

Appendix H

Communication Strategy

How the scheme would be consulted on and communicated to stakeholders to ensure successful implementation

Version dated August 2011

Version Tracking

This Communication Strategy supersedes the version submitted as part of the Programme Entry submission in April 2009

Version	Date	Reviewer
v2.0	July 2011	
v2.1	August 2011	Steve Thorne

1.1 Introduction

This section sets out how WP1 will be communicated to stakeholders to ensure engagement. It includes:

- **Objectives** – outlining the objectives of the communication strategy and how this supports the implementation of the scheme;
- **Target audiences** – identification and analysis of the key stakeholders for WP1, showing which stakeholders relate to which scheme;
- **Messages** – key messages for WP1 and which stakeholders these are communicated to;
- **Delivery** – Communication mix and analysis of tools, also allocation of tools by stakeholder;
- **Resources and timescales** – resources available for delivering communication strategy and the timescales involved; and
- **Feedback mechanisms** – review and feedback on the strategy to ensure it remains effective.

North Somerset Council recognises the importance of consulting and informing stakeholders about the proposals which form Weston Package. Communication and consultation is vital in achieving support for the elements which form the Weston Package, in turn ensuring a strong case for Government funding is made.

By having a clear stakeholder analysis and communication strategy, which can be reviewed and updated as the programme progresses, North Somerset Council can ensure it is keeping stakeholders informed and engaged with Weston Package. The communication strategy needs to be robust and proactive, supported by those involved in delivering Weston Package, in order to ensure full engagement with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

Although the stakeholders for the programme are numerous and varied in their levels of engagement, influence and interest, North Somerset Council is in a strong position by virtue of being able to utilise a number of existing communication tools and channels which are readily available to it.

This strategy builds on previous work that outlined extensive consultation that took place in September 2008, details of which were submitted as part of the Programme Entry bid in April 2009. This updated strategy will provide the foundations for a prioritised proactive approach to communication as the project moves into the delivery phase. It sets out how we will utilise the tools available, identify key messages and details how all stakeholders will be engaged with.

1.2 Objectives of the communication strategy

The objectives of the communication strategy are as follows:

- To support the aims and objectives of Weston Package through the provision of regular, effective, professional and creative communication to all stakeholder groups;
- Ensure a high awareness of the Weston Package and its overall aims;
- Develop and deliver a best-practice consultation to support the Weston Package scheme;
- Communicate proactively with a wide range of identified stakeholders, sharing information concerning the progress of the programme and using the most appropriate tools for each group;
- To achieve support from local residents, businesses and other interested parties;
- To ensure support from key decision makers and stakeholders;
- Identify and deliver key on-target messages about Weston Package, including addressing any concerns held by stakeholder groups;
- Support the bid preparation and implementation of the six Weston Package elements and related work;
- Ensure all communication work is carried out in line with the agreed West of England transport protocols, including utilisation of the Travel+ brand;
- Utilise communication as an effective tool for change management; and
- Ensure programme responds to local opinion by feeding back information and comments to the Programme Board.

1.3 Target audiences

Weston Package has a large number of stakeholders and these vary for each of the six elements which form the programme. These stakeholders are identified in Appendix 5.1. Each of these groups will have different communication needs.

Some can be considered key stakeholders and these will be the primary targets for communication moving forward.

It also needs to be considered how those not identified as key stakeholders may still exert influence.

A stakeholder analysis is attached at Appendix 5.1. This will influence communication for each stakeholder group and should be referred to when identifying key messages during implementation of the communication plan (Appendix 5.6).

A useful tool when considering stakeholder engagement is to map stakeholders according to their level of interest and influence. This will assist in identifying which stakeholders require engagement and which need to be informed. This mapping of the full stakeholder list forms Appendices 5.2 and 5.3.

Stakeholders can be further divided into a number of sub-groups, which will be beneficial when it comes to determining method, frequency and type of communication to be used.

They are:

- North Somerset Council
- Public
- National and regional Government
- Local Government
- Developers and landowners
- Media
- Public transport
- Transport organisations
- Partners
- Business
- Education
- Emergency services
- National bodies and organisations
- Other

1.3.3 Identification of stakeholder by scheme

When considering Weston Package’s stakeholders, it is also important to consider which stakeholders are involved in which of the six elements. While many stakeholders will have an interest in all elements, this is not true across the board. Identifying the correct stakeholders for each scheme will ensure effective and targeted communication with them.

Table 5.1 summaries which stakeholder groups are associated with each scheme. Each top level group is listed, unless not all stakeholders within that group are involved with that specific scheme.

Table 1 Summary of stakeholder groups and scheme association

Scheme	Stakeholders

Junction 21 inbound	North Somerset Council
	Travel+
	Weston businesses
	Business organisations
	Emergency services
	National bodies and organisations
	Weston residents
	Commuters
	Visitors to Weston
	National and regional Government
	Local Government
	Developers and landowners - Persimmon, Mead Group, Oxford Instruments
	Media
	Public transport - bus operators and transport organisations
	National bodies and organisations
	RNLI
Town centre Gateway	North Somerset Council
	National and regional Government
	Local Government
	Developers and landowners - Oxford Instruments, Persimmon, Mead Group
	Public transport - bus operators and transport organisations
	Travel+
	Media
	Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road businesses
	Weston businesses
	Business organisations
	Weston residents, visitors to Weston and commuters
	Hans Price Academy
	Emergency services
	National bodies and organisations
	RNLI
Drove Road roundabout	North Somerset Council
	National and regional Government
	Developers and landowners - Gas works, Wales & West, National Grid
	Local Government
	Media
	Public transport - bus operators and transport organisations
	Travel+

	Media
	Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road businesses
	Weston businesses
	Business organisations
	Weston residents, visitors to Weston and commuters
	Emergency services
	National bodies and organisations
	RNLI
Worle Station improvements	North Somerset Council
	Travel+
	Weston businesses
	National and regional Government
	Local Government
	Developers and landowners - Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Persimmon, Oxford Instruments, Mead Group
	Public
	Media
	Public transport
	National bodies and organisations
Queen's Way bus link	North Somerset Council
	Public
	National and regional Government
	Local Government
	Developers and landowners - Oxford Instruments, Persimmon, Mead Group
	Media
	Public transport - bus operators and transport organisations
	Travel+
	Businesses around Queen's Way and business organisations
	Priory School
	Emergency services
	RNLI
	National bodies and organisations
Elmham Way bus priority	North Somerset Council
	Public - those living near Elmham Way
	National and regional Government
	Local Government
	Developers and landowners - Oxford Instruments, Persimmon and

	Mead Group
	Media
	Priory School
	Public Transport - bus operators and transport organisations
	Travel+
	Businesses around Elmham Way and business organisations
	Emergency services
	RNLI
	National bodies and organisations

1.4 Messages and delivery

Each of the stakeholder groups identified in Appendix 5.2 will have different requirements in terms of methods, frequency and manner of communication.

The preferred method of engaging with each group will be further developed and will form the basis of the communication plan (Appendix 5.6), which will support this strategy and underpin its delivery. Key messages will be identified for each stakeholder group, along with a planned timetable of presentation and delivery.

It is important to note that this communication plan is flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the programme as it progresses. It should also be reviewed at regular intervals throughout the course of the programme to ensure it is still engaging with the correct stakeholder groups.

There is due to be a period of consultation during the summer of 2011, so this will be reflected in the analysis and communication plan.

Strategic targeting of specific groups will ensure the best use of resources, while communicating the key messages for Weston Package. Consistency is also important to ensure all groups receive the same messages.

Members and town councillors will be briefed both in order to equip them to deal with enquiries from the public but also so that they can help inform the public about the scheme and the benefits that it will achieve.

Three key messages will be identified, along with those stakeholder groups on which they impact, and these three key messages will form the basis of consistent communication going forward. It is important that while other messages may be used for different stakeholder groups, the key messages do not become too diluted.

1.4.1 Key messages

The three key messages for WP1 are as follows:

- Addressing congestion in and around Weston;
- Improving public transport; and
- Working to regenerate the town particularly by attracting more employers to the area.

It is not only important to ensure the correct messages are delivered but also that they are delivered by the right person.

It may not always be necessary or appropriate for either the most senior person available or a communication specialist to deliver the message. Instead, consideration should be given to the resources available, the target audience and who they may be most likely to relate to.

With Weston Package, where a number of different elements are involved, it may be more appropriate at times for the relevant subject matter expert to convey the message.

At all times, consideration should not only be given to the message, but also who is best placed to deliver it.

1.4.2 Other messages

As well as the three key messages, which all involved should try to include in any communication, there are also a number of other messages which should be considered and used where possible. These should be used to support the key messages whenever the opportunity arises.

These messages are:

- Specific benefits of each scheme, identified by scheme as follows:

M5 Junction 21 inbound

- Reduce queues on M5 off-slips – northbound and southbound;
- Reduce queues on A370;
- Reduce incidences of queuing back on to the M5 itself;
- Address concerns of congestion at J21;
- Will create reliable journey times; and
- May also have some positive impact on J21 outbound as the inter-green on the northbound off-slip signals will allow traffic onto the roundabout from A370 Somerset Avenue.

Weston Gateway and Drove Road roundabout

- Improve access and exit to and from Weston;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle access;
- Better public transport with introduction of bus lane;
- Improved safety on Marchfields Way, with additional crossings;
- Better access to businesses on Marchfields Way; and
- Improved access to businesses on Winterstoke Road, with traffic now solely heading to businesses along there, reducing traffic jams and making it easier for customers and stock deliveries to access the businesses.

Worle Station, Elmham Way and Queen's Way

- Additional parking will address local concerns over on-street parking;
 - Improved access to the station from the southbound platform;
 - New motorcycle and bicycle parking;
 - New bus interchange, improving bus links between Worle Station and the town;
 - New bus lanes in areas leading to and from Worle Station to improve public transport and improve traffic flow; and
 - Will create reliable journey times.
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- Public reassurance over the work taking place
 - Works have been carefully planned and scheduled;
 - The council will keep the public and other stakeholders informed of road works and closures;
 - Closures will not take place during the summer season and other times where there may be increased congestion on the roads; and
 - The council is aiming to keep disruption to a minimum.
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- Environmental consideration has been given;
 - Environmental consideration has been given to where the works are taking place and the impact of the works on the environment at all sites has been carefully considered; and
 - The council has consulted with environmental experts both internally and externally, including with national organisations.
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- Where funding for the programme is coming from;

- If the bid is successful, funding for Weston Package will come from a combination of central government grant, contributions collected from local developers and, North Somerset Council.
- Future-proofing of the works involved;
- All the work carried out has been implemented with future improvements in mind; and
- The work will support any future road network improvements which may need to be made, for example to outbound traffic at J21.
- What work is taking place

At J21 inbound:

- Widening of the southbound off-slip from two to three lanes;
- Widening of the A370 approach (east) from two to three lanes;
- Widening or marking three lanes on the roundabout and on to the A370 into Weston; and
- New traffic signals on the M5 off-slips and A370 (east) approaches to the J21 roundabout.

Weston Gateway

- New roundabout at the junction of Marchfields Way and Winterstoke Road;
- Drove Road roundabout modified to handle changes to traffic;
- Town-bound bus lane provided on Winterstoke Road;
- Widen Marchfields Way from two lanes one-way to four lanes, two-way;
- New junctions, signals and crossings on Marchfields Way; and
- New pedestrian and cycle ways.

Worle Station

- New station car park south of the station;
- New bus interchange at the station;
- Bus way at Queen's Way;
- Bus priority and traffic management on Elmham Way; and
- New motorbike and cycle parking at the station;

- When the work is taking place
- September 2011: submit best and final offer;

- December 2011: reactivated programme entry;
- May 2012: bid for full approval;
- July 2012: full approval given;
- May 2012 – April 2013: Worle Station works take place;
- September 2012 – December 2014: work on M5 J21;
- September 2012 – December 2014: Weston Gateway works take place; and
- Programme completed by January 2015.

NB – It should be noted that these dates may be subject to change and will not necessarily be described this way in communication materials.

During construction the impact upon traffic in the peak times will be minimised and lanes will be kept open during the summer tourist season.

- What work is not taking place:
 - Since the scheme was decoupled in 2009 the Airfield Bridge Link will no longer be delivered as part of the package.
 - The Cross Airfield Link will, however be delivered by the development in Winterstoke Village.

1.5 Communication mix

A number of tools and activities will be appropriate in communicating the key messages to the stakeholders. Each is analysed in Appendix 5.4, with a summary of its strengths and weaknesses. For each tool, it will also be identified which stakeholder groups it might be most appropriate to be utilised for. Some of the mechanisms are active, others are inactive.

The communication tools and activities are listed below, in order of their perceived effectiveness for communicating messages about Weston Package. Their effectiveness is based on a number of elements, analysed in Appendix 5.4, including cost effectiveness, which stakeholders they target and which messages they can be used to communicate. This perceived effectiveness is reflected in the communication plan, Appendix 6.

1.5.1 Effective communication tools

These are the communication tools which the analysis has shown to be most effective, whether this be in terms of cost, frequency or specific audience. It is recommended that these communication tools are used throughout the implementation of Weston Package and this is reflected in the communication plan, Appendix 5.6. A brief summary is given next to each tool.

North Somerset Council website

This is a useful tool as it is owned by the council and can be used regularly to communicate a wide variety of messages to a variety of stakeholders.

Partners' websites (including Travel+)

As partners in the programme, they should be willing to communicate messages on a regular basis. Good opportunity to reach other stakeholders.

Newsletters

Cost effective and particularly when the newsletters are funded or belong to partners in the programme. They should be willing to communicate messages regularly, so ensure regular supply of information from the council to these newsletters.

North Somerset Council newsletters

This is cost effective and full editorial control. It is a strong tool to use on a regular basis. There are a number available which will meet different communication requirements.

Meetings

Council has access to variety of meeting rooms and can provide a good opportunity to provide updates and generate two-way communication. They need to be targeted to specific stakeholders.

Presentations

Good way to communicate key messages and visual information about the programme. They need to be targeted to specific stakeholders.

Press releases

Cost effective and should be used regularly, with caution of not over-using them. No control over how information is used once submitted to the media.

Stakeholder events

Good way to engage and establish two-way communication with stakeholders. They need to be targeted to specific stakeholder groups.

Briefings

This is cost-effective and a good way to ensure dissemination of information within some stakeholder groups. Also make use of North Somerset Council's internal briefings.

North Somerset Council Intranet

Cost effective method of communication but only targets very specific stakeholder group.

North Somerset Life

This is cost-effective and retains editorial control. It is a regular way of communicating and opportunity to use graphics to enhance method. It goes to a wide audience.

Leaflets and other printed publicity material

Cost involved, but effective once printed and good to provide as reference material for a varied audience.

Council, committee and executive reports and decision notices

This is a useful way of ensuring councillors remain engaged and informed.

eConsult

Cost effective tool and useful for analysing results. May not be well-used, but provides valuable information from those who do use it. Will need promoting as a communication tool.

Social media

Cost effective and popular with specific demographics. Effective way of disseminating messages among a varied stakeholder group.

North Somerset Council Gateways

This is an on-going opportunity and cost effective. It can be used effectively when timed to coincide with key developments and stages of the programme.

Town and parish councils

Good to keep them informed as may disseminate and influence other stakeholders.

Local media

It can be a valuable and cost effective tool, although the council will hold no editorial control over them.

Email

This is cost effective, but there is a risk people will not read unsolicited emails. It can reach a variety of stakeholders and opportunity for information to be more widely disseminated. It is mainly effective for targeting specific stakeholder groups.

1.5.2 Less frequent communication tools

These communication tools may be less effective than the tools identified above or may not be appropriate for using as frequently for a number of reasons, but still have a value and could be used during the implementation of Weston Package. These will be used less frequently and less widely than the tools identified as the most effective. A brief summary is given next to each tool.

Stakeholders' and other external websites (for example, First)

Valuable tool but may be limited in the frequency and willingness to post articles and information.

Other magazines

Valuable and cost-effective tool but may be limited in the frequency and willingness to post articles and information.

Direct mail

Cost involved and risk that people won't read information delivered in this form, good opportunity to communicate overview and key messages, including graphics.

Staff networks

Could be effective way to reach other, more varied, stakeholder groups, but information sharing may be limited by meeting frequency.

1.5.3 Less effective communication tools

These tools are felt to be less effective or inappropriate for communicating messages about Weston Package, based on the analysis. It is not recommended these tools are used. The reasons are detailed below.

Telephone

This would be quite a costly method of communicating and a large number of people do not appreciate unsolicited calls. It may have a value as a reactive method of communication, if people wish to contact the council.

Television advertising

This is a very costly method of communication and may not be effective in targeting specific stakeholder groups. It is not recommended for use based on anticipated return on investment.

Text messages (SMS)

Again this could be quite costly without a good return on investment. It would also require access to relevant mobile phone numbers.

1.6 Resources and time scales

A communication plan will need to be produced covering the period from June 2011 to completion of works in January 2015 to ensure effective communication with the relevant stakeholders during this time. A plan will also need to be developed that identifies the communication tools and the stakeholders these should be used for. Both these plans are attached at Appendices 5.5 and 5.6.

The council has some budget set aside for communication around Weston Package, but will be able to utilise in-house resources to make it as cost-effective as possible. This includes the use of communication professionals within the council, in-house design and printing and making use of council facilities to host meetings, presentations and other events.

Some communication tools have been discounted in order to optimise the available resources and it is recommended that the most cost-effective and efficient tools are used as regularly as possible, within the boundaries of the communication plan.

The council may need to consider extra resources for particularly busy times, such as managing and implementing the consultation which is due to take place during the summer period of 2011.

The council may also wish to consider making use of available external resources, such as other organisations' newsletters and websites. Again, this is reflected in the communication plan.

1.7 Feedback mechanisms

It is vital to perform regular communication audits in order to assess the effectiveness of the communication strategy and the implementation of the communication plan. This should be aimed at both the internal and external stakeholders.

An audit should be carried out relatively early in the implementation, followed by audits at regular intervals to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the documents. Considerations should also be given to changes to timescale, potential changes to stakeholder groups and changes to the way in which Weston Package is being implemented.

Possible feedback mechanisms include a short questionnaire for some target stakeholder groups. Due to the volume of stakeholders for this scheme, it may be that some stakeholders are targeted above others for this.

The council should also keep a record of feedback and comments about the Package, particularly noting any which reflect and measure the effectiveness of the communication strategy and plan.

North Somerset Council's communication professionals can audit and review the communication strategy and associated documents.

1.8 Conclusion

The in-depth analysis of Weston Package's stakeholders and communication emphasises the need to follow a communication plan, underpinned by a communication strategy, while delivering Weston Package.

A communication plan is attached at Appendix 5.6, and it is recommended this is followed and reviewed regularly during the implementation of the programme.

This will ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement and assist with the effective delivery and implementation of Weston Package.

Note: The Appendices referenced in this strategy are available on request.