



Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework 2024-25

Introduction

The aim of this framework is to share how we will tell the story of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and the County.

It describes how marketing and communications activity will support the delivery of the Council Plan and reflects the priorities articulated in the Council Delivery Plan

As pressures on the public purse continue to rise, we will be faced with difficult decisions. The Council has a robust heritage of prudent financial management, but we are not immune to the challenges faced generally in local government.

We need to build on the trust people have in us, being clear about what we are doing and why, so that our partners, stakeholders, communities and colleagues understand our actions and work with us to find solutions.

We also need to build on the pride people have in our County and through a voice rooted in authenticity, we will celebrate all that makes Warwickshire the best it can be. Today, tomorrow, together.

Priorities for 2024-25

The Council Delivery Plan identifies our areas of focus for the next two years. We will support each area, wherever appropriate linking themes showing how each part of the Council contributes to the achievement of our mission to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations.

Building trust in the Council and pride in our County

- We will enhance our sharing of news – showing our progress on the Council Plan through video, graphics and copy.
- We will encourage residents to share how, where and why they are proud to live or work in Warwickshire.
- We will showcase the many ways across the County where we are creating opportunities to close the gap in inequalities.
- We will amplify our commitment to demonstrate we care – about our residents, communities, businesses, the people who work and volunteer here, our visitors and our staff.
- We will work closely with our partners to build on Team Warwickshire. This year will see staff from partner organisations share physical working space with us and we will work together to ensure all colleagues are informed, engaged and feel valued and the new arrangements are welcomed.
- And we will refresh our internal communications, building on our solid platform of engagement results achieved in the Your Say survey 2024, with particular focus on reaching remote staff; induction and empowering tier 4 managers with the tools they need to cascade organisational vision, direction and priorities.



Marketing and communication goals

For the council to achieve its goal of making Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations, our communications goals are:

1. To build on the reputation and brand awareness of Warwickshire County Council as a great Council and partner
2. To increase engagement with communities and use data and insight so that services reflect need, barriers to access are overcome and best use is made of existing assets
3. To ensure that our employees are well-informed and engaged
4. To ensure members are kept informed about key issues
5. To make a strategic contribution to the achievement of the areas of focus articulated in the Council Delivery Plan

Goal 1

To build on the reputation and brand awareness of Warwickshire County Council as a great Council and partner

In order to maximise sharing of key Council messages, we will proactively pursue a planned schedule of communications, complemented by taking tactical advantage of issues that arise. This will be achieved through news releases, campaigns and our schedule of Council owned publications. Our Media Relations Protocol sets out how we will work with the media. We will lead the county's communications response on major issues as appropriate.

How we will achieve this

- Develop, agree and embed narratives around the areas of focus, described earlier
- Maintain weekly calendar of WCC news and use a calendar of national events to amplify our voice
- Use our owned channels to share information and engage with different audiences
- Develop strategic campaigns which are delivered in partnership with our key stakeholders
- Create a schedule of information round ups to highlight progress made against the Council Plan
- Show the difference we make through a suite of people-led experiential videos
- Reinforce our position as a caring and welcoming organisation



Goal 2

To increase engagement with communities and use data and insight so that services reflect need, barriers to access are overcome and best use is made of existing assets

How we will achieve this

- Ensure our communications reach those groups identified in the Council's Creating Opportunities document and the ICB's CORE20Plus5
- Investigate options for greater listening to local communities
- Increase engagement on social media according to our Social Media Strategic Framework
- Develop communications which illustrate and illuminate the power of communities
- Support development of local levelling up plans
- Develop a suite of communications to shine a light on creating opportunities across the county
- Engage with communities to build on local pride
- Ensure our communications are accessible by paying particular attention to needs of identified groups. We will provide easy read versions of key documents where appropriate

Goal 3

To ensure Council employees are well-informed and engaged

We know that the better engaged employees are, the more likely they are to perform well, feel pride in their organisation and act as ambassadors of the organisation. Therefore we will:

- Promote wellbeing and an inclusive culture
- Provide visible, engaging and empathetic leadership
- Engage and listen
- Inform and communicate direction
- Create a high-performance culture

How we will achieve this

- Maintain annual plan of activity and engagement opportunities
- Build on the employee value proposition
- Maintain a spotlight on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Support the priority actions in Our People Strategy
- Refreshing our approach to internal communications so that staff understand our priorities and actively engage in securing our ambitions



Goal 4

To ensure members are kept informed about key issues and that we harness opportunities for community engagement through them

How we will achieve this

- Weekly updates using social media and assets mailing
- Member briefings on key issues
- Promotion of democratic engagement, process and the roles of elected members
- Support members to raise awareness of opportunities in communities and galvanise activity which builds on community strengths.
- Ensure members have appropriate information flow around key local issues

Goal 5

To make a strategic contribution to the achievement of the areas of focus articulated in the Council Delivery Plan.

How we will achieve this

- Develop plans to communicate areas of focus in line with change programme priorities
- Develop annual directorate plans which are mapped against the Council Delivery Plan, and which incorporate the relevant change management and enabling plans
- Work with partners to amplify impact: e.g. working with NHS colleagues around public health messaging

Marketing and communication principles

Communications at WCC is a shared responsibility and every employee has a part to play in supporting and delivering effective communications. The following principles outline our collective approach to communications and are aligned with our values and behaviours framework.

We will:

- Speak and listen as one council, telling our story with pride and supporting employees to tell great stories about the organisation and Warwickshire that unite us under a common brand.
- Use our county-wide perspective to engage and create targeted communications for localised audiences, communities and stakeholder groups, through working in collaboration with our local district, borough, town and parish councils, faith and community groups, Warwickshire Police, NHS and other partners.
- Develop creative and impactful campaigns that deliver value for money to enable the council to achieve its objectives and that are underpinned by data, audience insight and behavioural science.
- Move with purpose and energy, so that negative reputational impact is minimised and all opportunities are taken to increase reputational capital from positive news.
- Involve the communications team in projects and initiatives at the earliest stage to ensure strategic decisions are influenced by communications at the right time and resources are focused on the council's priorities.



Audiences

Our audiences sit at the heart of all we do. In developing campaigns and activity we will use data and insight to inform segmentation, channel selection and messaging. Our messaging will create consistent outtakes, but will vary in vocabulary, tone and style to resonate with each audience.

Special regard will be paid to ensuring we reach those communities of interest and place identified in the Countywide approach to levelling up.

We will develop channel maps to engage with those communities of interest; understanding who and where they are and how best to reach and engage with them.

Our channels

Owned media

The channels we create and control

- WCC website
- WCC YouTube channel
- WCC social media accounts
- Email marketing
- Podcasts
- **WCC publications**

Internal channels

- WCC intranet
- Working for Warwickshire
- Corporate broadcasts
- Blogs
- Yammer
- Directorate/service internal publications

Earned

Our customers, the media and the public share our content or speak about our brand

- Word of mouth
- Regional media coverage
- National media coverage
- Trade media coverage
- Broadcast media coverage
- Social media content shared by others.

Paid

A third-party channel

- Broadcast advertising
- Out of home advertising
- Print and digital advertising
- Paid search



Monitoring, evaluation and review

We will share a corporate monthly report on key metrics and quarterly directorate reports.

Our campaigns will be evaluated using the Government Communications Service evaluation grid.

