

# Appendix J – Communication Strategy 2020

**Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing**

Communications Strategy September 2020

## 1. Project Overview and Context

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council (NCC) intends to build a third river crossing in Great Yarmouth. This will see a lifting bridge constructed across the River Yare linking the A47 trunk road to the port, the energy-related enterprise zone and the town centre on the other side of the river.
- 1.2 NCC made the Third River Crossing one of its three infrastructure priorities in 2016 in recognition of its potential to attract future investment and development to the area, create skilled jobs and business opportunities and give local people a better quality of life.
- 1.3 The project objectives of the Third River Crossing are as follows:
  - To support Great Yarmouth as a centre for the offshore renewable energy, oil and gas industries and to enhance the port's role as an international gateway
  - To help create new jobs by improving transport links between the port and the main road network
  - To support the regeneration of Great Yarmouth, including the town centre and seafront
  - To improve local access by reducing congestion and improving journey time reliability
  - To improve safety and remove heavy traffic from unsuitable routes within the town centre
  - To improve access to the Great Yarmouth peninsula for pedestrians, cyclists and buses
  - To protect and improve the environment, and minimise the impacts of the proposed scheme on local people and places.
- 1.4 In November 2017 Norfolk County Council was awarded £98m towards the anticipated £120 million cost of building the Third River Crossing by the Department for Transport. In February 2018 the Secretary of State for Transport confirmed the Third River Crossing as a nationally significant project.
- 1.5 As a result, the County Council made an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to progress the project in April 2019. This was formally accepted by the Planning Inspectorate in May 2019.
- 1.6 The examination of our DCO application began on Tuesday, 24 September and closed on Tuesday 24 March. Subject to gaining the required statutory consents, NCC intends to start construction of the Third River Crossing in early 2021 and aims to open the bridge to traffic by early 2023.
- 1.7 Great Yarmouth is highlighted as a key growth location within the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) Strategic Economic Plan. The LEP has provided support for the project including a £2 million contribution towards the overall cost, and there is potential for them to provide further funding commitments depending on future allocations from the government.
- 1.8 The A47 links Great Yarmouth with the Midlands and as such is a vital artery for the Norfolk economy. The Government is currently investing in a series of improvements along the A47 to help tackle congestion and reduce delays.
- 1.9 Furthermore, through the LEP Growth Deal a multimillion pound programme of improvements are underway in Great Yarmouth to help connect employment sites,

tackle congestion pinch points and support walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) is also leading on work to regenerate the town centre, through its town centre masterplan. Between 2017 and 2024, GYBC intends to bring about improvements that will enhance the town as a destination, a place to shop, to work, to trade, to live, to sight-see and to socialise.

- 1.10 In January 2019, the council announced it had awarded a design and build contract for the Third River Crossing to BAM Farrans, a joint venture between two construction industry leaders.
- 1.11 The Environment Agency (EA) are currently implementing flood defence improvements along the River Yare. Where these planned improvements fall within the footprint of the Third River Crossing scheme, these will be carried out by the Bam Farrans Joint Venture (BFJV) team as part of the Third River Crossing work. This is to ensure the flood defence can be constructed around the new bridge structure and to avoid the need for amendments and additional costs shortly after any improvements are made.

## **2. Communications planning and objectives**

- 2.1 Wherever possible, communication about the Third River Crossing will be planned in advance as details about the forward programme are known. Planning the communications approach for the construction phase of the project began in early 2020 and will be developed and updated as opportunities, risks and potential issues are identified.
- 2.2 The BFJV will be heavily involved in planning and delivering communications and engagement during the construction phase, with oversight and guidance from NCC's Stakeholder and Engagement Manager and Project Manager.
- 2.3 There will also be a need to react to any emerging queries, concerns or opportunities and provide updates and reassurance as necessary. Those people with responsibility for communications on the project, as well as the wider project team as necessary, will need to be flexible in responding to issues which could become or already are reputationally damaging. This will be particularly important during the construction phase when visibility of the project and the potential for concerns and problems to arise will be high.
- 2.4 The communications objectives must support the project objectives and the effective delivery of the Third River Crossing. Therefore, the communications objectives are to:
  - Raise awareness of the Third River Crossing, its construction and its expected benefits
  - Instil widespread confidence in the project by providing up-to-date information, regular updates and opportunities to ask questions and comment
  - Provide timely information to those people and businesses directly affected by the creation of the bridge and engage with them about the likely impact
  - Encourage independent advocacy by providing targeted information to key stakeholders
  - Help to position Great Yarmouth as a town of increasing opportunity and positive change.
- 2.5 The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have some impact on how communications and engagement work is carried out throughout 2020 and possibly beyond. Face-to-face

briefings and events may not be permitted or advisable. Creative solutions to this challenge will be sought wherever possible, for example through the use of technology and easy-to-digest materials, printed and electronic. Proposed activities will be kept under review at regular communications meetings and adjusted in line with current guidance and to minimise risks to the public and those representing the project.

- 2.6 COVID-19 may also have impacts on the planned delivery of the Third River Crossing. The potential extent of these impacts is not yet known but careful reputational and communications handling of this will be required if the pandemic does affect delivery.
- 2.7 Regarding the EA flood defence works, coordination and liaison with the EA will be required across the project teams, including on communications as appropriate.

### **3. Key messages**

- The Third River Crossing is important to Great Yarmouth's future success, helping to attract investment, enable growth and create skilled jobs
- The new bridge will ease traffic congestion on the town's roads and improve network resilience, shortening journey times and improving journey reliability
- There is strong and widespread support for the Third River Crossing and the benefits it can bring to the town
- Norfolk County Council and its main contractor are very experienced at working on large-scale infrastructure projects
- During construction, Norfolk County Council and its contractors will work hard to keep any disruption to road and river traffic and the local community to a minimum.

### **4. Project identity**

- 4.1 To ensure a consistent and professional look and feel to all relevant project materials (e.g. leaflets, newsletters, event branding), and therefore increase trust in and recognition of this significant project, a Third River Crossing logo has been developed. This will be used in conjunction with the NCC logo (and the contractor logo as appropriate). Templates for regular communication channels, such as letters and newsletters, will be developed which incorporate these logos.

### **5. Stakeholders**

#### **5.1 Key stakeholders**

Key stakeholders have vital interests in the project, or are essential to effective delivery. They need to be engaged through targeted communications, as well as the general communications channels.

#### **5.2 We have identified the following key stakeholders:**

- Local residents (not directly affected as landowners)
- Landowners/occupiers
- Local community and residents groups
- Peel Ports, operator of river port and outer harbour
- Local businesses
- Port and river users
- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

- Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Brandon Lewis, MP for Great Yarmouth
- Relevant county and district councillors
- Utility companies
- Emergency services
- Bus companies
- Other interested parties (from Examination process)
- Greater Yarmouth Tourism
- Department for Transport
- Relevant NCC departments
- Highways England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Environment Agency
- Natural England

### 5.3 Other stakeholders

Other stakeholders may be affected by the project as potential users, or have lesser interests in the project delivery. Providing accessible general information will usually be sufficient but some milestones, such as the start of construction and the bridge opening, will be publicised to a wider group of stakeholders. This group includes other Norfolk residents, MPs, authorities and interest groups not directly involved.

5.4 We are aware that Great Yarmouth has a higher than average proportion of residents for whom English is not their first language. We will offer to translate important communications via a specialist translation service.

### 5.5 Local media

The local media have an important role in providing information to other stakeholders. The media can also lead, as well as reflect, public opinion. Maintaining a good working relationship with local news outlets will be essential.

## 6. Communications methods

6.1 Clear, timely and easily accessible communications across a variety of channels and methods will be produced to ensure stakeholders are well-informed throughout the project. Low and no-cost channels will be utilised as a priority in order to minimise spending.

6.2 As well as 'broadcast' communication, it will be important to facilitate conversation about the project so that stakeholders have the opportunity to comment, query and air concerns, and provide feedback to Norfolk County Council and its contractor that may inform the management of the project.

6.3 The main communications methods that will be used are:

- **Website** – the Third River Crossing webpages on the Norfolk County Council website ([www.norfolk.gov.uk/3rc](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/3rc)) will remain the core information resource, serving both as a comprehensive reference library for background information and a source of the latest updates, utilising maps, visualisations, photos and videos. A frequently asked questions section will be maintained. All other communications will direct people to the friendly url for these webpages to find out more about the project. The

webpages will be reviewed monthly and updated regularly to ensure up-to-date information is provided, with substantial updates planned to coincide with significant project milestones.

- **Email** – distribution lists of key stakeholders' email addresses will be created and maintained in line with data protection laws and updates about the project will be sent to this list. A project email address has been set-up and this will be promoted as the primary means to get in touch with the project team.
- **Newsletters** – in the run-up to the start of construction, a monthly e-newsletter will be established to which anyone interested will be able to sign up via the NCC website for updates, news and information on the project. A separate quarterly hard-copy newsletter will also be produced and distributed to residents and businesses in close proximity to the construction site. These will be continue to be created and distributed throughout the construction period.
- **Letters** – targeted letter drops will be used to properties in close proximity to the construction site in advance of work that could impact on them. This could include traffic management measures, parking restrictions and noisy work. These will include contact details for the contractor team where recipients can refer any questions.
- **Signage** – signage will be displayed on hoarding around the perimeter of the site before construction begins. This will show artist's impressions of the bridge, the opening year and the web address. Community noticeboards on the perimeter of the site will also be erected to disseminate useful information to passers-by and local residents. Signage will also be used as appropriate by the project team on the local road network to make road users aware of likely disruption or diversions.
- **Leaflets** – A fold-out project leaflet will be created in the run-up to construction and feature a map of the Third River Crossing and approaches, artist's impressions, photos and key information such as dates, benefits and where people can find out more. This will be made available from local venues and used at events and briefings. This leaflet will be reviewed and updated as necessary at stages throughout the project. Leaflets will also be developed to support key activity as appropriate (e.g. attendance at targeted events).
- **Social media** – significant updates will be posted on Norfolk County Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts, which are well-established and have strong followings. Content, including wording, images and videos, will also be provided to partners for their own channels. Targeted Facebook advertising will also be utilised to deliver messages to people in the borough around key activity, such as the start of construction, milestones and disruptive work.
- **Briefings** – meetings will be offered and arranged with key stakeholders as appropriate ahead of announcements and project milestones, to inform them of upcoming work and agree appropriate mitigation and in response to any concerns being raised. In many instances, these briefings will also serve the purpose of encouraging the stakeholders to share the information via their own channels and advocate for the project. Where appropriate, these may be carried out remotely via Microsoft Teams or similar applications.
- **Local media** – good relationships have been built and will be maintained with local editors and reporters. Regular information and multimedia content will be provided to them via press releases, interview and photo opportunities, media briefings and site visits.
- **Events and meetings** – opportunities to attend relevant groups, events and council committees that grant access to multiple key stakeholders will be sought out, with the intention of providing updates and answering questions. Where appropriate, these may be carried out remotely via Microsoft Teams or similar applications. We will also intend to organise events to support key activity, such as events to mark the start of work on site and the official opening of the bridge, 'meet the buyer' events for local

businesses and events for local residents to find out more about the project and ask questions of members of the project team.

- **Stakeholder and working groups** - A Third River Crossing board and member group have already been established which bring together several of the key stakeholder groups. Other groups of stakeholders will be established in the run-up to the construction stage to aid coordination and collaboration with specific partners. The working groups are likely to include a marine working groups, a utility working group, a traffic management working group and an environmental working group.

6.4 Other methods such as NCC's residents' magazine, partner channels and national/trade media will be targeted and used as appropriate throughout the project.

## 7. Communications strategy development, approval and delivery

7.1 The communications strategy will be updated regularly by the NCC Stakeholder and Engagement Manager to reflect changes to the project programme and emerging details. Approval for significant updates to the strategy will be sought from the Third River Crossing board.

7.2 The stakeholder and engagement manager at NCC will lead on the delivery of the strategy, including seeking approval for communications as appropriate. Members of the Third River Crossing project team, the NCC communications team and senior councillors and officers at the council will also contribute to the plan's delivery.

7.3 NCC's contractor, BAM Farrans Joint Venture, are contracted to provide communications and engagement support both in Phase One of their contract (pre-construction) and Phase Two (construction). They will coordinate work and approaches with the NCC comms lead and a communications protocol has been developed to guide this arrangement.

7.4 During Phase One, this support will be relatively 'light touch' but will increase towards the start of construction in late 2020, with a dedicated and locally-based stakeholder coordinator to be appointed in the run-up to the start on site.

7.5 Positive communications and engagement opportunities will be sought on a regular basis throughout the construction period and these will be promoted via a range of channels as appropriate. These opportunities are likely to include:

- **Events to mark the start of construction and bridge opening** – with guests (and many key stakeholders) invited to celebrate the occasion, speeches, photo and interview opportunities, branded promotional material and community involvement.
- **Progress updates and key milestones** – informing people of notable changes that are happening on site and provide reassurance about work being on schedule. Photos, videos and time-lapse cameras will be used to 'show' rather than 'tell' wherever possible and make the content as engaging as possible.
- **Promotion of business/employment/training opportunities and benefits** – promotion of local work and training roles created by the project, 'meet the buyer' and local employment events, business breakfasts and case studies of new local trainees.
- **Engagement with schools, colleges and community groups** - a programme of planned activities will be delivered to these key stakeholders throughout construction which is likely to include: a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programme offer to local primary schools; construction career-related



activities for secondary schools and colleges; community initiatives to help regenerate the local area and involvement in the official opening event.

- **National/trade media coverage**– approaching relevant media outlets with tailored news releases and features on innovative approaches being used.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Oversight - NCC	<p>Tom McCabe Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services Chair of the Third River Crossing Project Board</p> <p>Grahame Bygrave Assistant Director, Highways and Waste</p> <p>Final approval of high-profile/milestone communications</p>
Senior Responsible Officer - NCC	<p>David Allfrey, Major Projects Manager</p> <p>Approval of lower level communications</p>
Project Management - NCC	<p>Mark Kemp, Projects Team Manager</p> <p>Approval of lower level communications and responsible for factual accuracy of statutory process and construction-related communications.</p>
Communications and Stakeholder Engagement - NCC	<p>Susie Lockwood, Stakeholder and Engagement Manager</p> <p>Leads on the delivery of the communications strategy, creates and reviews key communications, main liaison with contractor communications and engagement leads, management of relationships with key stakeholders, media relations lead, provides regular updates to the project board, supports the project team in planning for events/consultations, provides direct support for Members (particularly the Cabinet Member) and senior officers, and is a key point of contact with the NCC comms team and communications leads at partner organisations.</p>
Senior Approvals – BAM Farrans JV	<p>Ewan Barr Project Director Bam Farrans JV</p> <p>Responsible for approval of communications from a BFJV perspective in respect of technical and factual accuracy of construction related communications.</p>

<p>Communications leads - Bam Farrans</p>	<p>Richard Hayman, Site Manager</p> <p>Victoria Johnston, Stakeholder Engagement Lead</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement Co-ordinator (to be appointed in the run-up to construction)</p> <p>Responsible for coordinating key communications with the NCC communications lead, sourcing and providing relevant information and content and gaining approvals. Also responsible for engagement with key stakeholders (particularly local residents, businesses and affected landowners/tenants) regarding construction.</p>
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## 9. Communications activity to date

9.1 Publicity and engagement has been carried out at the following key milestones for the project:

- November 2017 – DfT awards funding and programme entry for the Third River Crossing.
- January 2019 – NCC appoints BFJV as their contractor partner in the project following a competitive process.
- May 2019 – Development Consent Order (DCO) application accepted by the Planning Inspectorate
- September 2019 – Start of DCO examination period

## 10. Consultations

10.1 Much of the communications activity to date has centred on the three consultations that have been carried out:

- Stage 1 (November 2016 – January 2017) Initial engagement consultation  
Understand views on congestion, share emerging proposals and understand level of support
- Stage 2 (September – October 2017) Scheme development consultation  
Understand views on the bridge development work so far
- Stage 3 (Aug 2018 to Dec 2018) Pre-application consultation  
Present details of the proposed scheme and understand views on it before an application for a DCO

10.2 For these consultations, a consultation survey was created and made available online and in paper form by post and at a variety of local venues. Key stakeholders were briefed about the consultations before they launched. A series of consultation events were held in the local area where people could respond to the consultation and meet and put questions to staff involved in the project.

10.3 The consultations were publicised via the website, email, mail-outs, local media, social media, briefings, events and meetings and posters and leaflets in public spaces and buildings.

10.4 The key results from these consultations are detailed below:

10.5 *Stage 1*

- 81% of respondents stated that they would either be very likely, or likely to use a new Third River Crossing
- 71% of respondents saw congestion in Great Yarmouth as either a serious or a very serious issue, with many being delayed for lengthy periods of time
- 79% of respondents to the public questionnaire either strongly agreed, or agreed that the Third River Crossing would make their journey times shorter
- 80% either strongly agreed or agreed that congestion would be greatly reduced by a new crossing.

10.6 *Stage 2*

- Overall support for the scheme remained high
- There was general support for the proposed scheme of a bascule bridge at 4.5m clearance,
- A key concern related to how the bridge affects port business and the passage of vessels on the river
- The consultation helped identify a number of suggestions regarding how the scheme could be improved, which will need to be considered in more detail during the next stage of scheme development.

10.7 *Stage 3*

- The majority of responses agreed the Third River Crossing was needed and supported the form of bridge proposed
- There was general overall support for the highway design, public realm and proposals to support walking and cycling
- There was general overall agreement that the Proposed Scheme would reduce traffic congestion in Great Yarmouth

10.8 Having considered the responses to the Stage 3 consultation, further consultation was carried out on:

- Minor refinements to the extent of the Application Site;
- Removal of the commercial vessel waiting facility from the Proposed Scheme (including associated changes to the extents of the Application Site);
- Refinements to minimise the impact of the Proposed Scheme on the MIND Centre and Grounds.

10.9 As a result of this further consultation, these refinements have subsequently been incorporated into the Scheme.

## **11. Communications and engagement in the operational phase**

11.1 Once the Third River Crossing is open and in operation:

- NCC's Third River Crossing webpages will be maintained and updated as required for the period of this Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
- There will be the opportunity to provide feedback on the Scheme via NCC's Customer Call Centre and the Scheme specific email address
- Questionnaire surveys will be undertaken via the scheme website.
- Targeted interviews will be arranged with selected key stakeholders to examine the impacts of the scheme in greater depth.

## 12. Communications activity schedule

12.1 As a programme of works is defined for the construction stage, this schedule will be updated to show more detail.

12.2 This schedule is based on the project programme, which assumes statutory processes are completed.

Dates	Project activity	Communications activity	Audience
Late summer/early autumn 2020	Development Consent Order decision by the Secretary of State	Press release, inform key stakeholders, update website and social media. If enough warning is received, organise photo call at the construction site with key stakeholders. Make updated fly-through of the scheme available.	Everyone
Autumn 2020	Full Business Case submission	Inform key stakeholders	Key stakeholders
Autumn 2020	Six week legal challenge period following SoS decision	Inform key stakeholders of the outcome and next steps once the six week period has elapsed	Key stakeholders
	Lead-up to the start of construction	Pre-publicity and briefings to make stakeholders aware of start on site, construction schedule and any potential disruption. Organise and attend events to publicise the scheme and promote benefits and opportunities. Leaflets and newsletters created and distribution begins. On site signage erected. Working groups established.	Key stakeholders
Early 2021	Start of construction	Launch event with key stakeholders. Press releases tailored to local and national/trade media.	Everyone
2021 – 2022	Construction phase	Regular updates throughout to inform and reassure stakeholders of progress and advise of any potential disruption via website, newsletters, letters, media. Construction milestones marked. Regular positive promotional opportunities. Engagement with schools, colleges	Key stakeholders

		and community groups. React quickly to any emerging issues.	
Early 2023	Third River Crossing completed and open	Official opening event with key stakeholders and strong local community representation. Press releases tailored to local and national/trade media.	Everyone