



**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
AND
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN
2007 – 2010**



**FOR THE WEST OF
ENGLAND
WASTE MANAGEMENT AND
PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

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1. Introduction

The West of England Waste Management & Planning partnership consists of Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The Partnership is working together to develop joint long-term strategies for dealing with waste in the West of England area. These include a Waste Strategy and a Development Plan.

A range of important motivating principles support this partnership. One of the key principles is the need to provide waste treatment facilities which help to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. This will, in turn, assist the local authorities in reducing the financial impact of the Landfill Trading Allowance Scheme (LATS). There is a further requirement to deal with waste in a way which is sustainable in the long term and meets the environmental goals set by the Vision of both the Waste Strategy and Development Plan.

The Waste Strategy vision

The four local authorities in the West of England area are working together to develop, in consultation with local residents and other stakeholders, a range of facilities for the treatment of municipal residual waste.

These will deliver significant reductions in the amount of waste, particularly biodegradable waste, being sent to landfill sites. They will also maximise the efficient recovery of resources and encompass environmental, social and economic factors.

Each local authority will maintain a long term commitment to increase waste reduction, recycling and composting, and will move toward a longer term aim of achieving zero waste.

The Development Plan vision

The West of England will take responsibility for its own waste, and through a Joint Waste Development Plan Document, will make provision for a network of waste management facilities.

This network will be consistent with the waste hierarchy principle, take account of the environmental, social and economic needs of the area, and assist in moving towards the longer term aim of achieving zero waste.

Communications are a vital and integral part of the process which ensure that all those involved, from waste industry, statutory stakeholders and decision makers to local residents and community groups, all receive clear and concise information at a level and amount appropriate to their needs. Communication is also a two way process so it is important that mechanisms are established where stakeholders and other groups can make their opinions known to the Project in a co-coordinated and efficient manner.

2. Background

In order to introduce this subject to a wider public whose general awareness about waste issues was likely to be low, a Communications plan was drawn up in May 2006 which covered the requirement for an early phase public consultation and awareness raising. A brand was created - 'Rubbish or Resource?' - which aimed to generate curiosity and interest by the public in the subject. A consultation exercise took place to introduce both the brand and the subject to the public. For details see Consultation Report Phase One on the website www.rubbishorresource.co.uk.

In October 2006 the Communication and Consultation Plan was further developed to build on the awareness already raised and to inform a wide range of stakeholders about the second phase of public consultation on the Issues and Options. This consultation ran from January to March 2007. For details see Consultation Report Phase Two on the website www.rubbishorresource.co.uk

In May 2007, a 4ps Gateway Review (level 0) was undertaken in which Communications was identified as an important contributory factor to the overall success of the project.

The Gateway Review made the following recommendation:
That an updated communications strategy be developed and include a stakeholder engagement plan to pro-actively influence the behaviour and attitudes of all stakeholders, whether internal and external.

3. Aim and Objectives

3.1 To pro-actively influence nominated stakeholders over the long term

Stakeholders include a very wide range of organisations and individuals and can be subdivided broadly into three categories: Internal, External and Statutory.

Internal	External	Statutory organisations
Chief Executives Senior Officers Directors of each of the 4 UAs Councillors Joint Overview & Scrutiny Reference Group Technical Managers in each UA Council employees in general Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)	Waste Industry, lead / sub contractors Residents in general Residents, by ward Residents local to potential waste facility site Council Citizens Panels Environmental/Special Interest Groups Those who took part in previous consultations Opinion Formers (Media) Members of Parliament Parish Councils Community and “citizens” Groups Registered Social Landlords Housing Associations etc Local businesses, industry and large employers (to capture MoD & universities) Regional 3 rd sector organisations (Resource Futures, SOFA, Wildlife Trust etc) Regional organisations: e.g. Local Government Association Primary Care Trusts West of England Partnership Office Chambers of Commerce Business West Police and Fire Services Neighbouring authorities: County, District and Parish Councils Schools and colleges	Environment Agency Highways Agency Government Office for the South West (GOSW) DCLG English Heritage Natural England Department for Transport South West Regional Development Agency The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England British Telecommunications Relevant Utilities Companies DEFRA Ministry of Defence Department for Culture Media and Sport South West Regional Assembly – ‘The Regional Planning Body’

Good communications needs to be planned and sustained throughout the duration of the project – up to and including commissioning and operation of new facilities. Until now the communications requirement has been based around the specific needs of the first two phases of public consultation. This communications plan aims to provide a long term approach with a plan of activity which addresses the communications requirements of the significant ‘trigger’ points.

3.2 To create awareness of the Joint Waste Strategy

A Joint Residual Waste Management Strategy (the Joint Waste Strategy) has been finalised and will provide guidance for waste management for 20-25 years. This document contains recommendations on a phased approach to the introduction on waste technologies and forms the core material which is to be communicated to stakeholders. Appendix A lists the specific communication activities relating to the Waste Strategy.

3.3 To create public awareness of the Waste Minimisation Plan which forms Phase 1 of the Joint Waste Strategy

One of the topics raised by the public during the consultation was the apparent confusion of different kerbside collection methods and different slogan or messages used to encourage recycling. A consistent theme from a majority of the consultation responses was the need to ensure that maximum visible effort was placed on encouraging recycling and waste minimisation. Although the Partnership's project is confined to the issue of dealing with residual waste, and this was explained in the literature, nevertheless, in the public mind waste and recycling are synonymous. Each council provides differing services and uses different logos, publicity and image styles. These differences can dilute the effectiveness of each councils' publicity effort.

Utilising the skills and activities that are already in place within the councils' own Waste Campaigns and Recycling Teams, another layer of promotion and publicity is proposed which demonstrates consistency, unity and commitment to waste reduction across the partnership. There is, therefore, a need to explore the potential for an overarching project to coordinate the efforts of the existing UA programmes and to pool marketing resources for this purpose. This could be based on the well recognised national 'Recycle Now' campaign.

The need to address the issues raised by the consultation together with a requirement to conform to the government's Waste Hierarchy, means that Waste Minimisation has become a key phase 1 and a continuous strand in the Joint Waste Strategy. A programme of waste minimisation, along with promotion to support this is planned and a business case is to be developed. A Joint Position Statement on Waste Minimisation has been prepared by the partnership which outlines the current activities and achievements in this area. A separate communications plan could be drawn up to support this work but currently there is no budget allocated to this activity other than that allocated by each council's own waste minimisation and recycling programmes.

3.4 To engage in a public consultation exercise in relation to the Preferred Options Consultation taking place mid 2008

A Preferred Options Consultation Exercise takes place during 2008. This is third stage of consultation and is required by law to meet the statutory planning requirement laid out by Regulation 26 of the Town

and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Preliminary details of how this consultation is being undertaken and the communications issues surrounding it are described in a separate report dated October 2007.

3.5 To assist the project deal with the potential for intensive lobbying

Pro-active communications can assist in diffusing the potential for aggressive objections by environmental lobby groups who have a published agenda to oppose any type of thermal treatment. Plainly, communications alone – however good, cannot dispel all prevailing negative attitudes, but it can help to redress the balance and ensure that a rational case is put forward.

3.6 To ensure councillors are regularly briefed and updated_

Each Unitary Authority within the West of England Waste Management & Planning Partnership underwent a change of political administration following the May 2007 elections. One of the key priorities is to ensure that, should membership change - for whatever reason, sufficient briefing is provided to any new Executive/Cabinet Members of the project board as well as briefing any new ward councillors.

3.7 To continue to liaise with DEFRA - a key stakeholder for positive communications

The first communications plan dealt principally with the requirement to inform the media and the general public. Liaison with the Waste Infrastructure Development Programme (WIDP) within DEFRA, 4ps, Partnerships UK and GOSW was managed through meetings and briefings between project staff. Communications with these organisations should continue through planned and regular briefings, as well as officer attendance at organised network meetings.

3.8 To increase the potential for Industry ‘biddability’.

The Waste Industry needs to be re-assured that the West of England is committed to the procurement of new waste facilities, and to ensure that we are seen as a robust, committed entity for this purpose. Timely and appropriate press releases will be issued to the industry media as necessary. Market research and liaison will be carried out, as required by the partnership, for example, through soft market testing. Documentation required by the procurement process will be produced with a view to ensuring that a positive impression is given to industry bidders.

4. Methodology

A whole tool kit of modern communication methods are available to use as a way of informing the wide variety of groups and individuals classed as ‘stakeholders’. There is no single route to successful communication – a mixture of different methods will be required. The

following lists those regarded as essential or valuable according to whether they are most effective against the target grouping.

Type of Activity	Internal	External	Statutory
<p>1</p> <p>Meetings and/or briefings_</p>	<p>The best way of communicating with small groups. Advantage can be taken where existing meetings already take place. Enables feedback to be measured and misunderstandings to be overcome. <i>Disadvantages – hard to arrange between groups across authorities. Time consuming</i></p>		
<p>2</p> <p>Minutes from meetings</p>	<p>Not be overlooked in importance for keeping key people in the picture. A good way of allowing information to cascade down through the teams.</p>		
<p>3</p> <p>Video conferencing</p>	<p>Could be organised when necessary to reduce unnecessary travel and assist people who cannot get to meetings</p>		<p>Could be organised when necessary to reduce unnecessary travel and assist people who cannot get to meetings</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Intranet</p>	<p>Each council has its own intranet and information for staff and important news about consultations etc can be publicised to allow a large number of council staff to be aware of progress or relevant activity.</p>		
<p>5</p> <p>E – bulletins, or e – newsletters_</p>		<p>An informative newsletter containing news and progress would be issued to all consultees and others who may have asked to remain up-dated. This would be sent from info@rubbishorresource.co.uk. Frequency of issue would depend on the availability and clearance of news and information. In all likelihood this could</p>	

		two or three times a year.	
6 Council newsletters and website		Each council's in-house newsletter or magazine. Useful for ensuring that a controlled and accurate message is conveyed to every resident. <i>Difficulties with this medium can occur due to timing. Some councils publish infrequently and the timing may not suit the requirement of the schedule. Also, there is limited space available</i>	
7 Posters and leaflets_		Posters are a cost effective medium for publicising events e.g. public meetings or special events. Council premises, schools and libraries are the most commonly used locations. Large posters, e.g. bus shelters and bus sides are very effective for disseminating simple messages to a very wide audience, particularly those regarded as 'hard to reach' . <i>They are costly and need to be booked at least three months in advance.</i> <i>The risk with posters is that their effectiveness depends on the display location.</i>	
8 Direct mail (print)		A printed message received in the post allows a detailed document to be sent. Where stakeholder database details exist the audience is ready and available. Where it is necessary to find those whose details are unknown, audiences can be selected by postcode, or by professional interest groups. The Direct Mail industry is designed for mass marketing and expects to yield a response rate of between 3-10%. <i>Many people regard Direct Mail as junk mail. To measure effectiveness direct mail needs a response mechanism such as a coupon or form.</i>	

<p>9</p> <p>Press articles/ or broadcast media__</p>	<p>Press articles are just as likely to be read by internal stakeholders as by the general public.</p>	<p>Press articles are often cited as the best way of disseminating information to the public at large. <i>It can also be a method that will miss many people out because the paper or article was missed, or the subject didn't interest them. Editors may alter or misinterpret press release and the message may not reach as a large number of people as expected. Not to be relied on as the sole method of informing people.</i></p>	<p>Press articles are just as likely to be read by statutory stakeholders as by the general public.</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Letters</p>		<p>A personally addressed and signed letter is a direct, straightforward way to send information. This method remains important for those without e mail access, and for a higher level of gravitas.</p> <p><i>For communicating with very large numbers it can be time consuming to locate the correct names and addresses and is largely surpassed by e-mail</i></p>	<p>A personally addressed and signed letter is a direct, straightforward way to send information. This method remains important for those without e mail access, and for a higher level of gravitas.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>Rubbish or resource web site</p>	<p>The dedicated Rubbish or Resource website aims to provide the best way for stakeholders to access the widest range of information and documents. Whilst some pages provide simple explanations, the user can also find and download full length technical documents, with supporting background documents. Also links and other useful information. The 'contact us' facility and opportunity to link to an e-consultation page have given us a valuable response mechanism and inter-activity</p>		

Regular Reviews of Activity

The methods and timings of communications actions will be monitored and reviewed regularly to assess the suitability of activities in light of changing circumstances.

5. Communications Matrices

See next two pages

5.1 Communications Plan Internal/Strategic/Technical

Who (Stakeholder)	Why (objective)	What (Content)	How (Method)	When
Strategic Decision-makers Council leaders Chief Executives Member Project Board Strategic Directors	To ensure timely and appropriate decision making	Background for policy and decision making	(see Timetable) Regular briefings by individual directors WEPO Board meetings MPB briefings and workshops Board meetings Directors Programme Management Team	As required Qtrly meetings As required Qtrly meetings SDG or SMT meetings Joint RD meetings
External Policy/National Strategy makers WIDP – DEFRA/ 4ps/PUK GOSW (SWRA/SWRDA/LGA) Environment Agency		Background for policy and decision making	WIDP Transactor (David Revell) Waste Officer attendance at Network and SECE meetings Project Director & Waste / DPD Managers	DPMT and MPB meetings Qtrly meetings Regular updates
Overview & Scrutiny Panels and Select Committees	To ensure understanding of the rationale, priorities and decisions		Individual UA O&S Panel/Select Committee briefings Joint O&S Reference Group (informal)	As agreed on workplans Qtrly meetings after MPB meetings
Council officers	Clear understanding of	Progress updates	Established Project Team	Regular monthly joint

Planning & Waste Officers	timetable and activities required		meetings	meetings
Other Council / Technical Managers (Property, Finance, Sustainability, Waste Operations)	Understanding of implications for other services areas		Service Team meetings Specific meetings	Monthly/regular As needed
Technical Advisors				
Capita Symonds Jacobs UK Ltd Hyder Consulting ERM SLR Consulting	To ensure technical advisors are provided with up to date information to complete the task commissioned from them.	Technical and papers to Board meetings, minutes of meetings, decision sheets etc.	Supply of relevant papers and attendance at Project Team meetings.	As and when required given the nature of their brief.
Waste Industry	To gain support from industry and biddability from potential suppliers	Tailored press releases Soft market testing and meetings Procurement documentation	Waste industry press and publications Relevant, professional looking documents	Key milestone points

5.2 Communications Plan External / Public

Who (Stakeholder)	Why (objective)	What (Content)	How (Method)	When
Media Local Newspapers Local Radio & TV	To generate positive and well-informed press coverage	Detailed information on technical areas	Specific Press briefings / workshops	In advance of key milestone points
Community Leaders All other councillors Members of Parliament Parish councils Local Strategic Partnerships / Local Area Agreement Project Boards WEPO groups	To ensure understanding of the rationale, priorities and decisions		E-newsletter (existing and project-based) Distribution/notification of key reports Communication of and inclusion in Consultation opportunities Briefings at meetings	Regular (Qtrly) Key milestone points Consultation periods Qtrly meetings
Residents / the Public General public Consultation respondees	Awareness-raising and engagement Retain interest and good will	Simple, clear information Updates on progress	Press releases Mail-outs to Citizens panels, Housing & Residents associations, Pensioner forums, Community/Special interest Groups E-newsletter Press releases	Key milestone and regular progress points Qtrly Key milestone and regular

				progress points
Residents In catchment area of proposed sites	Create awareness and reduce risk of planning objections	Updates on progress	Leaflets to all houses in catchment area	? Preferred Options Report consultation Build up to Planning application period
Regional authorities and DPD Statutory consultees Police, Fire, Utilities, PCTs etc	Keep informed of plans for awareness of implications		E-newsletter Consultation documents	
Environment groups Friends of the Earth Greenpeace	Keep informed as they have a keen interest in the development of these issues and plans. Regular dialogue will help to deal with potential future conflicts	Briefings on key decisions, access to relevant papers to Board meeting etc.	E circulation, newsletter or letter. Consultation documents ? Special briefings	At an appropriate point before key decisions are taken.
Neighbouring county, district and parish councils	Keep informed of plans for awareness of implications		E-newsletter Consultation documents	
Local businesses and employers, Chambers of Commerce	Keep informed of plans for awareness of implications		E-newsletter Consultation documents	
Regional 3 rd sector organisations (those not already covered in WEPO and LSPs) eg Resource Futures, SOFA, Wildlife Trust	Keep informed of plans for awareness of implications		E-newsletter Consultation documents	
Schools, colleges, universities	Keep informed of plans for awareness of implications		E-newsletter Consultation documents	

6. Communications Timetable and Key Decisions

Item	9/07	10	11	12	1/08	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1/09	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1/10
I & O Consultation Report	MPB																												
Press Release*																													
Prepare preferred options docs																													
Waste Strategy awareness raising*																													
Final Waste Strategy & Preferred Options Consultation				MPB				Each UA tbc																					
Press Conference*						*																							
Analysis of results																													
Outline Business Case										MPB UA																			
Site/s purchase										MPB UA																			
Prepare Preferred Options results																													
Preferred Options Consultation Report											MPB		Each UA																
Publish/ press release preferred options results																													
DPD for submission to Secretary of State																	MP B	Each UA											
Site visit for members and media																													
Planning Permission/s applications. Press response as required																								MPB	Each UA				
Tender List Approval																										MPB	Each UA		
DPD for Adoption																													

Appendix A

Detailed Information Plan (Waste Strategy)

Proposed specific communications activities to enhance awareness and understanding of the Strategy and Waste Technologies

All timings are provisional

Nov-Dec 07	Draft text for short version of Waste Strategy prepared
Jan 08	Design work to start on “ “
	Preparation of FAQs and fact sheets
Jan 08	Publicise joint waste minimisation strategy as an emerging good news story.
Jan 08	Issue press release about joint waste reduction figures
Jan 08	Preparation of a standard presentation on the strategy which succinctly describes the story of why and how we have arrived at our recommended course of action. For use by each UA locally as well as jointly
Feb 08	Detailed press briefing with key journalists
April 08	Present final Strategy to each UA Cabinet for approval
March 08	Widespread distribution of printed information about Waste Strategy
March 08	First e newsletter to be prepared and issued with FAQs and answers.
March 08	Press statement in readiness for the next member project board.
March /April 08	Press release ready for UA council meetings