

Hertfordshire Local Transport Body - Interim Communications Plan

Note: This outline communications plan is designed to support the Local Transport Body in the run up to final decisions about the major transport scheme(s). Once the prioritisation decisions have been made, each prioritised scheme should be earmarked as a communications priority within the relevant LTB member organisations. For HCC, this will be the Environment Department, supported by a comprehensive communications plan including public consultation etc.

It should be clear in communications that the LTB is a separate entity to any of its members (i.e. the County Council, the LEP and HIPP).

In the short-term, it is suggested that communications activities will be co-ordinated by the accountable body (HCC), however it should be clear that public communications made by the spokesperson for the LTB are on behalf of the LTB partnership, not one individual member organisation of the LTB.

The chair of the LTB will be the primary spokesperson on behalf of the LTB, however in his absence, he may delegate this responsibility to a named substitute, or either one of the other named full members of the LTB.

Audience: residents; members; district councils; staff; local media; trade press; Department for Transport (DfT); businesses

Objectives

- To raise awareness of the role of Hertfordshire Local Transport Body
- To manage expectations among stakeholders about proposals for major transport schemes in the county
- To help manage effective relationships with key partners

Key messages:

- Major transport scheme funding has been devolved from the DfT to newly established Local Transport Bodies, based on LEP geographic areas.
- Hertfordshire Local Transport Body has drawn up a prioritised programme of major schemes for the period 2015-2019.
- The shortlisted schemes have the potential to bring major benefits to Hertfordshire residents and support economic growth and well being.

Milestones:

- 12 March 2013 – meeting of Local Transport Body to endorse an initial list of prioritised schemes for approval by HCC's Cabinet.
- 28 June 2013 – meeting of Local Transport Body to endorse a prioritised programme of schemes for 2015-2019 for approval by HCC's cabinet.
- End of July – inform DfT of priority programme of schemes, signed off by Cabinet.

Communications methods: Herts Direct and Compass website; Horizons; e-news; members bulletin; LEP, district and borough council websites and newsletters; local media; transport trade publications

In the short-term, the LTB will use an interim website, hosted on the website of the accountable body (www.hertsdirect.org). However in the long-term, the LTB will need to consider whether it develops an independent website.

The website will need to provide all the public information required as set out in the Assurance Framework. The website will also need to provide a full description for each scheme, as well as a FAQs section.

Risks:

- Public hostility to proposed scheme(s).
- Disagreement between lobbies for alternative schemes.
- Submissions to DfT in advance of finalised funding: could be 30 percent below or above indicative funding of £27.8 million, giving a range between £19 million and £36 million.

Outcomes:

- Stakeholders receive clear, timely, information about the schemes(s) and understand the process of prioritisation and rationale for final decisions.
- Positive messages about the benefits of the proposed scheme(s) are communicated in response to media enquiries where relevant and appropriate.