

## **West of England Rapid Transit Network Strategic Stakeholder Management**

This paper focuses on strategic stakeholders and decision makers for the West of England Rapid Transit Network.

Engagement with stakeholders has been a key part of the wide public consultation and information programme that the three projects in the Rapid Transit Network have undertaken to date.

This paper focuses on Stakeholder Management and contact going forwards as the BAFB submission is made, and afterwards as the projects are planned and delivered.

These stakeholders may have an influence on the outcome of the BAFB submission to the DfT and are often local opinion formers with significant influence on local opinion.

Different types of stakeholders have different viewpoints and may require a different level of information or have different interests in the project. Communication activities therefore need to be focussed at the right level for particular individuals and groups.

This paper is concerned with external stakeholders; the Transport Executive Members are regarded as internal stakeholders and will be updated via the established channels.

These external groups have been broadly divided into

- Decision Makers – elected Members, funders and officers who are all involved in decision making on the scheme or preparatory work for decision making.
- Stakeholders – for the purposes of this paper, individuals and organisations who have an interest in the economic, social well-being and development of the West of England area and the impacts rapid transit may have.

These groups include but are not limited to;

- LEP Board members
- Business Organisations CBI, IoD, FST
- Local business
- Universities and Colleges
- Local MP's
- DfT Ministers
- Other Ministers; BiS, CLG
- Senior political party members

## **Methods or Channels**

Stakeholder engagement takes various forms and can consist of individual meetings and interaction, letters and more formal communication, personal letters. Stakeholder engagement should also be undertaken at the wider level to reflect the schemes contribution to the wider economic situation.

Ongoing activities will build on the contact already made with stakeholders and will include but are not limited to:

- Personal contact by Executive Members and LEP Board Members
- Personal contact by local Councillors
- Letters to MPs' from LEP, councillors, influential businesses.
- Information in local media
- Contact via twitter and other social media
- Regular newsletters and/or personal updates

Representatives from the LEP have previously held individual meetings with local MP's in Westminster emphasising their support for the major transport schemes and their importance to the local economy. This has helped to provide a wide base of informed support that will be maintained and improved as the projects move forwards.

Previous contact with local business stakeholders has resulted in a high number of letters of support that will accompany the bid submission. Contact with these businesses will be maintained throughout the planning and delivery phase.

## **Media contact**

Media briefings and one-to-one meeting with specialist and local journalists as required have helped to ensure an in-depth knowledge of the West of England Rapid Transit Network, its philosophy and ethos as well as the practicalities and locations that will inform their writings.

Continuing to keep the national and trade press informed of progress ensures that readers will be aware of the West of England proposals and help achieve a high level background awareness of the schemes and 'drip feed' positive information.

## **Messages**

It is important to maintain the focus on a few short, clear and succinct messages that are easily remembered and repeated.

Messages can be adapted to suit different audiences, these messages are designed to align with the strategic stakeholders interests rather than describing what rapid transit is.

Messages used to date and that will continue to be used are

- These five schemes tackle existing congestion, removing traffic from congested areas, improving the local environmental and air quality, and put in place a new high quality public transport network.
- These five schemes are essential to maintain the economic competitiveness and to deliver growth in the West of England. Without these schemes the Local Enterprise Partnership will not be able to deliver its targets for economic growth and jobs.
- The five major transport schemes directly serve five key employment locations, including the new Enterprise Zone adjacent to Bristol Temple Meads Station, and are a key component in the delivery of jobs and sustainable economic growth.
- Investment of this kind will help realise the full potential of the knowledge-based, high growth economy of this natural economic area and support the delivery of a substantial number of new jobs and homes.
- The five schemes link places where people live with places where people work and study, removing the barriers to employment and encouraging sustainable growth and investment.

## **Timescales**

The work going forwards is divided into four phases

Phase 1, up to and including submission and decision;

Phase 2, the projects move from planning and procurement towards build and delivery;

Phase 3 construction;

Phase 4 the schemes become operational.

Each successful project will develop a full communication programme with timescales and activities for each phase so that the relationship between different activities can be monitored and coordinated.

### **Phase 1 covers the period immediately prior to Bid Submission up to the decision date of 'by December'**

#### Phase 1 Proposed Actions

- Councils to write to MPs informing them of the bid submission.
- LEP to discuss as Board agenda item and agree that all Board members will write to 'their' government department (Education, BiS, CLG) in support of the bids.
- LEP to meet with or write to all local MP's asking for support for the bids.
- LEP to contact parliamentary contacts in BiS informing them of the submission and importance of it to growth and economic competitiveness.

- LEP to ask local business organisations to contact their MP's asking for support.
- Local business organisations to inform their members that the bids have been submitted and asking them to show their support by writing to local media, writing to MP's.
- Councils (West of England Office) to inform local media that bids have been submitted.
- LEP to contact local media to demonstrate support for bids.
- Local Executive Councillors to contact their Senior Party Members.
- LEP to 'twitter' re bids.
- Local councillors to 'twitter' re bids.
- LEP to meet with media to brief on the bids and the importance to the local economy, jobs and the future.
- LEP to inform trade press that bids have been submitted and have full support of the business community.

## **Phase 2 - projects move from planning and procurement to build and delivery**

In Phase 2 the focus moves to with keeping stakeholders informed of progress on the schemes as they move from planning to delivery at different rates and includes statutory planning and approval processes, procurement of operators and contractors and other activities leading to DfT Full Approval status.

### **Activities will include**

- Regular updates to MPs, based on the quarterly reports to JTEC. Updates could be newsletters, letters or personal contact.
- Regular updates to the LEP Board, based on the quarterly reports to JTEC for direct dissemination to the wider business community.
- Occasional letters from the LEP Board to local newspapers supporting the progress of individual schemes.
- Regular updates to Scrutiny and other Executive Members in the West of England, based on the quarterly reports to JTEC.
- Communications with the local media will be managed on an individual project basis but overviews will be provided to Business Correspondents to endeavour to keep the sector informed of progress.

## **Phase 3 Construction**

As Phase 3 approaches and build takes place, contact with stakeholders will be increased to ensure they are fully informed of timescales, any possible disruption to local activities, possible visits to the sites to view the build.

This phase is 'activity on the ground' and can have significant impact on the relationship with the local community and their early impressions of the scheme. Many Stakeholders will have contact with other opinion formers and influencers so it will be vital to keep stakeholders informed and to be as open as possible with communications.

Contact with stakeholders must remain a high priority alongside that of regular public information.

#### **Phase 4 schemes become operational**

As the build nears completion and the projects become operational it will be important to involve stakeholders in testing and launch plans and, as the schemes bed in, to keep them informed of passenger growth and the positive impact they are having.

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