

APPENDIX 2

HCCTP Communications Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1. The Hereford City Centre Transport Package (HCCTP) is one of a number of high-profile schemes planned within Herefordshire with the aim of meeting Herefordshire Council's priority of delivering significant growth in housing and employment. The importance of the HCCTP is reflected in the Communication Strategy being employed by the authority to inform stakeholders and the wider public of the HCCTP and its constituent elements.

2. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY - KEY MESSAGES

2.1.1. It is important to keep all relevant parties informed about the progress of the project, in a timely and appropriate manner that is suitable for their level of involvement. Certain key messages have and will be communicated as the scheme is developed and will be included when information is circulated to target audiences through the channels identified, including that the scheme is a key component of the LEP Strategic Economic Plan.

2.1.2. The key message is that the HCCTP measures form a fundamental part of the strategy to:

- Improve access to/from/within the city for walk, cycle and public transport modes;
- Improve the public realm and the transport links between the historic city centre and the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) redevelopment area, helping to better integrate new development with the retail and other services/facilities located in the historic city core;
- Improve walk and cycle links between the railway station and city centre and the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) area, consistent with the LSTF funded behavioural change project;
- Assist in delivering retail, leisure, tourism, employment, housing, and other development;
- Support the delivery of a major mixed-use development, maximising the potential of a significant area of under-utilised land in a highly sustainable location for both Hereford and the county; and
- Help address the decline in Hereford's traditional role as a regional economic hub, and meet the national agenda for economic growth.

2.1.3. Once implemented the HCCTP will help to:

- Unlock underutilised land for development within the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) area;
- Reduce transport infrastructure related severance between the existing city centre and ESG area;
- Improve access to the ESG area and city core by non-motorised modes of transport;
- Improve access to the railway station and wider transport network in Hereford;
- Provide enhanced interchange facilities for public transport;
- Reduce accidents by all modes at accident cluster sites within the ESG area;
- Reduce vehicle speeds on Newmarket St, Blueschool Street and Commercial Road;
- Reduce journey times for vehicles and cyclists; and
- Increase footfall in the ESG area and city centre.

2.1.4. The dissemination of these overarching objectives and benefits form the basis of the communication strategy.

2.1.5. Herefordshire Council has a good understanding of the key stakeholders involved in the delivery of this scheme. A monthly strategic communications meeting brings together the development partners involved in this and other projects to ensure a shared approach to communications around all the schemes. Key landowners and tenants are aware of the proposals and larger landowners are involved in shaping communications around the project. Good working relationships between communications staff ensure clear messaging and a good understanding of the project.

3. APPROACH

3.1.1. There is an overarching communications strategy for the wider HCCTP. Tactical plans are developed within this strategy when necessary for specific projects. Though aspects of the project have been controversial there is general support for the HCCTP measures.

3.1.2. The Communication Strategy has been put together to pinpoint the communication channels that should be utilised to ensure all relevant parties are kept informed as the project develops. Communications have and will be tailored to meet the needs of each stakeholder and will take into consideration the objectives for the scheme.

4. METHODS OF DISSEMINATION

4.1.1. Since the inception of the project in 2007, information on the HCCTP has been disseminated in a variety of ways, including:

- Herefordshire Council Member briefings;
- Herefordshire Council website;
- Meetings with key stakeholders;
- Focus Groups;
- Design Workshops; and
- Public consultation events.

4.1.2. A monthly strategic communications meeting brings together the development partners involved in this and other projects to ensure a shared approach to communications across all the schemes. Key landowners and tenants are aware of the proposals and larger landowners are involved in shaping communications around the project. Good working relationships between communications staff ensure clear messaging and a good understanding of the project.

4.1.3. Over the coming period to through to the completion of the scheme, this approach will be augmented by marketing and awareness campaigns.

4.1.4. The Communication Strategy covers the HCCTP from its development through to its delivery and implementation. This is summarised below.

Scheme Development Phase:

- Establish and empower an authoritative source of information on progress with the development of the HCCTP;

- Establish clear methods of communication, including a dedicated website and associated FAQ area;
- Co-ordination between departments within the Council to ensure that information on the purpose of the HCCTP and progress with its development is released in a co-ordinated fashion to reduce confusion and support the process;
- Provide a consistent message on the rationale behind the need for the HCCTP and its benefits;
- Co-ordination with partner organisations;
- Media relations co-ordinated through the Council's press team and local journalists kept informed throughout the process; and
- Ensure that consultation with stakeholders is planned and programmed and delivered in conjunction with the Customer Experience Team.

Scheme Delivery Phase

- 4.1.5. A number of works are planned for parts of the city centre network to facilitate the delivery of the various HCCTP improvements. Some of these works are likely to be disruptive.
- 4.1.6. As such the Communications Strategy will seek to ensure that the public and stakeholders are kept informed about scheme milestones and also warn and inform of any disruption caused during scheme delivery.
- 4.1.7. The delivery phase of the Communications Strategy will enable Herefordshire Council to:
- Alert people to any disruption, keep people informed and explain the reason for works and the actions taken to adjust traffic flow;
 - Work with partners to ensure that any additional disruption caused by the implementation of the HCCTP is minimised;
 - Listen to concerns and issues raised by individuals and organisations and to do what we can to address these;
 - Encourage informed use of suitable alternative routes and transport modes to minimise disruptions during construction periods;
 - Minimise negative impact on trade in Hereford city centre;
 - Minimise the number of complaints received by communicating effectively with the media and stakeholders; and
 - Ensure the council demonstrates leadership in reducing traffic on the network caused by its own activities
- 4.1.8. A tactical plan was developed for the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) relating to the City Link Road (CLR) element of the HCCTP which ensured that there was an authoritative source of information about the process and the reasons underpinning the need for and benefits of the CLR. Questions from the public and from specific stakeholders were invited and reflected in an FAQ area of the Council's website. Co-ordination between departments within the Council and partner organisations ensured that information was released in a co-ordinated fashion reducing confusion and supporting the process. Media relations were co-ordinated through the Council's press team and local journalists kept informed throughout the process.

4.1.9. A similar approach will be followed during the development phase of the other elements of the HCCTP, namely:

- Public transport, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements along Commercial Road, Blueschool Street and Newmarket Street
- Public realm improvements along Commercial Road and Blueschool Street
- A new multi-modal transport hub at Hereford railway station

5. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TARGET AUDIENCES

5.1.1. The key groups identified for the scheme can be classified as:

- Central Government;
- Marches LEP and supporting LTB;
- Statutory Environmental consultees;
- Local businesses;
- Internal Herefordshire Council consultees, including local members;
- Other Key Stakeholders, including landowners, local transport operators, emergency services; and
- Public –including local residents and public in general who may be affected by the scheme.

6. ALERTING

6.1.1. Prior to the commencement of the delivery stage of the various elements of the HCCTP we will have an initial marketing /awareness-raising campaign targeting:

- The general public using Hereford's transport system (across all main modes of transport)
- Hereford City Traders
- Large employers
- Education establishments
- Public transport operators
- Community transport operators
- Disability groups
- Large volunteering establishments
- Visitor attractions
- emergency services
- taxi operators
- supermarkets
- pharmacists
- social landlords
- dial a ride
- disability organisations etc.
- health trusts

6.1.2. The campaign will aim to direct people to the information and newsletters provided on the Herefordshire Council website.

7. KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED

7.1.1. The public and stakeholders will be kept informed of progress with the development and delivery of the HCCTP by a variety of methods, including:

- Creation of a dedicated area of the website providing an overview of the schemes and detail of the works programmed in for the duration of the scheme. The URL will be used on all publicity, signage and a QR code version will be used on appropriate publications
- Offering email newsletters (the frequency and number of these will be dependent upon the stage of scheme development and delivery)
- Use of twitter, Facebook and possibly other social media feeds with existing corporate feeds or new, dedicated feeds or a combination of both
- Production of a generic hard copy leaflet to alert people to the online content and to encourage them to visit the website or sign up for email newsletters
- Use of SMS alerts if required to disseminate short notice information
- Providing an alternative communication model for people who cannot or will not access online information. This may be by means of a telephone service, potentially using the authority's customer services to interrogate the website
- Providing Herefordshire Council staff with information on the HCCTP and encouragement for them to distribute general and specific information via their existing networks to businesses and other organisations
- Providing general and specific content to people writing existing newsletters (such as distributed by Hereford Futures).
- Use of signage around the city centre (and at some distance in the case of HGV traffic) in advance of any road works will warn road users of "Road works planned for Hereford City Centre XX/XXX until XX/XXX" serious delays expected. Visit Herefordshire.gov.uk/roads for more information."

8. WORK WITH PARTNERS

8.1.1. If disruption during scheme implementation is likely, Herefordshire Council will:

- Talk to key partners including police, highways agency and identify contingency planning
- Agree communications protocols with those agencies for emergencies and emergency road works
- Keep communications staff and relevant operational staff informed of plans, changes and communications

9. SPECIFIC CONCERNS AND ISSUES

9.1.1. Herefordshire Council will encourage citizens to raise issues and report concerns relating the HCCTP by email, phone, social media and a form on the website.

9.1.2. In the event that specific concerns and issues are raised by individuals and organisations, Herefordshire Council will:

- Actively investigate what steps (if any) we can take to mitigate the impact raised. The outcome (or the reasons why we cannot take any steps) will be reported to the customer via their preferred channel
- Actively approach people and organisations likely to be impacted (because they are adjacent to works or diversion routes or because they are heavy network users).

10. USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT MODES

10.1.1. Herefordshire Council will provide advice and incentives to encourage people not to drive on the Hereford network at times of peak demand. The council is currently running a project Choose How You Move (CHYM) to encourage people not to drive on the city network but to take sustainable modes. Herefordshire Council will:

- Ensure that the advice and support available from CHYM is included in all our newsletters, web content and other content provision.
- Share the planned road works programme with the CHYM team so that, where possible, they can plan their work programme to make the maximum use of our publicity and the increased congestion relating to works.
- Encourage CHYM to promote our website through their networks and marketing initiatives.

11. MANAGING IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMY

11.1.1. Herefordshire Council will work with local businesses to encourage people to continue to visit the city centre and associated services during the delivery of the HCCTP measures. The council will work with the markets and city centre team to ensure the provision of advice and incentives to encourage people to keep spending money in the city centre during periods of disruption, including:

- Working with the markets and city centre team to ensure a programme of events is available.
- Consider discounting stalls etc. during the period of the work.
- Helping to fund local advertising to promote the city centre during the works
- Encouraging traders to provide discounts to people with bus tickets, where this will help to maintain/improve access to the city centre
- Consideration of park and ride options where this would maintain/improve access to the city centre
- Ensuring that any known large-scale events planned for the city should be included in the network planning.
- Ensuring that the programme of works will be made available to key stakeholders involved in planning large scale events to ensure that load on the network is minimised.
- Encouraging event organisers to raise concerns and issues.

12. LEADERSHIP

12.1.1. Ensure the council demonstrates leadership in reducing traffic on the network caused by its own activities, including through:

- Promotion of its programme enabling and encouraging staff to work flexibly and to travel more sustainably;
- Ensuring that staff will be kept informed of the HCCTP and associated disruption via internal channels;
- Encouraging staff to raise concerns and issues;
- Encouraging staff to minimise their use of the network during times of disruption;
- Asking staff to act as ambassadors ensuring that clients and partner agencies are aware of the planned disruption and actions they can take; and
- Contacting managers with staff in buildings that will be particularly affected to begin planning to enable as many staff as possible to work from other locations or to travel by sustainable means during periods of disruption.