

The Development of a
Marketing and Communications Strategy for

msp MANCHESTER & SALFORD PATHFINDER



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Introduction

IPB Communications was appointed in October 2004 to develop a marketing and communications strategy for the Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (MSP).

MSP needs to raise its profile as it delivers the activities funded from the initial allocation of £125m and develops its second Prospectus for HMR funding that will cover the period 2006-2008. An outline of the brief can be found in Appendix A.

IPB undertook a three stage approach in developing the strategy.

- **Stage 1-** Understanding the objectives of MSP – *(Full details in Appendix B)*
- **Stage 2 -** Testing current levels of awareness and understanding of MSP – *(Full details in Appendix C)*
- **Stage 3 -** Arranging a Partnering Day involving key Officers from Manchester and Salford Councils to identify gaps in provision and opportunities to promote MSP, agree target audiences and key messages and identify action points: *(Full details in Appendix D)*

The Way Forward

Manchester and Salford had already implemented, or were developing, programmes to tackle regeneration and neighbourhood renewal prior to the establishment of Pathfinder. It is therefore understandable how Pathfinder has been welcomed and perceived as a funding stream within an existing strategy. This has meant the intellectual profile of MSP has not been articulated.

The approach of 'demonstration not proclamation' has resulted in MSP avoiding the negative media coverage which other 'branded' Pathfinders have attracted. However, this 'funding stream' mindset means that the individual communication strategies of the two cities and the four Strategic Regeneration Frameworks have failed to promote the 'bigger picture' and opportunities to position MSP as 'The Pathfinder of Pathfinders' are being lost.

A detailed, timed and costed marketing and communications strategy is needed if MSP is to fulfil its commitment to 'promote and publicise the interest and achievements of the Partnership'.

The identity and profile of MSP must be raised amongst key audiences in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the HMR programme in the core urban centre shared by the two cities.

Finding common ground and creating communications tools which would enhance the individual marketing strategies of the four Key Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and meet the aspirations of the Partnership Board is achievable.

An overarching and complimentary communications plan can be implemented without the expensive development of a public facing logo in a sector which is already cluttered. However, there is an urgent need for the creation of a consistent corporate identity for MSP and a communications plan which promotes the approach being taken to HMRF in Salford and Manchester.

Positioning MSP

Raising the profile of MSP requires an action plan which addresses a range of audiences and succeeds in cutting through the noise created by the plethora of agencies, initiatives, funding streams and regeneration schemes in the region.

A simple statement describing the purpose and vision of MSP must be constantly and consistently reinforced at every opportunity.

One of the key messages of the proposed marketing and communication strategy must be that "Manchester and Salford are working together and leading the way in creating a step change in the housing market, improving the quality of life for existing residents and attracting new people to sustainable communities".

To the national audiences, MSP must be positioned as the leading market renewal Pathfinder in the country that is already established and delivering results. This will be achieved through activities such as gaining positive news coverage, lobbying ministers and influencers and sharing best practice and experience with other Pathfinders.

To the regional and local audiences, MSP should be positioned as the partnership approach which the two cities are engaged in to secure the funding and momentum needed to transform the conurbation. For local residents in the four framework areas, the intellectual positioning of MSP is less pertinent.

The issues of most concern to them relate to the future of their homes and communities rather than the sub-regional picture.

The ways in which local residents are consulted and involved in the renewal of their neighbourhoods is far better dealt with by the area teams on the ground. A more parochial approach to consultation and planning, such as those carried out in Seedley and Langworthy and Beswick, are far more relevant to local people and perhaps, most importantly far less threatening. Nevertheless, we would recommend that an agreed MSP key message is thread throughout the local communications material.

The internal audiences require a much higher level of awareness and detailed information on the progress of the regional frameworks and the current status of the Pathfinder. This is an area which must be addressed as a priority in the action plan. Whilst there is evidence of Partnership working between the two cities, there is no communication or procedures in place to disseminate and share information.

MSP must demonstrate to all audiences that it is the leading Pathfinder in terms of delivering real change and that the two cities are working in harmony. And by activities such as sharing ideas and best practice, identifying opportunities to promote success, and spotting and avoiding potentially damaging stories, it will secure the funds to continue achieving the vision of establishing sustainable communities.

Action Plan

(see pages 7 to 10 for detailed plan)

The proposed action plan has been designed in three timed phases and the actions are listed in priority order.

The first phase primarily addresses the significant gap in internal mechanisms for partnership working, for example no contacts database and the lack of a corporate identity to link current marketing and communications materials.

It became clear at the partnering day that there is a shortage of resources to oversee activities necessary in raising MSP's profile. IPB recommends that MSP recruits, as a priority, a dedicated Marketing and Communications Officer to be responsible for managing many of the suggested actions.

The officer would act as a conduit, working closely with Council departments including marketing and communications and area regeneration teams and overseeing activities such as the creation of a website, developing a media protocol and agreeing key messages to be used in press releases.

It is recognised that local authority recruitment processes can sometimes be drawn-out, however IPB must stress the urgency in securing an appropriate professional to oversee these activities to maintain momentum in the plan in order to achieve all objectives. There may be a requirement however, for short term agency support in the period up to a permanent appointment being made to avoid slippage in the timetable.

IPB also advises that the secretariat quickly establishes a Communications Group to assist the Marketing and Communications Officer. MSP must utilise the existing skills base in both Councils and representatives should be identified from marketing, communications, press offices and design teams who will commit to giving an agreed level of support including attendance at regular meetings. This will ensure the sharing of information in a coordinated approach and provide the Marketing and Communications Officer with necessary technical support to deliver the action points.

It is advisable that an overarching corporate identity for MSP is developed as soon as possible which will give communications material relating to MSP a recognisable, professional distinctiveness – it could be as simple as the design on the cover of this strategy. (further examples can be found on page 11)

This should not be a public facing brand (e.g. logos seen on community bill boards) that would only serve to confuse residents who are already receiving information from local organisations.

IPB advises that the creation of a style guide would assist in maintaining this corporate identity and promoting the partnership approach. Currently, all internal communications e.g. power point presentations, letters and emails relating to MSP issues have no differentiator to distinguish them from other Council matters. The style guide would ensure consistency of identity and messages.

Perhaps most importantly, all information presented to ODPM and the Audit Commission, should be packaged with the agreed identity in order to present a more professional and coherent image.

Phase 2 of the strategy focuses on raising profile and is timed to engage Ministers through briefings prior to the August holiday period. This period, from June until October 2005, will involve a surge of activity which will depend on all of the action points in Phase 1 being achieved.

It is important to raise profile by demonstrating real achievements to the national audience. A system needs to be created for gathering all MSP related press cuttings and packaging them with the corporate identity to be distributed to Ministers and other key influencers, however MSP should also be proactive and not merely depend on material being distributed through the area frameworks.

While MSP may have avoided negative press through being 'invisible', major opportunities are being missed, especially as MSP is in a more advanced position of most other Pathfinders. MSP cannot continue this low-key approach over the coming months.

IPB advises securing positive press coverage by holding media briefings which should include a tour of the cities with identified news hooks including human interest angles and good photographic opportunities. The key messages should clearly be defined with thought given to all potential angles in order to reduce the capacity for negative coverage. Providing spokespeople to support success stories would help give a full picture of MSP's achievements and future ambitions.

MSP cannot purely depend on second-hand information and must directly lobby Ministers ahead of the Second Prospectus funding. MSP should tap into existing opportunities and utilise contacts from within both councils. A lobbying programme should be drawn up by the MSP Marketing and Communications Officer, this activity will be time consuming, but is vital in reaching influencers directly and emphasising positive messages.

Consideration should also be given to influencing prospective business partners and potential investors. The creation of an MSP brochure outlining achievements and aspirations could have a multi-purpose design, suitable for this audience as well as Ministers and journalists.

Phase 3 is a continuation of suggested communications activities as well as the evaluation stage. Within this stage, IPB would foresee the growth of many of the activities in Phase 2 for example the drip feed of press releases outlining milestones and achievements.

This stage would be an opportunity to focus on the production of materials and IPB recommends the creation of a short film featuring interviews with Partnership Board members, residents and other key stakeholders, which would help 'sell' MSP visually and attract potential business partners.

IPB also recommends evaluating progress and presenting findings in an annual report which also outlines a plan for the following 12 months.

PHASE 1 FEBRUARY - JUNE 2005

Actions	Audience	Rationale	Resources/Lead
Recruit dedicated MSP Marketing and Communications Officer	/	Lack of resources within the Councils to oversee the task of raising profile and awareness and influencing ministers and Government	Secretariat to prepare job description and oversee recruitment process (short term external support from an agency may be required)
Create MSP contacts database	Internal area teams, secretariat, regeneration teams, marketing, press and communications departments, Partnership Board	No shared contacts information currently available for teams involved in MSP, hinders clear communications between Councils	Secretariat
Audit of existing MSP communications material	/	An audit will highlight what materials are currently available and identify gaps and inconsistencies	Secretariat
Agree concise key messages which can be used in all MSP material - including press releases	Staff involved in MSP, journalists, residents through press releases, Ministers, politicians, ODPM and influencers	No current universal MSP messages - can be confusing for all audiences	Marketing and Communications Officer with CMT and Board
Establish Communications Group to assist the Marketing and Communications Officer	/	MSP must utilise the existing skills base in both Councils. Representatives should be identified from marketing, communications, press officers and design teams to assist the Marketing and Communications Officer and share information in a coordinated way	Secretariat
Create overarching corporate MSP identity. To be used on all internal/external communications (should not conflict with local regeneration brands)	All audiences including national, local/regional and internal	MSP has low visibility and no consistent corporate identity	Marketing and Communications Officer supported by Communications Group
Create style guide to be issued to all staff involved in MSP and Partnership Board	Internal	Helps to maintain corporate identity and promote partnership approach	Marketing and Communications Officer
Create shared image database	To be used in MSP materials for all audiences	No share of images between Councils. Professional quality MSP images including people shots and artists' impressions will enhance all materials including press releases and brochures	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer (Professional freelance photographer to be commissioned)

PHASE 1 FEBRUARY - JUNE 2005

Actions	Audience	Rationale	Resources/Lead
Create linked MSP website from Council homepages	Politicians and Government influencers such as Audit Commission, key partnerships, media, residents, potential residents and other pathfinders	Near impossible to navigate to MSP information on current Council websites - no consistency in messages and language	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer with Communications Group
Create intranet for staff	All Council staff	Regular flow of information to staff needed on answering questions, Q&A, tips, advice for frontline staff	Communications Group
Establish media protocol	Press, marketing and communications officers, Partnership Board and identified spokespeople	Need for strict protocol for handling all MSP media enquiries to limit potential for "leaks" and negative coverage. It should identify spokespeople and include a strategy for handling adverse media	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer Communications Group advised by Board and Council directors
Identify one point of contact for all press/media enquiries	All media	Cuts confusion among media and potential for misinformation	Communications Group
Identify MSP champions and ambassadors	Media, Government, Ministers, influencers	These champions can be quoted in press releases	Partnership Board
Start planning MSP briefing pack for ministers	Ministers, MPs, politicians	Urgent need to raise profile and visibility of MSP and influence ahead of 2nd prospectus	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer
Plan press packs and regular flow of releases	Media	Will take time to pull information together and identify the best stories/angles	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer with Council press offices
Establish mechanism for sharing information with other pathfinders	Other pathfinders	MSP more progressed than most pathfinders - best practice to be open and demonstrate experience	Secretariat

PHASE 2 JUNE - OCTOBER 2005

Actions	Audience	Rationale	Resources/Lead
Produce briefing packs for Ministers with case studies packaged with MSP corporate identity	Ministers	Important to have well presented information clearly stating case for additional funding	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer
Elected members briefing with briefing pack using existing information	Members	Members could be ambassadors for MSP, but if they are not kept informed, are more likely to take an opposing stance	Lead should be identified from within Communications Group
Establish system for gathering all MSP related press cuttings and packaging them with corporate identity to be distributed to Ministers and other key influencers	Ministers, Members, Board, CMT, ODPM	Important to raise profile and demonstrate achievements to national audience	Lead should be identified from within Communications Group
Proactive media briefing - tour of cities with press pack (identify spokespeople, human interest angles with good photograph opportunities)	Media - emphasis on national and trade	High profile coverage will influence Ministers, however important to cover all angles and all spokespeople should be fully briefed on possible questions	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer
Lobby Ministers through formal and informal briefings, tap into existing opportunities and create more	Ministers	Vital to reach this audience so can't rely solely on second hand information such as press cuttings - personal contact necessary to emphasise positive messages	MSP Marketing and Community Officer supported by political champions and Council directors/Leaders. Assistance from specialists lobbying agency could be
Monthly E-Bulletins containing news and media update	Partnership Board, CMT, key partnerships eg police, universities and area teams	Regular flow of progress important for many internal audiences. Keeps parties informed and sign posts achievements	Lead should be identified from within Communications Group
Identify angles of interest to business/investors and prospective partners and release press information	Trade press including financial and business journals	Need to position MSP as a sound business prospect with track record	Communications Group with advice from Partnership Board members
Create MSP brochure outlining achievements and goals with key message of proven deliverability, innovation and	Ministers, politicians, Government, investors and potential business partners e.g developers	Raises profile and opportunities to promote key messages and strengths	MSP Marketing and Communications Officer

PHASE 3 NOVEMBER - FEBRUARY 2006

Actions	Audience	Rationale	Resources/Lead
Produce Q&A Pocket Guides for frontline staff	Staff and residents	As profile of MSP grows, local audience will become more aware and may ask questions of staff, especially wardens. Pocket guides will help staff answer most common questions and direct enquiries to appropriate local contact	MSP Marketing and Community Officer/Communications Group
Briefings for frontline staff	Staff and Trades' Unions	To give overview of MSP's achievements and plans, answer questions and distribute pocket guides	Communications Group to identify appropriate managers
Commission production of MSP video/DVD featuring interviews with key MSP people and Partnership Board members	Potential investors/business partnerships/Government/Other Pathfinders/key partners, e.g. University	To help sell MSP visually - attract funding and future business/partnership opportunities	MSP Marketing and Community Officer to commission professional film crew
Annual achievement report	Politicians, MPs, MEPs, Government, ODPM, Audit Commission, Partnership Board, CMT, Frameworks and Regeneration Teams	Annual update of progress - opportunity to celebrate success	MSP Marketing and Community Officer
Review progress of marketing and communications in achieving goal of raising profile and attracting additional funding	Partnership Board and Core Management Teams	To measure effectiveness of marketing and communications strategy	Secretariat

Examples of a corporate identity



Manchester & Salford Pathfinder

MSP

Manchester & Salford Pathfinder

Manchester & Salford Pathfinder

Examples of a corporate identity

msp MANCHESTER & SALFORD PATHFINDER

MSP

MANCHESTER & SALFORD PATHFINDER

MANCHESTER
& SALFORD
PATHFINDER

MSP

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MANCHESTER & SALFORD PATHFINDER

Appendix A

Outline of brief

A raised profile will assist the MSP to:

- Build confidence amongst external agencies in its ability to deliver by increasing recognition of effective performance both regionally and nationally. This issue will be critically important for Ministers and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) who would wish to see demonstrable benefits attributed to the HMR Pathfinder programme.
- Target the various stakeholders in the HMR programme, to ensure that customised key messages relating to their particular interests are addressed.
- Promote a regular and more proactive communications outflow to national and local press, as well as targeting the professional journals on a regular basis to disseminate lessons learned.
- Ensure that the MSP adequately publicises HMRF investment and gives due prominence to the substantial investment that Government is making in this Pathfinder area.
- Enable the MSP to deliver a consistent message to external and internal Partners and the media i.e. speak with one voice, both as a Partnership and across both cities.

Appendix B

Stage 1 - Understanding the objectives

Methodology

IPB Communications conducted telephone and face to face interviews with key stakeholders of the MSP to understand their own marketing and communication objectives and to ascertain their opinions on the development of the communications strategy for MSP.

Discussions have covered:

- The nature of the Pathfinder – is it a strategy or a funding stream?
- Is there a need for it to be marketed / communicated? If so, who are the key audiences?
- How should the Pathfinder be perceived by the various audiences?
- Are there opportunities being missed in terms of gaining kudos with ODPM/Audit Commission?
- What is the role of the Board?

Findings

Audit Commission

The Audit Commission emphasised its role as a critical friend and not a critic. It believes that the MSP should be clearly positioned as a strategy and have some concerns about the current lack of visibility. They feel the current low profile may fail to win "brownie points" at the next round of funding and that the "intellectual identity" of the Pathfinder should be communicated to a range of audiences including Ministers, MPs, ODPM, private developers and private funders. The Audit Commission does not believe there is a clear rationale in place to support the current low key approach with the public.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

The ODPM is satisfied with the current approach taken by MSP in terms of marketing and communications as it is in line with that agreed at the start of the project.

However, it was made clear the Partnership needs to be cognisant that it may be dealing with different ODPM Officers in the future, and a more corporate "feel" to the way the Partnership presents itself could be advisable. Both the ODPM and Audit Commission reported that the recent Sunday Times magazine article has understandably unsettled Ministers and ODPM Officers and that the Government is seeking a more proactive PR and communications approach from the various Pathfinders to help to redress the negative press.

Officers

New East Manchester (NEM)

The perception was that the Pathfinder is a means to achieving the objectives of NEM and there was no support for any specific branding of the MSP. Concerns were raised about the apparent lack of a media protocol and spokesperson to manage potential negative press coverage.

Salford City Council

Officer views were clear that the Pathfinder is a funding tool and that the Local Strategic Framework did not require another layer of branding. This view was supported by Members. However, the need to communicate the "bigger picture" to ODPM and other Pathfinders was acknowledged. There is an ambition to position MSP as the 'Pathfinder of the Pathfinders' and promote the unique approach being undertaken, against the background of the dynamic local economy.

The lack of a coordinated message could cause confusion. Examples were highlighted where Partners were vying for PR coverage. For instance in Lower Broughton, Countrywide are undertaking public consultation with local residents and have engaged the services of Connect Point PR. Countrywide will have a stand at the forthcoming Sustainable Communities Summit at GMEX and will probably feature this work alongside their other projects. It is unclear how the Pathfinder will fit into this promotional activity, if at all. Under current arrangements the success stories of the various projects and initiatives are not being brought together in a coherent manner.

Similarly, Officers at both Manchester and Salford have produced some excellent literature on regeneration and neighbourhood renewal initiatives. However, at present there appears to be no mechanism (or commitment) to share ideas, photography and costs.

Manchester City Council

Officers were clear that the purpose of the Pathfinder is to create strategic regeneration frameworks managed at a local level – a funding stream within a broader strategy.

Again, it was acknowledged that the relatively low public profile could unnerve Civil Servants and Ministers. This could be rectified by the identification and placement of positive stories, even at these early stages of the strategy as well as the production of some basic public information about Pathfinder. There are opportunities to promote and protect the reputation of the two cities by portraying MSP as:

- Transforming the core of the urban centre
- Setting the National standard
- Demonstrating best practice in consultation
- Showing that the money is being spent in the right way

Opportunities for the positive promotion of MSP are easily identified (such as a feature in Regeneration and Renewal at the time of the Sustainable Communities Summit), however, current arrangements and workloads and the lack of dedicated resources mean such opportunities are being missed.

Partnership Board

The Board stressed the need for a much higher corporate identity and the creation of a brand/logo to raise the profile of the Partnership. Promotional activity should include a reception at the House of Commons, regular presentations to local MPs, a proactive media campaign in local, regional and national media. The Board felt that the Partnership should be positioned as a visionary strategy which is succeeding in bringing life and people back to the core conurbation and helping to create a dynamic sustainable housing market.

The Board identified key audiences as:

- Existing residents
- Prospective residents
- Prospective Partners
- Central Government

Interviewees included:

Tamsin Hartley - Audit Commission

Gill Shields – Marketing Manager, New East Manchester

Charles Green – Salford City Council

Professor Michael Harloe – Partnership Board

Councillor John Merry – Salford City Council

Ian Slater – Manchester City Council

Eddie Smith – Manchester City Council

James Cruddas – ODPM

Sue Hill – Salford City Council

John Rooney – Pathfinder Secretariat

Gavin Brotherstone – Pathfinder Secretariat

Bryce Glover – Partnership Board

Appendix C

Stage 2 - Testing Current Levels of Awareness

Telephone interviews have also been held with the media to ascertain levels of understanding about the MSP.

Findings

The Media

Interviews were held with key journalists from the local, national and trade press to ascertain:

- Current levels of awareness of MSP and other Pathfinders
- Perceptions of MSP and other Pathfinders
- Information sources and channels
- Communication challenges
- Areas of interest

Local/regional media

The Manchester Evening News had little knowledge of MSP. However, journalists have strong contacts with the Partners including URCs, the Local Authorities and individual regeneration schemes in Salford and Manchester.

Journalists would like to see more coordinated activity between ODPM and the Local Authorities. Press releases are sometimes issued by Government without local contacts being prepared. Also, if the MEN was given advance warning of a regeneration story before it was announced by Government, it would have time to prepare appropriate photographs and graphics, which would secure more coverage. Journalists also suggested that if these announcements were made at a local level, they would achieve a higher profile.

It was pointed out the MEN recently put together an end of year business supplement on economic conditions in Salford and Manchester and the resources that have gone into these areas over the last 12 months. This would have been an ideal opportunity for Pathfinder coverage.

The MEN believes that the feeling among residents/tenants about current regeneration work is "generally optimistic", but the biggest challenge for MSP is managing concerns that regeneration plans will force people out, creating a climate of high/rising house prices and that estates will be turned into luxury developments similar to Salford Quays.

Local journalists are interested in regeneration stories and confirmed funding stories will receive coverage, although features with a human interest angle with supporting images will always be given more prominence. Journalists cited the Central Salford Consortium story which received increased coverage due to the involvement of an Italian architect and also the Chapel Street regeneration. Here, plans to build 100 new apartments would normally have received a few paragraphs, but when the MEN discovered the proposal also included refurbishing the popular Old Nelson Pub which had been gutted by fire, it received more comprehensive coverage. This demonstrated the need for a local 'feel' to press relations.

Trade press

Discussions with the Regeneration/Housing trade press revealed a deeper understanding of the issues facing Pathfinders. However, levels of awareness of MSP varied.

The trade press were most aware of Elevate and Renew (and also Hull because of the delays). Most had received information about MSP's funding announcement, but could not recall any other specific information. Most publications receive the lion's share of information from the Government; however they are interested in forging better contacts at a local level.

New Start had recently met with contacts from Manchester and Salford and had the highest level of awareness of MSP out of all the trade publications interviewed.

Managing the sensitive demolition issue with tenants and the perception of raising house prices are seen as the biggest challenges facing the Pathfinder.

The areas the trade press expressed most interest in, were funding announcements and finance stories of interest to developers, concerns of agencies working on the ground, and announcement and criticism of Government policy.

National press

The national press demonstrated a clear preference for more controversial stories.

Of the publications interviewed, The Guardian had the most awareness of Pathfinders and MSP and regularly covered social housing/regeneration articles in its Society section.

The Guardian was most familiar with Elevate and Renew and reported these Pathfinders where the most proactive at media relations. However, the journalist did also have knowledge of MSP and would have ranked it third after Elevate and Renew.

Managing the demolition line was seen as the main communications challenge. The angles that The Guardian would be most interested in would have a controversial edge. Also, situations where there has been a u-turn on a decision (the journalist referenced Elevate reconsidering demolition of terraced housing) were considered newsworthy.

Some national journalists appear unaware of MSP or the Pathfinder initiative. The Independent's Local Government Correspondent is sent ODPM press releases so has limited awareness of regeneration issues, but could only recall covering London-centric stories such as the Thames Gateway and Stansted developments. The Independent does not view housing as a core subject but again confirmed that the more controversial the story - the more chance of coverage.

The Sunday Times journalist who wrote the recent 'Price of Prezza's Follies' article which featured an Oldham couple demonstrating against plans to demolish homes, had no awareness of MSP. He confirmed an interest in controversial stories, believing funding announcements to be of local interest only.

Telephone interviews were held with:

Neal Keeling – Manchester Evening News

Matt Weaver – The Guardian

Graeme Wilson, political correspondent – Daily Mail

Ben Russell, local government correspondent – The Independent

Maurice Chittenden – The Sunday Times

Russell Jenkins, North West correspondent – The Times

Austin Maccauley – New Start

Rob Cowley – Social Housing Journal

Regeneration Editor (requested anonymity) – Regeneration and Renewal

Rebecca Evans, Chief Reporter – Inside Housing

Lucy Bryson – Northern Housing

Appendix D

Stage 3 - The Partnering Day

Methodology

IPB Communications organised a Partnering Day on Tuesday 11th January 2005. Key Officers from both Councils including Managers from Regeneration, Marketing and Public Relations, Secretariat, Market Renewal, Area Teams and a critical friend from the Audit Commission were invited to participate. A facilitator was employed to manage the structure of the day and encourage opinion.

In the morning session, introductions were made and participants gave an overview of their role and shared views on what the MSP marketing and communications strategy should deliver. Discussions covered:

- Views on creating an MSP 'brand'
- Is the Pathfinder a funding stream or a strategy?
- The need to articulate what the Pathfinder is achieving and to influence Government
- The need for a range of marketing and communication tools to serve the four MSP areas
- The need to share information better and current gaps

The group then broke into four workshops covering the four Regional Development Frameworks - New East Manchester, North Manchester, South Manchester and Central Salford. Participants were asked to explain the current status of each initiative, including marketing and communications activities.

This exercise identified the huge volume of work being undertaken in the MSP area and variations in terms of marketing and communication activities. For example, East Manchester has an established strategic framework and well developed marketing plan with consistent activity; South Manchester has no regeneration framework in place and marketing and communications is conducted in an ad-hoc, reactive manner.

The workshops highlighted that there is very little shared information between the four areas e.g. no central image bank, no linked MSP website, and no corporate identity to link any current marketing and communications materials with MSP.

Action planning

Further workshops were held in the afternoon session aimed at:

- Identifying target audiences
- Identifying key messages
- How to deliver key messages
- Resourcing/who would lead on that activity

The group concentrated on three key audiences: national, local/regional and internal. Participants mapped out marketing and communications activity required for each audience and identified the resources needed. In summary:

National

The group identified the national audiences as:

- Ministers and MPs
- ODPM and Civil Service
- Audit Commission, CAGE and other influencers
- Other Pathfinders
- The media
- Potential new residents
- Business developers
- Funding agencies
- Investors, financial institutions

The group acknowledged the importance of lobbying Ministers, MPs and Senior Civil Servants in order to raise profile and help secure additional funding in the 2nd Prospectus. It was felt that this audience should be treated as a priority within the strategy and it was also noted that the media would also play an important role in helping to raise the profile within Government. Suggestions for actions included:

- New briefing packs for Ministers (carrying a clearer corporate MSP identity)
- Informal and formal lobbying of Politicians
- The creation of MSP images, including artists' impressions, easily accessed through a shared database
- Pulling together positive local news stories and packaging them with an MSP identity
- Creating a system for gathering and circulating relevant press cuttings
- Linked website from both Council homepages reinforcing consistent messages and highlighting the Partnership approach
- Creation of a media protocol for MSP
- Strategy for identifying and managing potentially negative press stories

Resources

It was suggested that it may be necessary to have a dedicated Officer employed specifically in an MSP marketing and communications capacity to coordinate these activities. The Officer would act as a conduit, working closely with Council departments including marketing and communications and area regeneration teams. The need for a single point of contact for media enquiries was also noted.

Internal audience

The group highlighted the internal audiences as:

- Partnership Board
- Core Management Team/Operational Group
- Key Partnerships
- Members
- Area Delivery Teams
- LSPs
- Neighbourhood Managers
- Chief Officers
- All staff

The group suggested that while the Board already gets quarterly progress reports more regular media reports and e-mail bulletins could be helpful. This group again highlighted the lack of shared information between the Councils and recommended the need for an MSP intranet for staff. Suggestions for actions included:

- Regular media reports
- Creation of media protocols
- Members briefings and reports
- Achievements reports for key Partnerships e.g. Police and URCs
- Intranet for staff with Q and As
- Briefings for Neighbourhood Managers and Ward Co-ordinators
- Media reports for Area Team
- Briefings and tools e.g. guide to MSP for frontline staff
- Newsletters and briefings for other staff

Resources

It was suggested a dedicated person be identified within the existing marketing/communications departments of Manchester and Salford to co-ordinate the above actions.

Local/regional

The group identified the local/regional audience as:

- Residents
- Potential residents
- Other Pathfinders
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Local media
- Employees
- North West Development Agency, Government Office North West, LSPs and other stakeholders including Police, Universities, etc.
- Estate Agents and other Landlords
- Advisory Agencies e.g. CAB, Age Concern
- Economic Agencies and other professionals e.g. Chamber of Commerce, or MPs and MEPs

The group expressed concerns about capacity. Participants questioned the capacity of the secretariat to deal with coordinating marketing activities and concluded that this was unlikely. Suggested actions included:

- Dedicated MSP website
- Residents' meetings
- Community events
- Issuing news through Council magazines and Ward newsletters
- Information packs including tailored information for MSP areas
- Press and media packs
- Media briefings
- MPs and MEPs briefings
- Advertising
- Creation of media protocol

Resources

It was acknowledged that there is no existing capacity within the Secretariat to oversee marketing and communications activity at a local and regional level. It was suggested that a marketing group was required (made up of representatives from each of the MSP initiatives) which would have the capacity to create a media protocol and coordinate the proposed activities.

List of attendees

[John Rooney](#) – Secretary to the Partnership – Salford City Council
[Gavin Brotherston](#) – Pathfinder Secretariat – Salford City Council
[Sue Hill](#) – Corporate Marketing Manager – Salford City Council
[Ade Alao](#) – Housing Market Renewal Programme Manager – Salford City Council
[Siobhan McCoy](#) – Housing Market Renewal Programme Manager – Salford City Council
[Rob Fletcher](#) – SRB5 Marketing and Comms Manager – Salford City Council
[Sue Ford](#) – Programme Manager – Salford City Council
[Liz Carridge](#) – Public Relations Officer – Salford City Council
[Ian Slater](#) – Head of Regeneration Programmes – Manchester City Council
[Julie Connor](#) – Regeneration Manager North Manchester – Manchester City Council
[Mick McManus](#) – Principal Renewal Manager North Manchester – Manchester City Council
[Bernard Murtagh](#) – Renewal Manager South Manchester – Manchester City Council
[Victoria Bottomley](#) – Marketing Manager – Marketing Manager – Manchester City Council
[Eddie Smith](#) – Head of Regeneration Programmes – Manchester City Council
[Reuban Flynn](#) – Principal Strategy Officer Market Renewal – Manchester City Council
[Michelle Berman](#) – Housing Strategy – Manchester City Council
[Gill Shields](#) – New East Manchester
[Andy Foot](#) – Audit Commission