

**Communications Team self-evaluation findings**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** As part of the its improvement programme, the council is carrying out a series of service self-evaluation exercises. This report sets out the findings for the Communciations Team, the first service to have undertaken this self-evaluation exercise.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1** Review and endorse the findings set out in Appendix 1.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1** The [Argyll and Bute Improvement Framework](#) (ABIF) sets out a structure that ensures all parts of the council carry out self-evaluation activities, identify areas for improvement, and make arrangements to ensure that these improvements can be delivered and evidenced.
- 3.1** As part of the Argyll and Bute Improvement Framework (ABIF), HR & OD is facilitating a programme of self-evaluation across council services.
- 3.2** The ABIF process is based on themes in the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model. These are: leadership; strategy; people; partnerships and resources; processes, products and services.
- 3.3** The Communications Team was the first team to undergo this exercise. Its findings are set out in Appendix 1.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1** The self evaluation actions are set out for comment.

**5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

Policy/Financial/Legal/HR/Equalities/Risk/Customer Service – None

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**APPENDIX 1:** Communications Team self-evaluation exercise – findings

## **Appendix 1: Communications Team self-evaluation exercise – outcomes**

### **The Team**

The council's Communications Team consists of:

- Communications Manager
- Senior Communications Officer
- Two Communications Officers
- Research and Engagement Officer
- Modern Apprentice in Digital Communication

### **Our Role**

Our role in brief is to contribute to Argyll and Bute Council in achieving its business objectives by:

- promoting the challenges and work of the council
- informing and involving employees and citizens in local government change, and increasingly,
- promoting the area as a great place to live, work and visit.

### **Our Challenges**

- Managing volume of demand (planned and unplanned) for support
- Developing the service in line with customers' preferences (eg developing digital/visual communication skills and channels)
- Identifying the actions that will have most impact amidst the numerous options available for communication.
- Competing for the attention of potential new residents with other areas/organisations.

### **Examples of recent successes**

- Digital communication progress: we are the most followed Scottish council on Instagram.
- Establishing an approach to recruitment promotion which is already evidencing success in attracting applicants: our successful fostering recruitment campaign has been shortlisted for two national communication awards.
- Developing [www.abplace2b.scot](http://www.abplace2b.scot), to help persuade people to move here, and to provide opportunities for promotion for local businesses.

### **Our outcomes**

We contribute primarily to these performance outcomes for the council:

- B005 – Information and support is available for everyone
- B030 – We engage with our customers, staff and partners

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNICATIONS TEAM</b>  <i><b>Making our team good for the council and for its team members</b></i></p>				
Making our team good for the council				
Aim	Required	Support	Improvement action needed?	Comment / examples
The Team's work supports successful achievement of council priorities	We know what the council's goals are	Vision	No. We are clear on our role.	Our role in brief is to support the council in changing to meet challenge, and to attract people and investment to the area
	We know how we link to the council's goals	Comms strategy	No. We are clear on our role.	
	We have a team plan linking our actions to council goals	Team Plan	No. We are clear on our role.	
	We monitor effectiveness of our actions	Pyramid targets + digital analytics	Revise Pyramid targets to better reflect the breadth of the work of the team.	For 2020/21
The Team is customer-focused	We know who our customers are	Comms strategy / Team plan	No. We know who our customers are.	Our key customers are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council staff</li> <li>- Elected members</li> <li>- General public</li> <li>- Partner organisations</li> <li>- Media outlets</li> </ul>
	We listen to and act on what our customers tell us	Digital analytics / public comments / comms and engagement group	We need to undertake an internal customer satisfaction survey now that we are again a full team.	Quarter 2 2019
The Team can adapt to change if/when required	We keep up-to-date with best practice in communication	PRCA membership / national comms/research groups / shared Facebook page	Renew PRCA membership. Continue to collaborate with external organisations and colleagues on best practice.	Renew PRCA membership in March 2019.
	We undertake training in new skills as required	We draw on different sources eg PRCA, on-line training	Achieve PRCA Management Standard for Communication Teams	April 2019
	We communicate openly about issues/ideas	Regular team chats / meetings	No. We need to continue as we are.	Full team meetings in diary for 2019/20.
	We 'horizon scan' to prepare for opportunities/challenges	Engage with peers in other organisations, with experts in different fields of comms.	No. We have a good network of contacts, and increasing on-line information resources.	For example – the national local authority comms group, podcasts, Facebook UK-wide site for ideas.
The council monitors and supports the effectiveness of the Comms Team	Progress against expectations is reported openly	Pyramid – this sets out our targets and progress	As above – targets to be revised to better reflect our work.	As above – from TBC
	Delivery of our work is monitored by senior management	IHR Management Team Customer Services DMT Customer Services Board Senior Management Team	Yes. There can be a challenge in making our contribution visible (eg as a support service, our work is often seen to be delivered by the services we support.)	Identify useful ways in which to highlight the contribution of our communication service to the success of the council.
Making our team good for its members				
Aim	Required	Support	Improvement action needed?	Comment / example
Individuals support the goals of the Team	We know what we are working to achieve together and why	Communication, Marketing and Website Strategy	No. We know why we are needed.	Our role is to support the council in changing to meet challenge, and to attract people and investment to the area
		Team Plan		
	Members can ask questions and contribute to developing Team goals	Team meetings. Team ethos – collaborative, my success is your success  Team aware of who they can report any concerns about team-working to eg the Comms Manager, Head of Service, Director, employee assistance programme	No. We need to continue our open ways of working with each other.	We are enjoying working together.

Aim	Required	Support	Improvement action needed?	Comment/example
Individuals know that their contribution is important and valued	Members know what is expected of them individually	Job description PRD	No.	None
	Individual success is recognised as well as team success	Customer Services' Employee of the Month Council Recognition awards Team meetings PRDs	Yes. Unplanned demand from services always has impact on planned/proactive work.  Priorities identified in annual PRDs can change therefore in the course of the year; to more fairly reflect the work of an individual therefore.	'Unplanned action' to be included as a category in Comms Team members' PRDs.  The successful – and vital - fostering campaign is one example of an unplanned initiative this year.
Team members are able to change/develop skills if needed	Training is available and encouraged, for example through the action below.	PRCA Training and other on-line sources	No. We need to continue what we are doing.	Example:  Comms Manager and Senior/Comms Officers all completed a certificate in digital promotion for business in 2018
	Members work with external organisations and peers to share and develop best practice	National comms/research groups		

#### Improvement Actions

Action	Aim	Responsible	Timescale
Revise approach to PRD actions	More fairly reflect the work of individuals in the team	Comms Manager	Complete
Revise Pyramid targets	Better reflect Comms Team work	Comms Manager	On track for 2020/21
Renew PRCA membership	Support horizon scanning and delivery of best practice	Comms Manager	Complete
Achieve PRCA Management Standard	Highlight professionalism of the team; support team to respond to opportunities and challenges	Comms Team	Complete
Internal customer satisfaction survey	Get feedback from staff to support on-going improvement	Comms Team	July-Sept 2019
Identify more ways in which to raise awareness of the work of the Comms Team	Raise awareness of how we can help services and staff to achieve the objectives of the council.	Comms Team	On-going

**This plan has been agreed by:**

- all members of the Communications Team
- IHR Management Team