



Non HRA Private Finance Initiative Scheme Communication Strategy

2009

Woking Borough Council Priority Homes Housing PFI Communication Strategy

1. Introduction¹

1.1 The purpose of this communication strategy is to set a framework within which the project team will work to provide on going information to the community and other stakeholders and interested parties on progress of the procurement of a PFI contractor to deliver the Priority Homes Project. The strategy identifies the key stakeholders at this time and the key methods and tools that will be used to deliver and engage with stakeholder and the wider community throughout the procurement process.

1.2 The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Identify the key stakeholder groups for the project.
- Set out how stakeholders will be engaged and informed.
- To communicate the role and activities of the project team in procuring the PFI contract.
- To highlight successes and achievements.
- Sets out how information flows will be managed between the PFI team, the bidders other stakeholders
- To map out the preferred methods of communication.

1.3 This strategy is intended to provide a structure through which the project team will communicate with identified stakeholders throughout the procurement of this project by providing accurate and timely information as the project progresses.

2. Principles

2.1 Given the competitive nature of this process it is necessary to protect bidders' proposals by adopting a commercially confidential approach to the release of information. We will therefore apply the following principles in the release of information;

¹ Please note this Communication Strategy is a living document and will be regularly reviewed and updated during the project procurement process.

- 2.2 To secure commercial confidentiality of bidders' proposals in order that the authority can negotiate and secure the best terms with regard to the contract, Bidder specific financial and commercial positions will only be revealed to members and individuals as agreed by the project team.
- 2.3 All press enquiries should be directed to Woking Borough Council's own marketing communications team
- 2.4 All information received and shared will be treated as confidential unless issued to the public as part of the public consultation process;

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 As this project involves both Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council, it is important to identify guardians for the communication strategy and a clear process for dealing with both proactive and reactive communications activities.
- 3.2 Woking Borough Council will lead on any reactive activities. All press enquiries should therefore be directed to Woking Borough Council's own Marketing Communications team. It will also be this team's responsibility to keep Surrey County Council's communications officers informed about any significant developments.
- 3.3 Woking Borough Council will lead on proactive communications including news releases and newsletters. In both cases, the collateral will be branded only with the Woking Borough Council logo although reference will be made to Surrey County Council's role in the project within the release or leaflet.
- 3.4 Surrey County Council will have an opportunity to review the content and, where appropriate, provide a quote from the relevant Member. Woking Borough Council will give colleagues at Surrey County Council up to one week to respond with their approval, unless there are clear reasons why the communication needs to be approved within a shorter timescale. The deadline for approval will be made clear in any supporting email and a lack of response by this time will be considered to be a sign of approval.

- 3.5 Whilst Woking Borough Council is prepared to lead on these activities, there may be times when a joined up approach is required i.e. due to a lack of resources within the Woking team.

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 One of the most important aspects of this communication strategy will be to measure the outcomes of our communications and the effectiveness of the tools used to communicate with each stakeholder group.
- We will do this by undertaking periodic stakeholder satisfaction surveys across the groups. These surveys may take a number of forms including group discussions, targeted meetings and satisfaction slips appended to newsletters or the Working magazine.
- 4.2 The survey questionnaires and meetings will be aimed at capturing information which allows us to determine the following:
- stakeholders views of the effectiveness of our chosen methods and tools of communication.
 - how informative the information being provided is.
 - stakeholders understanding of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) process
 - how useful the information being provided is in clarifying stakeholders understanding of the project and the objectives.
 - how involved stakeholders feel in terms of contributing to the process and how their views and opinions are being fed back to the bidders and subsequently informing bidders proposed solutions.
 - Whether or not the information we are providing enables stakeholder to make informed contributions and judgments on how well the bidders proposed solutions are going to meet the project objectives.
- Ultimately the surveys and meetings will enable us to improve on how and the nature of information we communicate to stakeholders.

5. Methodology

5.1 The project will adopt the following approaches and timeframes to communicate with stakeholders and interested parties. The approach taken will depend on the item or subject at each given time, and the frequency will be determined by the need to know and the speed at which the project progresses. The timelines proposed will depend on the rate at which the project progresses in relation to the project programme (timetable attached). The following methods will apply for all stakeholders.

a) Direct communication - information materials presented directly to stakeholders and the wider community will include:

- personal letters and mail merges
- face to face meetings with planners, highways, waste and other relevant Council teams, project board, Communities Local Government (HCA)
- reports to project board, Communities & Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the client team/Council's enabling team.
- public exhibitions, presentations, consultations and other planning-related activities.

b) Electronic communication – this communications strategy is supported by comprehensive project specific web pages, contained within the Woking Borough Council webpage, which provide detailed information about the key aspects of the project. The site will be updated in line with the procurement process.

c) Hard communication – this will include;

- newsletters,
- the Woking magazine (for all borough residents)
- News releases to print and broadcast media,
- Statutory adverts in newspapers and industry procurement press,
- project documentation such as OBC, market brief available on project/WBC web sites.

6. Stakeholders

6.1 The project team has identified eight groups of key stakeholders at this stage in the procurement process. It is recognised that other stakeholders may evolve during the course of the procurement process and this strategy will take account of changes as they occur. There are key methods of communication which will cut across all groups such as newsletters and web media. This will not preclude the use for more specific activities as a means of communicating with those groups identified.

Group 1 Stakeholders are Members of the Project Board

The communications strategy for this group includes the following activities

- Monthly - updates on project progress at Board meeting.
- Papers to inform of specific issues with bidders' proposals. Papers will be submitted to the project board up to one week before the meetings.
- Bidder presentations as per attached timetable
- Bidder exhibitions (as part of the planning process).
- Quarterly project newsletter.

Group 2 Stakeholders are Surrey County Council

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Monthly meetings to discuss progress on land deal and transfer from SCC to WBC
- Bi monthly meetings to discuss bidders specific proposals
- Quarterly project newsletter
- Membership of project evaluation group meetings to evaluate ISDS submissions (dates to be determined)

Group 3 Stakeholders are members of the Council's enabling team

The communications strategy for this group includes the following subject

- Quarterly meetings with key members of the housing team to inform of progress of bidders proposals including details of unit numbers, unit types, phasing proposals and density for both PFI and development works
- Bidder presentations of proposed solutions as per attached timetable.
- Bidder exhibitions of proposed solutions (as part of planning consultation process).
- Quarterly project newsletter.
- Open access to the project webpage.

Group 4 Stakeholders are planning, highways, waste, and environment teams

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Bi monthly meetings to discuss bidder specific proposals on the master plan, waste strategy, environmental sustainability.
- Bi-monthly meetings to discuss progress for public consultation proposals
- Membership of project evaluation group meetings to evaluate ISDS submissions (dates to be determined)
- Quarterly project newsletter

Group 5 Stakeholders are all WBC & SCC staff

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Quarterly project newsletter by email or post.
- Public exhibitions.
- Access to project information via Woking Borough Council intranet.

Group 6 Stakeholders are Woking Borough Council Councillors and the local Surrey County Council Councillors.

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Quarterly project newsletter by email or post.
- Public exhibitions.
- Council meetings.

- Bidder presentations.
- Access to the project specific webpage via Woking Borough Council webpage.

Group 7 Stakeholders include people on Woking BC housing register and waiting list

The communication strategy for this group will include the following subject, frequency and media:

- Quarterly project newsletter to inform of project progress.
- Open access to project webpage.
- Bidder exhibitions of proposed solutions and master plans (dates as per attached communications timeline) as part of the planning process.

Group 8 Stakeholders are the Woking Partnership

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Quarterly project newsletter to inform of project progress.
- Open access to project webpage.
- Bidder exhibitions of proposed solutions (as part of planning consultation process)

Group 9 Stakeholder is CLG/HCA

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Monthly – project monitoring report includes milestones achieved against the project timetable, resident participation, planning, and procurement issues.
- Quarterly – meeting with CLG (HCA) to discuss procurement, issues, progress, timetable, project affordability status.

Group 10 Stakeholders are local residents and neighbours living close to the Moor Lane site

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Letters (timing to be determined) to individual households within close proximity to the site (4km exact distance to be determined with planning). This will include letters informing residents of planned dates to undertake detailed

surveys and other ground investigation works on the Moor Lane site. (Dec 2008)

- Letters (timing to be determined) to individual households to inform of planned/proposed Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) (where this is deemed the only option of gaining access to properties on the Moor Lane site).
- Access to the project specific web pages contained within the Woking Borough Council webpage.
- Local media coverage
- public consultation events, and other planning consultation activities

Group 11 Stakeholders are members of the general public

The communications strategy for this group includes the following

- Open access to the project specific web pages contained within the Woking Borough Council webpage - members of the public will be able to access relevant information at their convenience.
- Bidder exhibitions of proposed solutions and master plans (dates as per attached communications timeline) as part of the planning process.
- Quarterly - project newsletter to inform of project progress
- Local media coverage

Group 12 Stakeholders is the Chamber of Commerce

The communication strategy for this group includes the following subject, frequency and media:

- Quarterly Project Newsletter.
- Open access to project webpage.

7. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

7.1 It is envisaged that there will be core parts of the project where key members of Woking Borough Council, stakeholders and other local people's views and opinions will help to shape the outcome of the project. The following mechanisms will be set up to allow these groups the opportunities to contribute to the review of technical and service

delivery elements of the solutions being proposed by the three bidders. The technical evaluation will be undertaken by two distinct sub groups as detailed in the table below.

- 7.2 Members of the local community will be invited to engage in the process through a series of managed workshops and exhibitions to be lead by the bidders.
- 7.3 The events are intended to maximise the opportunities for engaging as wide a range of stakeholders as possible in the design development process and the evaluation of the bidder's service delivery solutions. The outcome of the events will be fed back into the process to inform bidders developing solutions.
- 7.4 **Design Development and Service Delivery Workshops,**
- 7.5 During the preparation of their detailed solutions bidders will be invited to run workshops for stakeholders and other members of the local community and exhibit displays of their proposals. The aim is to engage and consult on the following aspects of bidder solutions:
- Development of their solutions for the master plan design of the site
 - Construction management and delivery proposals
 - Service delivery plans for the project during and post construction
- 7.6 The workshops and exhibitions will be jointly arranged and managed by the three bidders with support and assistance from members of the council Priority Homes project team. Though the workshops will not be evaluated, bidders will be evaluated on their approach to seeking and achieving maximum feedback from local community members and stakeholders, their approach to managing community issues and to evidence how the consultation and engagement activities have contributed to their proposed solutions for the development.
- 7.7 The bidders will be required to submit detailed statements setting out in addition to the above how each comment, remark and or suggestion offered by those participating in the workshops are considered and contributes to a change in the key aspects of the proposed solutions or rejected. If feedback is rejected bidders will be required to state reasons for the decision to reject.

7.8 **Methodology**

- 7.9 There will be two separate workshops organised to take place during the ISDS stage. Workshop one, the bidders will be invited to showcase their developing solutions and elicit feedback and comments from participants.
- 7.10 Workshop two bidders will be invited to exhibit their near final solutions and demonstrate how the outcomes of workshop one have been incorporated into the final solutions.
- 7.11 The two events will be run in a single day with all three solutions on display for review and comments.
- 7.12 The project team in dialogue with the bidders will determine the design of feedback forms which will be issued to each member of the public visiting the event. The forms will focus on gaining feedback on a number of areas of the bidders master plan, construction and service management solutions and might include the following;
- Quality of public realm
 - Links to public transport
 - Tenure integration
 - Integration with surrounding areas
 - Quality of community environment
 - Phasing of construction
 - Sustainability of the community – car parking, community facilities, links to surrounding areas
 - Construction management and delivery process – focusing on safety and security of the site during and after construction
 - Proposed site access points – primary secondary vehicular and pedestrian
 - Landscaping
 - Environmental
 - Technical Specification – room sizes, facilities, resident and tenant choice

7.13 Other Activities

7.14 General project communications – there are several media which, have been used to communicate information about the project to a wide range of audiences examples of these include:

- Magazines
- Newsletters
- Radio
- Public exhibitions
- Posters

7.15 The level of involvement and engagement will be determined according to the needs of the project. However, the aim will be to engage all groups' at all key stages of the procurement process using a combination of the above approaches and to then specifically target individual groups at key stages when their input is most valuable.

7.16 It must always be borne in mind the level of commitment that individuals are able to practically make to the process – views cannot be properly accounted for unless gained on a basis that is equitable to all bidders and which are fully informed. Other schemes (both HRA and non-HRA) have sought to achieve this through:

- The distribution of workload amongst evaluators such that no individual ideally has no more than one area of focus.
- Providing abridged objective reports (either written or verbal) on an aspect of all bidders' proposals to allow groups to then respond with views immediately.
- Inviting bidders to present their proposals on specific topics through the process

7.17 In the case of the Priority Homes, the project development is likely to be split across project working groups (that might be divided according to the grouping of the evaluation criteria). Those stakeholders identified as part of the working groups may either play a full part of one of these groups or be linked to a group (depending on time commitments and according to experience and/or interest).

7.18 The table below is an example of how this approach can be applied on this project. For completeness, this includes all project team members.

Evaluation Criteria	Sub/Working Group Membership
Technical sub-group (covers design and master planning, construction and maintenance, environmental sustainability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project team (including external TA) • Council representative(s), (Planning planners, Highways, Environmental) • Member (s) of the Local Strategic Partnership • Surrey County Council (SCC) representative (s) • Council client representative
Service delivery sub-group (covers housing management and consultation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project team representatives (including external TA) • Council client representative • External Resident advisor (if required)
Financial & Commercial sub-group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team representative (including external financial adviser) • Council representative • SCC representative
Legal & Contractual sub-group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Team representative (including external legal adviser) • Council representative • SCC representative

7.19 It does not necessarily follow that everyone on the sub-group has a role in bid evaluation. Marking can be done either by the Project Team (accounting for the views of other group members), by consensus, or by each member allocating marks which in turn lead to an overall mark.

7.20 **Resources**

7.21 The project will benefit from a dedicated officer to manage the resident and stakeholder engagement strategy. The use of an independent organisation (such as PPCR, Partners in Change, Keith Mann Associates) to manage the process is likely to require a fee commitment the level of which is determined by the nature of the appointment. Whilst there is a cost associated to this option there is clear value in having an

independent body manage the process. The Council may however want to consider an internal appointee to manage the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

7.22 The expenses incurred by tenants in attending events have in some cases been met (although they are not remunerated in any way). Stakeholders have generally participated at their own cost.

7.23 Other elements of the strategy such as communication and involvement will require a budget allowance in order to effectively undertake the activities and provide the services identified. For example the publication of regular newsletters, the development and maintenance of a dedicated web-site, dedicated to stakeholder events and resources for bidder days and bidder presentations.

7.24 Maintaining resident and stakeholder involvement over a long procurement process will require thoughtful planning and timing. Participants will be expected to volunteer their time to the project and give personal commitments to be involved for the duration of the procurement. It needs to be understood that participants will have conflicting demands on their time. Therefore, early clarity about time will need to be determined and communicated.

7.25 Stakeholder Consultation Table

Method of communication	Stakeholder Group											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Project News letter	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	
Email		*	*	*	*	*						
Bidder exhibitions	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Bidder presentations	*	*	*	*		*						
Project webpage	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Consultation letters							*			*		
Other Public consultation events						*	*			*		
Project Board Meeting	*											
Monthly monitoring report									*			
Quarterly project update meetings			*	*					*			
Weekly project update meetings		*										
Local Media Coverage										*	*	

Project Stage	Strategy Objective	Communication Method & Action.	Start Date and Frequency	Audience	Responsibility
ISOS stage evaluation	Agree shortlist of 3 bidders to ISDS	Decision paper to Project Board	20 th Nov 08	PFI Project Board	PCW, JD, CP
ISOS stage evaluation	Project Board & Surrey CC evaluation of bidder submissions	Bidder Presentations	26 th , 27 th Nov 08	Surrey County Council, Project Board	PCW, CP, JD, PB, CM, MD
ISDS stage document development	<p>Select members of the technical evaluation teams. Establish (confirm) Surrey CC priorities and those activities SCC wish to be involved in.</p> <p>Commence 'capacity building' and 'champions' for evaluation.</p>	Meeting	24 th November 08	Surrey CC	PCW, CP
ISOS stage evaluation	Agree shortlist of 3 bidders to ISDS	Project Board Meeting	28 th Nov 08	PFI Project Board	PCW, CP
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	<p>Select members of the technical evaluation teams. Establish (confirm) key resident & other stakeholder priorities and those activities residents & other stakeholders wish to be involved in. Commence 'capacity building' and 'champions' for evaluation.</p>	General Review Workshop/Meeting	1 st week December	Resident representative members Local Strategic Partnership Planning, highways, waste & Environment Departments	DC, CP, PCW, JD

Project Stage	Strategy Objective	Communication Method & Action.	Start Date and Frequency	Audience	Responsibility
Pre ISDS stage:	Feedback to bidders re ISOS submission	Meeting	15 th Dec	WBC, SCC, Bidders	PCW, Project Team
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Procurement progress review	Meeting	2 ND December 2008	Surrey County Council	PCW, CP
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	1 st Complete Draft of ISDS	Present at project board meeting	19 th January 09	PFI Project Board	PCW, Project Team
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Issue ISDS	Official issue to Bidders	30 th January 09	Bidders	PCW
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Update on procurement process	Issue Newsletter to inform of project progress to date. (South Woking Matters)	9 th February 09	All stakeholders	PCW, KP
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Stakeholder Engagement in procurement process	Public Exhibition	21 st March 09	All stakeholders	PCW – Project Team, KP
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Update on procurement process	Bids returned	29 th May 09	N/A	N/A
ISDS Stage: Bid Development	Update on procurement process	Update project website to inform of number of bids returned and next steps	5 th June 09	All stakeholders	PCW
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Update on procurement process	Issue project newsletter to inform of number of bids returned and next steps	5 th June 09	All stakeholders	PCW

Project Stage	Strategy Objective	Communication Method & Action.	Start Date and Frequency	Audience	Responsibility
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Evaluation	Bidder presentations of proposed solutions	Early June 09	PFI Project Board, Surrey County Council, Evaluation team members	Project team
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Update on procurement process	Project board meeting to update on initial review and clarifications	Early July	PFI Project Board	PCW
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Evaluation	Review of ISDS submissions	29th May 2009 to 26 th Oct (Weekly sub group meetings)	Evaluation team members	CP, Evaluation team members
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Update on procurement process	Update project website to inform of progress on procurement process	Aug 09	All stakeholders	PCW
ISDS Stage: Bid Evaluation	Update on procurement process	Issue project newsletter to inform of progress on procurement process	Aug 09	All stakeholders	PCW
ISDS stage: Bid evaluation	Public Consultation	Bidder public exhibitions	Sept 09	All stakeholders	Project team members
ISFT stage: Document development	Notification to finalise final tender documents and close dialogue	Project Board Meeting, seek approval to close dialogue and issue final tender to bidders	Sept 09	PFI Project Board	PCW, CP
ISFT stage: close of Dialogue	Close dialogue	N/A	26 th Oct 09	N/A	N/A
ISFT Stage: close of dialogue	Update on procurement process	Issue project newsletter to inform of progress on procurement process	Oct 09	All stakeholders	PCW

Project Stage	Strategy Objective	Communication Method & Action.	Start Date and Frequency	Audience	Responsibility
ISFT Stage: close of dialogue	Update on procurement process	Update project website to inform of progress on procurement process	Oct 09	All stakeholders	PCW
ISFT stage: close of dialogue	Notification of intention to select preferred bidder	Project board & other WBC approvals for selection of preferred bidder	Nov 09 – 12 Dec	PFI Project Board	PCW
Final Business Case stage: close of dialogue	Preparation of business of Final Business Case	Present draft Final Business Case to project board	Jan 10	PFI Project Board	PCW
Preferred Bidders stage:	Prepare to announce preferred bidder	Project board meeting Seek approval to announce preferred bidder	Early Feb 10	PFI Project Board and WBC	PCW
Preferred Bidders stage:	Announce Preferred bidder	Newsletter to inform of PB	Mid Feb. 10	All stakeholders/Public announcement	
	Announce Preferred bidder	Update project website with PB announcement	Mid Feb 10	All stakeholders/Public announcement	
Pre-planning consultation Stage:	Pre planning consultation	Public exhibition of preferred bidders proposals pre submission of planning application	Feb 10		