

# **Synergy CAV – Draft Communications Plan**

**Spring 2021**

## **Background**

The original aim of project Synergy was to further develop technologies for connected autonomous vehicles (CAV), to accelerate adoption of driverless vehicles and allied technologies in the UK.

The project was to introduce innovative technologies to operate connected autonomous cars in a platoon formation from Stockport to the arrivals terminal at Manchester Airport. Concurrently, a platoon of three pods was to transit passengers to and from a car park in the airport to the passenger terminals.

As the project has developed, it has been turned in to a trial of automated cars along the A555 from Hazel Grove to Manchester Airport. The current expectation is that autonomous function will be trialled on two junctionless sections of the A555 in traffic with the presence of a professional driver ready to take back control as needed

The trial is expected to take place in Spring 2021.

## **Strategy**

Stockport was to undertake work to ensure that the trials on the Council's roads are carried out safely by:

- Undertaking a risk assessment of the proposed route. Ensuring that the route had received any necessary maintenance to make sure that is suitable for the trial.
- Insuring that accurate GIS mapping of the route and its signage, lining and related TROs is provided to the CAV development team as needed.
- Liaising with utilities about the trial to minimise conflict regarding works on the highway.

For the purpose of the communications plan, the council's main task is to communicate to the public details about the trial and its nature. For example, including safety advice about interacting with the vehicles and explaining that CAV vehicles will still be subject to stopping distances as with other vehicles.

## **Communication Objectives**

- To explain to residents and businesses how automated cars are an option for the future.
- Consultation with the public to get a clear understanding of the views of residents and businesses in Stockport about the connected and autonomous vehicles in order to support future decisions regarding connected and autonomous vehicles.
- Assisting TfGM with any online public events related to the trial
- Communicating the findings of the project to the general public
- Update existing website to showcase the current project status

## Target Audiences

- Residents
- SMBC staff
- Members
- Wider GM population
- Airport users
- Public transport users
- Businesses in the borough

## Key Messages

- What do residents know about automated vehicles – explain and educate
- How would automated vehicles affect public transport in the future
- How can technology improve the lives of Stopfordians
- As a continuation of the 'Build Back Better' and 'One Stockport' corporate policy, use of **'Stockport - We are in this Together'** & **#CouncilsCan** on any social posts

<b>When</b>	<b>What <i>Communication product</i></b>	<b>To whom <i>Target organisation or individuals and position</i></b>	<b>What level <i>Organisational level of communication</i></b>	<b>From whom <i>Lead commissioning office staff with name/position</i></b>	<b>How <i>Communication means</i></b>	<b>Why <i>Purpose of communication</i></b>	<b>Cost <i>Potential costings to the project</i></b>
Planning	FAQ sheet to be produced for the project	Council members, officers	Planning and Operational	JW in Comms team with input from Synergy and partners – possible that FAQ sheet is adapted from existing comms.	PDF – preferably one side	For the purposes of answering any questions members/officers/partners may have about the project before it goes live	
	Update basic PR info so it includes a quote from SMBC, together with comment from other partners	General public/service users	Planning	Comms team, under 'spokesperson' title	Email/PDF	Uniformity with other partners, so SMBC is represented as well.	
	Potential design of car and graphics to be used on the vehicles/POD. Graphic – that is wrapped around the PODS - could be skyline of Stockport, merged with Manc skyline. Car graphic to be similar.	General public, SynergyCAV users	Planning	Partners across the project	Design graphic, created by external agency	To display which partners are involved in the project, but at the same time not having the any official branding/logo in a prominent position on the vehicles. New design incorporating all partners needs to be created	
	Pictures taken during trial at the test track	For future comms to be sent out	Planning	External photographer	Photos	To be put on file, to show the vehicles in operation and to be distributed with any official releases ahead of the trial	

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						taking place on the roads.	
	Develop Synergy CAV website, together with links to partners' websites (SMBC, TfGM etc). Return links back to Synergy site	General public	Planning and Operational	SMBC Comms team and Synergy CAV	Revamp needed of Synergy CAV website, input from all partners needed, new images, plus updated text and description about the upcoming trial. Also, consider options on how show the project on the SMBC site (new page, new mini-site etc)	Up to date information of the project, so the public know what will be happening	JW cost
Preparation (of the trial launch)	Produce PDF map of the route to be used (along the A6 down to the A555) to send out with release plus FAQs	General public, council members, members of the local press, internal council comms	Operational	Issued from SMBC, with reference to the partners involved - JW	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.	Informing the public what will be happening for when they come across the vehicles	

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	Location of pre-trial photo shoot with vehicles – location of shoot to be confirmed (options – in front of town hall, in layby next to Stockport train station)	General public, council members, internal council comms	Comms team (JW, SH)	SMBC Comms team - JW	Pictures and video	Pictures to be placed on file and used when needed, for example on day of trial and for any pre-trial release that is issued.	
Launch day of trial	Social media posts, pictures, videos, map of the route – creation of # tag for social media	General public, council members	Operational and Planning	Synergy CAV plus reference to all the partners involved in the project.	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn	Showing social media users what they may be seeing as they go about their daily tasks.	
	Press release issued, including pictures of the event	Local/GM media, Trade press, council members, internal Council comms	Operational	Comms - JW	Email via Graticus, posted on Connect, included in Review Extra, and on the council website in the news section	To announce that the trial has taken place. With information regarding the next phase of the project (if this has been confirmed)	
Monitoring	On day of trial launch, monitoring social media feeds to	Internal members of the project team at SMBC	Operational	Comms - JW	Email to SMBC project team	To monitor initial feedback of the trial, and to analyse comments received from members of the public and	

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	see feedback from Stockport residents					project stakeholders	
	In following two weeks, complete similar checks to those carried out on the day of the trial	Internal members of the project team at SMBC, plus project stakeholders	Operational and Planning	Comms – JW	Email to SMBC Project team and members of the Synergy CAV team (Westfield, local authorities, universities, Synergy)	Continue monitoring feedback from public both locally and further afield.	
Follow-up	TBC						
	TBC						
Others							