

**A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A BRAND STRATEGY FOR
WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Introduction

Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) is committed to delivering building a better future for those who live and work here. The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a vision for delivering the best possible services and is linked closely with the Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest, the Best Value Performance Plan and internal Divisional Business Plans and the Council's budgeting process.

The Branding strategy will be designed to support the values, aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan with an emphasis on continuous consultation and evaluation.

Brand is intrinsically linked to trust and reputation, which has recently been highlighted by the Local Government Association in conjunction with MORI. Their findings suggested that if Councils focus on doing certain things well - for example, cleaning the streets and communicating with key audiences - it would improve overall public satisfaction and in turn impact on reputation.

This link provides a bridge from branding to customer service, and therefore WFDC is developing a Customer Service strategy alongside its Branding Strategy.

Reputation revolves around not just the stories we tell and that are told about us through our media relations and Council newspaper, but on what people understand to be our products and services and the manner in which we deliver them.

Branding is about far more than just our visual identity. It is about every contact the customer has with us – face to face, by phone or email, on a poster or in a leaflet. It is powerfully present in the stories that are told about us, on the street, in the newspaper, or over a coffee. First impressions are usually lasting impressions, so it's important to get it right, first and every time.

A DEFINITION OF BRAND:

The sum of all the characteristics, tangible and intangible, that makes Wyre Forest District Council unique

Background and Objectives – why are we re-evaluating our brand?

In a world where the A-Z of services are sourced by the Council and delivered fully or in partnership with many other agencies, individual brands are often lost in the melee and customers are left overwhelmed and confused.

This is reflected at Wyre Forest, and issue that is compounded by operating from six separate sites which has created a sub-brand culture.

Future plans include a move to a single site, as well as the integration of the Worcestershire Hub brand, a countywide initiative aimed to bring Council services under one roof – a Council ‘supermarket’ for customers.

The time has come establish a clear brand identity so that we establish clarity of who we are, and what we’re about in the hearts and minds of all our audiences – internally and externally. To do this we need to gain a clear understanding of present perceptions of the Council so that we can assess what changes we need to make in order to meet these aspirations.

Where do we want to be?

Wyre Forest District Council aims to develop and sustain the area as a place where people are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential, are proud to live and work, and businesses are attracted to invest.

Drivers for establishing a brand strategy

Internal	External	Government
Transposed sub-brand culture	Worcestershire Hub Branding	Pending Local Government Review on Councils
Developed into mini-brands	Partnership Working	‘the future is local’ a new vision for local Government – closer to people and places. LGA publication
Various hybrid brands	A multitude of ‘council’ sub brands	Reputation Campaign - LGA
Single site – need to establish values, sense of place and		

identity		
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Confusion	→	Clarity
Hostility	→	Sympathy
Prejudice	→	Acceptance
Apathy	→	Interest
Ignorance	→	knowledge

Baselines

The Customer Service and Branding Working Group was set up in 2005 for the purpose of formulating a Customer Service and Branding Strategy which would agree a corporate approach to customer service and branding across the authority.

The group looked at best practice across the country to inform their work and held an on-site day with Consultants solace Group to evaluate current perceptions of customer service and branding.

Initially, the formulation of a combined customer service and branding strategy was anticipated, but after further research, it is felt by the Chief Executive, that two mutually exclusive strategies should be developed, demonstrating the wider realms of both branding and customer service.

Brand Values

- Supporting people
- Growing businesses
- Investing in our future
- Welcoming visitors

What will this brand experience involve?

- Continually reviewing and improving customer services – people feel consulted and that they live in a forward thinking and caring District
- Pro-active partnership working to attract inward investment and business development for all – people feel valued and supported in their endeavours
- Investing in communities – people feel they get value for money services, and that they live in a ‘special’ place

Our approach

Our objectives are focused on people and how they 'experience' the WF brand:

People who live in Wyre Forest – Residents

People who run businesses in Wyre Forest – Business Owners

People who work in Wyre Forest - Workers

People who visit Wyre Forest - Visitors

People who may invest in Wyre Forest – Investors

People who have leadership roles in the community and in organisations – Partners

Realising the Brand Vision

Next steps:

1. Consultation and Audit

We will combine existing and new research with residents, workers, visitors, and potential investors. This will be achieved by a combination of quantitative and qualitative research across our audiences:

People who live in Wyre Forest – Residents	People who run businesses in Wyre Forest – Business Owners	People who work in Wyre Forest - Workers	People who visit Wyre Forest - Visitors	People who may invest in Wyre Forest – Investors	People who have leadership roles in the Community/orga nisations
<p>Newswyre Summer 2006</p> <p>Customer Satisfaction Surveys</p> <p>MORI Survey 2006/07</p> <p>Citizen's Panel/Community Choice questionnaire</p> <p>'On the street' survey</p> <p>Members Bulletin and focus group</p> <p>Liaison with local clubs and societies such as WI</p> <p>Liaison with hard to reach groups such as young people, ethnic community</p>	<p>Newswyre Summer 2006</p> <p>Business focus group and questionnaire</p>	<p>Newswyre Summer 2006</p> <p>Partners Meetings and focus groups (ie PCT, Wyre Forest Matters, Worcestershire Partnership etc)</p> <p>WFDC Core Brief</p> <p>WFDC Intranet</p>	<p>Tourism/visit or research</p>	<p>Commercial Property Agents</p>	<p>Media audit</p> <p>neighbouring Districts</p> <p>Ask Partners what they think of Wyre Forest, and if we can share their own reputation/perception surveys</p>

2. Analysis of Audit and Consultation

3. Create Brand Package to include:

Current Perceptions of WFDC

Where we want to be

The way forward: how we 'live' the brand

Benefits of living the brand

Resource Implications

Risk Analysis

Measurement and Evaluation of living the brand

Timescales

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| • Audit and Consultation | July – September 2006 |
| • Analysis | September 2006 |
| • Create Brand Package Proposals | September – concluded 1 st week October 2006 |