023-24 on the Council’s Communication Strategy 2022-27 and associated action plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- a note the progress being made on the strategy; and
- b agree the 2024/25 action plan in Appendix 3.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The current Dundee City Council corporate communication strategy was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 31 October 2022 (Article IV of the minute, report 273-2022 refers). 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 Whilst 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, listening to feedback from communities means this must be supplemented by continuing to use inclusive channels to reach those who don’t have ready digital access or skills.
- 4.5 It also supports the statutory processes and partnerships required to deliver resilience communications like those required during severe weather.
- 4.6 Appendix 1 is the annual report on the Strategy. It provides an update on the work carried out over the past year, including case studies. Key achievements over the past 12 months include:
 - a Continued rapid growth of our social media channels, increasing the audiences with which we communicate and engage. Across all social media channels, the Council now has over 87,000 followers, a growth of 8% over the past year.
 - b Continuing to inform the public and media about key Council information through the publication of news updates. 235 news releases were issued in the past year, up 25% on the previous 12 months.

- c Successfully executing a year-long programme of City Marketing activity. Put Dundee On Your Map exceeded expectations over the year, delivering over 89,000 engagements while shifting its focus to video-based content.
 - d Contributing to the development of a revamped Dundee.com website, to function as a main portal for the promotion of the city as a place to live, work, study, and visit.
 - e Harnessing the “extranet” - OneDundee On The Move – which was launched as a tool to engage with employees working from home or without easy access to Council IT systems. The number of page views increased by 25% last year.
 - f Supporting the delivery of major consultations including the annual Budget consultation and a separate consultation on LACD service proposals.
 - g Collaborating with neighbouring authorities on communications which impact on citizens across the wider region, including the Dundee Low Emission Zone, Tay Cities Region Deal and a range of other partnerships.
 - h Running a specific campaign to raise awareness of the support available during the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The multi-channel campaign used radio, bus stop and social media adverts as well as posters and business cards. Effectiveness was measured through the usage of a dedicated web page (viewed 24,853 times in 12 months).
- 4.7 Appendix 2 is the action plan which underpins the strategy, with updates on delivery. A new action plan set out in Appendix 3, based on 2024-25 priorities, feedback from stakeholders and learnings from the work undertaken so far, will continue to drive our corporate Communication Strategy.
- 4.8 Activity over the coming year will focus on continued signposting of support for citizens struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis, preparation for the inclusive communications equality duty and delivering an ongoing calendar of effective City Marketing activity to support the Tourism and Culture sectors. Internal communications approaches will reflect feedback from the Council’s employee survey, ensuring that colleagues continue to feel informed, engaged and listened to.
- 4.9 Other key goals for 2024 include developing the use of Whatsapp as a channel for public communications; supporting the ongoing implementation of inclusive communications in line with proposed legislation and building on the strong relationships with partners to amplify messaging and identify collaboration opportunities.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

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

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GREGORY COLGAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 2024

STEVEN BELL
SERVICE MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS

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A person is seen from behind, holding a smartphone to take a photo of a sunset over a city. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the landscape. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of residential buildings. The background shows a range of mountains under a clear sky.

2024 Update Communication Strategy

Dundee
City Council

www.dundee.gov.uk

**CHANGING
FOR THE FUTURE**



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Introduction

Council communication impacts daily on everyone who lives, works, visits or studies in Dundee.

It's how people find the vast range of services provided by the local authority and the different ways to access them. That might mean learning what the Low Emission Zone means for them, how to download a new bins app, or what number to call to arrange a repair.

It's understanding the context of the challenging financial climate, including how their council tax is spent, decisions on policy and ways to make their views known through public consultations and surveys.

It's how they get advice in an emergency, or find sources of support during difficult times. That could be during severe weather, or the Cost of Living crisis which continues to be felt in households across the city.

It's even how to make the most of a visit to the city, by accessing the tourism resources developed to support a key pillar of the local economy which was worth £290million last year.

continued focus on delivering impactful and inclusive communications

From statutory services to the democratic process, partnership priorities to transforming and modernising for the future, people need to know what is happening, what it means for them and how they can engage.

The past 12 months have seen a continued focus on delivering impactful and inclusive communications, both in the way information is presented and in the channels used to reach more and more people.

The corporate communications team, and the wider Council, have embraced these changes in order to best support the delivery of the outcomes set out in the [Council Plan](#) and the Dundee Partnership's [City Plan](#).

The outcomes are clear, in both financial and human terms. Effective communication has played a significant part in almost 25,000 people locally accessing advice on the support available during the Cost of Living crisis last winter. It underpinned the growth of the tourism sector after the Covid pandemic. And it allowed people to have

their say in consultations on the future of leisure and culture services in the city.

A digital-first approach means that corporate social media channels showcasing services, disseminating information in impactful ways and providing immediate feedback now reach almost 88,000 people – an 8% increase in the past year alone.

Supporting the [Digital Strategy](#), communications have 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.

But it's not all about digital. Working closely with the Fairness Commissioners, we've continued to put inclusivity and accessibility at the heart of our communications in line with our shared vision of being a caring and fairer city.

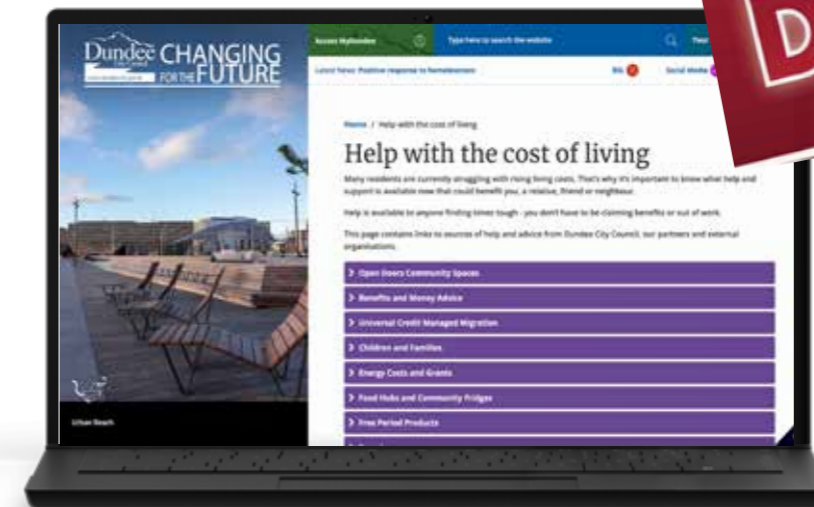
This annual update reviews the progress made over the past 12 months, and sets out how good communication will continue to underpin the vital work the Council does.

The value of communications

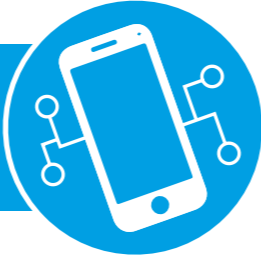
Cost of Living information continues to be a key priority, and is a good example of how communications adds real value to communities.

In addition to specific campaigns, the latest advice and resources are updated regularly on the Council's [website](#). These have been accessed by citizens almost 25,000 times in the past year.

A further campaign is being planned for winter 24/25, using a mix of digital and traditional media including radio and newspapers.



Social and Digital Media



Social media and the corporate website are a critical means of communication between the Council and citizens.

Growth of these channels has remained strong over the past 12 months, with the number of people reached via social media growing by another 10% over the past 12 months to almost 88,000.

To put that number in some context, in 2020 the figure was around 54,000. So there has been huge growth in the number of people that the authority can inform, interact with and listen to.

There has also been a focus on diversifying the platforms that we use. The way people use social media – particularly the growth of Tiktok and Whatsapp and changes to X (formerly Twitter) – have shifted radically in a relatively short period of time, and it’s important that the Council adapts to that.

By ensuring that we serve people useful, adapted content, we’ve grown our TikTok, Instagram and LinkedIn followings, alongside a significant rise in people following on Facebook.

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

“House rules” have also been implemented this year, setting out how we engage and respond with our users on social media as well as the expectations we have of them. We continue to monitor engagement to ensure that digital communications



We know that digital delivery can get important updates to citizens quickly and effectively.

are effective, although changes to data presentation on Facebook has made that more challenging this year.

And we continue to monitor trends in societal usage. That’s why we’ll be trialing the use of the Whatsapp channels function as a means of informing citizens, particularly during any emergency situations that arise. More than 50% of the UK population use the app, and this functionality is seen as a potential “game changer” in public communications.

We know that digital delivery can get important updates to citizens quickly and effectively. Pages on the corporate website are seen around 500,000 times every month. Over the next year, work will continue to help services ensure that their areas of the site are maintained and that the information shared with the public is as up-to-date as possible.



Case study: The Lord Provost's social media blog

Social media has been at the heart of efforts over the past two years to increase public awareness of the Council's Civic function.

Facebook and X channels set up in the summer of 2022 already have around 1500 followers between them, while content is also shared on corporate channels.

The rapid growth of the **blog** reflects the value that citizens give to the information and content being shared. This includes recognition of various organisations and societies, including Twinning Associations, charities and religious groups of various faiths. Content is also shared about the Civic function and its history, from the origins of the Lord Provost title to the Civic Mace, Coat of Arms and City Chambers.

These channels enjoy good engagement, with citizens regularly asking questions and making comments. And they are an effective means of promoting important initiatives, from the annual Citizen of the Year nominations to Christmas family activities in the City Centre.



Marketing and Design



Wherever you look in Dundee, there are examples of eye-catching artwork created by the Council's small in-house team of designers.

Visuals communicating an array of subjects can be found on shopfronts, bins and street furniture, posters, brochures and leaflets, banners and maps. Even stickers and the sides of vehicles.

The same applies in the virtual world, where the suite of corporate designs extends to websites, videos, animations, photography and social media graphics.

The demand from the Council and its partners for design services continues to increase, as services become more and more aware that impactful communications materials, whether in print or digital form, bring better engagement from customers. This leads to improved outcomes, whether that be increased awareness, changes in behaviour or higher levels of service take-up.



Families of documents, from the City and Council Plans to Protecting People publications, have a consistent design as well as easy-to-understand one-page summaries where appropriate.

Major marketing campaigns undertaken in the past 12 months have included a TV campaign raising awareness of the **Low Emission Zone**, promotion of the **Dundee MyBins app**, a **biodiversity** awareness drive and ongoing marketing of the city as a visitor destination.

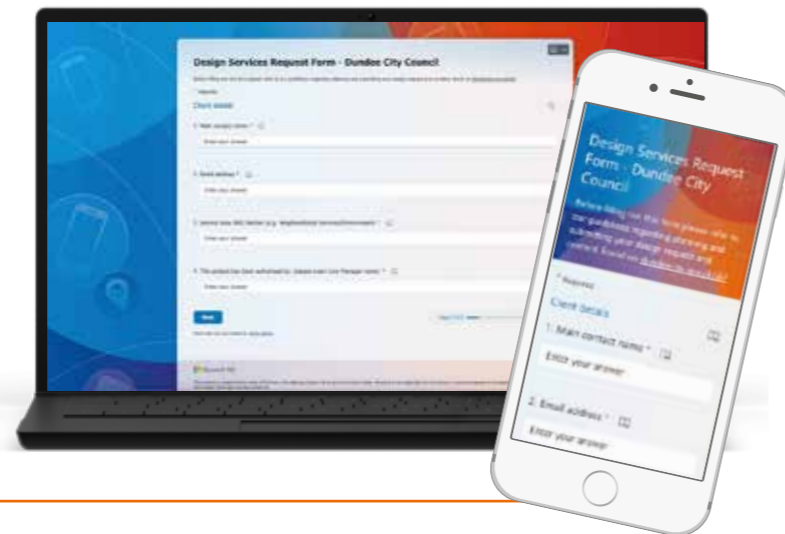
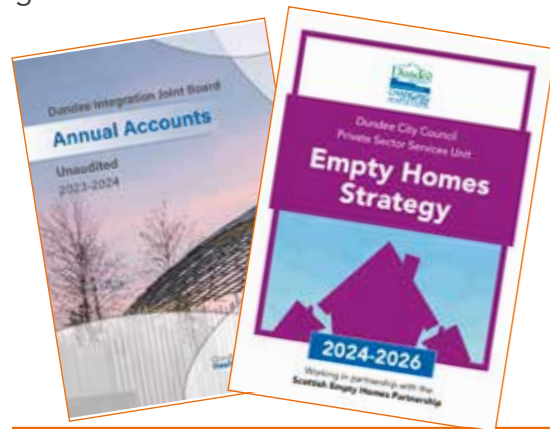


To support the increasing demand, the team has implemented a new online form for design requests using tools in Microsoft Office 365. This has reduced the amount of administration required, freeing up time for design work.

The roll-out of a tiered design approach, through which widely-consumed public-facing documents are fully designed while internal and other publications are supported as appropriate with designs for covers, back pages and page footers, has also proven successful.

The service also continues to focus on ensuring that corporate materials are designed with accessibility in mind. This includes providing advice to services on ways to meet accessibility legislation and guidelines.

impactful communications materials... bring better engagement from customers



Case study: City Marketing

Latest figures show that the visitor economy is worth approximately £290m per year to the Dundee economy, with total visitors increasing by 10% to 1.35million in 2023.

The Council works closely with the city's Tourism Leadership Group to deliver coordinated city marketing activity which encourages people to come to Dundee and stay longer to explore its attractions, green spaces and hospitality venues.

The flagship **Do It All in Dundee** campaign proved hugely successful in 2024, running in spring and summer across a range of digital platforms and far exceeding industry benchmarks.

An evolution of the Put Dundee on your Map branding launched following the Covid pandemic, it primarily used short videos to showcase the city's tourism offering. These were shared via YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok.

Key themes included walking, cycling and other outdoor activities, eating out and hospitality and Dundee's range of public art.

Analysis of the campaign phase showed that the videos were viewed around 1.7million times in the space of a few months, and there was strong follow through in terms of people clicking onto the campaign web pages to find out more.

The next phase of the campaign will be launched this winter.





2024

Leadership

MAIL UNIT

0 LET

Dundee City Council

Community Improvement

CHANGING THE FUTURE

Business & Economic Council

Dundee Holiday Fun

DUNDEE Low Emission Zone

LEZ

Coming Soon

Enforcement begins 20th May

Dundee City Council

Strategic Workforce Plan

2023 - 2028

RE:CITY ENERGY

Saturday 28th September 11am - 4pm

Adult Employability Service

Employer Support Service

You need photo ID to vote at a polling station

YOUR VOTE MATTERS DON'T LOSE IT

Emergency and Estates

DUNDEE'S FARMERS' MARKET

City Square, Dundee, DD1 3BY

9am-4pm

2024	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1 st	16	20	18	15	20	
			Nov	Dec		

Dundee City Council's Gaelic Language Plan 2021 - 2026

Biodiversity Duty Report | 2021-2023

Greenland managed for biodiversity	Greenland managed for biodiversity	Greenland managed for biodiversity
49 ha woodland planted	2.8 ha planting native woodland	169 trees planted
10 ha woodland planted with 2 ha designed with ecological planting	1 ha natural grass sward	32,000 native plants
\$0,000 native bulbs planted	3.3 ha native woodland created in partnership with Eden	2000 trees for the future
16,000 other bulbs planted on 100m x 100m green spaces		

Please don't feed the gulls

Take pride in your city

Gulls can contribute to Feeding • Aggressive • Litter

Dundee Climate Leadership Group

Systems & Retrofit

ИНТЕГРАЦИОННАЯ ПОДДЕРЖКА ДЛЯ НОВЫХ ШОТЛАНДЦЕВ

Вы новичок в Данди или ищете, как найти группы, занятия мероприятия или поддержку

Свяжитесь с Викки по телефону 07435 779 842

We are looking for Foster Carers

to offer short-term breaks & longer-term care.

Bonnie Dundee Britain in Bloom Portfolio 2024

Dundee City Council

British Sign Language Local Plan 2024-2030

DUNDEE City Council

Map of the city showing various zones and services.

Discover our Culture

all within walking distance from here

North Hill Primary School

Routes to North Hill Primary School

Emergency communications



Local authorities have statutory duties during significant incidents such as severe weather, and these include communications with the public. That role has increased in recent years as partner organisations have evolved.

Learnings from Storm Babet just over a year ago have been implemented, and a new emergency communications plan has been produced to support the Council and partners' response in times of crisis.

It sets out how we will warn and inform the public to minimise impacts and support recovery. By providing reassurance, giving advice and signposting to help, clear messaging can be a powerful tool at a time when people are in distress.

Key agreed actions include setting up a single webpage during an incident to quickly update and disseminate information

- this worked well during Storm Babet with around 25,000 page views in the space of four days.

As noted elsewhere in this annual report, the Council will also trial the use of Whatsapp Channels as a means of quickly "broadcasting" important information to citizens in a shareable format.

It makes clear that, while digital communications are by far the quickest and most effective approach in a fast-moving incident, there is still a need for more traditional approaches. An example of that is detailed in the case study on p20.

clear messaging can be a powerful tool at a time when people are in distress

The Council's team works closely with services and partner agencies to ensure that accurate, consistent and compassionate communications are delivered to the public, elected members, our own workforce and other agencies.

The emergency communications plan also outlines how good internal and stakeholder communications can give responders clarity on roles and mission, as well as encouragement and support.

This approach gives roles to corporate communications and also to managers to ensure a cascade of updates to and from their teams.



Case Study: Preparing for an emergency

Providing clarity of roles and responsibilities is one of the ways communications can support a crisis response. But just as important is that this is done in advance of disaster striking wherever possible.

There are areas of the city which are at higher risk of flooding during storms like the one which hit Dundee in the autumn of 2023.

Householders and business owners in those areas need to know what actions they need to take to protect their properties should flooding happen, as well as what the Council and other partners will do.

Working closely with the resilience and city engineers teams, the communications service has produced a leaflet giving advice, signposting sources of help and detailing what people can expect from responding agencies.

The leaflet has been distributed to identified properties in advance of the autumn weather setting in. It's hoped this proactive approach will help reduce the human and property impacts should floods occur.

Further assessment will be carried out to see if similar documentation can be created and distributed in response to other civil contingencies risks.





Partnership working

One of the key pillars of the Modern Council transformation is that the authority will work in collaboration more, moving partnership working across the city from good to great.

Communication is key to ensuring that organisations combine effectively by sharing visions and values, supporting the flow of information and ensuring stakeholders - including the public - are informed and engaged.

Often this is complex work in order to ensure that the needs of all partners are met and that agreement is reached on proactive and reactive communications.

The Council plays a key or lead communications role in a number of critical projects, from the Tay Cities Region Deal to Cost of Living crisis support, the Low Emission Zone roll-out to Fairness and Climate leadership groups.

Other successful communications collaborations have included Hope Point, Tay5G, Take Pride in your City (see the case study on p24), tourism promotion, Urban ReLeaf, the Dundee Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Dundee Loves Local.

The Communications Team also works closely with NHS Tayside and the Third Sector in supporting the Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership, including PR, design and committee support.

Close partnership working with Leisure and Culture Dundee also supported the delivery

of a major consultation on services during 2024.

Through the Dundee Partnership, the Council has 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.

It is also represented at national level, through the National Communications Group Scotland and the National Resilience Communications Group.

Collaboration between agencies on shared communications will become ever more important in years ahead to meet demand and resource challenges in the most efficient and effective ways possible. That will include creating shared resources which can be used by multiple organisations to remove duplication.

...creating shared resources which can be used by multiple organisations to remove duplication.

Case study: Take Pride in your City

Although led by the Council, this long-running campaign is only successful because of partnership working with a range of stakeholders, from public agencies and businesses to community/tenant groups and individual citizens.

Communications support for the campaign helps raise awareness of its aims, encourages people and businesses to get involved, highlights successes and engages the local media.

A huge range of communications activity has been undertaken over the past 12 months. This includes:

- Fresh and updated Take Pride campaign imagery and graphics
- Awareness-raising through traditional and digital media, utilising Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok to reach new audiences across different demographics
- Take Pride adverts being displayed on a rotation on a regular basis on 25 different Clear Channel screens at bus shelters around the city.



- Dundee-specific versions of Zero Waste Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful's Scotland is Stunning, Let's Keep It That Way campaign to tackle litter in parks and public spaces
- Messaging to promote adherence to Broughty Ferry Beach's summer Animal Exclusion Zone
- Campaigns to promote the Dundee MyBins app, encourage participation in community clean-ups and litter picking hubs, discourage fly-tipping and prevent litter being left at sports pitches
- Supporting the delivery of the City Centre Commercial Waste Project.



Engaging with our people

Communicating with as diverse a workforce as the 6,500 people who are employed by the Council is an enormous challenge. Colleagues have different roles, different needs, different access to IT.

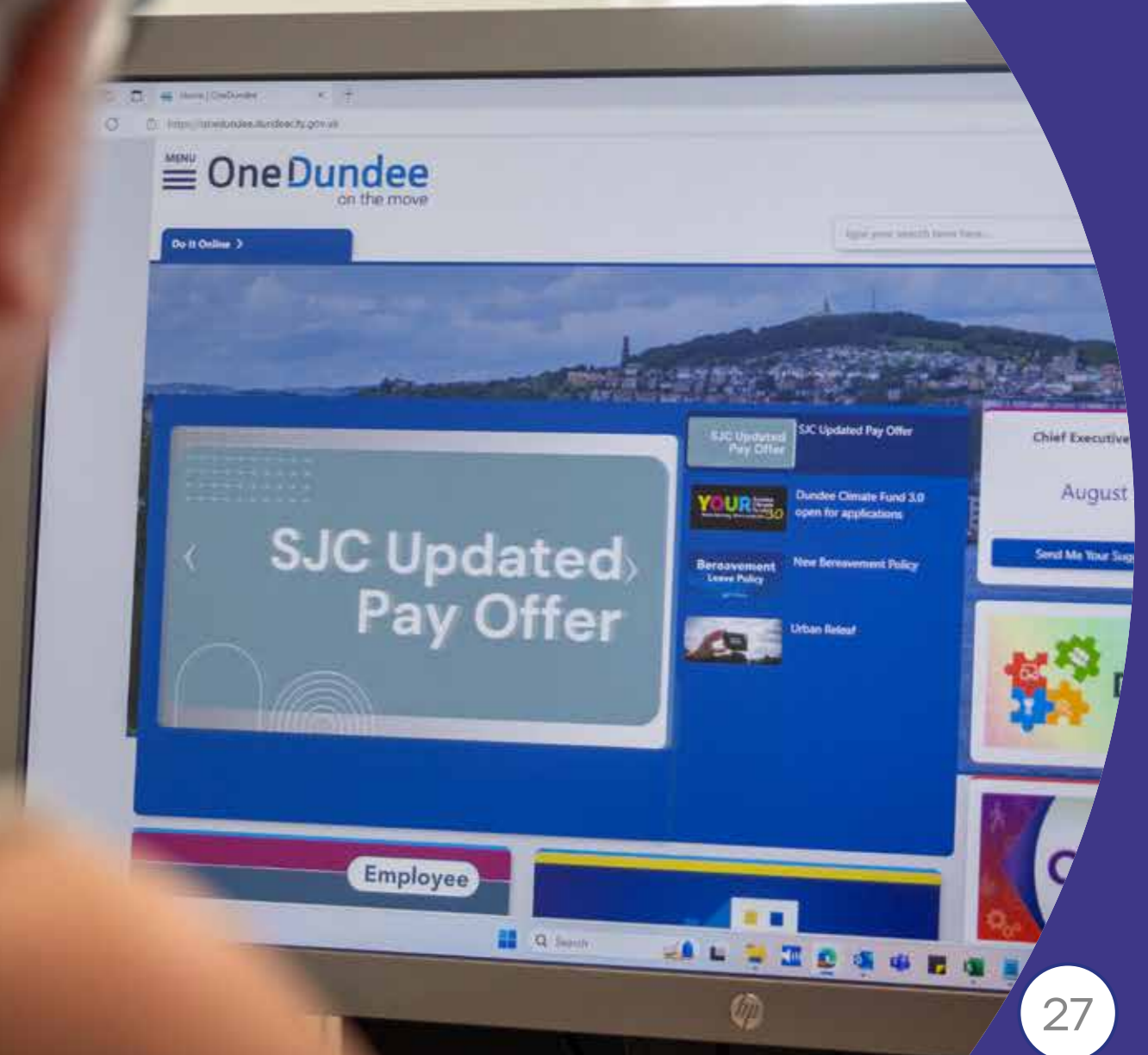
However, it is essential that good communication takes place as we collectively navigate challenges and continue to deliver services for the people of the city.

The Council employs a dual approach to employee communication, through both corporate updates and cascade of information by managers through team meetings and one to one conversations. Key “all staff” information is shared via the OneDundee corporate intranet, the chief executive’s monthly video blogs and a weekly round-up email containing news and

resources. “Mission critical” information is sent out via AllStaff emails.

Good progress has been made in opening up communication to the entire workforce, and the **On The Move** version of OneDundee (which can be accessed by all colleagues) is increasingly being used – page views by colleagues were up 25% last year compared with the previous 12 months.

OneDundee will continue to be the central source of corporate news, policies and other key documents, and all employees are encouraged to visit it regularly.



The roll-out of the Microsoft Office 365 suite provides opportunities to further improve corporate communication. There will be challenges to manage too, however, around volume of information, fragmentation of channels and IT access barriers to Sharepoint sites.

The focus for the next 12 months will be on further improving internal communications through effective use of cascade by managers to their teams. This will be critical on the journey to becoming a Modern Council, as well as during any periods of disruption to services such as during bad weather.

ensuring that every member of staff is aware of the corporate vision and priorities and the role they play.

Case study: Weekly Round-up

The Weekly Round-Up employee newsletter has gone from strength to strength since it was launched as a means of keeping colleagues informed during the Covid lockdown.

Analysis shows that articles included within it are well-read, while there are very regular requests from teams across the Council and partners to include news or updates in it.

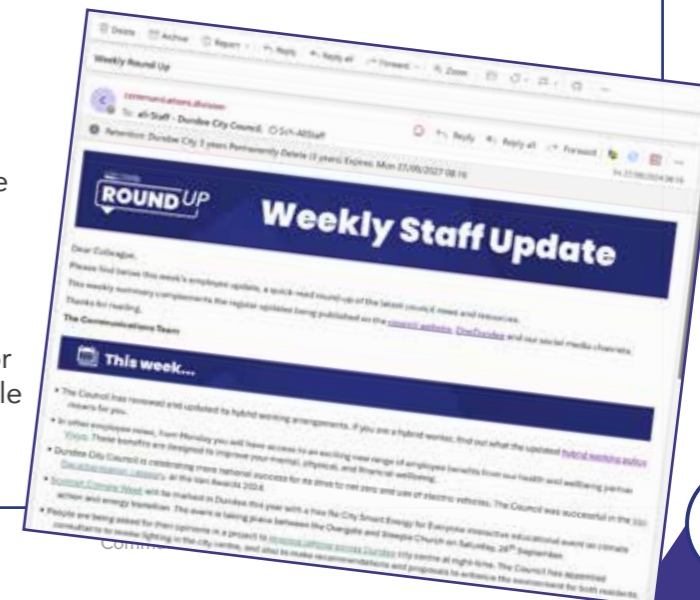
The round-up serves a multitude of purposes. It gives time-poor colleagues the opportunity to get up-to-speed quickly on the latest organisational news. It reduces the amount of individual Allstaff emails filling inboxes, and ensures that channel can instead be prioritised for mission-critical updates from the Council Leadership Team.


It raises the profile of themed days or weeks, provides updates on the publication of new policies, blogs or benefits offers, and signposts people

to sources of help around wellbeing, learning and financial issues.

It's also a way to celebrate successes across the Council, for example when teams or individuals have been recognised at awards ceremonies.

The round-up email has undergone a minor revamp this year, but its design and content will be kept under review to ensure it remains as engaging as possible. A priority this year will be encouraging even more colleagues to contribute news and other content.



5,241 OneDundee intranet page views per day 

38,623 followers on Twitter  **6%** 

87,679 social media followers 

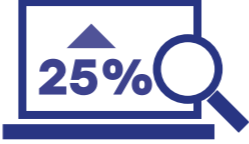
120,000 free ad plays on digital bus stop boards per month (approx) 


37 media inquiries handled per month 

COMMUNICATIONS

58 designs completed per month (average) 

235 news releases issued 

6,080,569 corporate web site page views 

89,325 engagements with Put Dundee On Your Map city marketing campaign 



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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2023/24 ACTION PLAN

Action	Area	Responsibility	Measure/KPI	Due date
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	90,000 engagements with campaign during 23/24.	Complete
Review emergency communications plan to reflect learning from recent major incidents.	Crisis communications	Communications manager	Emergency communications plan is updated.	Complete
Continue the development of TikTok and Instagram as platforms to connect with younger audiences.	Digital and Social Media	Communications manager	Increase in followers of 10% on each platform over the next year.	Complete
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.	Now 2025
Develop existing network of Information Champions to ensure all services can appropriately maintain their website content.	Digital and Social Media	Communications manager, IT manager, service managers	Requests from services for basic changes to web pages are reduced.	Complete
Review and scope the impact of changes to the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland relating to inclusive communications.	Marketing and design, Digital and Social Media	Communications manager	Council complies with new responsibilities under the PSED. Relevant staff training undertaken.	Ongoing
Implement improvements to design services commissioning including an online process and protocol for document design support.	Marketing and design	Communications manager, Design services team leader	Online portal is implemented.	Development complete, rollout now under way

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2024/25 ACTION PLAN

Action	Area	Responsibility	Measure/KPI	Due date
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	90,000 engagements with campaign during 24/25.	Spring 2025
Roll out and implement emergency communications plan to reflect learning from recent major incidents.	Crisis communications	Communications manager	Emergency communications plan is followed in a major incident.	Winter 2024
Trial the use of Whatsapp Channels as a means of quickly "broadcasting" important information during an emergency.	Crisis communications	Communications manager	1000 followers of channel.	Autumn 2025
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.	Summer 2025
Review and scope the impact of changes to the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland relating to inclusive communications.	Marketing and design, Digital and Social Media	Communications manager	Council complies with new responsibilities under the PSED. Relevant staff training undertaken.	Autumn 2025
Develop our internal communications approach in line with feedback from the annual employee survey, ensuring that colleagues continue to feel informed, engaged and listened to.	Engaging with our people	Communications manager, head of people	Future employee survey feedback shows improvement.	Autumn 2025