



**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**POST TITLE: Head of Customer Experience and Communications**

**Grade: MG2**

**DIVISION/SECTION: Customers, Policy and Improvement**

**Location: Civic Centre**

**Responsible to: Assistant Director, Customers, Policy and Improvement**

**Responsible for:** Corporate communications, consultation and engagement, frontline customer services, contact centre, web team, translations service, internal communications, events and corporate publications, corporate complaints and Members Enquiries service and concessionary travel.

**Post number:**

**Date: May 2019**

**MAIN PURPOSE**

1. Lead high performing, ambitious communications, customer services, complaints, Members Enquiries, consultation and community engagement services, while driving forward innovation and improvements to increase income generation and maximise commercial opportunities.
2. Strategic responsibility for protecting and enhancing the council's reputation through a highly professional communications and engagement service.
3. Lead and drive the delivery and continuous improvement of the council's customer contact (face-to-face, telephone, website and digital platforms). Innovating and driving the use of digital and social media to improve the delivery of services to residents and customers efficiently and effectively.

4. Lead high performing engagement and consultation services to ensure that the Council's residents, customers and community partners are fully engaged with the Council's agenda and strategic priorities, continually driving innovation through digital engagement and a new engagement strategy for the organisation.
5. Lead the Council's corporate complaints and Member enquiries service, taking a proactive approach to resolving external customer complaints and using customer feedback to drive service improvement across the organisation.

## **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Lead and manage a high performing and motivated team of officers across relevant professional specialisms – communications, consultation and engagement, digital, complaints, customer services – ensuring that teams are fully integrated and consistently deliver against the council's key priorities.
2. Lead the development and delivery of an effective communications strategy and annual plan that protects and improves the reputation of Merton and ensures that key stakeholders are engaged with the council's agenda.
3. Strategic responsibility and accountability for the management and development of the council's corporate brand and identity, driving its consistent application throughout the organisation.
4. Provide professional advice and guidance to the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members on key communications, consultation, engagement, complaints and customer service issues.
5. To provide leadership to the organisation about all strategic communications matters and to direct the delivery of key services including media relations, internal communications, publications, community engagement, events, marketing, digital and social media – ensuring all that services are highly professional and effectively delivered.
6. To provide an effective corporate out-of-hours media relations service and to lead on effective communications and engagement management in crisis and/or emergency situations.
7. To lead the development and delivery of the Council's corporate Customer Contact Strategy and Service Standards in collaboration with senior officers and elected Members, ensuring that these are driving improvements to the customer experience and efficiencies for the council.
8. To lead and champion the delivery of an effective complaints service to ensure the management, resolution and learning from complaints and

customer feedback, in collaboration with senior officers and elected Members.

9. To drive continuous improvement to the overall customer experience using intelligence from complaints received, including policy development and service improvement.
10. Accountable for the effective delivery of customer contact services – via telephone, face to face, online, digital and social media and also responsible for the effective delivery of the Council's physical customer contact environment including the Civic Centre reception and Merton Link.
11. To improve the customer experience by championing development of customer access channels, including face-to-face and telephone access and to lead on the implementation of a new digital platform and communications channels to reduce demand on face-to-face and telephone contact interaction.
12. Strategic responsibility for the council's website, driving continuous improvement and development to ensure it works effectively for the organisation, both as an entry point for customers accessing services and as a communications channel.
13. To act as the corporate client for outsourced arrangements for services including (but not limited to) creative design, location filming and collection of cash income.
14. Operate as the council's champion of local people, ensuring their voice is prominent and that customers' and residents' views are sought, heard, understood and acted on.
15. To lead the development and delivery of the council's Community Engagement Strategy ensuring that residents and stakeholders are effectively engaged through a regular programme of events, forums and digital engagement channels to address issues and provide feedback.
16. To commission and oversee resident and customer feedback through regular surveys, reporting outcomes to CLT and Cabinet.
17. To ensure high quality and professional advice to the Corporate Management Team, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members on key communications, consultation and engagement issues, ensuring that all legislative requirements are met and that the organisation has a clear a framework and guidance in place for activities in this area.
18. To oversee provision of the Council's Complaints and Members Enquiries service, ensuring the effective management and response to all complaints and the co-ordination of customer feedback and complaint reviews, working with senior officers and stakeholders to resolve complex issues in a pragmatic way.
19. To ensure that the Complaints service adheres to the Council's Policies and service standards as well as relevant statutory frameworks,

completing performance plans and returns and liaising with the Local Government Ombudsman and other external stakeholders as required.

20. To develop and maintain routine analysis of complaints and Members Enquiries as a source of customer intelligence and feedback and ensure this drives the council's improvement agenda.
21. To innovate and drive forward new commercial and income generation opportunities, to maximise income and to leverage funding opportunities from external bodies and partners.
22. To continuously horizon scan and look for best practice, innovate and improve across all parts of the service and professions within it.
23. Commercial approach – look for efficiencies, constantly review and improve processes, structures, policies, technology, standards and working practices to deliver excellence on an evidence based approach.
24. Responsible for effective financial management of operational budgets of up to £15m. Additional responsibility for the collection and reconciliation of circa £40m annual income through numerous channels including the award of contracts to external organisations.
25. To provide strategic direction and leadership for staff across the whole service, ensuring that staff are motivated and that a training and development programme is in place across for all professions in the service.
26. To drive out the synergies between the combined communications and customer contact and complaints/Members Enquiries services, ensuring that the Council makes the most effective use of limited resources.
27. To ensure the collection of high quality data and management information, setting key performance indicators to drive performance improvement across the service.
28. To ensure effective service plans are in place to support delivery of the council's strategic objectives.
29. To participate in the overall management of the Division and to deputise for the Assistant Director as required



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**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

**Professional and post specific requirements**

- Must have a relevant degree or professional qualification and/or equivalent work experience in a leadership role.
- Delivery of effective communications, media and marketing for a multi-functional, political organisation
- Experience of managing customer facing services (face-to-face, telephone, online) in a multi-functional public sector organisation
- Experience of strategy and policy development and delivery.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

**Experience**

- Equivalent senior leadership experience in a complex, political environment in a relevant discipline.
- Experience of internal and external communications techniques practices and current thinking.
- Excellent professional judgement and experience of providing strategic advice at the highest level of an organisation.
- Experience of operating to tight deadlines in highly pressured environments.

- Excellent experience of staff management together with the proven ability to motivate and develop staff.
- Experience of positively challenging thinking to create better outcomes for customers, residents and the organisation.
- Proven experience of developing, implementing and monitoring clear performance standards and service delivery outcomes.
- Experiencing of managing a significant operational budget and of commissioning services.
- Experience of leading on income generation activities and developing commercial strategies to ensure that income generation and business development opportunities are realised.
- Experience of project management and a track record of successfully leading and driving change in a complex organisation.
- Experience in commissioning and procuring services and performance management of contracts and suppliers.

## **Skills**

- Highly developed effective leadership and management skills with the ability to build, motivate and develop a multi-disciplinary team.
- Ability to develop and deliver specialist training to Members, officers and partners.
- Ability to make sound and timely decisions, work under own initiative to initiate action and provide pragmatic and effectively thought out solutions, takes significant decisions on behalf of the Council
- Good numeracy and analytical skills.
- Political acumen and the ability to form productive, professional working relationships with councillors across the political spectrum and with staff at all levels within the organisation.
- Ability to inspire, influence and lead at all levels in the organisation including with CMT and Directors.
- Stakeholder management skills and ability to work effectively with the Council's external partners, working with them to develop and coordinate borough-wide policies and programmes that support the Community Plan and the Council's vision and priorities.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including presentation skills in formal and informal settings.
- The ability to effectively lead the council's media response including during a crisis situation.
- The ability to set the strategic direction for the Customer Experience and Communications service, including development of the overarching strategy and implementation of delivery plans.

- Commercial skills and ability to develop strong working relationships with key stakeholders to deliver effective income generation partnerships and new business development opportunities.
- Able to plan, organise and prioritise work, tasks and projects with efficient use of resources.
- The ability to develop close working relationships with the media and community partners to enhance the image and reputation of the council.

## **Knowledge**

- Understanding of the structure of local Government, the role of elected members and current issues facing local Government.
- Understanding the role that communications must play in shaping and promoting the priorities identified by the authority, and how to implement, co-ordinate and evaluate communications activity to achieve these objectives.
- Thorough working knowledge of the Code of Conduct relating to Local Government publicity and other relevant legislation.
- A highly developed understanding of the principle of Customer Care in employment and service delivery.
- Up-to-date knowledge of communications best practice and the ability to provide a consistently high-quality service.
- Up-to-date understanding of the use of the latest communications technology, especially digital media and customer access channels.
- A demonstrable understanding of the role of the internet, digital and social media and other technologies in the provision of services to, and communication with, the public.
- Understanding of media relations and marketing communications - including crisis management.
- A strong understanding of the issues related to diversity, equalities and community cohesion and the ways in which public services should be provided in this context.
- An understanding of the workings of local government, current issues and challenges and the law as related to local government PR.
- Understanding of the role of support services and how they can contribute to the effectiveness of direct service provision
- Understanding of the principles of value for money and an ability to apply them in the management of support services
- Understanding of the council's vision and mission statement and how they relate to the work of the team

## **Other**

- Flexibility to work outside normal office hours as required and attend council meetings as required
- Ability to be available to attend council premises out-of-hours in the event of emergencies or urgent management issues.