

Weston Package Phase 1
Major Scheme Business Case

Appendix 4.3

Communication Plan



West of England Partnership

Bath & North East
Somerset Council



North
Somerset
Council

South Gloucestershire
Council



South West RDA

Weston Package Phase 1 Communications Plan

1 Introduction

The four West of England councils recognise the importance of consulting stakeholders and the general public on the proposals developed for the Weston Package Phase 1 [WP1]. Achieving support for the schemes that form the Package will ensure that a strong case for government funding is demonstrated which will assist the project delivery to programme and within the budgets set.

This communications plan is a live document that will be reviewed by the Board and adapted as the scheme progresses. It will also conform to the emerging overarching communications plan being developed to support the Major Scheme programme for the West of England sub-region.

Initial consultation (see Appendix 4.5) suggests WP1 is not controversial and therefore likely to achieve a high level of support. Our communication plan reflects this initial finding, but remains flexible enough to respond rapidly should the situation change. A programme of information dissemination will form the basis of the work using all appropriate communications channels in order to achieve support from stakeholders.

A programme of internal communication and consultation will be maintained through the West of England Major Scheme governance structure and local arrangements. In addition, scheme progress will be monitored and advised through a review process including regular meetings of the WP1 Board and Team.

2 Objectives of the Communication Plan

The objectives of the communications plan are:

- a) To inform local residents, businesses and other interested parties of the objectives and contents of WP1
- b) To achieve support from local residents, businesses and other interested parties to the objectives and contents of WP1;
- c) To promote a positive image of WP1 to the general public, businesses and media in the sub-region and Weston in particular;
- d) To ensure support from key decision makers and stakeholders; and
- e) Ensure the regular flow of information via a wide range of channels in order to minimise the inconvenience to residents, businesses and other interested parties during the construction period for each element of the programme.

3 Position statement

WP1 is a Major Scheme within the JLTP, with a bid submission date of April 2009 with a view to achieving 'Programme Entry' by September 2009. The

constraints on 3rd party funding due to the recession will mean that after Programme Entry the Low Cost Option elements of the scheme will be decoupled from the Airfield Bridge Link [ABL] and the Cross Airfield Link [CAL]. Decoupling will enable the Low Cost Option to be progressed through Conditional and Full Approval to delivery whilst the remaining elements wait for the economy to improve and the necessary third party funding to become available. The target for commencement of construction for the Low Cost Option is during 2011–12.

4 Project Rationale

The aim of WP1 is:

“To enable the sustainable development of Weston–super–Mare”

The key to realising this goal is to readdress the imbalance between jobs and residents, which results in high levels of out–commuting, mostly by car via the M5 motorway. One of the barriers to job creation in Weston is the poor perception of the town in the eyes of business, which includes its transport problems. Conversely, the attractiveness of Weston as a place to live remains; evidenced by the strong market for homes (at least until the recession).

Hence, WP1’s objective is to encourage the employment–led development of the town by selective improvement of the town’s transport network to:

- Improve the highway access between the M5 motorway and Weston to reduce congestion;
- Relieve congestion on the A370 corridor in Weston;
- Provide improvements to local access, safety, public transport, walking and cycling; and
- Improve access between regeneration areas and other residential areas of the town.

5 Scheme Description

The WP1 major transport scheme comprises a series of improvements to the transport infrastructure of Weston–super–Mare, which would benefit a wide range of users and, of crucial importance, support the employment–led regeneration of Weston as defined in the draft RSS.

The transport elements that form the Package, include:

- i) Addressing congestion at the M5 Junction 21
- ii) Cross Airfield Link [CAL]
- iii) Airfield Bridge Link [ABL]
- iv) Improvements to the A370 Gateway area

- v) Improvements at Worle Station (including new car and cycle parking, a bus interchange and passenger facilities) and bus priority improvements for routes to and from the station;

6. External Consultation

Audiences and stakeholders include: Statutory and other partners, town and parish councils transport operators, interest groups, businesses and other employers, and the general public. Current methods are specified in the table below and will be updated as the project progresses and the communication plan is developed. So far the Weston Package has been the subject of media attention with positive reports in the local press. Media coverage has been used to raise the status of the Weston Package. The West of England Marketing & Communications team coordinate overarching publicity for the sub-regional strategic transport improvements.

Methods/techniques for External Communication

As the communication plan develops the following table will be updated.

Who/how	presentation	formal meeting	media (via releases)	e-news	Displays & public meetings	website
Public			■		■	■
Business /Employers groups	■		■	■		■
Landowners /developers		■				

Communication Media

Media	Previous	Future
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Website Establish a dedicated section of the new West of England Travel+ website with links from key partners' sites to establish facts, make the case, explain the process and the timescale, include FAQs. Provide opportunity to contact councils / email questions.	September 08 e-consult facility setup	Setup e-consult after Programme Entry - autumn 2010 to collect comments prior to detailed design
Local Newspaper - Weston Mercury	Press release Aug 2008	Press release following Programme Entry - Autumn 2009
NS Life - North Somerset Council magazine sent to every household	September 08	After Programme Entry - Autumn 2009 to signpost e-consult
E-news - regular updates via e-newsletter to Partners.	September 08	After Programme Entry - Autumn 2009
Other local and regional media	Press release Aug 2008	After Programme Entry - Autumn 2009

West of England and North Somerset Website

The full bid documents will be placed on the current West of England website (www.westofengland.org/transport) with links to and from the North Somerset site. The emerging Travel+ website (see Appendix 4.4 West of England Transport Branding) will develop as the single portal for all travel information for the sub-region and is expected to be a significant two way channel of communication as the project progresses, disseminating information as well as receiving feedback from the public.

7 Stakeholder analysis (to April 2009)

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Actions</i>
<i>Department for Transport</i>	Key to scheme success Need to ensure bid compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email updates Feb & Mar 2009 ▪ Presentation 25 Nov 2008 ▪ Visit/tour Oct 2008 ▪ Visit/tour Jul 2008 ▪ Visit/tour Nov 2007 ▪ Introductory meeting in London Jul 2007
<i>Council members</i>	Key to scheme success Members decide whether or not to proceed with bid	Member Workshop 2 Jul 2008 SPED (scrutiny panel) 1 Sep 2008
<i>Developers/landowners</i> Including: Persimmon Oxford Instruments Mead Group SWRDA English Partnerships	Key to success of preferred option 2-way link as WP1 helps to support regeneration but delivery of the preferred option is dependent on additional developer funding	Regular briefings/updates to Weston Advisory Group which is attended by all Presentation to landowners meeting Jan 2007
<i>SWRDA</i>	Landowner and provides financial backing towards preparation costs	Delegate on programme board
<i>Director of Finance</i>	Key to scheme success Need robust finance both for bid and ongoing success of scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly finance forms ▪ Also sign off at key milestones including finalised costs prior to submission of programme entry bid Mar 2009
<i>SWRA</i>	Key to scheme success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly updates ▪ Additional meeting before programme entry bid Mar 2009

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Actions</i>
<p><i>Bus Operators</i></p> <p>ACL Travel First Somerset & Avon</p>	<p>Key to scheme success Support is needed for proposed new bus services and extension to existing services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetings in Oct 2008 ▪ Meetings in Feb 2009 ▪ Both operators supplied letters to support the proposals and were supportive of proposals for new and extended bus services
<p><i>Rail</i></p> <p>Network Rail First Great Western</p> <p>NR – Territory Outside Party Engineer</p> <p>DfT Rail</p>	<p>Need to work closely with operator in connection with station area improvements. Need to work with NR to ensure deliverability of the bridge component of preferred option</p> <p>Critical to setup track possessions</p> <p>Less critical now that proposals for station work are mainly off-platform</p>	<p>Meetings in Sep 2008</p> <p>Initial discussions Aug 2007 – need to follow up when construction target date set</p> <p>Initial discussion Sep 2008 – expect involvement to be limited</p>
<p><i>Business Community</i></p> <p>GWE Business West</p>	<p>Key objective of package is to support employment led regeneration to support and input is fundamental</p> <p>Member of the Board of the West of England Partnership</p>	<p>Email communication in Sep 2008</p> <p>Future email newsletters as programme develops</p> <p>Mar 2009 – Presentation to members</p> <p>Letter of support received</p>
<p><i>General Public</i></p>	<p>Critical for programme success</p>	<p>Public consultation exercise Sep 2008</p>
<p><i>Education</i></p>	<p>Proximity of A370 Gateway scheme to secondary school</p>	<p>Invited to public consultation Sep 2008</p>

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Actions</i>
<i>Weston Town Council and; surrounding Parish Councils</i>	Represent local public opinion	Information supplied Aug 2008
<i>Highways Agency</i>	Key to scheme success Particularly for Junction 21 element of the package	Delegate on programme board Structural assessment of bridge carried out by Interroute
<i>Local MP</i> John Penrose	Public support	Information sent in Sept/Oct 2008. Letter of support subsequently received.
<i>Internal</i> Risk Manager Property Manager Development Control Planning Policy Highway Maintenance New Works team Environment Officer Communication Officer Rights of Way Officer Cycling Officer	Working closely with internal colleagues essential to ensure deliverability	Involved in Risk Workshops held in July 2008 and Feb 2009 Regular meetings of Project Team
<i>Statutory</i> Natural England English Nature Environment Agency	Key to scheme success, all concerns must be addressed	NATA/ environmental assessment information supplied Feb 2009
<i>Links</i> Weston Town Centre Area Action Plan – Gateway master planning process	Important to ensure that development plans for the Gateway area fit with the scheme proposals	Land required by package identified for safeguarding in Area Action Plan Regular internal communication with planning policy team

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Actions</i>
<i>West of England Partners</i>	Scheme is part of strategic transport improvements in sub-region	All UAs represented on programme board Collaborative working with WoEP officers to maintain strategic focus

8 Internal Communication

Internal communication with North Somerset staff is being achieved through regular project team meetings, presentations to key staff groups, and will include internal staff newsletters and use of the staff intranet.

The North Somerset Executive Member is briefed regularly on progress. Reports and updates are also provided to the Joint Transport Executive Member meetings. A Members' workshop took place on 2 July 2008 and approval of the WP1 bid was given by the Executive of North Somerset Council in February 2009.