

A SPECIALIST WESTCO PROGRAMME

Integrated Public Speaking & Media Training

Practical coaching that prepares senior public sector leaders to powerfully communicate and connect with their audiences: in the chamber, on camera, and under real scrutiny.

Westco: your local government communication experts

Owned by Westminster City Council. Built exclusively around the public sector.

Westco is a communications consultancy with deep roots in local government and public service communication. We understand the political context, the member-officer dynamics, and the pressures facing senior public sector spokespeople because we work inside that world every day.

- ✓ A track record of working with senior officers and elected members on communications that serve both the organisation and the public interest
- ✓ **An understanding of the political landscape that shapes what local leaders need to communicate, and how they need to communicate it**
- ✓ Experienced in helping leaders explain difficult decisions clearly and credibly across media, scrutiny, stakeholder and community settings
- ✓ **Trusted by councils and public bodies to combine strategic insight with training that feels relevant, grounded and immediately usable**



80+

public sector clients supported

England & Wales

councils and public bodies served

Council-owned

an agency built by and for local government

Trusted across the public sector

A selection of the councils, NHS bodies and public sector partners we've worked with.



Why this matters for public sector leaders

Senior officers and elected members are judged, in the moment, on how well they communicate.

What leaders need to do

- ✓ Explain difficult decisions clearly and credibly to residents, staff, partners and the media
- ✓ Build trust under pressure: in scrutiny, community meetings, media interviews and online
- ✓ Balance transparency with political sensitivity, especially around member-officer relationships
- ✓ Inspire confidence in their organisation and its values, even when the news is hard
- ✓ Adapt their style for very different audiences: from the council chamber to national media

Where this training fits

- ✓ One integrated method for every setting: chamber, camera, community and social media
- ✓ Built around real public sector scenarios, not generic presentation theory
- ✓ Explicitly tailored to the different risks and objectives of officers and elected members
- ✓ Addresses what politicians need from officers when they brief, advise or appear alongside them
- ✓ Practised live and on camera, so confidence is tested before it's needed for real

One method for every setting

Leaders rarely communicate in one format. The same issue can move from the council chamber to a staff briefing, a community meeting, a camera interview or a social post , sometimes within hours.

Our programme builds one transferable method: define the purpose, understand the audience, distil the message, structure it clearly, deliver it with authority, and stay composed under challenge.

The result isn't a bag of presentation tricks. It's practical communication confidence, grounded in the realities of local government.



Cormac Smith, live on Times Radio — the same composure and message discipline we coach into every session.

One method, four skills

The same foundations are practised across public speaking, video and media interviews.



Purpose & audience

Define the communication job, what the audience needs, and the response you want.



Message & structure

Turn complex policy into a clear headline, supporting points and a memorable story.



Delivery & presence

Use voice, pace, posture and eyeline to communicate naturally and with authority.



Questions & pressure

Answer directly, bridge with integrity, and stay composed when scrutiny rises.

Public speaking with impact

Participants shape and deliver messages that work in formal, public and direct-to-camera settings.



Structure for the ear

A strong opening, a clear sequence and a memorable ending — not a speech written for the page.



Storytelling that lands

Examples, analogies and human impact that make policy meaningful and easier to remember.



Authentic delivery

Stronger voice, pace, pauses, posture and audience connection — without sounding rehearsed.



Confidence under scrutiny

Manage nerves, think on your feet, and respond credibly to challenge in the room.

Media training under pressure

The same method, adapted for television, radio, online interviews and direct-to-camera content.



Understand the media lens

What makes a story, what journalists need, and where council and political communication differ.



Prepare the interview

Set an objective, sharpen the central message, assemble evidence and anticipate hard questions.



Answer and bridge

Give a clear, direct answer before returning naturally and honestly to the central point.



Perform on camera

Concise language, eyeline, body language and vocal energy that work for television and radio.

How we deliver it

Our focus is on practical learning, coaching and development using real life scenarios



Discovery & tailoring

We agree participant needs, two realistic scenarios and the settings that matter most.



Integrated theory

A shared method for purpose, audience, message, structure, delivery and response.



Filmed practice

Participants deliver a public address and complete proactive and reactive media exercises.



Joint playback & coaching

Video playback and structured group feedback to help refine and develop your approach



Repeat & improve

Participants apply feedback immediately so improvement becomes visible and practical.

Filming and editing are led by our specialist public sector videographer, so every session produces broadcast-quality playback participants can learn from immediately.

Practice under real pressure

Three filmed exercises, built from an agreed scenario, test every part of the method.

1

Prepared public communication

A short address for a meeting, event or direct-to-camera video.

WHAT IT TESTS

Clarity, structure, presence and audience connection

2

Proactive media interview

A television or radio-style interview on a pro-active council priority.

WHAT IT TESTS

News value, concise answers and message discipline

3

Reactive scenario

Sharper questions, new information, or greater scrutiny from a reactive media issue that is a reputational challenge.

WHAT IT TESTS

Composure, credibility, bridging and response to challenge

A focused four-hour session

Half a day, four filmed exercises, and a shared method that sticks.



Timings flex around your agreed scenarios — the split between speaking and media practice can be adjusted on request.

Tailored around your leaders, issues and risks

Before delivery, we agree participant needs, two realistic scenarios and the communication settings that matter most — council and Cabinet meetings, community challenge, broadcast media, staff communication or video content.

Separate cohorts or scenarios can reflect the different responsibilities, risks and objectives of senior officers and elected members.

Meet your trainers

Senior practitioners who understand the room, the camera and the political environment.



Simon Jones

Director of Communications, Westco

- ✓ 18 years at director level in local government communications and policy
- ✓ Senior roles at Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey and Wandsworth councils
- ✓ Former Chair of LGcomms; Fellow of the PRCA; led the LGA's #FutureComms programme
- ✓ Former award-winning journalist and newspaper editor
- ✓ Deep experience in media strategy, interview preparation and crisis communications



Cormac Smith

Public Speaking & Strategic Communications Specialist

- ✓ 20+ years coaching senior managers and politicians in public speaking and media handling
- ✓ Nearly two decades as a senior local government communications leader
- ✓ Former Deputy Director of Communications, UK Cabinet Office
- ✓ Strategic Communication Adviser to the Foreign Minister of Ukraine
- ✓ ~400 broadcast interviews across nine countries since 2022, as a Ukraine and defence commentator

Why councils choose Westco

What sets our approach apart from generic presentation training.

- **Grounded in your reality**

Political, operational and reputational realities, not generic theory.

- **One integrated method**

A single transferable method, not a set of disconnected techniques.

- **Two senior specialists**

Complementary expertise, plus a professional videographer.

- **Small groups, real practice**

Extensive filmed practice and genuinely personalised feedback.

- **Scenarios that matter**

Built from live council priorities and the scrutiny you actually face.

“

Westco's approach was professional, credible and highly practical. What really stood out was Simon Jones's wealth of experience as both a senior journalist and a professional in local government.

Cormac brought the subject to life with practical advice, strong examples and a real understanding of elected members' roles.

Guy Holloway

Assistant Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Council

Investment

£2,895

Per half-day session · 2 trainers · 1 videographer

*Excludes VAT and travelling expenses

Core format: 4–5 participants, in person, with filmed exercises and individual feedback.



Westco can tailor this programme around your leaders, your issues and your political environment.

Get in touch to discuss dates and scenarios.

Contact: simon@westcocommunications.com

Contact us

For more information, or to discuss a tailored programme

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