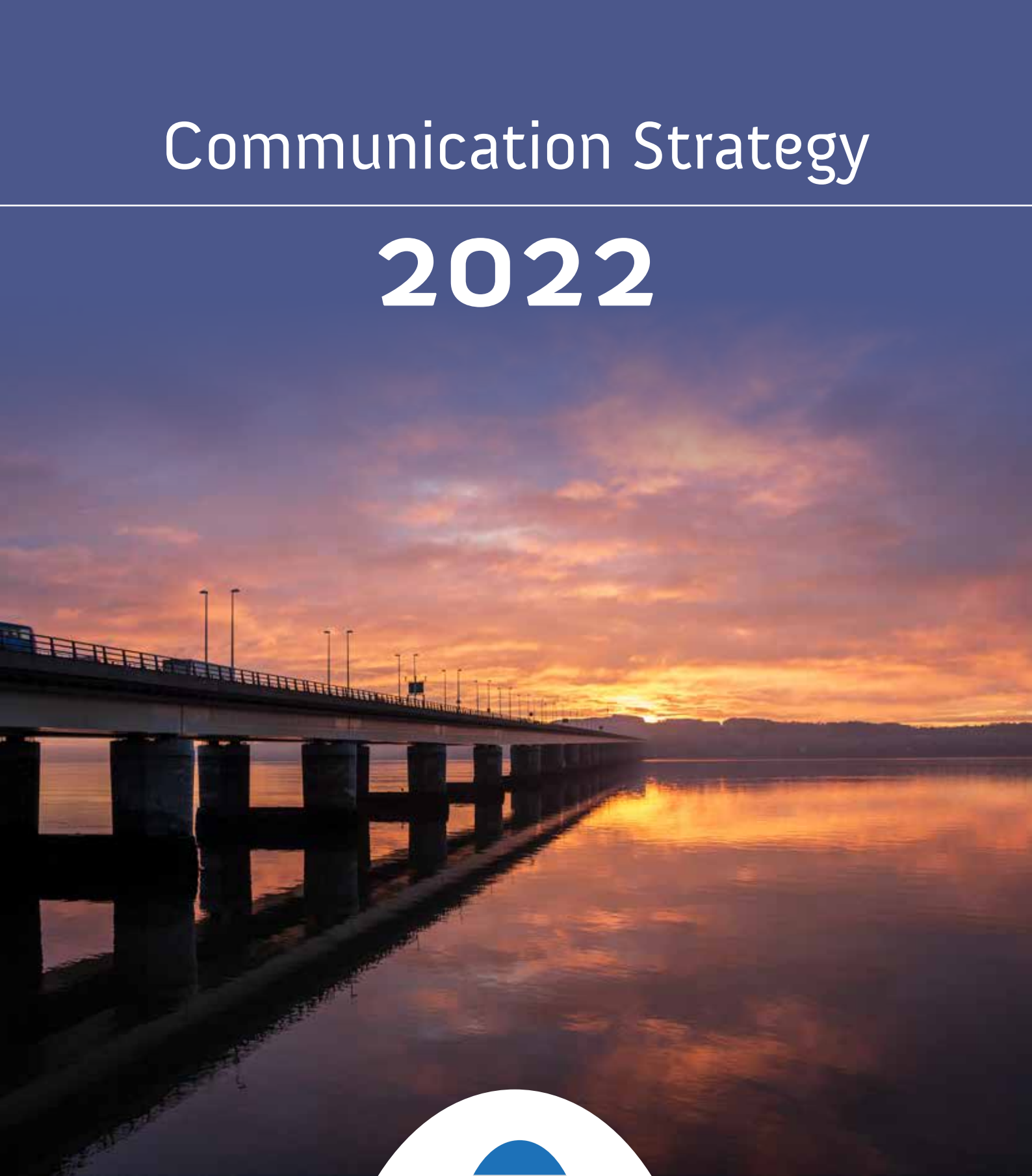


Communication Strategy

2022



Tay Road Bridge



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Executive Summary

This new Communication Strategy running from 2022 to 2025 provides a framework to guide the Tay Road Bridge communication activities for the future.

The Strategy takes a corporate approach to providing simple, strong, clear and consistent messages from the Bridge to both external and internal audiences. It is about engaging with and informing users, maintaining a positive reputation and developing a well informed workforce.

To communicate successfully, the message must be clear, the process simple and the appropriate combination of communications channels used in each situation. The Tay Road Bridge will use a multiple channel approach harnessing the reach of social media and other digital communications.

Communication with bridge users and partners

These will continue to be proactive and adopt the principle of openness, timeliness, transparency and accountability.

Media relations

The Tay Road Bridge has a strong relationship with the local media. The strategy will ensure this continues.

Dundee City Council's Corporate Communications team will continue to provide advice and support to staff in regards to public relations.

Internal messages to staff

A more structured, proactive, joined-up and consistent approach to communications with staff has been introduced and will continue.

Staff will be given clear information on the reasons for change to assist their understanding.

Communication Channels

The website for the Tay Road Bridge will continue to be developed as a critical channel of communication with bridge users and external organisations.

Appropriate use of social media will be maintained, with Twitter principally being used by staff to update bridge users, including relevant information on closures and issues of interest. Other channels may also be adopted as required to reach different audiences.

Print and broadcast media will be kept informed of important information concerning the bridge.

Communication Procedures and Guidance

A series of communication procedures and guidance will be utilised to assist staff in understanding what their actions should be in specific situations. These will be drawn up with guidance and checklists.



The website...will continue to be developed as a critical channel of communication



Objective of the Strategy

The communication strategy is designed to provide a clear framework for how the Tay Road Bridge communicates.

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1.1 Why is a Communication Strategy required?

The reason for developing a communication strategy arose from the need for the Tay Road Bridge to be clear and focused about what it is and what it is seeking to do. With an ever-changing media landscape, staff members must be aware of any implications that may arise from dealing with external communications.

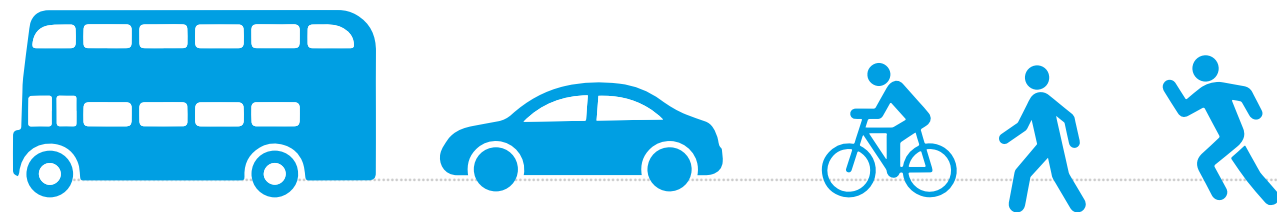
The strategy will provide a framework to guide communication activities. It provides information on current activity, where the bridge plans to go in the future and actions required to get there. The strategy will direct communications externally including interaction with local communities, the media, partners, emergency services and transport companies and internally with its own employees. It has been developed to inform and educate, and to support consultation on other strategy developments, as well as joint working with partners.

1.2 Communication Strategy outcomes

Ongoing engagement with bridge users, maintaining a positive reputation and developing a well-informed workforce.

1.3 The Communication Strategy's objectives are to:

- **Ensure that users are well informed** about updates and changes.
- Assist in achieving the overall vision for the bridge by **ensuring that all staff understand what the key priorities are**.
- **Promote safe and respectful use of the bridge by all users**.
- **Raise awareness and understanding of specific issues**, including attendance at the bridge by people in crisis, measures in place to support them, and the impacts of incidents on other bridge users.
- **Maintain and develop the framework, standards and relationships** necessary to ensure effective communication of Tay Road Bridge activities.
- **Maintain and develop internal communications channels** to raise staff awareness.



Promote safe and respectful use of the bridge by all users



Principles Influencing the Strategy

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2.1 General

To communicate successfully the message must be clear, accurate and timely, the process simple and the appropriate combination of communication channels used in each situation.

2.2 Context

Staff are responsible for the management and maintenance of the bridge.

26,000 vehicles cross the Tay Road Bridge each day. Users need to know up-to-date information such as roadworks or bridge closures. It is vital for communication methods to be fast and clear.

2.3 External Audience Requirements

The Tay Road Bridge needs to clearly communicate its purpose, vision and intended outcomes. This will ensure high quality services are delivered and that the best use is made of resources. It is a lifeline to many, commuters rely on information from the bridge.

This requires a review of the bridge's vision on a regular basis to adapt to changes in the ever-changing communications landscape.

2.4 Internal Staff Requirements

Staff communications continue to be improved. Staff and Officers must work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles. This will provide a better level of service for customers.

Increased clarity of the vision through good communication will help staff understand how they fit into delivering the Tay Road Bridge's objectives and increase motivation.

2.5 Corporate Approach

The Tay Road Bridge needs to provide a strong, clear and consistent message. This should come from the centre of the organisation, disseminated to both internal and external audiences that then allows feedback from whatever audience it reaches.

The Communications Division at Dundee City Council will act as a consultancy service to the Bridge to assist.

2.6 Multiple Channel Approach

With the ever-expanding development of technology allowing new and varied means of communication both individually and more generally, the Tay Road Bridge should be able to communicate both with its external audience and its staff in ever increasingly effective ways. This needs to be continually assessed to determine the most appropriate way to pass on specific messages in each individual case. What is the right communication channel for one message or audience group is not for another.

Social media is more personal and as such can help in the move towards the individualisation of messages required to help effective delivery. Q&A pages have also proven effective in conveying information that informs and reassures the public.



work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles



Communication Functions, Channels and Procedures

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3.1 General

Communication is the two-way transfer of information or an idea, from one person to another. There are any number of channels that can be used to communicate, from a simple face-to-face conversation to social media that can reach millions of people in an instant. The growth of more social, more digital and more mobile communication is taken into consideration in this strategy and the implications of these changes. Each channel is discussed as to where we are presently, where we should be aiming for and the actions required to get there. The main Procedures are also discussed to give clarity as to how they should be followed.

3.2 Communication Functions

Communication Functions are the three major communication activities that are the core of this strategy.

1 Engagement with bridge users and partners

Present Communications

A much improved area since the last Communication Strategy was introduced. Social media has allowed faster, two-way engagement with audiences, while the website allows detailed information to be shared and signposted.

Future Communications

Communications with users, partners, emergency services and transport companies will continued to be targeted using the best available media and channels, including video, signage and other digital media.

The Tay Road Bridge manager will hold meetings with partners to make sure the bridge is communicating well with them and fulfilling their needs.

The website will be updated on a regular basis.

Outcomes of effective communication with target audiences will be:

- consistently high levels of user satisfaction
- greater interaction with users and patrons.
- Minimises impact of issues
- understanding of priorities by staff

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Revise core messages and how they should be communicated and reinforced through interaction with audiences.
- Build on existing two way communications with users through social media channels, and continue to improve the website.
- Hold regular meetings with partners to improve communications

2 Media relations

Present Communications

As part of a Service Level Agreement, Dundee City Council’s public relations team handle a range of communications for the Tay Road Bridge Joint Board.

The team:

- proactively seeks out, researches and writes news releases.
- organises press conferences, media briefings and photo calls.
- deals with enquiries from local, regional and national media outlets
- acts as an internal consultancy offering advice and support
- manages the public relations aspects of any potential crisis situation.

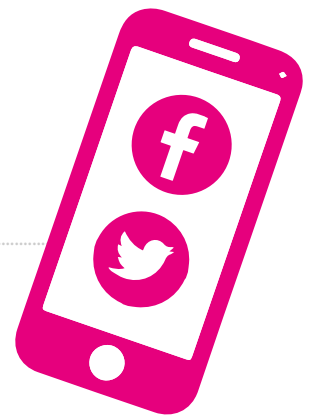
Future Communications

The primary role of media communication in any organisation is to manage reputation. One of the key tools used to do this is a proactive relationship with local media.

Future actions are to build on current communication activities and increase the level of proactive discussions with the local media.

Outcomes of effective communication with target audiences will be:

- consistently high levels of user satisfaction
- greater interaction with users and patrons.
- Minimises impact of issues
- understanding of priorities by staff



Social media has allowed faster, two-way engagement with audiences

3 Internal messages to staff

Present Communications

Improvements have been made across all areas. Particularly involving shift workers. Messages from senior staff are now more effectively reaching all of the workforce but further improvement will be beneficial.

Future Communications

Communications influences the perception and performance of employees. Feeling valued and in touch is important to overall satisfaction levels. A planned and sustained flow of quality communications is key to supporting teamwork, commitment and innovation.

More information needs to be supplied corporately to staff on the decisions that are being taken that will influence their work. The outcome of this would be an educated and informed workforce who understand the reasons for change and in doing so can become advocates for it.

Best practice and research both suggest that it is vital that the same message is circulated in the appropriate way for all staff.

Key messages should be given precedence and be reinforced in different ways at different times.

Development of communication plans would use a mix of the following:

- Staff intranet site to provide:
 - Staff blog
 - Staff bulletins/news updates
 - Board briefings
 - Suggestion schemes
 - Focus groups/service improvement teams
- Noticeboards, newsletters and IT training.
- Regular team/section meetings in which staff have specific communication roles
- Regular employee surveys

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- An audit and review of current internal communication procedures with a view to developing a comprehensive new system for all staff. Investigate the use of video briefings and Teams channels.
- More information for staff highlighting their role for the future.
- Provide training for staff on communications.

3.3 Communication Channels

This Communication Strategy takes the approach that multiple channels are available and should be utilised as appropriate when undertaking any communications.

The following are the specific channels which are critical in how the Tay Road Bridge communicates and how they should be utilised.

Web Development

The Tay Road Bridge web site is one of the most important channels for communication with key target audiences and partners. The aim is to continue to use the website as a source of news about the bridge. How we receive information from the internet is ever changing. It is vital that the Tay Road Bridge adapts to these changes, eg using easy to understand Q&As for important subjects.

Social Media/Digital Communication

Used appropriately, to a targeted audience, with clear messages, and as part of a planned process, social media can be a powerful and cost-effective tool.

It can be regularly updated to include traffic information and bridge closures. This will reach a larger audience than before.

Social Media requires an entirely different approach from the normal channels of communication. Fast, interactive and almost always unsupervised, these channels require regular monitoring, quick responses and a confident and robust approach by the staff group using them. This has been implemented well in recent years and the Twitter account has circa 11,000 followers.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- It should be decided whether additional social media channels would extend the audience reach of the Tay Road Bridge.
- Create a series of protocols to assist staff when they are using social media, give advice and guidelines as to its various uses and its risks will be drawn up in the near future, with help from Dundee City Council's Communications Division.

3.4 Corporate Identity

A brand is more than just a logo - it's about an organisation's values and beliefs and how it wants to be perceived. It needs to convey its core values and give a common base for a clear, consistent and unified message.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Internal promotion of values

3.5 Complaints System/Compliments and Suggestions

The Tay Road Bridge is committed to providing a high-quality customer service and has a robust complaints handling procedure. Complaints are recorded by phone, in writing via email or on the website. People making complaints are a very important communication channel to be able to listen to customers and hear what is not right with the services to provide continuous improvements. Responses can help shape the public's view of the bridge in a positive or negative way.

Compliments can also be used and can be highly useful in motivating staff.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Procedure put in place so all complaints are regularly reviewed and acted upon by management.
- Procedure put in place that ensures all compliments are passed on to the relevant staff.
- Regular reports are provided to the Bridge Board by Management on complaints and compliments.

3.6 Communications with the Tay Road Bridge Manager

Internal communications should be handled directly with the Tay Road Bridge Manager. This will help solve problems and issues much more efficiently.

External will be managed by Dundee City Council's Communications Division.

3.7 Accessible Communications

The Tay Road Bridge will use the principles of:

- Providing alternative formats to increase the available information and advice ie Easy read version
- Ensuring the Website is fully accessible
- Training key front line staff on communication needs and support for protected characteristic groups such as deaf or non English speakers.

3.8 Signage

- The value of clear signage should not be underestimated as an effective communication tool.
- Done well, it can change behaviours, help deal with significant issues and improve users' experience.
- Over the next year, the Bridge management and a team of experts will work together to deliver a suite of effective new signs, art, lighting and related furniture etc on the Bridge.
- The objectives of this are:
 - To make the bridge and surrounding area a safe, welcoming, interesting and interactive place to visit and travel over for pedestrians, cyclists and visitors alike.
 - Break down any stigma surrounding the bridge as being a lonely place, or a place to go when you are feeling vulnerable.
 - Create a place where this mindset can be altered but still provide the necessary support information for those who require it.
 - Deliver this in an inclusive fashion.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Engage with experts to design new visual approach to communication on the Bridge
- Implement designs and monitor effectiveness



Monitoring and Evaluation

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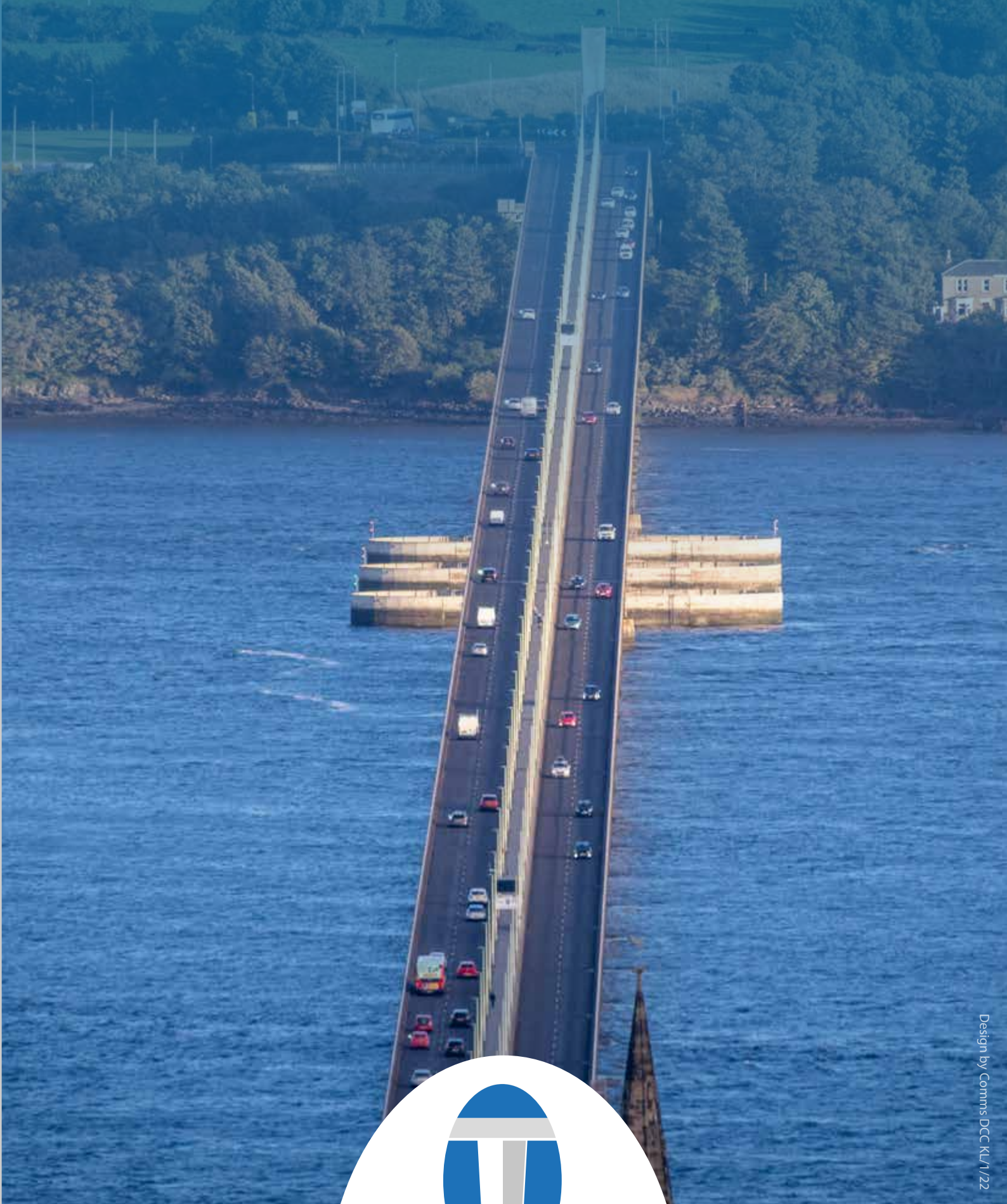
4.1 General

It is essential that an outcome-based approach is taken to performance managing the Tay Road Bridge communications.

Appropriate performance indicators will be devised that help to establish whether or not staff are meeting its communications objectives. This includes monitoring of social media and website analytics.

4.2 Review

The communications strategy will be monitored and evaluated regularly to update and improve. The Strategy's actions will be reported to the staff on a regular basis.



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Tay Road Bridge

tayroadbridge.co.uk