

Cabinet

13 October 2022

Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework

Recommendation

That Cabinet endorses the Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework at Appendix 1.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. As part of the Council's Transformation Programme, the marketing and communications team adopted a new operating model, which included a new staffing structure. The new arrangements were partly in place as COVID struck. The new model set us in great stead for our response to the Pandemic with our communications being swift, agile and our "Let's do the right thing..." campaign adopted and adapted for use locally, regionally and nationally.
- 1.2. Since the adoption of the new model, we have continued to build on and improve the way we operate, embedding new ways of working and learning from a number of new and creative communications initiatives that we introduced during the Pandemic. Some excellent results were achieved including the establishment of weekly updates and online resource packs for Members and partners. We led the County's communications response working with partners in District and Borough Councils, Health, Police and Education. We were able to try new messages, tactics and channels to ensure we delivered tangible results.
- 1.3. The new structure and operating model meant that during the Pandemic the team was able, and continues, to respond quickly and effectively to a rapidly changing environment.
- 1.4. As a result, and as part of our service review cycle, the Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework (MCSF) has been refreshed to set out our communications themes and plans for the year. The core themes reflect the ambitions of the Council and support the delivery of the Council Plan launched in April 2022. Best Warwickshire remains as a key over-arching theme and there is a greater emphasis on increasing and improving engagement with our communities.
- 1.5. The MCSF is intended to be flexible, allowing capacity and scope for pressures, challenges and opportunities as they arise. These include cost of

living, pay awards, recruitment and retention – issues to which we will need to be agile and responsive.

- 1.6. However, opportunities remain to maximise the many positive initiatives and developments across Warwickshire, and the Marketing & Communications team will continue to be proactive; for example, introducing podcasts to tell the story of Warwickshire; building on listening and engaging with communities and developing corporate campaigns which build on the themes of levelling up and community power. We will continue to work closely with partners to deliver County-wide communications, whilst also working with members to ensure maximum reach, impact and efficacy of our campaigns.

2. The Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework

- 2.1. The MCSF puts our audiences at the heart of all we do – be they residents, businesses, schools, vulnerable people or others specifically impacted by an issue. Segmenting and identifying audience groups, understanding their needs and using the best channels to reach them with impactful visuals, tone and style of wording is fundamental to our way of working, and the framework is predicated on these principles.
- 2.2. To do this, we have worked with our colleagues leading each service area as part of the commissioning cycle of “plan, do, review”. This enabled us to link the interdependent themes from across the organisation, ensuring each contributes to the broader aims articulated in the Council Plan. As a result, the MCSF sets out how we will be consistent in our messaging and speak as one Council, to give us the greatest chance of engaging our communities with our suite of core narratives.
- 2.3. In creating the MCSF, we have set out how we will achieve two-way communications which inform, encourage, influence and support our residents to take the necessary actions and adopt behaviours that will help them to live their best possible lives. It ensures appropriate effort and attention is given to the key themes and areas of focus, and that our plans match the aspirations of the Council.
- 2.4. We have identified six key communication themes:
 1. Levelling up and devolution
 2. Community Powered Warwickshire
 3. Climate change
 4. Child Friendly Warwickshire
 5. Educational attainment
 6. Cost of living
- 2.5. The three directorate delivery plans are embedded into the MCSF. A framework for evaluation is also included so that progress and performance can be regularly monitored and adapted to achieve the best possible outcomes.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. The activities required by the Framework are covered by existing budgets.

4. Environmental Implications

4.1. Communications around climate change are a central part of the Framework.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1. The MCSF sets out the approach we will follow regarding our marketing and communication activity. The MCSF will be reviewed in line with our review cycle.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Marketing and Communications Strategic Framework.

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Jayne Surman Strategy and Commissioning manager, Marketing and Communications	jaynesurman@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Sarah Duxbury Assistant Director, Governance and Policy	sarahduxbury@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Rob Powell Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Andy Jenns Portfolio Holder for Customer & Transformation	andyjenns@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a

Other members: Chair and Party Spokesperson of the Resources & Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee