

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 24 November 2020

Report Title	Recommendations Paper - Communications & Engagement – Visual Identity/Branding	
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Future Northants Programme	Corporate	
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Date of final endorsement by Joint Implementation Boards	4 November 2020	
Date of final endorsement by North/West/Joint Implementation Executives	N/A – Did not go to JIE	

List of Appendices

N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Recommendations of Category 1 Items for branding/rebranding/de-branding to ensure we are Safe and Legal for Day One.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Why is council branding important?

A strong brand builds recognition, awareness and trust. For a council, strong branding helps residents understand the range of services available and how to access them. By helping residents and other audiences to feel better informed about what the council does, this in turn helps to increase their satisfaction with the council.

To achieve a strong brand, the branding must be used widely, clearly and consistently across all council services.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 West Shadow Executive duly notes the contents of this paper which outlines proposals for how the new branding should be implemented, along with timescales.
- 3.2 Delegated Authority is granted to the Transformation Directors and the Corporate Board in consultation with the West Communications & Engagement Task & Finish Group for approval of spend for re-branding critical items for Day One from the FN Communications & Engagement Project re-branding budget.
- 3.3 Approval of the proposed criteria for implementation of the new branding (including costs, timescales and responsibilities), broken down as follows:
- **Category 1 – Safe and Legal – Day One**
 - **Category 2 – Proactive Rebrand – Day Two Onwards**
 - **Category 3 – As and when**
- 3.4 Clear agreement that Category 1 items are to be rebranded to be Safe and Legal for Day One.
- 3.5 If there are non-essential items suggested for Day One rebranding in addition to Category 1 items, e.g. to assist with Cultural Change and Customer Need, that – given budget limitations and prioritisation - these items are also supported with funding from the respective FN workstreams and Programmes.
- 3.6 Approval of the principle that items which require proactive rebranding post Day One will become BAU and will be funded by the services themselves.

4. Report Background

4.1 Ultimately, the entirety of the council branding will need replacing but the cost of doing this must be kept as low as possible, so the proposals below advocate a phased implementation, meeting statutory requirements and ensuring coverage of key public-facing touch points and channels to launch the new authorities effectively.

The final logo designs are also being presented for approval to the West Shadow Executive in this November round of meetings, and the visual identity/branding guidelines are being developed in time for a 'live' date (i.e. ready to use for preparation of items) of 4 January 2021.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 Proposed principles for use and implementation of the new West Northamptonshire brand

5.1.1 The new West Northamptonshire brand will be used widely and consistently across all West Northamptonshire Council services, complying with the brand guidelines at all times.

5.1.2 There shall be no sub-brands West Northamptonshire services, unless agreed in consultation with the relevant Communications team as an exception. All services shall use the West Northamptonshire brand.

5.1.3 Partnerships and separately funded initiatives will retain their existing identity, but will adopt either the West Northamptonshire logo where that of a sovereign council currently appears.

5.1.4 Governance of the West Northamptonshire brands shall sit with the relevant Communications team, who shall have authority to oversee its correct use and implementation.

5.1.5 It is proposed that, as far as possible, the new West Northamptonshire branding is not used prior to 1 April 2021, as this may confuse customers. This requirement needs to be communicated clearly and carefully to all colleagues.

However, in certain specific circumstances (see *5.2.2 below), it is more cost-effective and practical – and in some cases necessary - for the new branding to be used ahead of Day One. These circumstances are the exception to the rule.

5.1.6 Colleagues across all four authorities will be asked to be cognisant of the change in branding in April 2021 and factor this into any spend on branded items leading up to that time which are likely to have a shelf life beyond April 2021. Any current branded items are to be used up as much as possible prior to Day One, and any merchandise (mugs, pens etc.) with the old branding is to be used internally only from 1 April 2021 to avoid confusion.

5.2 Proposed implementation of the new West Northamptonshire branding

5.2.1 When considering what branding is business critical for Day One of West Northamptonshire Councils there are two main criteria that have been used: customer need and cultural change.

5.2.1.1 **Customer need:** to make it as easy and clear for customers (and other audiences) as possible to understand the services delivered by the new West Northamptonshire Council and how to access them. This will as a priority be looked at from a safe and legal perspective as per the wider programme.

On a practical level, we know that use of the correct branding/logo adds weight, authority and legitimacy to people's perceptions, and is central to visibly launching the new authorities, so it is proposed that the new branding should be used from Day One on items such as signage on main council headquarters, and items which have an official or legal status, such as parking tickets, official identity badges, council tax bills, main communication channels. See the table below for further information.

5.2.1.2 **Cultural change:** what is needed, as a minimum from Day One, to support establishing a new internal culture for all employees so they feel a sense of belonging to the new West Northamptonshire Council such as email signatures, ID badges etc.

5.2.2 Budgetary and timing implications mean that it is not advisable to rebrand all items for April 1 2021. Through intelligence gathered from an audit process we have developed three categories to prioritise the rebranding process – the below table is to illustrate the Categories.

Category	Explanation	Example	Timing
Category 1 – Safe and Legal – Day One	Items which have an official, statutory or legal status.	Statutory documentation such as planning, complaints, licensing, elections. Car park tickets and penalty notices. Exterior building signage – prioritising main council offices and staffing hubs with high levels of customer contact.	Ahead of Day One/for Day One.
Category 2 – Proactive Rebrand – Day Two Onwards	Items which need to be proactively rebranded as need arises on cyclical basis or in year one.	Any other signage on buildings or vehicles which is not covered by Category 1 or Category 3.	As required and/or in year one.
Category 3 – As and When Re-brand/BAU	Items which should have new brand in place when replacement required.	Waste bins/dog waste bins/salt bins etc.	As reprints are required and/or medium-term priorities.

* Pre-Day One – it is not possible to brand items requiring a longer lead time in or implementation, such as signage, to all be replaced overnight on 31 March 2021. Therefore, some of the branding may be visible ahead of Day One, and this information and rationale will be proactively shared internally and externally ahead of time.

Out of Scope:

- Council owned or leased buildings that will be disaggregated.
- Council owned or leased buildings that may no longer be used by the council after the asset rationalisation process is completed.
- Countryside/Country Parks and Rangers.
- Bus Stops.

5.2.4 The above template is intended to act as a framework to guide services on which items should be prioritised for rebranding. Enquiries for items that do not fit into one of the above categories should be discussed with relevant Heads of Service and Communications.

5.2.5 It is proposed that no old branding of the old sovereign councils should be visible or in place after 5 years from January 2021, at the latest. This gives a deadline of January 2026 for all council services to be correctly branded with the new visual identity/logos.

5.2.6 It is proposed that services cover the cost themselves of any re-branding that is required for Category 2 and 3 items.

5.2.7 Work is progressing on the branding implementation plan through the Future Northants programme team. To ensure best value for money, we advise that the

services across NCC and D's & B's collaborate to ensure that their orders are placed in bulk, with one provider and this will also ensure consistency of design/production.

5.3 Old branding and logo decommissioning

While establishing the new brand is important, decommissioning older branding is arguably of equal importance. Continuing to display logos and branding for organisations that no longer exist may cause confusion for residents and hinder efforts to establish the identity of the new council.

It is proposed that one way of keeping costs down is to simply remove existing county/borough/district logos and branding from identified priority items that are not included in Day One. For priority items, such as signs, banners, information boards etc., this can be achieved by removing old branding where practicable (e.g. removing vinyl stickers) or by placing hard-wearing stickers over existing logos on a temporary basis until said assets are retired or replaced. It should be noted that this not a requirement across the board, and items will be agreed on a case by case basis.

5.4 The Communications & Engagement Team will oversee approval of all branding. We are currently exploring either using internal or external design support, which will be informed by the capacity of in-house team's vs level of work required. There may be ongoing costs associated with this to factor in.

5.5 There will be extensive communications both internally to employees and externally to partners and suppliers about the implementation process for the new branding, outlining what they need to do and when, to support this. These communications will alert services to timescales, processes and their responsibilities. Importantly, the communications will inform services of the need to update contact details, particularly the website addresses at the same time as updating branding.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1 Delegated Authority

6.1.1.1 We ask that Authority is delegated Transformation Directors and the Corporate Board in consultation with the West Communications & Engagement Task & Finish Group for approval of spend for re-branding critical items for Day One from the FN Communications & Engagement rebranding budget. If costs look to exceed the allocated budget, authorisation of the prioritisation of items to be re-branded will also be delegated to Transformation Directors and the Corporate Board in consultation with the West Communications & Engagement Task and Finish Group. The appropriate procurement rules on spend threshold will be adhered to and any spend will go through the correct procurement process if required. The definitive list of re-branded items and costs for your information will be presented back to PIB at the early January 2021 meeting.

6.1.1.2 A strong agreement across the board must be reached with approval of the Category 1 Safe and Legal for Day One approach. Also items that are perhaps not essential to be Safe and Legal for Day One, but are however required to assist with Cultural Change and Customer Need – with these non-essential items, we ask for approval that the other FN Programmes offer budget towards these items. The FN Communications & Engagement workstream have a budget of £400k to go towards Category 1 items to ensure Safe and Legal for Day One. We propose that these Category 1 items are funded as one-off transformation costs. If the full £400k budget is not used up on Category 1 items, the remainder will be split between the authorities to enable them to add this to their budget for Category 2 items.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 We have legal advice from an in-house solicitor advising that there is no legal requirement for the new logo to be used by any service: the legal requirement is for the name of the new council to be displayed which can be done in writing.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 Significant change is required across the board within this programme and branding is no exception – as mentioned previously in this report, while establishing the new brand is important, decommissioning older branding is arguably of equal importance. Continuing to display logos and branding for organisations that no longer exist may cause confusion for residents and hinder efforts to establish the identity of the new council.

6.3.2 There may be issues with enforcement if the correct council name is not displayed on enforcement notices. We are seeking internal legal advice on this and we have added this to the Risk Register. We have included statutory Notices in Category 1 for re-branding to mitigate the risk.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 No formal consultation on re-branding is required. A survey was taken for views on preferred draft logos for the new Unitary Councils.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 N/A

6.6 Environmental Impact

6.6.1 N/A

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 N/A

7. Background Papers

7.1 Rebranding Information Paper presented at PIB – 4 November 2020.