



Brand policy

1. This policy outlines the key principles of Nottinghamshire County Council's brand, including how our brand is used and governed. It replaces the Council's original Corporate Identity Policy (dated January 2012).
2. This policy directly supports the Council's Strategic Plan and a number of other corporate strategies including the Communications and Marketing Strategy and Customer Access Strategy.

Our brand

3. Branding is not purely a case of a name or logo or how something looks, it is also what makes us unique and distinctive. Our brand represents and is a physical embodiment of the Council, so is part of the whole customer experience.
4. The Council's brand is also visible in all types of communications and everything we do – including the uniforms worn by employees, our letterhead, our website, information we produce about services, signage on our buildings and our vehicles.

Branding matters

5. It is important to ensure that customers can recognise Nottinghamshire County Council services by having a strong brand which is consistently used. Branding directly affects customer perceptions of value for money, through increased awareness of the range of services which are paid for by their Council Tax.
6. Our brand is the foundation for everything and evokes both customer association and reaction (whether positive or negative). Therefore branding plays an important part in our reputation and overall satisfaction with the Council.
7. In addition, our brand is part of and impacts on:
 - a. Public accountability – to taxpayers, voters, residents, businesses
 - b. Instant recognition - of the services we provide (either directly or indirectly)
 - c. Awareness of our values, promises and priorities – outlined in our Strategic Plan
 - d. Effective communications – through better information provision, clearer messages and imagery
 - e. Customer loyalty – repeat use of our services and attendance at our venues or events

- f. A higher profile – important for partnership working, economic prosperity and improved perceptions of the Council
- g. Value for money – through brand governance
- h. Pride in Nottinghamshire County Council – which supports employee motivation

Our brand ethos

8. As explained in points 3 and 4 above, the Council's brand is more than just its logo and represents the total customer experience at each touch point when people interact with our services. Customer experience and perception is shaped from these interactions and in turn forms people's overall level of satisfaction with the Council.
9. Our brand ethos helps make the strategic vision of the organisation a reality to our customers through a consistent and professional approach in the way we look and speak to our customers.
10. Our brand ethos reflects the three core values in the Council's Strategic Plan – fairness, value for money and working together.
11. Nottinghamshire County Council's brand ethos includes ten key characteristics:
 - **Relevant** - we deliver information and services that meet local people's needs and encourage participation in the local community.
 - **Trusted** - we provide high standards of public service which are reliable and valued by generations of Nottinghamshire families.
 - **Universal** - we ensure services are fair, accessible and tailored to the local population's (and where possible the individual's) needs.
 - **Authentic** - we communicate in a way which is authentic, human and warm no matter what context from authoritative to entertaining.
 - **Innovative** - we take a new and exciting approach to anticipate and satisfy customer needs.
 - **Modern** - we deliver contemporary, efficient and affordable services which lead the way in best practice.
 - **Customer** - we start with customer needs and include customer feedback as a key part of measuring success.
 - **Joined up** - we work with partners to join up services where it makes sense, while always reflecting clear accountability and ownership.
 - **Engaging** - we listen to, involve and engage residents to improve services and support local democracy.

- **Open and transparent** - our default position is to be publicly accountable at all times.

Brand Guidelines

12. The Council's Brand Guidelines sets out the rules which must always be followed and applied. This document ensures:
 - Consistent use of the brand, logo and design features (e.g. colours, fonts etc) both online and offline
 - The correct and most appropriate version of our brand is used for a particular purpose
13. The Council's brand will always be used as the primary brand for directly provided Council services.
14. Our brand should always be reflected appropriately when we work with other organisations (e.g. to deliver a product, service or initiative).
15. The Brand Guideline ensures that the details of the branding relationship with other organisations is always be clear and includes:
 - a flow chart which helps determine the decision making process for how the Council's brand should be used
 - a description of the five categories which reflect the different types of branding relationship the Council has with other organisations
 - the five versions of the Council's brand mark which reflect the wording that best describes the particular nature of these relationships.
16. No deviation from Brand Guidelines is allowed unless by specific business exception given by the Communications and Marketing team and potentially political/other sign off as appropriate.
17. The Brand Guidelines include reference to a small number of services which are able to use their own identity as a secondary identifier to the Council's primary brand. These are normally trading services with a reach outside of Nottinghamshire. In this instance, the relationship with the County Council must again be clearly communicated in line with Brand Guidelines.

Branding principles for alternative service delivery models

18. Alternative service delivery models includes but is not limited to trusts, commissioned services, arms lengths companies and new joint ventures.
19. A strategic approach to branding of alternative service delivery models will be taken. This may include the need for research and market testing.
20. The Communications and Marketing service should be consulted at the earliest possible stage of the proposal for advice.
21. Appropriate wording in relation to branding is particularly important when the Council is considering an alternative service delivery model. Branding needs

to be appropriate and reflect the nature of the Council's contribution to/relationship in a new entity. This should include consideration of existing Council assets across all channels (e.g. online and offline).

22. Branding principles should be included as part of contract negotiations and detailed as part of the contract itself. Consideration needs to be given to the practical application of branding to ensure the Council's reputational interests are safeguarded. In every instance, further advice on this must be sought via the Communications and Marketing service at the earliest possible stage.
23. The ongoing development and use/application of our brand – and the development of any new brands which involve the Council – should represent good value for money and be proportionate to business objectives.

Other brand considerations

24. Due to the technical requirements involved and the fast moving nature of digital communications, more variations of our brand may be required online. This will be developed in a consistent and planned way that is always updated in our Brand Guidelines.
25. Old versions of the Council's brand (pre-dating January 2012) have largely been replaced. Any remaining historic examples should be replaced unless the costs are excessive and the resources required would not represent good value for money.

Use of the Council's brand by partners or third parties

26. Use of the Council's brand (including the logo) by a partner agency or third party organisation must be approved by the Communications and Marketing service.
27. Where architects or designers are employed on projects to refurbish or rebuild venues - or when a new build is taking place - the Communications and Marketing service must be advised at the earliest possible stage to ensure the Council's brand is used appropriately and sign off any designs from a brand perspective.
28. Where there is a need for an external organisation to provide a service in relation to any type of branding (e.g. on websites, vehicle wraps etc), this must be commissioned by the Council's Communications and Marketing service.
29. When an external organisation leads on developing a new brand for which the Council is a partner or the client, the Council's Communications and Marketing service must be involved at the earliest possible stage and be involved in the sign-off process from a brand and reputation point perspective.

Brand governance and sign-off

30. The Communications and Marketing service is responsible for governing the Council's brand and maintaining the Council's Brand Guidelines.
31. The Communications and Marketing service ensures:

- Consistent use of the Council's brand corporate in line with our Brand Guidelines
 - Savings and efficiencies are made through the central procurement of design and print (the Communications and Marketing service will commission all design and print work)
 - Best value for money is achieved through any communications which use our brand
32. With the exception of any pre-approved branded templates (e.g. letterhead, report writing template, powerpoint slide etc.), any use of the Council's brand (including the logo) must be approved by the Communications and Marketing service.
33. All purchasing and commissioning of graphic design and print services must take place through the Council's graphics and print team, which works closely with the Communications and Marketing service to ensure Brand Guidelines are upheld. In (contractual) exceptions to this when artwork is produced by a partner (or its agency) then final artwork must still be approved by the Communications and Marketing service.

Further information

34. For any queries about our brand, Brand Guidelines or this policy – please contact the Council's Communications and Marketing service.

This Policy was approved by the Council's Policy Committee on 20/5/15.