



Marketing and Communications Strategy

Warwickshire County Council 2014-2018



Foreword

The marketing and communications team sets the strategic framework for delivering the marketing and communications functions which are essential to the delivery of the Council's ambitions as articulated in the One Organisation Plan.

The framework covers all marketing activity and all communications – internal and external, on and off line. It is set against a back drop of reducing resources and increasing demand. The £92m savings which need to be achieved over the next four years will not only require explanation and clarification to our various publics but also promote a culture of increasing commercialisation and the search for additional income generation. For these reasons the framework also includes objectives set around sponsorship and marketing support to the organisation.

The framework is based on four key principles which will shape the way in which we deliver our services:

- 1. A commitment to placing the council's customers at the heart of our activities**
- 2. The various disciplines of communications are treated as a whole rather individual elements**
- 3. Marketing and communications is an integrated, corporate function**
- 4. Our marketing and communications must be of demonstrable value to the Council and the communities we serve**

So what lies at the heart of excellent marketing and communications? The Local Government Association (LGA) and the national communications body for marketing and communications in the Public Sector, LGComms advocate a strategy of building trust among our customers. Our customers should know what is available, why we have taken the decisions we have and how they can access our services. They must be able to trust not just what we tell them but that we will engage with them and place them at the core of our thinking. Trust builds and maintains our reputation; brings customers, partners, stakeholders and staff on the journey we have mapped out and enables us to achieve our aims and objectives, be they at a broad place-based level or pertaining to specific behaviour influencing campaigns.

What follows is a framework which identifies the strategy and tools we will engage to

... "be an organisation that can develop and sustain a society that looks after its most vulnerable members, that delivers quality services at the right time, and seeks opportunities for economic growth and innovation".
One Organisation Plan 2014

A strategy based on four key principles

1. A commitment to placing the council's customers at the heart of our activities

This requires us to know and understand our customers. We need to engage regularly – listening and opening up dialogue as opposed to simply informing. We need to ensure we provide opportunities to feed back and encourage our customers to help shape services.

Understanding our customers – who they are, how best, when and where they like to be engaged requires a continuous circle and cycle of research, engagement and informing service provision.

Accessing and utilising the research available to us and commissioning research where none exists provides us with the best possible understanding of our customers and therefore how best to shape our services.

Sources;
The Observatory
Service users
User data
Campaign evaluation
Commissioned



2. The various disciplines of communications are treated as a whole rather than individual elements

The hallmark of excellent communications is a seamless alignment of all brand elements – the messages we transmit and the impact of those messages; our visual identity, the channels we use to communicate and our customer service.

We call this approach 360 degree marketing. This means that our activity must be planned, managed and aligned, be that member communications, media relations, campaigns, internal communications, customer service or visual identity.

3. Marketing Communications is an integrated corporate function

The marketing and communications strategic framework is predicated on the basis of delivery through an integrated marketing and communications (marketing and communications) team.

In practice this means:

- The marketing and communications team delivers a core set of corporate activities as described below with additional agreed work delivered through service level agreements
- All media relations activity is delivered through the marketing and communications team
- All marketing and communications activity is channelled through the marketing and communications team
- Procurement of marketing and communications supplies and services, including print and

merchandise, is made through the marketing and communications team

Which means that:

- There is a coordinated, managed, and consistent approach to all our marketing and communications activities
- The brand and reputation of the Council is actively managed
- We achieve efficiencies and economies of scale across reducing resources, both in terms of staff skills and expertise and ensuring best value for money

4. Our marketing and communications must be of demonstrable value to the Council and the communities we serve

In order to understand the impact and therefore the value of our activity, we will monitor and evaluate all that we do. Each Group will have its own marketing and communications plan which flows from the corporate plan and each will be governed by a service level agreement clearly outlining the services covered and reporting processes.

Each individual campaign will have a marketing and communications plan which includes monitoring and evaluation. Campaign objectives will be based on research and customer insight and specific targets set. These will be reported on to the client and contribute to the overall monitoring and evaluation of marketing and communications work.

Media relations – monthly analysis of enquiries, responses, results and coverage achieved including inclusion of quotes, key messages and photographs.

Key channels will be monitored and impact of campaign and news activity evaluated. This includes, web, intranet, social media, staff newsletter.

THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX



Marketing and Communications Core Offer



Section A – core provision

1. Media relations

- 1.1 Reactive: response to media enquiries, requests for interviews and comments
- 1.2 Proactive: identification of stories and news which support the key objectives of the Council as identified in the One Organisation Plan
- 1.3 Rebuttals and challenge and media management as appropriate – for example, correcting facts, handling complaints to the media and managing the amount of exposure relating to specific issues
- 1.3 Emergency situation response, such as major accidents, flooding
- 1.4 Critical incident response, such as death in care
- 1.5 Preparation and distribution of all media releases including liaison with relevant members and officers
- 1.6 Monitoring of all media on and off line, including social media

2. Corporate communications

- 2.1 Corporate brand and identity
- 2.2 Corporate publications
- 2.3 Corporate stakeholder engagement
- 2.4 Design and publishing of corporate publications, printed and web-based
- 2.5 Corporate campaigns
 - public facing - based around the five key priorities
 - key internal campaigns
 - corporate issues
 - sharing and archiving of campaign and performance



2.6 Internal communications

- Staff newsletter
- Intranet
- Core brief
- Roadshows
- Templates for group communications
- Staff awards and events

3. Senior management and Member relations

3.1 Briefings and liaison on media issues

3.2 Communications advice, support and attendance at key meetings from Cabinet, Council Overview and Scrutiny to management meetings and boards.

3.3 Creation of marketing and communications plan on Group/priority basis

Section B – commissioned provision (through SLA, internal or external invoice)

- Campaign planning and management based around products, services or issues
- Specific services including design, visual identity, photography, video production, single issue management, copy writing, printing, merchandise, exhibitions and roadshows, social media campaigns
- The above services are charged for EXCEPT where they are part of media relations and corporate campaigns, such as five corporate campaigns to promote the key priorities, and the provision of core services for agreed corporate generic campaigns such as Digital by Default, governance structure, corporate/group presentations, staff newsletter .



Our Aim



To build trust in the organisation through effective communications with our customers, residents, partners, stakeholders, members and staff.

Our Objectives

- 1. To support the council in achieving its vision and priorities**
 - through a series of campaigns and activities based around the key priorities; through clear and consistent messages and a cohesive, consistent approach to branding
- 2. To support the council in delivering key internal programmes which facilitate delivery of the priorities**
 - through a series of campaigns and activities internal supporting programmes, including Digital by Default, One front door, governance structure
- 3. To support the Groups in achieving their priorities**
 - through overarching marketing and communications plans and project or issue specific plans.
- 4. To engage with members and staff to ensure consistency of understanding around the priorities and key internal programmes**
 - through revitalised internal communications, including democratic support
- 5. To support the emerging drive towards increased income generation**
 - through marketing support, development of a corporate approach to sponsorship and supporting the areas seeking to commercialise areas of activity (eg Shire Hall; Road Safety...)
- 6. To establish an excellent, value for money marketing and communications function at WCC**
 - through agreed corporate policies which achieve consistency, impact, efficiency and effectiveness and the setting , monitoring and measuring of outcomes for all areas



Audiences

Our audiences are many and varied and our approach must be targeted and timely. Communication must be based on insight and include a continuous cycle of engagement and feedback.

Customers and residents

Businesses and investors

Media – on and off line, local, national and trade

Visitors

Special interest groups

Staff

Members

Trade Unions

Suppliers

MPs

National govt

Government agencies

Key Corporate Messages

Narrative

Warwickshire County Council exists to develop and sustain a society that is safe and protected; looks after its most vulnerable members, delivers appropriate, quality services at the right time and seeks opportunities for growth and innovation.

Against a backdrop of unprecedented cuts we will work with a streamlined budget to commission or deliver services which meet people's needs and shape a sustainable future for all who live, work and visit the county.

The table below demonstrates our approach to messaging. To achieve maximum impact, we have set what we want people to hear, see and believe about the county and council (out takes). In order to achieve these, key messages are listed, which when delivered regularly and consistently will collaboratively build to create the out takes described. We will use specific examples - proof points to evidence and give life to the messages.

For example:

Out take	Message	Proof Point
Warwickshire...	We are making Warwickshire safer	Numbers killed or seriously injured on our roads down



Out take

Warwickshire is a great place to live, work and visit

Messages

- We are making Warwickshire safer.
- We are making Warwickshire healthier.



Proof Points

Key Corporate Messages contd

Out take

Warwickshire is a great place to live, work and visit

Messages

- We are helping people to live independently for as long as possible.



- We promote economic growth and vitality



- We are a centre of choice for business



Proof Points

Key Corporate Messages contd

Out take

**Warwickshire is a great place to live,
work and visit**

- Our schools and colleges offer education which meets the needs of business



- Our communications and transport networks are excellent



- We have a rich heritage and vibrant living culture



Proof Points

Key Corporate Messages contd

Out take

We manage our reducing budgets carefully

Messages

- We seek the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and adults who need our help.
- We target our resources efficiently and effectively.
- We have to prioritise spend – we will look to protect vulnerable people
- We manage budgets prudently, maximising impact, avoiding duplication and offering value for money.
- We look for new ways to deliver services and seek opportunities for economic growth



Proof Points

Key Corporate Messages contd

Out take	Messages	Proof Points
We manage our reducing budgets carefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work with partners to deliver or commission effective, efficient service 	
Our customers are at the heart of what we do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We create dialogues with our customers • Our customers help shape our services • We act on what our customers say 	
The Council is the natural and trusted leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our councillors are champions of the communities they represent • Our staff are professional - experts in their fields 	



Appendix 1.



Appendix 2.

Marcomms Ten Point Plan

Background

Brief overview of the event / activity to be promoted.

Objective

What do you want to achieve. Make objectives smart

- For example, increase on-line take up of digital service a from x to y by (date)

Link to corporate plan

- Show how the activity links back to organisational priorities

Audience

Who do you want to talk to – the more specific the better.

- For example, older residents aged 60 plus; people looking for work, potential volunteers etc
- Audience insight – what do you know about the target audience? How do they prefer to receive information? What formats are best suited to the audience. Consider need to make other formats available.

Wording to be used:

If you would like this information in a different format, please contact Marketing and Communications on 01926 413727.

Messaging

What do you want to say to your audience. Are the messages different for the different audiences identified above.

- For example, older residents may be interested in practicalities - how to keep warm, stay safe etc, younger people might be motivated by aspirational thinking.

Activities and channels

What's the best way to get your messages to each audience

- For example – online promotion, social media, engagement events, video screens, posters, flyers, banners etc.

Roles and responsibilities

- For example – copy, messages drafted by People Group, crafted by marketing and communications; campaign material briefed & signed off by People Group, designed and distributed by marketing and communications. Materials produced by the Print Unit.

Resource

- Available staff and budget

Risks

- What are the risks associated with this activity (including not doing this) and what mitigating activity can be put in place?

Evaluation

- What are you going to measure to gauge the success of the campaign.

For example – no. of clicks on web page, number of sign ups, target audience reach, media coverage, take up of service etc.

Appendix 3.

Putting the customer at the heart of what we do

In order to ensure we put the customer at the heart not only of what we do but how we do it, all customer facing marketing and communications campaigns and materials, such as posters, leaflets, adverts etc, must:

- Pay regard to and follow the spirit of the customer service strategy
- Be channelled through the corporate marketing and communications team for all copywriting and design and for production through County Print Services.

This includes all printed materials - on paper and any other substrate, for example, promotional merchandise including branded clothing, pens, banners and so on. As well as printed promotion, all broadcast, social media and web marketing including facebook pages and twitter accounts, new websites, videos produced for corporate youtube accounts and radio/tv promotions, should be procured through the marketing and communications team.

- Be presented initially in the form of a marketing and communications plan (see Appendix 2) which includes the requirement to clearly articulate the link to corporate objectives, fit with relevant business plan, customer insight, channel preference and promotion of the opportunity to receive information in alternative formats. This will help ensure the campaign realises the objectives it sets out to achieve and is accessible to all potential audiences.

Marketing and Communications

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