

## Job Description

**Job title:** Senior Policy and Communications Officer  
**Grade:** PO3  
**Division:** Policy and Communications  
**Reports to:** Policy and Communications Manager  
**Responsible for:** Up to 6 staff

### **Main purpose of the post:**

To actively contribute to a highly effective performance and communications service that enables the council to deliver its outcomes. Operating efficiently, using existing processes and procedures to advise deliver and manage a comprehensive work programme with a focus on continually improving and enhancing service delivery.

### **Generic responsibilities:**

1. Provide technical support, advice and information to a range of customers and organisations, responding to routine queries as well as non-routine issues and requests. Deliver the authority's policy, performance and communications approach, taking personal responsibility for maintaining and improving the council's reputation.
2. To implement changes arising from new or amended legislation or professional practices, ensuring that the council's processes are compliant with the appropriate regulatory and specialist requirements. Deliver an evidence-led approach to monitoring the impact of work activity.
3. Represent the PO5s in relationships with stakeholders including senior colleagues, external partners and contractors, regulators and members as necessary, supporting the achievement of optimal outcomes for the council.
4. Contribute to the delivery of Policy and Communications services to the council's directorates and co-ordinate agreed outputs and outcomes to the directorates with colleagues across Policy and Communications.
5. Support the delivery of the council's long-term business strategy and plans, showing an awareness of complex factors and relationships including financial constraints, new legislation and government policy, sustainability and partnership opportunities.
6. Contribute to reports that set out the policy, performance and communications implications of the council's activity and provide a practical approach to these bodies around the way that this impacts on the council's services.
7. Deliver and monitor policy, performance and communications services to the highest professional standards and to input into the development and delivery of innovative solutions to support services in the context of a challenging public sector environment.
8. Assess the effectiveness of existing approaches and recommend innovative enhancement practical improvements, taking into account research and evidence available to the council.
9. Work colleagues to make sure that officers across the council have the necessary advice and information to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively in policy making, performance management and communications.
10. Work without close managerial supervision (except in areas of particular technical complexity or sensitivity) with work subject to review on completion.

Pro-actively identifying problem areas and work with the business to develop improvements to systems and supporting processes.

11. To manage and develop more junior staff within own work area as necessary.
12. To take responsibility for the development and implementation of own Personal Development Plan, and own continued professional development in those areas relevant to own role within LBL.
13. To maintain an awareness of the risks to the department and the Council as a result of any actions associated with the work programme and to work with colleagues to manage and mitigate these risks.
14. To work with external suppliers and contractors to ensure the team and authority can achieve value for money and positively impact on outcomes
15. To take personal responsibility for the good use of the council's resources appropriate to the job level and work area and to agree an appropriate contribution to the team income target
16. To take responsibility, relevant to the post, for ensuring that Council policies, statutes and government legislation is upheld.
17. To report and respond to safeguarding concerns that may be identified and contribute as appropriate to the investigation of those concerns.
18. To undertake other duties of a similar standard and nature that might reasonably be requested from time to time to meet the needs of the service.

The remit of this division includes: performance and service improvement; policy and partnerships; communications; events; the Leader's Office and Lamco. The post-holder will be expected to carry out detailed work against one of the main remits and collaborate with colleagues across other remits to provide a joined up service.

### **1 Performance and service improvement:**

At a broad level, this team works closely with colleagues across the council to monitor and manage performance, and support performance improvement at both a practical and strategic level. Specifically, this includes: defining the Council's performance framework; devising and preparing innovative performance solutions and reports across directorates, services and team to provide a strategic overview and graphical data representation of performance data; analysing data to understand trends in performance and the reasons for those trends; advising and providing assurance to management and Cabinet on performance and whether interventions are sufficient to improve performance; defining, advising and monitoring service improvement interventions; and compiling and submitting statutory returns to government departments in key service areas. The team works closely with services and Directors to take a shared approach to performance management that incorporates financial, activity reporting, performance indicators, human resources, risk management and key programme workstreams.

The team also plays a role in performance system development, support and training. This includes: maintaining and developing information and intelligence systems on behalf of the wider organisation and partners; supporting the deployment and development of systems such as MOSAIC ensuring that current

and anticipated reporting investigating complex problems or situations that may arise and developing new reporting systems, workflows and processes where necessary and providing training and support to managers around performance.

The performance area will have relevant expertise at the appropriate levels. The PO7 directorate lead will coordinate a work programme to meet the needs of the both areas and look to use the team in a matrix fashion so that there is less of a split between service areas in the team; at the PO5 level there will be capacity around managing data sets and generating dashboards. There may also be the development of data base systems such as GIFTs, and understanding of SQL writing skills; at the PO3 level effective training and relationship management skills; and at the framework level there needs to be expertise in the systems. At PO1 level, officers will build relationships so that our performance processes and procedures and run effectively in a timely way.

## **2 Policy and partnerships:**

This area co-ordinates and sets out how the organisation and partners will enable, deliver and measure the ambitions of the administration and the borough. They will articulate this through the Community Plan; coordinate processes for business planning and budget development and monitoring their achievement. The team coordinate the role of the partnership boards; providing guidance and advice to the strategic partnership and developing strong links in order to develop collaborative approaches on behalf of the organisation. They also lead on a range of skills to support business intelligence and how insight, data, consultation and research are co-ordinated to improve decision making and increase our understanding of how the council is performing for our residents. They have the strategic lead for equalities in the organisation and consider how this is embedded across the organisation.

The team need to be able to work with a complex range of stakeholders and be able to negotiate, project manage and lead on complex issues. They will need skills around analysing data and insight and be able to draw up with colleagues forward looking solutions across a range of key policy areas. This will be aligned to a strong commitment to the outcomes in the Community Plan that they need to embed across the organisation and partners.

The complexity of the issues and the management of competing interests requires that there is a strong grip on core issues. This requires at the PO7 level the ability to develop cross-cutting and forward thinking approaches to partnership working; equalities impacts; and business intelligence. At the PO5 level there will be project management and analytical skills that enable independent leadership of identified projects that will again require the management of and collaboration with stakeholders and partners; at the PO3 level we need strong expertise around the

processes and detail of partnership working and equalities and an ability to analyse complex information.

### **3 Communications and stakeholders:**

The communications team is responsible for campaigns, promotions, media, public affairs, internal engagement, digital, design and brand, engagement, consultation and publications. They will take a practical approach and strategic overview to the role of marketing and communications as drivers for internal change and transformation; promoting and maximising growth and regeneration opportunities and ensuring that council services are understood and accessed. The team drive the management and promotion of the council's reputation within the borough, regionally and nationally. They need to coordinate consultation activity and create a coherent forward programme of external engagement using key assets to achieve positive impacts on our outcomes.

The team needs to be both strategic and operational and therefore have a strong grip on the processes for producing communications output as well as able to negotiate its purpose and form. The team inevitably has a degree of reactive work that will inform how it operates on a day to day basis and must develop mechanisms to cope with competing demands. This means overall the team needs to be very collaborative whilst have lead expertise across a range of remits.

The role of direct engagement and the management of consultation are not the same things but there are cross overs that make better coordination a necessary consideration in this area. With the management of the market researchers an additional consideration here we need to look at the whole cycle of communications, engagement and consultation. It will require close working with the Policy and performance areas to ensure that the knowledge, insight and impact are fully understood.

In this area there PO5s will lead on key remits around marketing, public affairs and media. They will act as a form of client manager to different service areas and in turn will be supported by PO3s who have expertise in design, internal communications and communication project delivery. There PO1s will add expertise in production, managing content across multiple platforms and can deliver on communications projects.

The PO7 will around engagement and consultation and be supported by consultation and engagement expertise, coordinating a forward programme working closely with colleagues and cabinet. The PO5 should be informed around consultation and statutory requirements and the PO3 will need to lead and coordinate the market researchers as well as advocate for the

#### **4 Leader's Office:**

The Leader's Office support the cabinet and the wider group of members in carrying out their democratic function, acting as a liaison point with partners and officers and co-ordinating the decision making processes for members. They provide policy support and co-ordinating information and analysis to support members in their responsibilities, managing and monitoring member casework.

This area needs to be excellent at stakeholder management both with cabinet but also on their behalf. They will need a broad understanding of the policy context at a local, regional and national level and be able to articulate issues both to cabinet and beyond. This is partly a briefing role but also is about ensuring that cabinet can be effective in carrying out their responsibilities. There is also a wider responsibility to the group.

The Head of the Leader's Office will largely deal with the Leader, supported by the Office Manager. The Head will advocate for the Leader and act as the liaison point into the Leader's office for the wide ranging strategic and occasionally operational issues. The PO3 officers will largely focus on cabinet and group and will work beyond the office to interact and engage colleagues and stakeholders.

The operational delivery of casework is about being responsive to issues but also having a good understanding of the background to these issues and how they relate to different portfolios and parts of the organisation.

#### **5 Traded Services:**

The Lambeth Policy and Communications trading arm generates income and maximises collaborative opportunities with other local authorities including overseeing the Harrow communications function. This team pitch for, contract and deliver a comprehensive service, gaining buy-in from and delivering for the leadership and stakeholders in the community they are working in; ensuring effective income generation and contract management and operating as an income generating traded service. The team ensures that the event strategy is supported by senior managers, cabinet and stakeholders in the community; ensuring effective cash-flow analysis and income maximisation is undertaken; providing assurance that the implications of events are understood. Events contribute to the council's outcomes on a strategic level and on a practical level, delivering professionally-run events.

The Head of Trading will work across the different remits to create a coherent forward plan and understand the stakeholders and pressures internal to Lambeth around commercialising different functions. They will need to be able to negotiate with different parts of the organisation to support them on their own

commercialisation journeys and this requires both understanding of services but also the political context in which decisions are agreed and negotiated.

The Harrow team has a contract to deliver against and therefore a large part of their remit is defined within the terms of the contract.

The Lambeth Communications trading team will need a lead that can develop effective pitches as well as monitor contracts and be an effective client manager often working with political leads in other organisations. The PO3 roles here will manage and support clients and be able to proactively deliver on agreed contracts in a flexible and responsive way. The Operations role requires financial expertise and understanding of business development and to be supported by an officer with expertise in our accounting systems.

The Events element here is changing because of the events strategy. The Head of Events will diversify the service and manage this complexity whilst understanding the risks and opportunities. PO5 managers will coordinate major contracts and deliver on time and to budget. The PO1 officers will have expertise in event handling and negotiation ensuring that processes are implemented effectively.

## Person Specification

### Senior Policy and Communications Officer

<p>It is essential that in your written supporting statement you give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A)</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confident scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with a "Tick" (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>			<b>Shortlisting criteria</b>
Education	<b>Q1</b>	A Relevant degree professional qualification or relevant experience	<b>A✓</b>
	<b>Q2</b>	For current employees, there is an expectation that they will hold or be willing to work towards a relevant qualification.	
Key Knowledge	<b>K1</b>	Substantial experience of working with residents and citizens in a political environment	<b>A✓</b>
	<b>K2</b>	Understanding of the context within which local government is operating, locally, regionally and nationally.	<b>A✓</b>
	<b>K3</b>	Understanding of partnership working across sectors, particularly with community and voluntary organisations	<b>A✓</b>
Relevant Experience	<b>E1</b>	Considerable experience delivering projects and programmes which include delivery of either policy, communications, consultation, events, performance and/or traded services.	<b>A✓</b>
	<b>E2</b>	Experience of leading and delivering projects and programmes of work successfully to time, budget and quality expectations in a complex environment, involving multiple stakeholders.	<b>A✓</b>

	<b>E3</b>	Experience of leading teams outside of direct span of control to deliver successful programmes of work, having to use influence and negotiation to achieve outcomes.	<b>A✓</b>
<b>Key behaviours</b>		<b>Focuses on People</b> is about considering the people who our work affects, internally and externally. It's about treating people fairly and improving the lives of those we impact. Put people at the heart of our work, after all that's our business. It's about making our processes fit people.	
		<b>Takes Ownership</b> is about being proactive and owning our personal objectives. It's about seizing opportunities, driving excellence, engaging with the council's objectives, and furthering our professional development.	
		<b>Works Collaboratively</b> is about helping each other, developing relationships, and understanding other people's roles. It's about working together with colleagues, partners, and customers to earn their respect, and get the best results.	
		<b>Communicates Effectively</b> is about how we talk, write and engage with others. It's about using simple, clear, and open language to establish positive relationships with others. It's also about how you listen and make yourself open to conversation.	
		<b>Focuses on Results</b> is about ambition and achievement. It's about making sure we are working towards the end product and considering the effect of our service. It's about making the right impact, having the right result and changing things for the better.	