

**Greater Cambridge City Deal Shadow Board meeting
Tuesday 18 November 2014**

Communications Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present the proposed Communications Strategy for the Greater Cambridge City Deal (shown in Appendix A) to the Shadow Board for discussion and approval.
- 1.2 A Communications Strategy is needed in order to ensure that communications carried out as part of the Greater Cambridge City Deal are done consistently and smoothly, with the right messages being communicated to the public and stakeholders.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Shadow Board is recommended to:
 - Agree the general approach to communications for the City Deal;
 - Agree the protocol, key messages and methods for engaging; and
 - Note that the issue of communications resource will be included in a later paper on resources that may be needed to deliver the City Deal.

GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL – COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. AIM

- 1.1 To ensure all partners (Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge University and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership) work together to actively engage in the purpose, process and progress of the City Deal partnership.
- 1.2 Engaging with all stakeholders in a timely and open manner is important and will help build trust and support for decisions as well as ensuring that projects are able to take all views and opinions on board. Good engagement takes time, planning and resource, but overall leads to a better outcome for everyone involved.
- 1.3 High standards of consultation must also be met for transport and housing schemes and be shown in Statements of Community Involvement, to go through the democratic decision making and Planning Authority processes.

2. CHALLENGES

- 2.1 There is no doubt that a venture of this size and scope, carried out by several different authorities, with differing processes for approvals, decision making, and political make-up will carry challenges for communications. Some of these are outlined below.
- 2.2 **Internal communications** – It will be vital for partners to be open and honest with each other, keeping everyone involved, informed and up-to-date. Processes and protocols may need to be developed to ensure this happens.
- 2.3 **Transparency** – Meetings of the Shadow/Executive Board and Assembly will be open to the public, and so information will need to be timely and clear..
- 2.4 **Managing expectations** – The large budget for the City Deal could lead to inflated expectations around what can be funded. The reality is that the funding is not sufficient to deliver all expectations, and the focus must be on prioritising schemes that deliver the greatest economic benefits. Managing expectations regarding future tranches of funding dependent on economic assessments in 2019 and 2024 will also be important as there is a possibility of no funding being made available if those assessments do not demonstrate sufficient economic benefits.
- 2.5 **Time** - Time for communications and consultation will need to be built in to delivery plans to ensure full engagement can be carried out. We will also need timely decision making and a rapid system for achieving sign off on communications. To this end a communications protocol has been included with the strategy below.

3. WHAT AND HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE?

- 3.1 A wide range of techniques could be used to effectively engage with different audiences. The communications strategy will need to take into account which tool is appropriate for the job taking into account time, audience, budget and probable outcome. These include:

- Online consultation
- Use of social media
- Dissemination of visualisations and video walkthroughs
- Workshops
- Briefings and meetings
- Direct marketing (mail and e-mail)
- Roadshows and exhibitions
- Advertising
- Media relations

KEY MESSAGES

- Key messages should be used in news releases, articles, consultations and promotions to highlight the benefits of the proposals to stakeholders. They will form the basis of communications but will be adjusted for audience and from feedback.
- The Greater Cambridge City Deal (GCCD) brings together 5 organisations in a ground-breaking new partnership to create the conditions necessary to unlock the potential of Greater Cambridge.
- The Deal aims to secure hundreds of millions of pounds of additional funding for investment in transport infrastructure to support high quality economic and housing growth over the coming decades. £100m of funding will be made available in the five years from April 2015. If certain conditions are met, we will be able to secure up to a further £200m from April 2020 onwards and up to a final £200m from April 2025 onwards.
- Significant new investment for transport infrastructure will be brought to the area through the Greater Cambridge City Deal. Funding will be used to make it easier to get to work, and to move between the business and research centres. More sustainable transport methods will be prioritised by increasing road space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and enabling more people to use public transport for at least some of their journey
- The Greater Cambridge City Deal will use its connections in business and higher education to better target investment to the needs of our economy.
- The Greater Cambridge City Deal will help accelerate delivery of the 33,000 new homes and 44,000 new jobs envisaged in the draft local plans and enable the delivery of an extra 1,000 new homes on rural exception sites – creating more homes for people across the region and allowing more of them to live within a reasonable commuting distance of work.
- The Greater Cambridge City Deal will help local young people develop the skills they need to take advantage of job opportunities in local businesses. The City Deal will deliver over 400 new Apprenticeships for young people and create new teams to act as brokers between training providers and businesses, as well as supporting the guidance that is given in schools and colleges to encourage young people to take up vocational careers.

- 3.2 The Corporate Communications team representing the team carrying out the bulk of the work on the project in question, will take responsibility for releasing information (i.e. transport – Cambs County, Local plan/ housing – relevant district authority, skills – Cambs County). Media work should be signed off by the Chairman of the Executive Board, scheme promoter, and potentially a central Communications Lead for the Greater Cambridge City Deal.

4.2 **Media statements and press releases**

The Board Chairman (once appointed)

The Greater Cambridge City Deal Board Chairman will be quoted in media releases or statements. Such statements will represent the views of the City Deal as a whole (not one organisation or political party) and/or matters of fact. If the Chairman is unavailable, the Vice Chairman will assume this responsibility.

Officers

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for an officer to front media work in place of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Board Chairman. These circumstances may be when there is a need for technical explanation, on schemes that may not as yet have gone through the correct democratic process or for low priority statements for issues such as small scale road works. However, if these link to Shadow Board/ Executive Board work or decision then the Chairman and Communications Lead will be consulted and a decision made on who should be quoted.

Local Members

Officers will make every effort to keep Councillors informed of media and communications work relevant to their responsibilities and the electoral divisions they represent, especially regarding strategic or contentious matters, and keeping them informed of any plans for roadworks, etc.

Senior staff and other employees

Senior officers will alert the Corporate Communications Teams promptly to any issues that may be of media interest. Senior staff will ensure that any direct media contact with their Service is passed on to their media teams immediately and must also ensure the factual accuracy of all information provided for use in any media activity. Officers should not make any comments directly to the media.

4.3 **Producing materials and public information**

Materials and public information will be signed off by the project manager and Corporate Communications team and/or a central Communications Lead for the Greater Cambridge City Deal.

5. **RESOURCE CO-ORDINATION**

- 5.1 Given all of the communications tasks required, it is recommended that a dedicated communications resource for the City Deal be considered to lead and co-ordinate on all aspects of communications and oversee the media and engagement work as a whole. This would include forward planning and ensuring communications is delivered in the most effective way. This person could attend/observe (as appropriate) the Shadow/Executive Board, Assembly and project manager meetings to ensure communications align with decisions being made and comment on the impact decisions will make on future communications work.

- 5.2 Currently each of the organisations has a team responsible for their corporate communications and media work. Each of these teams has responsibility for their organisations' "brand" and public face. Cambridgeshire County Council also has a Community Engagement team of two and a half people who specifically work on engaging the public with all major transport plans and proposals. All current communications teams already face extremely challenging workloads before taking on extra work for the City Deal.
- 5.3 Adequate resource in staffing and budget will be needed early to ensure a clear strategy is in place from the outset and engagement is of a high standard. It should be remembered that poorly communicated projects may lead to poor support and risk delay or being removed from the programme. It is suggested that extra staff resource will be needed to help carry out communications and engagement work for the Greater Cambridge City Deal.
- 5.4 A paper is expected in the near future that will deal with wider aspects of resourcing City Deal and the communications aspect will be included in that.