



Active  
Travel  
England

# A best practice guide to community consultation and engagement



February 2025

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## 1. Introduction

If done well, community engagement and consultation can transform the introduction of changes to a road layout, town or city centre into a conversation of discovery and opportunity. It can enable people to have their say and make sure that the scheme delivers for local people and businesses – and it can be so much more than that.

It may be the only opportunity to speak to people who live in a certain area or businesses on a high street about transport for years. It's a chance to not only understand the views about the proposal but also to ask about transport-related issues or make people aware of other initiatives.

Good community engagement and public consultation takes time and effort. But it shouldn't just happen when change is proposed. It's something that should be happening between local authorities and the people who live, work study in the area or travel through it. The more you know about how people travel around, how they'd like to travel around, and both the opportunities and barriers, particularly related to active travel, the better the scheme proposals.

This document focuses on engagement and involving people in the project development process. For major schemes, project engagement can be considered part of the consultation process, which then has legal implications.

It is also important to remember that community engagement and involvement isn't a referendum on the scheme's progression. That is not to say that people shouldn't have a chance to comment and, where they want to, object to proposals. This has to be provided at statutory consultation stage as an absolute minimum.

Consultations – particularly the formal and statutory consultation stages – are defined, and there are legal requirements related to the processes and stages they must go through. It is important to note that a consultation can be challenged by anyone who may experience an impact. Before embarking on a major scheme it is always worth consulting decision makers, democratic/legal services teams (or similar) to ensure your proposed approach is compliant with the decision-making process.

### 1.1. Document purpose

This document has been developed to help people involved in the delivery of major transport schemes, and particularly those with a focus on active travel. It has been designed to help with transport project engagement and consultation generally but also includes a step-by-step guide. The step-by-step section follows the project stages used by Active Travel England as part of the project management and delivery process.

There are other guides that can provide further information and guidance on engagement and consultation. This includes New Conversations 2.0 by the Local Government Association.

### 1.2. Project stages

All projects go through different stages of development, and this document has been written to provide guidance and advice throughout the process.

Different organisations use different terminology for these stages, sometimes with overlap and some contradiction. This guide has been developed to work with the project stages used by Active Travel England and partners, as part of the design review gateways and stages, which are:

#### Project Stages

- Baseline
- Feasibility Design
- Preliminary Design
- Strategic Outline Business Case
- Pre Outline Business Case design review
- Outline Business Case
- Full Business Case
- Detailed Design
- Statutory consultation
- Construction/Implementation
- Post-implementation monitoring & review

It is likely that the stages outlined above won't run perfectly sequentially and there will be overlap. Whilst it may differ from programme to programme it is likely that the business case process runs primarily alongside and in-between the design stages.



## Case Study: Islington Council: Engaging with disabled people in their communities

In a pilot project that took place in Highbury New Park, Islington Council wanted to incorporate disabled people's lived experience into their current, technical reports. This enabled the council to understand the impact its work has on residents, understand what residents want to see from public realm improvements, and work alongside residents co-producing project outputs.

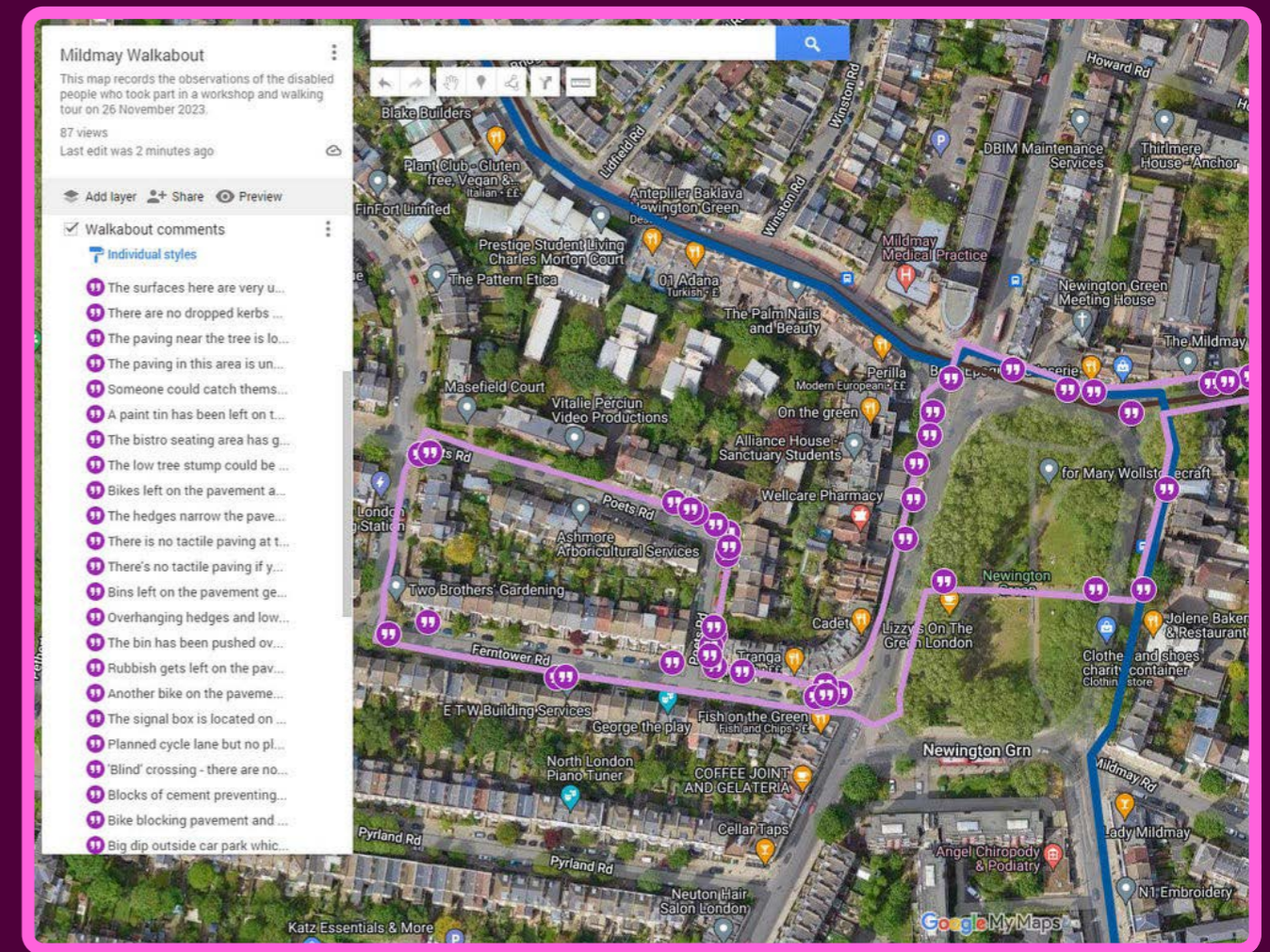
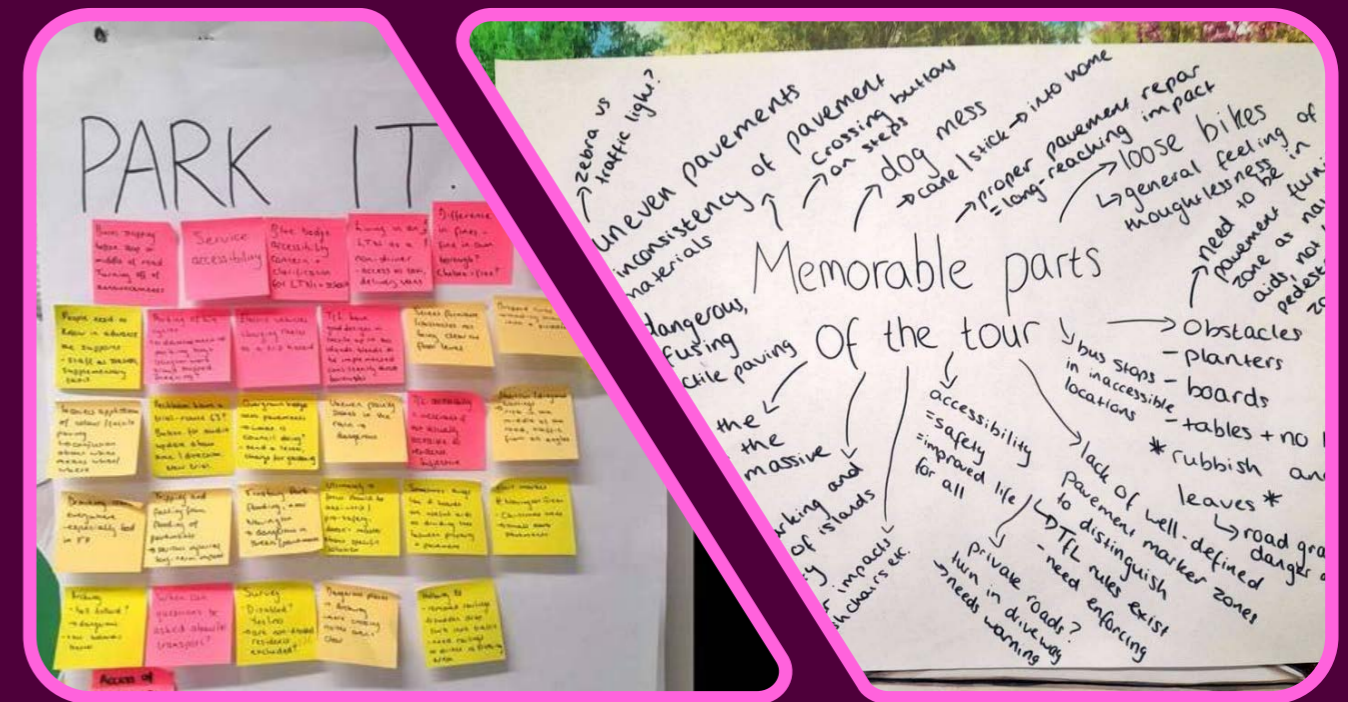
The pilot project focused on engaging 12 local, disabled residents and capturing their views and experiences through three components. The first component was an inclusive design and participatory methods workshop which informed and upskilled participants on the principles of inclusive design and technicalities of completing an accessibility audit. Additionally, project members and participants discussed the meanings of lived experience and the various methods to capture experiential data.

The second component consisted of a 'walk-and-wheel-about' tour, where participants utilised their knowledge on accessibility audits. Project members guided participants on this tour and discussed and recorded the various barriers they faced during the tour resulting from inaccessible physical infrastructure. Following this, the recorded barriers will supplement a map of the Highbury New Park area, outlining the various necessary public realm improvements identified by participants.

Accompanying disabled residents on the tour was incredibly insightful to council staff, as it provided a direct insight into the barriers faced on a day-to-day basis in the borough. Additionally, the walk-and-wheel-about enabled both participants and project members to view physical space and point out barriers from a pan-disability perspective.

The final project component saw participants attend a workshop on survey design, with the aims of exploring ideas for an accessible survey to enable residents to carry out audits of their local area to support with future public realm improvements. This was done with a particular focus on group discussion of accessible design principles and a focus on the aims of the survey in finding out what disabled residents need to be asked about when the council is considering improvements to the public realm.

By embedding the lived experiences of disabled residents into structural changes within the borough, Islington Council aims to ensure that future audits are more effective, and genuinely cater to the needs of residents. The information and experiences produced by residents as part of this project will inform future thinking and planning around Islington's public realm.



## 2. Policy Framework

A significant driver for active travel schemes is the wider policy aims and objectives that they help deliver. This also has a bearing on scheme designs, what they should include, what they can include, and what they can't.

Introducing a policy framework to people is a really important part of the engagement and involvement process. This includes design standards and tools that are used to assess existing conditions, and the impact design proposals may have.

To make sure active travel schemes provide for everyone, are of the highest quality, and that they deliver the objectives of Active Travel England and the DfT, schemes should meet all relevant current design guidance. This includes Inclusive Mobility, Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design ([LTN 1/20](#)), Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2: Wider application of the principles.

Due consideration should be given to this guidance when designing new schemes and, in particular, when applying for Government funding that includes active travel infrastructure. Where relevant, explaining these standards and how they have had a bearing on design decisions and outcomes will aid the community engagement and involvement process.

### 2.1. LTN 1/20

LTN 1/20 provides guidance and good practice for the design of cycle infrastructure, in support of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The scope of the document is limited to design matters. This national guidance provides a recommended basis for those standards, based on five overarching design principles and 22 summary principles.

### 2.2. Manual for Streets & Manual for Streets 2

Manual for Streets sets out good practice advice and principles for the design of residential and quiet streets. Manual for Streets 2 extends those principles to busier streets such as high streets and town centres. Both advocate design that puts 'place' above 'movement' where appropriate and include a hierarchy that puts consideration of the needs of people walking, wheeling and cycling first.

### 2.3. Local policy

It's likely that you will have your own strategies and policies that should help guide the project. Given the influence that

how we get around has on our lives, relevant policies may not just be related to transport but also engagement, communications, public health and environment to name a few.

An early part of major project development should be to create a policy framework to support, and in some instances, help justify decisions related to the development and progress of schemes. Whilst most people aren't going to become experts in street design, it's important that people understand that schemes have been designed in a certain way for good reason.

This rationale, along with robust background data is a good place to start the conversation with the local community. This is especially important when trying to improve conditions for all road users by using space differently, especially if the benefits to all may not be immediately obvious. It should be remembered that the benefits active travel schemes can bring are wide-ranging and vary depending upon the location. This therefore means that active travel schemes can also help achieve strategic and policy objectives related to health, environment and inequalities to name a few.

## 3. Engagement

### 3.1. Approach to engagement

While approaches to engagement can differ in terms of size, scale or importance, the principles by which you engage should remain the same. It is best to be honest, open, transparent and enable anyone who wants to take part in the project development process to do so.

That doesn't mean that everyone has to take a central role in the decision-making process but that you give people an opportunity to have their say and include opportunities along the way for people to get involved in different ways.

### 3.2. Why engage and consult?

There are two core reasons for carrying out consultation and engagement. Firstly, it's a legal requirement to go through any statutory consultation process.

Secondly, involving people to help develop schemes, and decide on options, leads to not only better schemes but a greater likelihood that the local community will embrace the proposal and enjoy the changes when implemented.

### 3.3. Defining the Engagement Area

Whilst the engagement area for every project should be considered in isolation, the following scope should be used as a starting point:

- **Large, area-wide schemes** (e.g. town centres, major corridors; borough-wide initiatives). *Borough, town or city-wide*
- **Medium-sized schemes** (e.g. school streets; local corridors; neighbourhood schemes). *Directly affected streets and buffer zone to wider impacted town centres/ward areas*
- **Small schemes** (e.g. bike hangars, EV charging points; changes to Waiting & Loading restrictions). *Directly affected streets and buffer zone.*

It should be remembered that including the entire city doesn't mean you expect a response from everyone who lives there. It might just be that your communications strategy is designed to make sure messaging is city-wide. This will be project-specific and dependent on a range of factors from budget to timescales.



### 3.4. How much engagement is needed?

You can never do too much engagement. However, projects need to be developed and implemented so the conversation with the community needs to be planned, managed and delivered like any other project element. A seemingly endless conversation can also become stale, and lead to frustration, particularly for people who want to see some action.

The level of engagement, its duration, and the size of the engagement area are all questions that need to be thought about as part of project engagement planning. A good start is to consider the significance of the project and whether due to budget or impact it will be significant enough for a political decision/sign-off and what is required to help inform that process.

When you are embarking on a new programme of projects or introducing an active travel scheme for the first time in a while, public engagement for a project also provides a much wider opportunity. It is a chance to promote active travel, engage individuals and organisations in a conversation about active travel and signpost them to complementary measures and behaviour change programmes. For this reason, it is always worth planning and ideally delivering more engagement than you think is necessary wherever possible.

It may be that once you have started to deliver a programme of active travel schemes and people understand the principles and how things work, project related community engagement can reduce in scale.

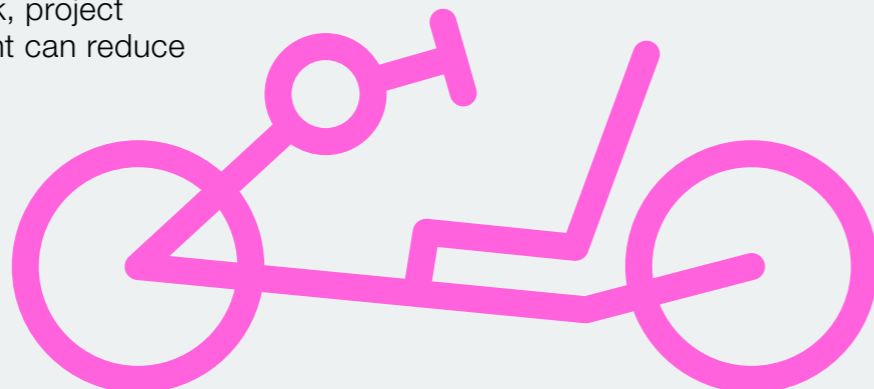
### 3.5. Who to engage?

The extent to which you engage people and organisations in the process will often be clearly evident in the scheme proposal developed, the quality of scheme implemented, and how it is received once complete.

One way to start this process is to compile a list of those who will be interested/affected by the proposal. This will of course likely include people who live, work, study or travel through the scheme area.

Thinking about the extent to which residents, local businesses or organisations will be impacted should also help you decide about how large a geographical area you need to engage with. This should of course be considered alongside the significance of the proposals, and available budget and resources.

However, as a rule of thumb it's a good idea to think about an area that should be directly involved and a larger area that should be kept informed. For smaller schemes these might be similar in size.



### 3.6. How to engage

When choosing how to engage with people, it is important to think about who you want to speak to and the ways in which they will find participating simple, easy but also empowering, enabling, and maybe even fun.

It's also important to consider how you would like people to help you with the scheme. Do you want them to help you develop outline design ideas, or just give their views on the proposal once produced? Best practice would suggest that a collaborative approach works best on active travel schemes but with more infrastructure heavy schemes with technical design elements the potential involvement of the community may be limited.

There are however lots of opportunities for people to provide lived experience, aspirations, comment on design proposals, and choose options, aesthetics, and public realm enhancements. This can all be done using technology, from social media and map-based engagement tools, to design tools and virtual reality.

It is also vital that your approach is inclusive, and you offer opportunities to engage face to face or provide comments using more traditional methods for those who can't easily access online content.

This is of course important when working with younger or older people, or in areas where access or familiarisation with technology is limited in some way.



### 3.7. Inclusive engagement

Active travel schemes, streets and places are much better when they enable everyone to access them and move through them easily. The approach to design development of schemes should be the same.

Making sure public engagement is inclusive is vitally important and just like designing infrastructure for all we should make sure the community engagement and design development process is too.

There are lots of ways to make public engagement more inclusive than just the basic options of using plain English and accessible venues for events. Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) – or similar – should be carried out as part of the development of major active travel schemes and the approach to engagement should be considered as part of this.

Consideration to the unique circumstances and characteristics of the place and people in your project area should always be given due consideration, even if a programme-wide EIA that applies to your project has already been developed.

Groups representing people with disabilities should be included in the design development process from an early stage and kept involved throughout.

Similarly, it is also important to remember that inclusivity is a broad term. For example, it may be that the scheme you are developing will benefit children travelling to school and engaging them in the design process will provide huge benefits to the scheme by balancing the views of older people.

The type, format and timing of engagement activities should be chosen to make sure everyone can take part with a range of options on offer.

Any online engagement or consultation materials should comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to ensure they are accessible to disabled people.



### 3.8. Hard-to-reach groups

Hard-to-reach groups is a term used to describe sections of the population who, for a variety of reasons, may be more difficult to involve in community engagement than most people.

The best way to approach the engagement of hard-to-reach groups is simply to develop your approach to make sure those groups can participate and are represented. This may require specialist resources, including external support or partnership working with colleagues from other parts of your organisation.

This is vital, as it ensures an inclusive, open, fair and empowering approach to community involvement.

### 3.9. When to engage

Community engagement should occur throughout project delivery. Whilst it might be that you have defined engagement periods with some projects, it is likely that the conversation about active travel in the area you have been working will have started before the project and will carry on once the project is completed.

As a minimum you should consider community engagement and involvement at the beginning of the project and during/ between the design stages. There are however many other opportunities to get people involved in the development of active travel projects, as outlined in the stage by stage.

Spring into early summer, and autumn tend to be the best times of the year to carry out community engagement. It is advisable to avoid school holidays and major events, where possible. Winter and the lead up to the festive period is also a busy time for most people and therefore not a good time to ask them to get involved in the design of streets and places.



## Case Study: Enjoy Waltham Forest: community and business engagement

The London Borough of Waltham Forest kick started its Mini-Holland programme 10 years ago and it has since transitioned into the Enjoy Waltham Forest programme.

The programme is well known for the bold proposals, and in-depth engagement carried out with thousands of interactions with the community, including via online surveys and engagement platforms.

The team went the extra mile to make sure people were aware of the project and the time and attention that went into working with stakeholders to make sure their views, ideas and issues were considered alongside data and the aspirations for change to develop the best possible outcomes.

One great example is the work done with the businesses that were subject to design proposals often involving the introduction of cycle infrastructure, reallocation of road space and parking/loading provision. This included a series of targeted surveys of businesses and shoppers on Lea Bridge Road.

The Lea Bridge Road project team working with the programme engagement and behaviour change teams delivered a wide range of activities to involve the local community from the very beginning.

These surveys were completed through face-to-face visits to businesses with all public facing addresses on the road visited during the engagement period. Shoppers were surveyed on street and also encouraged to complete the survey online.

The results were used in a variety of ways not least to inform the design but also to help educate the local community in the priorities for people who lived and shopped there in addition to the vital provision required for businesses to operate on the road. This included the production of a series of infographics to show the results of the various community engagement exercises suggested. The graphics were produced as part of this series and showed what shoppers said they wanted included in the redesign of Lea Bridge Road versus what businesses thought they wanted.

There were significant differences between the two, with businesses thinking more car parking provision would best support their customers while shoppers actually wanted infrastructure for people walking and cycling.

Other business focused engagement activities on main road schemes included advice on green travel planning, cycle training for employees, HGV driver training for fleets based in the borough, cargo bike loan schemes and a cycle parking for businesses programme.





## 4. Stakeholders

### 4.1. Stakeholder mapping

Once you've started to identify a project area and likely project stakeholders, a great next step is to start mapping them.

There are always unique stakeholders wherever you are developing and delivering a scheme. Identifying them, and ways to engage them, in the project should be given the appropriate levels of thought and scrutiny.

However, most can be broadly categorised as either internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, local or specific interest groups, transport user groups (including those representing people with disabilities), transport operators, the emergency services, utility companies and of course, local residents and businesses.

Projects near major developments or existing private residential or commercial estates may also need to include landowners or developers.

Putting important stakeholders on a map of a scheme area, thinking about where people who might use the scheme live, work and study and any important local destinations or trip generators will help you form a good project engagement area. It's not an exact science but the area to be kept involved should be a bit larger than the area directly affected by the scheme.

Affected doesn't mean just the physical change but where the impact and opportunities to benefit from the infrastructure may extend to. The wider area to keep informed might be similar or for large schemes might be the entire town, city or maybe even region.

One useful approach is to group stakeholders by the aspired/required level of involvement (for example, who should be commenting on the design, or taking part in making decisions, or who should just be being kept up to date with progress). This includes both internal and external stakeholders.



### 4.2. Internal stakeholders

Winning internal hearts and minds is a vital part of successful project delivery. Active travel schemes often have impacts that are far reaching and involve much more than just moving a kerb line. Understanding the impacts that doing things differently will bring is also a key part of the journey. This includes for colleagues who may see a higher workload or have to change the way they or their department do things.

Engaging with other departments of local authorities is a really important part of stakeholder engagement, and, if done well, it strengthens project delivery and broadens the potential benefits whilst mitigating risks related to the delivery of services by local authorities and partners.

### 4.3. External stakeholders

Depending on the project scope, size and impact, external stakeholders can be an extensive list of very different individuals and organisations with a broad range of views, interests and circumstances. Some of the typical project stakeholders and their roles in scheme design development are discussed below.

#### 4.3.1. Residents

People who live in the area that you are delivering a scheme in are a key part of the project and one of the main audiences for community engagement. They will likely represent the origin of a large proportion of the trips that are taken along the route or in the area you are working. Being local to the area they will also represent a main target group for mode shift to more walking, cycling and wheeling.

#### 4.3.2. Businesses

Businesses are another stakeholder group who can play a central role in the development and implementation of an active travel scheme. Their requirements related to servicing and receiving deliveries at their premises should be a key consideration of design development.

The ability to service and load/unload should be maintained but must be done safely and in keeping with rules and regulations. Dialogue with local businesses on this should therefore be a core part of business engagement.

Business engagement shouldn't however just be about loading. It is important to understand business views on the scheme proposal and importantly, include elements that make improvements for businesses and their customers.



## Case Study:

### East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood: Involving the community in area-based projects

Bristol City Council have been developing proposals in close collaboration with the community for a trial Liveable Neighbourhood project in East Bristol.

The scheme is the first in a programme of similar area-based projects planned for the city, aimed at supporting more active travel and addressing existing issues in the area related to congestion and road safety.

Prior to embarking on the programme, the project team, wider transport team and councillors undertook training on the development and delivery of similar schemes, how they can contribute to the wider functions and objectives of the local authority from a team of transport consultants and engagement experts aimed at upskilling and workshoping anticipated issues. This included preparing the wider council for the project launch and likely increased levels of correspondence, including when outcomes from community engagement may impact on council operations.



Project development and delivery for the scheme has been shaped into five main stages:

#### Stage 1 – Co-discover

Project engagement commenced with an initial perception survey based on the healthy street indicators. Residents and community stakeholders were asked about current travel trends and to map what they liked about their neighbourhood, and what they would like to change. This engagement took place both in person via on-street pop-up events and online workshops. This open approach led to the identification of a range of issues including street maintenance and anti-social behaviour issues.

#### Stage 2 – Co-develop

At 'co-develop stage' design tools/measures to help address the issues identified at co-discover were introduced. This included using 'top trump style' cards that informed people what the measures were, where they could be placed (main roads, local streets, or community assets), what was good about them, things to consider i.e. disbenefits, and deliverability.

Participants were asked where they want to see these measures/solutions on their streets both in person and online. This worked really well and some people would stick to hyper local areas and some would design the whole neighbourhood. Bristol partnered with The Alan Turing Institute to develop an open tool for street design. This interactive tool allows anyone to visualize how small street changes, such as redirecting car traffic from certain residential streets. To support the development of traffic reduction measures and so people could understand the likely cumulative impact of proposals and the impact they might have on the local street network.

#### Stage 3 – Pre-trial

Suggestions and ideas from the initial stages were taken and developed into a series of robust proposals that worked with and complement each other with an accompanying Outline Business Case prepared at the same time to release funding for the following project stages. Following further consultation on the proposed trial scheme, further changes were made to the trial layout including bus gates and re-locating modal filter locations. Drop-in sessions to view plans for the trial and give feedback were held, as were organised walkabouts where proposals were outlined and explained to interested parties.

#### Stage 4 – Trial

Bristol formally consulted on the Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the trial scheme measures. This approach was chosen to ensure that people had an opportunity to feedback and object prior to any measures actually going in. This approach provides the option to review the scheme and re-advertise TROs for a final scheme.

#### Stage 5 – Trial and permanent design

The trial is ongoing with the focus on monitoring and data collection through trial operation. The team plan to co-design some of the permanent scheme using collaborative design software, particularly for larger pocket parks that have the most opportunity for community input into space and design. Concurrently permanent measures for main roads i.e. new crossings, junction upgrades and protected cycle tracks have been developed with public engagement planned for the same time as the three-month review. This is to enable people to understand how the entire permanent scheme can be the scale of investment and change. Further interactive public engagement is planned, including the use of immersive technology to show interested parties infrastructure proposals.



More information can be found at **Have Your Say Today – East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood – Commonplace** or at [Bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk).

### 4.3.3. Local groups

Local groups, who represent local people or specific interests can be helpful to involve in the engagement process. You can work with them to learn more about the local area, including who you might want to speak to and where. They can also help promote the project and encourage local participation in engagement more generally.

It is however really important that, wherever possible, you include a diverse range of groups, that individuals have equal opportunity to have their say and that conversations are not dominated by groups or their representatives.

### 4.3.4. Road user groups

Road user groups represent specific people who travel on transport infrastructure. They can be a great engagement and consultation resource, providing access to expertise on subjects or localities and a specialist perspective. They can help you get the basics right at the beginning and with technical detail further down the line.

However, it should be remembered that these groups don't represent everyone and whilst well intended they can sometimes unintentionally misrepresent views. For example, a local cycle campaign group may be great providing constructive criticism and expert local knowledge, but will however provide a view skewed by the fact they already cycle.

Similarly, groups representing industry sectors, such as those representing logistics or public transport, will provide expertise, but it will be informed by their perspective. To mitigate, include a range of road user groups to engagement wherever feasible.

### 4.3.5. Statutory consultees

Statutory consultees are organisations and individuals that must be consulted as part of any statutory consultation process. Statutory consultees in the Traffic Regulation Order process include:

- groups representing the freight industry
- bus operators
- ambulance and fire services
- chiefs of police
- utility providers/infrastructure owners

There is also a requirement to consult other organisations representing people likely to be affected by the proposal. This normally also includes neighbouring authorities. This means they have to be sent details of proposals at statutory consultation stage as part of the formal legal process.

It's also always a good idea to engage statutory consultees earlier in the process as part of issue identification and design development. It may also be worth keeping them up to date with wider programme objectives and plans, so they are informed of the wider reasoning behind scheme proposals and inform you of any significant issues that may impact the project you are working on. There are significant benefits to having good relationships with all statutory consultees and time and financial savings can often be found through working closely together throughout.



## 5. Doing Engagement Well

### 5.1. Skills and capability

Doing project engagement well leads to better project outcomes.

Once you have worked out who you want to engage and have an idea for how and when you want to carry it out, it's worth considering whether you have the skills and experience in your team or whether you need to identify additional resources. This includes whether your communications team has capacity to help with the project. It may be that in addition to community engagement specialists you need to identify additional project communications resources.

### 5.2. Communications

Good engagement relies on good communications. It's crucial to project success that you explain the scheme, its purpose and objectives from the outset. It's also key to notify people of key project stages and dates when things will happen and give plenty of notice. When communicating, use plain English, avoid using technical terms (or explain them if you do). Always try to present data and background information in simple ways, using images and infographics where possible in combination with well written content.

Communicate everything well, even when you make mistakes and especially when things don't go well. We don't always know how a project proposal is going to be received no matter how good the idea might be.

### 5.3. Approaches and tools

Positives for some can also be negative for others. It's important to think about who you want to speak to and whether the approaches will work for them. There are lots of different engagement approaches, tools and techniques available including lots of new online platforms.

Images are just as powerful as words and can be used to show people what change will look like. Showing people how things could look using examples from elsewhere, renders and CGI visualisations of scheme proposals are great ways to help inform the decision-making process.



## Case Study:

### Greater Manchester: Use of CGI visualisations

In Greater Manchester, as part of its launch of the Bee Network, Transport for Greater Manchester put a big focus on the proactive communication of active travel scheme proposals.

Some of the schemes were complex and involved interventions that were technical and hard to visualise.

To help bring the plans to life, Greater Manchester used CGI visualisations to show the before and after of proposed changes. These were produced from authority plans and meetings with TfGM's design engineers.

At scheme consultation stage, the visualisations were used online as well as at community events and given to media and stakeholder groups. Feedback from consultations was that the visualisations helped people to better understand the changes being proposed and were a way of visually digesting complex technical language.

In many instances the use of the visualisations resulted in more positive feedback from the public as they helped to take away the fear that the changes would result in negative impacts on the street scape or that the changes would more drastically impact the environment.

Greater Manchester authorities were also given consistent templates to use for consultation documents using tailored branding and messaging. This meant that the language used was consistent, the consultation materials were of high quality and people became familiar with the brand signifying that the schemes were about local transport choice.



## 5.4. Technology

Technology is moving fast in traffic and transport. This includes the ways in which background data can be collected, collated, analysed, and used. Recent advances in this area mean there are lots of ways we can collect data concerning variables related to traffic and transport schemes. This means that we can use this data to show people the status quo, what's not working and what might happen if we change things, thereby informing scheme development but also the wider conversation about streets and the potential for change. You can educate and inform local people on issues like air quality or traffic conditions, and they can be explained to people using local data and information.

Whilst advances in technology mean there are lots of data and information that can be used as part of the engagement and consultation process, it's important that this data is then presented in simple ways that are easy to understand wherever possible.

It's also always a good idea to make sure you're aware of the data protection implications of data collection and to let people know what data you're collecting, and how and why it is being collected.

## 5.5. Online engagement tools

Online engagement platforms are great resources for the development and delivery of active travel schemes. Many software applications in this field can be effectively used as project websites with background information, designs and opportunities for people to have their say and see what other people think too.

Any online engagement documents need to comply with the relevant [accessibility regulations](#).



### Case Study:

## York: Targeted interventions to get the views of under-represented groups

In November 2023, ten policies were put to the people and businesses of York which, between them, brought transformational potential for the city and how we all move around it.

The Big Transport Conversation, the most far-reaching consultation on transport in York since 2010, was a proactive campaign to reach all audiences, not just those who typically respond to transport consultations.

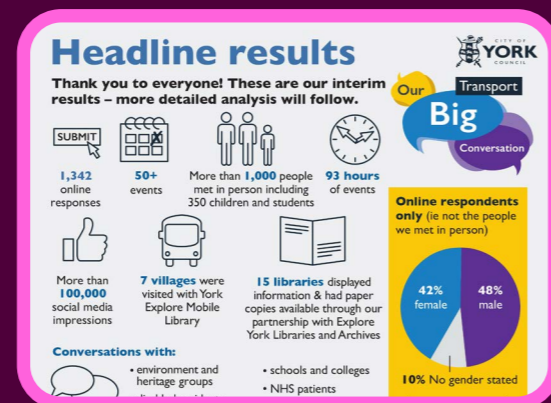
York's approach was two-fold; first, an online portal was launched where people could view the full version as well as skip through areas they weren't so interested in. York invited people to drop pins on maps to show specific areas of concern and offer their experiences of travel.

In addition to the online portal, they visited the rural villages, suburban areas and the city centre to get a real-life picture of current travel needs. They gave assemblies in primary schools to hear how pupils travel and how they'd like to travel. They met with secondary school pupils gaining independence through cycling and buses, and talked with college students about some of the challenges they face in choosing apprenticeships when travel options are restricted.

They held ward meetings and arranged for posters across the city.

They also held dedicated sessions with our disability community including being welcomed into the York Deaf Café with an interpreter, and going to visit adults with learning disabilities. They arranged sessions with taxi and bus operators to explain future plans; had drop in sessions in libraries and in the centre of town, and visited the local cycling campaign to present to them. York were also grateful to be able to ride along with York Explore's mobile library, visiting some of the more remote villages within CYC's boundary to particularly hear from older people about their experiences of using the bus network.

The feedback York received has helped to create key documents for the way people in the area travel. In July 2024 York's new Local Transport Strategy was adopted and they are now progressing with an implementation plan to deliver the first two years, as well as a movement and place plan.



## 6. Project engagement through Project Delivery

### 6.1. Project delivery process

Most transport related projects go through a series of stages from inception to delivery and post-implementation. These stages and tasks are described using different terminology depending on the type, scale, focus, impacts and outcomes of a scheme.

For the purpose of Active Travel England projects these stages have been defined as follows:

- Baseline
- Feasibility Design
- Preliminary Design
- Detailed Design
- Strategic Outline Business Case
- Pre-Outline Business Case design review
- Outline Business Case
- Full Business Case
- Statutory consultation
- Construction/Implementation
- Post-implementation monitoring and review

### 6.2. Step by step

It's important that we deliver the right schemes in the right places for the right reasons. Engagement and consultation play a vital role in successful project delivery in a few different ways. This starts before project initiation and should carry on past when the project has finished. Some of the ways in which you can carry on the conversation are included in the later sections and appendices of this document.

Firstly, it's important that you communicate background information related to the scheme and why the scheme is happening.

Secondly, it's important that you understand a bit about how people feel. It's very hard to know how people will feel about something that is new. It is also likely that you may not know what the scheme proposal will include at this stage.

You can, however, ask them how they feel about transport, streets, and places in lots of other ways and use this information to help shape outline scheme ideas and strategies.

As with other technical terms, outlining what happens at each stage and, importantly, how people can get involved, is a key early stage in consultation and engagement.

There are other stages and tasks that some transport schemes may include, and some projects may have significant amounts of work done at each stage, but most projects follow these steps.

Some projects, such as behaviour change initiatives, may be sparked by a conversation during a design development meeting, or may only commence at post-implementation stage of another project. It may be that a project grows and requires more resource, support and scrutiny.





### 6.3. Before (Baseline)

Baseline stage for a project is about understanding the existing situation, gathering project data, and preparing for project development and delivery.

Alongside other data it's important that you gather data related to people's perceptions, travel patterns and priorities for improvements.

There are a number of things you can do to understand the project area and how people feel about transport and streets. These don't all have to be based on surveys and data either. For example, you can use maps for people to identify issues or opportunities the scheme could address, or you can also do walking street audits, attend community meetings or councillor surgeries.

If you want to involve more people at this stage hosting a survey online or using a purpose-built engagement software platform might be a good idea, especially for larger projects. Baseline should also be about setting up the project. This should of course mean project and financial management but also engagement and communications.

If you haven't done so already, now is the time to consider the 'who, when, how, and how much' questions related to engagement and consultation.

Understanding this at baseline stage will help you plan for later stages of project delivery but also understand what resources you might need, where you might find them and how much it might cost.

Whilst not strictly engagement and consultation, messaging about the project and its benefits will depend on your ability to tell the story of before and after the scheme. To do this you need to know how many people are travelling through the scheme area and on what modes of transport, how much time they are spending there, whether they're crossing the road etc., before you start the project so speak with colleagues to make sure you have that all covered.

As with all other project tasks it's important that appropriate levels of funding are allocated to engagement, consultation, and communications if it is to be done well. It may also be that the project team requires additional resources specialising in engagement, consultation and communications, either from internal or external sources.

For larger projects it is worth considering the development of engagement and communications strategies for the projects.



### 6.4. Communications at Baseline

At baseline stage you begin to communicate the reasons for a proposal for change. This includes the important message that the status quo isn't working or needs to change to accommodate something new.

This needs to be communicated well from the outset. If it is part of a wider programme of works or delivering towards wider objectives this is the time to start explaining this to people. This includes communicating background data and information in easy-to-understand ways using non-technical language wherever possible. This might be through using infographics, plans and images in addition to text. People won't always agree but they will begin to understand the reasons and associated aims and objectives.

Baseline is also the right stage to make a place where people can go and find out about the project. Building a place for people to go and find the latest news on a project means you will keep them engaged in the process.

Your content should be easy to digest and understand. This can be through the use of images and infographics or simplifying data and technical information.

For larger projects this might mean dedicated pages on the council website or even a standalone website.



## 6.5. Feasibility Design

Feasibility Design is about understanding what is possible.

Depending on the scheme and the location this may mean the exploration of different options. It may also be that whilst you have an idea of what some of the issues and key design elements to address them are, you are less clear what additional features the scheme should include.

This is the time to get everyone else, including decision makers and key stakeholders, more involved. Start with an update on the project scoping and discovery stages and what related background data suggests.

If you didn't do at baseline, feasibility design stage is a great time to get your communications and engagement officers involved in the project. They should be able to assist you with developing communications and engagement elements of the project.

There are a number of engagement related tasks that can be undertaken during feasibility design. This will vary depending upon your chosen engagement but at feasibility stage it is time to get a much richer understanding of the local area and how the project will impact it.

A good approach at this stage is to adopt an objective to discover the local area in partnership with the local community. This can be thinking about the existing connections or those that the project will provide. The connections and relationships formed with the local community at this stage can last throughout the project and beyond.

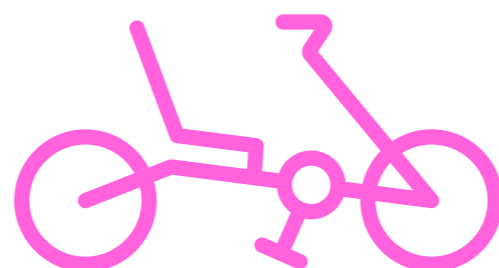
Conversations should include how people and businesses will be able to benefit from the project, and who could be involved longer term in things like local ownership of infrastructure, new spaces and planting.

It's also important to understand people's experience of moving through the area, or what they would like to see along the route or in the area. This information combined with professional expertise, technical knowledge and robust design standards will make the best scheme designs.

Approaches you can use to discover the project area with the community include walking audits, workshops, presentations, individual and group creative work and discussions.

If the scheme outline design is refined enough, it is a good time to start getting a view on the ideas and options available. This should always be carried out with the idea that the scheme is to help achieve objectives and aims related to active travel. It may be at this stage that there is a series of robust proposals that may include some design options that can be discussed, evaluated and prioritised for progression collaboratively.

Using these methods takes time and commitment from officers and those asked to take part. Realistic expectations of how many people may be involved should be set for these activities but equally adequate importance and resources should be allocated wherever feasible.



### 6.5.1. Communicating messages

At feasibility design the project team will be learning as much as anyone else. It may be that at this stage options are deemed not being viable for a range of reasons. This can be a difficult message, especially if options including maintaining the status quo are popular.

It is often just as important to communicate the reasons why certain options are not being taken forward as it is to communicate the benefits of the preferred option. This of course includes why things can't stay as they are. Another key message at feasibility stage is to explain the next project steps, key dates and how people can get involved in the project in the following stages of project development.



## 6.6. Preliminary Design

Preliminary Design is the stage at which your scheme is beginning to take shape and the conversation with the community needs to step up a gear. The first things to do include notifying stakeholders that the project is moving to preliminary design, what the next steps will be, what is expected of them and how they can input into design development.

This will of course vary depending upon the stakeholder, but the focus of community engagement should be on increasing the amount of people involved, whether through design activities, exhibitions/drop-in sessions, or surveys.

It's important that you update those who will be directly affected by the proposal – particularly those living, working, and studying in the project area – providing them information on the project to date, next steps and when and how they will be able to have a say.

It is likely that at the end of preliminary design you will engage the local community in the project area to understand their views on the final proposal or proposals. There are different ways to go about this but this normally involves a survey or opportunity for people to comment on.

It's important that this isn't a referendum of the scheme progressing but an opportunity for people to positively input into the design development and project delivery process.

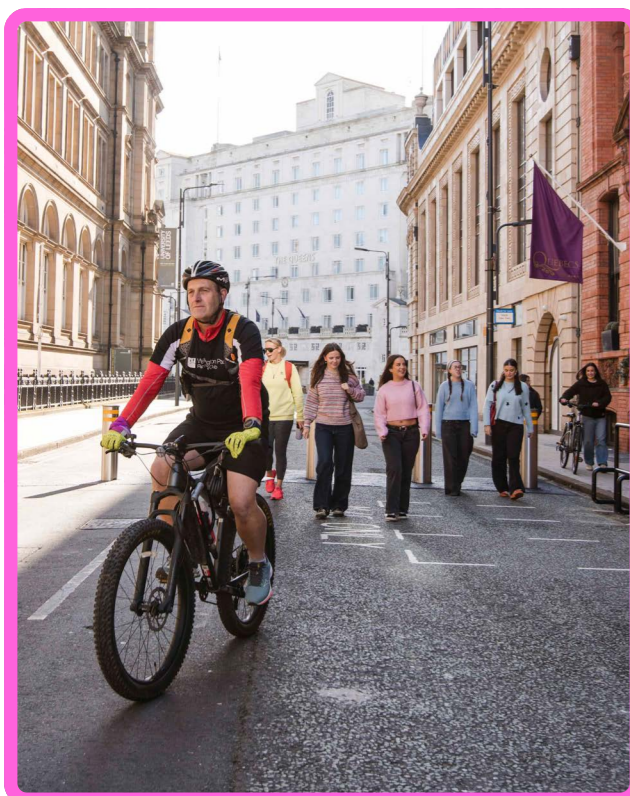
## 6.7. Detailed Design

Detailed design is all about finalising the scheme proposal and putting the finishing touches to the design.

At this stage it is likely that you have asked people their views on a project and will be making amendments to design proposals. It is likely there are a number of reasons why you are making design changes, and this could include where feedback was received during previous engagement stages. It is important to communicate these decisions and reasons for them.

Keeping people engaged and involved in this stage of project delivery is vital if you want the local community to feel they have ownership of the scheme and fully embrace the new infrastructure.

As will all other stages, it is important to keep the local community and project stakeholders updated on scheme progress and raise awareness of the next steps towards statutory consultation and construction.



## 6.8. Business Case

Project business cases are developed in parallel with the scheme concept and design and, depending on the funding programme, submitted at various stages of project development and delivery.

The first stage is 'strategic outline case', where an initial assessment of the scheme proposal is undertaken. This includes scheme justification, with the outcome used to support the case for change. The business case is then developed, refined and updated as the scheme is developed through to the point where schemes are approved for funding.

Similarly to other key project stages and gateways it is important that the process, outcomes and decisions are communicated to stakeholders and more widely when significant.

## 6.9. Statutory Consultation

Many, but not all elements of an active travel scheme will have some form of statutory consultation associated with implementing them. These include vehicle access restrictions, parking restrictions, cycle tracks, and speed limits. You should make sure you are familiar with the processes required for your proposals.

Statutory consultation should not be the only form of engagement carried out during scheme development. It represents the bare minimum and should be seen more as a way to confirm what will go forward, following engagement with communities.

The most common process is likely to be that associated with making a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), used for many traffic management restrictions.

There are various types of TRO but the most relevant are permanent and experimental ones. Both must be made following the processes set out in the [Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Procedure\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 1996](#).

For permanent orders, which make a lasting change to the road network, the process includes advertising the proposal in local newspapers, and making the plans available to the general public to view. There are 21 days for people to respond to the proposal, including by raising objections. Following the 21-day period, representations are considered and a decision is made as to whether to make the proposed changes. In some circumstances, there can also be a public inquiry if any objections cannot be resolved. Once agreed, the scheme proposal can proceed to implementation.

The following groups must be consulted as statutory consultees:

- groups representing the freight industry
- bus operators
- ambulance and fire services
- chiefs of police

There is also a requirement in the regulations to consult other organisations representing people likely to be affected by the order, as the local authority sees fit. There is no fixed list, but this can include road user groups, local accessibility groups and groups representing local businesses and services, as well as taxi and private hire operators. The process and ways for people to provide feedback needs to be communicated effectively.

For experimental TROs (ETROs), the process is different. These can be put in place more quickly than permanent orders, as they have only a seven-day notice requirement before they can be made. This is then followed by a statutory objection period of six months. During this time, statutory consultees must be consulted as per the TRO procedure regulations, and schemes should be monitored and evaluated to help make decisions as to whether the scheme should be made permanent and, if so, in what form. An ETRO can last for a maximum of 18 months, after which they must either be made permanent or revoked.

This approach can be used to good effect in the right circumstances and for the right projects. The temporary nature of features means schemes can be modified in light of experience/feedback, which can lead to a better scheme overall and help address community concerns about impacts. Given the short lead-in time, ETROs should not be used to circumvent prior engagement by relying on the objection period. To provide the best outcomes, community engagement and involvement should still be a key feature of project development prior to making any ETRO. The need for extra monitoring and consultation can make ETROs a more onerous process overall.

If they are not implemented following the principles of good engagement outlined in this guidance, ETROs may prove unpopular and open to challenge.

The British Parking Association has also produced a guide to [Traffic Regulation Orders](#) which provides useful background.



## 6.10. Construction/ Implementation

Communication and engagement during implementation is just as important as at any other project stage. Whilst the main engagement and consultation stages may have passed, good communication during construction is crucial to ensure it runs smoothly with the local community especially those living on roads directly affected by the scheme.

It is the culmination of an entire project and the stage at which people see the outcome of their input and involvement in the project to date. It can therefore often be an exciting time for people who are pleased to see the change.

For those who are less pleased with the change, or even those who don't have any interest or see any direct benefit for them, implementation of changes to the highway are an inconvenience or annoyance. Even relatively temporary works can clash with an important date for a local business or family.

It is therefore really important that people in areas affected by works are given advance warning. This is particularly the case in shopping, commercial and retail areas where construction may temporarily adversely impact businesses and their customers accessing them.

It is important that any temporary changes are communicated along with final designs or layouts.

## 6.11. Post-implementation

The first thing to do post-implementation is to go through the snagging and scheme finalisation processes. It may be that there are some things that still need finishing off. This is a really important time to make sure your communication with the community is clear. If things need finishing off let people know.

If there are still appealing features to do – the planting, trees, cycle parking and street furniture – make sure it's going to get done and let people know. It can be very disappointing for the local community if these finishing touches appear to have been forgotten. If there is planting and other scheme elements that require some ownership or input from the community, make sure you get the agreements and relationships in place.

Once the project is complete it's time to celebrate. Don't be afraid to collectively mark this moment with local people, businesses, decision makers and crucially, the team who have delivered the scheme.

This also provides the platform for scheme activation. There are lots of different ways you can do this, from pop up market events to celebration cycle rides. Wherever possible involve the local community in developing it with you – they know how they party.



Make sure you keep people updated with snagging and provide ongoing feedback on the impact of the scheme. The amount you do this and your ability to do so effectively will be dictated by the amount of monitoring you are planning to undertake.

This is particularly important with businesses. If you have made changes to car parking and loading it may be an idea to check it's working for everyone.

It's best practice to continue monitoring post-implementation for 12 to 36 months and ideally longer. This does of course depend on the type and size of scheme and the aims and objectives. It may also be that an official review of the scheme is planned which this monitoring should help inform. Will people want to know how many more people are walking past the shops or cycling down a new cycle track?

Post-implementation is not the time to realise you didn't get baseline data, so if you're reading this at project planning stage, please turn back to the section covering baseline, make sure your monitoring framework is in place, and you have the required consents before data collection in your project plan.

## 6.12. Closing remarks

Good engagement and consultation on active travel should start before schemes begin and continue after they are complete. It isn't always easy but when done well, engagement and consultation is powerful. You need the right team and supporting resources, time to have a good conversation and a project process that enables the team to listen to feedback and make changes where necessary. It is, however, important to remember that you are delivering schemes that, while complex and sometimes difficult, are going to make it easier for everyone to get around safely, and for active travel to be the obvious choice for short trips. Please tell us about your successes and share and learn with each other.



## Case Study:

### Bradford: A consistent engagement approach to city-wide plans

Future Bradford is an £80 million Transforming Cities Fund project to completely overhaul the centre and reimagining it as a place for people.

Health and economic benefits have been a key part of the plans. The new journeys that will be enabled have been carefully planned to make them manageable and enjoyable for all, building in accessibility from the start and bringing 1,000 new homes to the city centre as part of another project – Bradford City Village.

Bradford Council put early resource into engagement – sending out nearly 120,000 consultation pieces to residents and businesses during the course of scheme development as well as holding a host of events.

The council also undertook considerable preparation to make sure the scheme gave as accurate as possible representation of the highway network, including six months of computer modelling work where the authority's Traffic Manager and Principal Urban Traffic Control (UTC) Engineer both spent considerable time with the modelling team working through traffic flows, individual signal timings and reality checking.

Bradford also had a rolling approach to engagement during its city centre work, providing weekly updates on feedback as opposed to infrequent, lengthy and formal reports. This has afforded the ability to allow flexible changes to the work programme, if required, which was especially useful during the unforeseen closure of the city's main bus station.



### Bradford City Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements Scheme

Have your say and help shape plans.

The Bradford City Centre Walking and Cycling Improvements Scheme aims to reshape Bradford city centre by improving walking and cycling routes, removing traffic from some roads, redesigning the bus network and introducing new green outdoor spaces for people to enjoy.

Since our initial consultation between July and August 2021, we have reviewed and updated the proposals.

**Take part**

We will be holding a drop-in consultation event at the Broadway Centre (outside Superdrug) on **Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th July 2022** between 2-7pm. Come along to find out more, ask questions and share your views.

You can contact us to leave feedback, ask questions, or request printed materials:

@ info@future-bradford.co.uk  
0808 196 9119  
Freepost BFD Highways

Find out more: [www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/bradfordcentre](http://www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/bradfordcentre)

This consultation is open until **Tuesday 2 August 2022.**

Scan Me

Delivered in partnership by:

Funded by: UK Government



## Appendices:

### Design review stage gates

The following design stages or stage gates are used throughout the lifespan of the scheme design and mark key points for design assurance.

Stage	Definition	Funding programme
Baseline	This is the current layout of the path or street, before the proposed design is put in place. Critical issues identified at this stage should be removed through later stages of the design process.	All
Feasibility design	Feasibility is the initial stage of a project where the primary focus is to determine whether the proposed project is technically, economically, and environmentally viable. During this phase the practicality of the project, considering factors such as site conditions, potential risks, available resources, and regulatory requirements is assessed. Feasibility studies often involve preliminary cost estimates and high-level technical assessments to decide whether it is worthwhile to proceed with more detailed planning and design.	Active Travel Fund
Preliminary design	Preliminary design stage is where the preferred scheme option is developed, resulting in sufficient design to inform costings and stakeholder engagement. Initial engineering concepts and drawings are developed to outline the project's fundamental structure and functionality. The project's scope, layout, and overall design concept are defined during this phase. Preliminary Design helps stakeholders visualise the project's form and function while providing the basis for more detailed technical and financial assessments.	Active Travel Fund
Detailed design	Detailed design is the phase where comprehensive, detailed plans and specifications for the construction or implementation of the project are produced. This stage involves producing detailed drawings, technical specifications, and engineering calculations. Specific design and construction issues, such as material specifications, structural integrity, environmental considerations, and safety measures are addressed. Detailed design aims to provide all the necessary information for contractors to carry out the construction or implementation phase accurately and efficiently.	Active Travel Fund
Strategic outline case	The Strategic Outline Case (SOC) is the initial phase of the business case development process. It involves a high-level assessment of a proposed project. The primary purpose of the SOC is to establish the case for change and to provide a preferred way forward for senior managements approval before progressing to more detailed planning. During this stage, the strategic context is reaffirmed, the case for change is made, and a preferred option is identified.	Major Road Network programme  Levelling Up Fund  City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement  Transforming Cities Fund
Pre-OBC design review	The Pre-OBC design review applies to MRN schemes at the request of the DfT Major Roads team, rather than a defined funding decision point; this is an opportunity for the authority to contact ATE to get feedback to their proposals prior to committing to producing the OBC.	Major Road Network programme

Stage	Definition	Funding programme
Outline business case	Outline Business Case (OBC) is the second phase in the business case development process. It entails a more detailed analysis of the project, focusing on its feasibility, affordability, and deliverability. The OBC further refines the preferred option identified in the SOC and includes a comprehensive assessment of costs, benefits, risks, and management arrangements. The OBC is used to determine whether to commit resources to develop a Full Business Case (FBC) and proceed with project implementation.	Major Road Network programme Levelling Up Fund City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Transforming Cities Fund
Full business case	Full Business Case (FBC) is the final phase in the business case development process. It involves a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the proposed project. The FBC provides detailed information about the project's costs, benefits, risks, procurement strategy, and delivery plan. It also includes a robust financial appraisal, including sensitivity analysis. The FBC serves as the basis for making the final investment decision, committing resources, and proceeding with project implementation. It ensures that all aspects of the project are well-defined and that it represents value for money.	Major Road Network programme Levelling Up Fund City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Transforming Cities Fund

## Useful Contacts

Age UK – [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Alzheimer's Society – [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Disability Rights UK – [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Guide Dogs – [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

Mencap – [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

National Autistic Society – [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Sustrans – [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Thomas Pocklington Trust – [www.pocklington.org.uk](http://www.pocklington.org.uk)

Transport for All – [www.transportforall.org.uk](http://www.transportforall.org.uk)

RNIB – [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

RNID – [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

Scope – [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Wheels for Wellbeing – [www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk](http://www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk)

Whizz-Kidz – [www.whizz-kidz.org.uk](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk)

