

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR STREETS

RETHINKING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
TO DELIVER BETTER STREETS
FOR ALL

ABOUT LCC



London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 20,000 supporters, of whom over 11,000 are fully paid-up members. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in Greater London; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

lcc.org.uk

ABOUT URBAN MOVEMENT



We make towns and cities better for all through shaping their streets and spaces; and our design portfolio is full of built projects that have had this effect in town and city centres, in high streets, at major stations, in local centres and public spaces, along busy corridors, and in new developments.

We believe in the power of better streets and spaces to make towns and cities more successful, healthy, and enjoyable for everyone; and we live and work to make this happen.

We're transport planners, landscape architects, traffic engineers, and urban designers who know we need to work collaboratively and inclusively to get the best outcomes.

urbanmovement.co.uk



CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	4
Consultation and engagement	5
Are consultations referendums?	5
Asking the right questions; listening to all voices	6
From consultation gone wrong to going right.....	6
Consultation and the law.....	7
2. Ten steps for better engagement and consultation.....	8
Step 1: Brief and purpose	8
Step 2: The team.....	8
Step 3: Data, data, data	9
Step 4: Ask the residents (and businesses)	10
Step 5: Create principles.....	10
Step 6: Create scheme options	11
Step 7: Engage.....	12
A note about trials.....	13
Step 8: Create a final scheme	13
Step 9: Build, monitor, benefits.....	14
Step 10: Rapid mitigation and roll-out.....	15
3. Case studies.....	16
Collaborative planning in Greater Manchester	16
Capturing views in Waltham Forest	17
Stakeholder mapping in Haringey	17
Inclusivity for the visually impaired in TfL design	18
Feedback in Waltham Forest	18
Collaborative route planning across London.....	18
Public events around the London Plan	19
Developing surveys in Ohio	19
Analysis and reporting on air quality in Waltham Forest.....	19
Liaison by Department of Health in UK and Department of Neighbourhoods in Seattle.....	20
Evaluation of the Cycling Towns and Cities project.....	20
4. Further Reading	21



1. INTRODUCTION



This guide is for local authority officers and their consultants, as well as others working at the sharp end of the conception, design and delivery of highway schemes intended to make streets better for residents, businesses and indeed everyone. It is therefore also likely to be of interest to anyone concerned with achieving the same outcomes, including councillors and local activists.

Done right, community engagement can garner not only acceptance of schemes, but also ownership and even a sense of pride in them. But, too often campaigners and practitioners face visceral opposition resulting in schemes being watered down or abandoned altogether.

Reflecting on the history of consultation and engagement does not suggest, however, that implacable hostility from the public to proposed schemes is a foregone conclusion. Rather, we need to learn from best practice and avoid pitfalls – in order to deliver better streets in less controversial ways.

As we use them here, two key words are ‘better’ and ‘delivery.’ We need to understand why measures are often rejected by some from within the communities that we consider will be the primary beneficiaries. If our intention is to make things ‘better,’ what do we need to change – in our approach and perhaps also in the schemes themselves – to enable more people to buy into these changes?

As for ‘delivery,’ we need to have this in mind from the outset. Too often, many of us proceed as though delivery refers only to the physical implementation of the measure(s) in question. In order to be able to undertake this aspect of delivery, however, we need first to have an agreed scheme. Practitioners should therefore have a much broader conception of delivery. The question we should begin with, and return to throughout the process, is “what will it take to get the best job done?” That is why rethinking the pathway to physical delivery is the focus of this guide.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Most practitioners are familiar with the idea that ‘consultation’ and ‘engagement’ have somewhat different meanings, with the former implying people’s genuine involvement and the latter smacking a little of superficiality, if only through association with past practice that often paid little more than lip service to what respondents actually said. While there is no need for us to get distracted by semantics here, we do think the following reflections are helpful by way of introduction.

The Consultation Institute says consultation is: “The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.” Sadly, however, it will be the experience of most people that this process of a genuine exchange of views simply doesn’t happen in most consultations.

In the Strong Towns blogpost, “Most Public Engagement Is Worse Than Useless” (www.strongtowns.org/journal/most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless), US-based consultant Ruben Anderson reflects on the shortcomings of a consultation on sustainable energy production:

“We had asked a question that could produce nothing but disrespect for the experts who have dedicated their education and careers to reducing environmental impact... a question that the members of the general public were not equipped to answer, because they aren’t experts.... [As a result], when the recommendations come out, the public sees nothing that resembles what they asked for... They too feel disrespected. They gave their irreplaceable time, hours from their one and only life, and look what they got.”

His conclusion? “We should only consult with residents when they are the ones that can best answer the question at hand. But in those moments, they should be treated as the experts they are.” He also adds, wisely, that practitioners should “humbly observe where people in the community struggle.”

ARE CONSULTATIONS REFERENDUMS?

In the UK, schemes currently aren’t typically brought before residents until they’re at a fairly resolved level of design, even where practitioners themselves have undertaken a great deal of groundwork. At this stage, residents may be consulted on a couple of options, or perhaps even shown only one. The questions they are then asked, often essentially out of the blue, are usually binary: either “Which do you prefer – Option A or Option B?” or “Do you like it – yes or no?”

Everyone says that consultation isn’t a referendum but, in such circumstances, it is treated as though it is. There is little “genuine exchange of views,” because the point at which residents could likely significantly influence a scheme has long been passed. Instead, they are asked questions for which they do not have the expertise, or that require a greater level of understanding of complex issues than they have been enabled to gain. Ultimately, their voices are reduced to a simple tally that can be, and often is, gamed by vocal residents’ associations and other groups such as local traders, taxi drivers and, yes, active travel campaigns.

In this context, it is crucial to ask yourself: Who tends to be listened to in your consultations; who isn’t heard from; and who has an outsized voice? Ask yourself how genuinely you’re trying to understand and reflect the concerns and ideas residents put forward. Ask yourself what you learn from the fact that 43% of residents agree or disagree with your proposals. Does it mean the residents didn’t understand the scheme(s), didn’t like it, wanted something else instead, or wanted some changes? Ask yourselves about turnout, about the extent to which a majority of respondents really reflects the majority of residents – which means also asking yourself about how representative these voices are. So, for example, ask yourself how much weight you should place on a loud motorists’ voice in a community with low household car ownership.

The result of poor consultation methods is that there is a consistent gap between, on the one hand, what most people say in surveys about the general principles of travel and about what they want in the places they live, and on the other hand,

what the most active groups locally tend to say in consultations. You've likely experienced this yourself: everyone wants cleaner, greener, safer streets in principle, but far fewer people seem to want cycle tracks where they live, or to have to drive a slightly longer way round to get home, or to have to park a little further from the shops.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS; LISTENING TO ALL VOICES



We keep asking residents to make decisions in the wrong place at the wrong time. Given that residents vote for politicians and policies across an area, we shouldn't then repeatedly query those mandates on a street by street basis.

It is for politicians and officers, as experts, to work out how to get more people cycling, whether more car parking is a public good or not etc. Residents should instead be empowered to make decisions that involve their specific expertise about where they live: which are the most important short trips, where should planters go, what happens at night on your street, etc. Our current approach means consultation all too often reinforces the status quo rather than promoting the change we (almost) all know we need.

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, we will encounter real challenges with engaging and consulting meaningfully with residents (e.g. face-to-face or in-the-room) for some time, and this risks increasing barriers to participation among those who are less likely to have resources or time to tackle online comment platforms. Additionally, the Black Lives Matter movement reminds us that transport planning, highway schemes, engagement and consultation – like every facet of our lives – can embody institutional racism. Who do we talk to? Who do we hear from? Who is most impacted

by the schemes we put in, or by our inability to implement schemes, or by one area being prioritised over another?

The crises we face also, of course, include the climate emergency, poor public health, and the wastage associated with congestion – and all demand bold action. Therefore, we simply cannot afford to persist with processes of consultation and engagement that lead to weak action that fails to meet the challenges or, worse, to inaction. In short, we need to be bold in changing how we engage.

FROM CONSULTATION GONE WRONG TO GOING RIGHT

Despite increasing general awareness of these crises, fears emerge time and again at consultation stage that grip a significant group of residents (and/or businesses) who are being asked to change their habits – and their response is to fight back. Angry opposition weakens or derails schemes, can see consultations turn toxic and hardens views not just against worthwhile schemes but also against politicians, campaigners, officers and 'experts' in general. This should no longer surprise us, not least because of our experience. In any case we must grasp that people will generally not embrace a proposal if they haven't properly been presented with the case for change and given a chance to shape it. Yet we still seem to pursue the 'same old' approaches.

At a time when we need to change our streets at a greater pace than ever, we risk both repeating the same mistakes and failing to take real opportunities to harness local knowledge and enable communities to come together to make changes. Unless we change our engagement processes, we will continue to leave sceptical residents further embittered and convinced that the council is against them. However unintentionally, this leads to the disenfranchisement of whole groups.

We need to adopt local decision-making processes that draw in and empower a truly diverse cross section of the community, help people understand schemes, and build their confidence in officers and politicians. We need to help our communities genuinely participate in, and feel ownership over, decisions that currently seem to be imposed on them by those who claim to know better.



We believe we know how this change can be achieved, and the following section sets out a step-by-step approach to engagement and consultation that we think every borough should consider adopting or adapting as appropriate.

In an age where ideas spread like wildfire through social media and 'fake news' dominates Facebook local groups, doing consultations the old way just isn't working any more. If officers and councillors want to make streets better for residents, the ten steps (see below) should help them to do so.

CONSULTATION AND THE LAW

Some practitioners are rightly concerned about whether the consultation process they adopt will be subjected to legal challenge. Freedom of Information requests, the spectre of judicial review and uncertainty about how best to fulfil the Public Sector Equality Duty can cause sleepless nights for professionals who, while unfamiliar with the law, have half-heard tales of woe from elsewhere. Other practitioners take a more blasé approach and exploit the lack of a clear legal structure to skew consultation metrics so as to support pre-determined positions.

We provide more detailed information about legal matters in the Further Reading blogpost (see below). For the present, it's worth being clear that while consultation is legally optional for all highway schemes, the Government has issued a Code of Practice on Consultation (assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100807/file47158.pdf)

that local authorities should consider following. The Code itself does not have legal force and cannot prevail over other statutory or mandatory requirements, but it sets out the Government's general policy on formal, public, written consultation exercises.

Other public sector organisations are free to make use of this Code for their consultation purposes, but it does not apply to consultation exercises run by them unless they explicitly adopt it. The Better Regulation Executive states: "The DfT Legal Section advises that the Code applies to all public consultations in relation to road schemes... but a positive decision must be made to depart from any aspect of the Code." While public consultation is a legal requirement in the case of any Traffic Orders needed for the implementation of street schemes, public consultation on the character of those schemes is not required by legal mandate.

Our purpose in preparing this document is not to help local authorities tick legal boxes. Rather, it is to enable more and better street schemes to get built. It so happens, however, that a by-product of the process we recommend will be to ensure that councils are rendered far less liable to successful legal action by anyone opposing the schemes in question, as the schemes will have been through a robust engagement and consultation process.

2. TEN STEPS FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

The following ten steps present a simple, logical and common sense process of engagement from scheme conception through to monitoring and mitigation of arising problems. It's helpful to see them all as part of the wider process of scheme delivery. This ten-step process isn't rocket science, and yet it could be revolutionary in terms of getting more, better schemes implemented. We trust that by adopting this process – adapting it as appropriate to local circumstances – practitioners will be able to avoid repetition of past failures.

STEP 1: BRIEF AND PURPOSE

It should be considered essential before you begin any engagement process, to identify the issues you think need to be addressed, and which the scheme is intended to address. Put another way: you should always start with why? One of the most common sources of consultation failure is opposition from those who simply don't know why change is considered necessary. People can readily identify or imagine how a scheme proposal may negatively affect them, so they need to be enabled to understand what gain there will be (for them, ideally) to offset the pain.

Perhaps there is a list of issues previously raised by residents, or other issues identified as priorities to be addressed such as collision trends, air quality, congestion, or economic matters. These should lead to a discussion of the level and type of engagement required. Stakeholder management teams and strategy/policy officers are usually best placed to do this. Best practice would be to involve community representatives in this early stage planning. Broadly, what does the area need, and what current policy and existing data supports this?

STEP 2: THE TEAM

Do not assume you and your team already have the right skills to do good engagement and calm, constructive consultations. Don't be afraid to get help – from TfL (or similar organisations in your area), consultants, or by hiring in experts. Comms and engagement specialists are trained to deal with the public, so their expertise should be considered before any engagement is undertaken or messaging produced.

Allocate a significant chunk of budget for this process – don't try to do it on the cheap or use officers without the right skills as it won't work and you'll end up wasting more money. Put simply: let engineers engineer and get comms and engagement experts to lead on facing the public.

When running any event, make sure you have a facilitator. This person needs to be an effective communicator, organised, a good listener, impartial, able to empower people to speak, as well as able to challenge assumptions. It is very helpful to have someone who acts as a conduit between residents and the council so that common ground can be found. Some councils have officers with these skills and if this is the case they must be allowed to be impartial and empowering to others without threat of conflict with their team or damage to their standing.

STEP 3: DATA, DATA, DATA

To ensure you identify the issues your residents face, develop the right scheme to answer those issues, and are able to support your position, you need data and lots of it. Start collecting it now.

Collect data on main roads inside and parallel to and outside the scheme, on at least some residential streets in the areas inside the scheme, and also on adjacent areas that may be impacted by any displacement from the scheme.

Collect traffic volumes and speeds – and get data for the peak hours not just averages over the day (and don't assume for every road, the peak hour is the traditional rush hour). Collect bus journey delays, reliability on routes that border your scheme. Gather collision data for the area. Measure air quality. If you can access it, trip origin/destination data (who is driving where) will give valuable information on the proportion of traffic made up by residents, businesses and the amount of through traffic that is not stopping. Measure the current active travel mode shares – how often are people walking and cycling in the area? Where? When? How safe are they?

Are there any stakeholders in the area that will require special consideration? For instance an old people's home that has specific access needs? Identifying them now and understanding those needs will also be useful: How do vans or coaches arrive? How often? Could this be done differently? And what can you already find out about the make-up of the local community in general, e.g. from census or other data?

Having a handle on things like community demographics, household car ownership, walking/cycling distances from different parts of the local area to the shops, can help in identifying people whose voices may be under-represented without further action.

For shopping centres and main roads, it is important to look at business customer and delivery data: What proportion of customers use cars to access the shops? Are they local or do the businesses serve a wide area? Ask business owners separately from customers to show any disparities between perception and reality. Undertake spend-by-mode surveys. In local high streets, these almost always reveal that car-borne trade is far less important than business owners assume. Someone filling their boot with shopping seems impressive, but little-



Photo credit: flickr.com/photos/chriszwolle

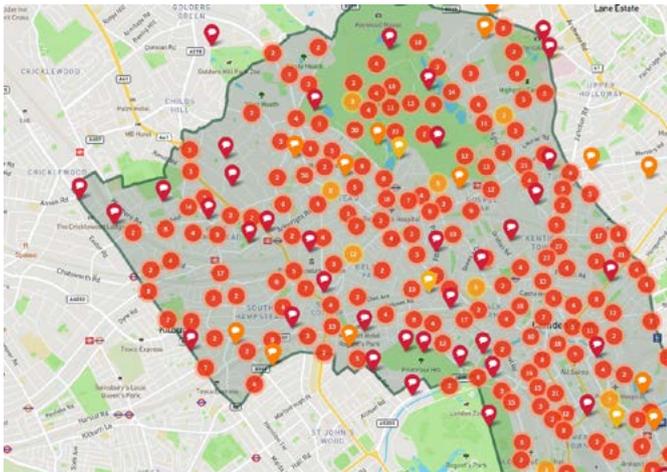
and-often bag shopping by people who walk, cycle and use buses is nearly always far more important.

It's worth going one or two steps further on business needs too – and really querying them. Consider spending a day of officer time surveying customer parking and loading bays: How much are they used? When? Who by? (Is it the business owners themselves parking for long periods?) Identify opportunities to reduce loading or delivery bays, put them on side streets, and consider the opportunities for consolidation of deliveries and servicing.

The more you know about the area in terms of objective data, the better. But don't overlook the need to also gather what might best be termed 'subjective data.' Many practitioners are all too familiar with the resistance of some people to evidence. This isn't just a recent product of the 'fake news era' – it's that when people have confirmed opinions, they tend to be resistant to anything that they feel seeks to 'prove them wrong.' Accordingly, the data collection step needs to try and understand local people's opinions about the issues associated with the scheme. Whatever sympathy you may or may not have with them, failure to understand the concerns, attitudes and gripes of the people you'll be engaging with increases the likelihood that you'll be 'leading with your chin.' Put simply: forewarned is forearmed – and this is why Step 4 is so important.

STEP 4: ASK THE RESIDENTS (AND BUSINESSES)

Photo credit: commonplace.is



Collect data from residents and do general perception surveys. Ask which streets are affected by rat-running traffic, where speed and aggressive driving is an issue, where antisocial behaviour, crime or isolation are a problem. Some councils are now using 'mapping and tagging' systems (such as Citizen Space, Commonplace or Streetbuilder) to achieve this – enabling residents to drop a tag on a map to highlight issues. Others use simpler surveys (SurveyMonkey etc.) instead. The key here is to build up an evidence base of what residents feel about their streets. This really helps later on when folks invariably start saying things like, “No one around here wants this scheme.”

Be aware, however, that it is those in any community with the most resources who will tend to respond to such surveys and consultations and indeed to organise others into responding too. Don't settle for well organised cyclists' or residents' associations. It is more important than ever that you get as wide a range of views as possible – encourage schools to get children involved, ask parent drop-in groups, ask old people's communities and groups to feed in, ask local disability access groups etc. Reach beyond those who are engaging on traditional social media channels or read leaflets through doors. Hold youth panels and ask parents to talk to their children, get officers on-street if possible, set specific engagement targets, target estates etc. to reach the communities that may otherwise not be heard from.

Make sure your communications are simple, clear and actually give residents choices and space to

express their views. The people who most readily respond to online documents and leaflets written in jargon aren't necessarily representative of the area your scheme is in. And as explained in the introduction, don't expect residents to be technical experts or engineers, but rather ask them questions which draw out their expertise as residents.

At this stage, start also talking to businesses that might be impacted by the scheme – get their views, but also be ready to get good objective baseline data to test their views.

STEP 5: CREATE PRINCIPLES

Gather all of the data, along with your council's policies, regional policies, the Mayor's Transport Strategy, national guidance etc. (that already have a public mandate) to identify the issues residents face. Residents may not talk about the climate crisis as an issue they face or about not enough people cycling. But between policy documents, resident perceptions and baseline data it should be fairly easy to create principles that will solve as many of the identified resident issues as possible in line with policy. For instance, removing through motor traffic on residential streets or reducing road danger while enabling more to cycle on main roads is likely to tick boxes against both policy and resident perceptions. The message that you give to residents should be simple: “We're here to improve the quality of your lives, so how can we help?”

Sadly, many people mistrust the council and so facilitators can really help with this element. Consider the 'charrette' approach (see Further Reading below) of public workshops to build trust and gain consensus. Treat people with respect. All opinions are valid, even if they are ones that are underpinned by fear or myth when looked at rationally. And sometimes people with different opinions to you can turn out to be right.

Start general and then hone in on principles. It may help to agree a principle such as, “We want to be the healthiest town in London,” and then start unpicking what that means and try to turn it into an objective that is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), e.g. “We want to be a healthy area by improving the air quality on our high street in line with EU levels by next summer.”

Wishy washy objectives get wishy washy results.



Photo credit: commonplace.is

Ask people what they want. But be prepared to give it back to them in terms they may not articulate themselves. And try and avoid those objectives coming across as critical of residents. Those who rely on driving do not want to pollute the streets where they live. Fear often pushes people into cars and so threatening to restrict access can leave people feeling exposed – so objectives should be worded to enable change, not create fear.

STEP 6: CREATE SCHEME OPTIONS

Double-check those principles – not just with the cabinet lead councillor, but the cabinet, the local ward councillors, and other key stakeholders. Then develop some rough options from those principles.

You could call your options bronze, silver, gold (or cheap, medium, expensive, or ‘do little’ / ‘be bold’) or they could be different approaches to the area’s issues – one focussing more on public transport, another on cycling and walking, another on freight and servicing. People like options – it shows they have some control over the process.

(This same approach can also be used for bid and other forward-planning documents where you want to be able to demonstrate the types of schemes you’re interested in, without falling prey to the accusation that the document indicates that everything that subsequently happens was decided in advance by the council.)

At this point and/or in Step 7, any diagrams or drawings you produce should be designed and labelled to ensure that anyone, no matter their technical knowledge or skills, can understand what they’re looking at. If parking or signals change, for example, there should be boxes that explain in simple language what that change might mean. 3D visualisations or other methods to enable non-expert residents to engage with the scheme are also well worth considering.

All engineers and planners should be able to produce a quick perspective view of streets to show potential changes, and this process does not need to be expensive. As part of the Bee a Champion Course run by Urban Movement, delegates are taught how to draw a perspective drawing in five minutes before they produce their own in 30 minutes. It is half an hour well spent and can help avoid months of confusion.



STEP 7: ENGAGE

Now, get resident opinions – this could be as a consultation or a more informal engagement process.

It shouldn't be just a handful of residents who are the quickest to sign up to a meeting. Try to ensure that you reach out widely – so that all key stakeholders are involved and that you have a wide range of voices. Have you talked to disability access groups in the area? To places of worship and schools? To shopkeepers and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)? To the young and old? To all of the ethnic groups in your areas, and a range of people from each of them? In other words, will the resident opinions come from a truly representative and diverse range of people in your communities?

Once you have that wide range of people, genuinely engage with them. This means asking for opinions on the options, allowing people space to provide feedback and raise concerns. There are lots of ways to do this, such as 'Planning for Real' workshops with maps and marker pens, online questionnaires and forums or more.

Residents need to be allowed to tweak, modify and express preferences, but it is vital for officers to direct residents who are raising issues back to the principles and data. There must be mechanisms to head off opposition to change with a clear set of reasons laying out why change is needed in general and why these changes (or something that fulfils the principles) specifically.

It can be very powerful at this point to present a 'do nothing' option too – taking current trends (growing population in the area, arrival of new transport links etc.) five or ten years into the future. This effectively shows how doing nothing won't result in no change, but a worsening of current conditions, and helps reinforce that current conditions aren't acceptable either.

The objective is to engage with those who might otherwise oppose schemes, giving them space to feel they can express concerns and make appropriate modifications. It is your role to ensure they understand they can only do so within the context of fulfilling the need for a scheme, founded in an analysis of the data (not just plucked out of the air), and in line with the principles. Modifications cannot be allowed to weaken the scheme and reduce its impact – be clear that change is necessary and will happen, for example, "Residents said they wanted less traffic on their streets, so whatever else happens, the scheme will be designed to reduce traffic."

It also really helps here (and throughout this process) if councillors are seen to lead, but also listen. It's important that officers know they can deliver bold plans and the council won't fold at the first hurdle. It's also important that residents feel their concerns and issues are listened to. And it's important that councillors set the policies and principles to move schemes forward. How to do that all at once? By councillors showing clear leadership.

That means engaging with residents to explain why schemes are vital, how important walking and cycling and tackling climate issues are, how change needs to happen etc. but also listening to residents, and answering some of their concerns, showing the scheme is changing to address their concerns. Councillors who only engage in listening mode, simply reacting to resident concerns, however, are sending a message that residents can say no and can veto schemes. Councillors must champion and lead schemes and the discussion around these issues.



A NOTE ABOUT TRIALS

The Covid-19 crisis has, at great human cost, reminded us what a crisis looks like, and indeed what an emergency response to one looks like too. It has seen transport authorities scrambling to react to urgent issues around social distancing on pavements, the increase of people cycling and road danger with rapid turnaround schemes – many as trials.

Trials are a great way to tick off many of the steps at once, as they enable residents to experience a scheme in situ, and trial schemes can often be tweaked or amended live. They can also be a great way to help demonstrate that a principle is achievable. For many, experiencing a scheme in situ can be a great way to start to see the benefits change can bring.

Even with trials, it is absolutely vital to communicate clearly with residents in the way we describe across these steps. Residents' understanding of what a trial is and why it's there is vital, as is understanding how much time they will have to allow in order to assess its impacts. Residents must be given opportunities to have their say, not just on whether something is good or bad, but how it might be changed or tweaked.



STEP 8: CREATE A FINAL SCHEME

Take all the feedback, concerns raised, suggested changes, and your initial options and use these to design the full scheme. This should be an opportunity to make real changes to the scheme based on resident and stakeholder feedback. You might end up with a variant of one of the options, or you might end up with a mix of them all, or even a slightly different and new approach.

Present the scheme to cabinet, but also the engaged community. A key phrase to use is, "You said this, so we did that." Show residents how their feedback and concerns have shaped the scheme, but also show them how the final scheme still fulfils the original principles.

This is usually the point where formal consultation happens. Under no circumstances should this be a referendum – consultation should never be an opportunity for residents to outright oppose or reject the scheme.

The ideal approach for a consultation is to frame it as: We've established that there is a problem to be addressed, and have evaluated and tested options and designed the most effective scheme based on your input. What ideas has anyone got to further improve the final scheme before we start building it?

Note that the real consultation has already taken place and the proposed scheme has incorporated the views and will of the community that you engaged and collaborated with. The standard consultation is therefore a chance to mitigate any problems or add value to developed options, and also to hear from people who were not previously engaged, but there should be few surprises at this stage.

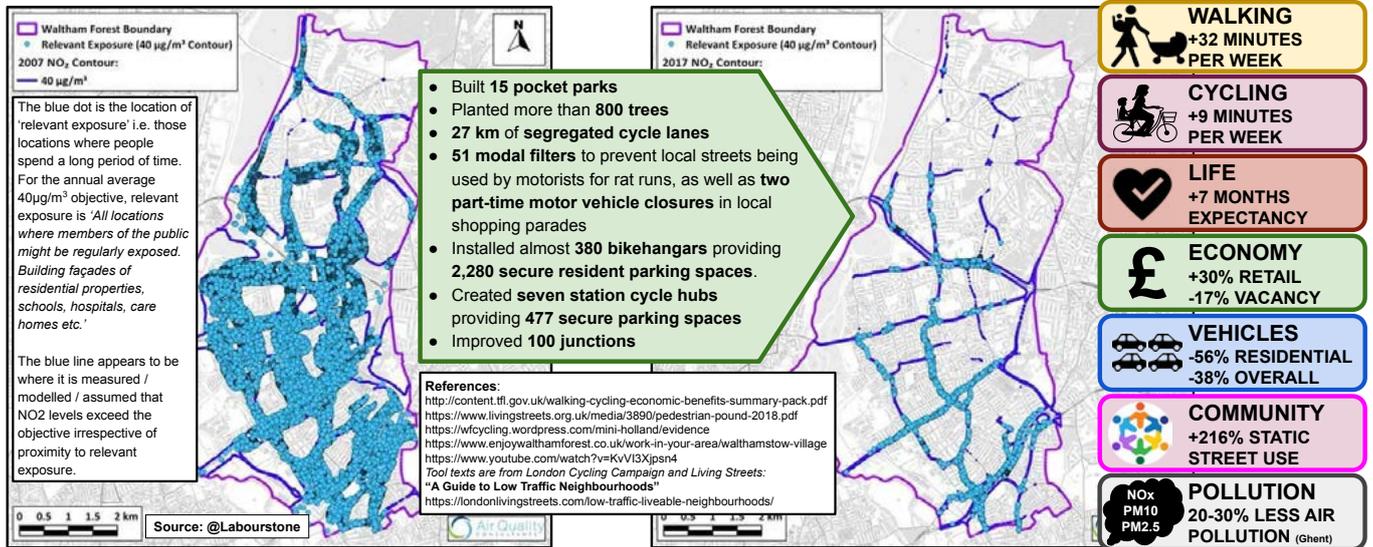


Photo credit: bit.ly/tncrbtsheet

STEP 9: BUILD, MONITOR, BENEFITS

Try as hard as you can to provide regular engagement opportunities to those affected by construction. Don't just announce on Twitter that half a main road is shutting down for six months. Talk to businesses and shopkeepers instead about how best they can work with the council and vice versa during the construction period (which is always disruptive and will have a short term impact on businesses). And provide updated schedules and clear information on ongoing works regularly.

Some business owners (and indeed residents) tend to see the negative aspects of change – so emphasise the ways they can benefit and the opportunities available for them the scheme brings. And be ready to provide some concessions to businesses that will genuinely struggle during construction, as well as mentoring to enable them to benefit after implementation. Have officers talk to cafes about outside seating and planters, or plumbers' merchants about where vans are best going to be parked, so they can forewarn regular customers.

Monitor the scheme for issues emerging as it is being built – the team on the ground and project manager may be able to spot a safety issue or see immediately that users are not behaving as expected. Some of these can be addressed as the scheme is being built.

As the scheme nears completion, begin the process of helping residents alter their behaviour to reflect the new scheme – promote change beyond simply providing the scheme itself. For instance, with cycling schemes, consider bike loan schemes, cycle

parking improvements, marketing to communities nearby etc. Now the scheme is arriving, ask people what else they need to use it to its best advantage, then try and provide that where possible. (Of course, this part of the process, as well as in other sections, may identify a need or desire for further schemes to come – that is great, your residents are helping you identify future priorities and starting to build the evidence base around them.) And once more, think beyond the usual suspects – what barriers will some members of your communities face to unlocking the benefits of the scheme?

Once the scheme has bedded in, review to establish that the scheme has successfully delivered against objectives, and to check if there are wider benefits or impacts. Use that data (and make it publicly available) to build the case and body of evidence for the schemes that follow and to improve each scheme in turn.

This process may seem time consuming but it does not take a lot of time to gather public opinion if the techniques laid out in this document are used, and it will save lots of abortive work in design. Furthermore it will stop the lukewarm maintenance schemes that so often replace grand ideas which get worn down and end up failing to deliver the benefits that helped make a case for them in the first place.

We cannot keep wasting taxpayers' money. We must deliver transformational change now. Without monitoring and learning from schemes, and allowing others to learn from them as well, we're doomed to waste money and fail to deliver meaningful change.



STEP 10: RAPID MITIGATION AND ROLL-OUT

Increasingly often, those against schemes use localised negative impacts, or even potential negative impacts, to try and derail or delay progress. They say that schemes will worsen pollution or congestion at one or two spots, on one road, or, most emotively, outside a particular school.

It is entirely right that we do not tolerate worsening air quality in school classrooms, or for hospital patients, and it is right to aim to reduce congestion that is one of the causes of pollution. But if a scheme will, or is very likely to, significantly reduce overall motor traffic volumes, and therefore overall pollution levels, even if it also causes isolated negatives, should that derail the scheme?

Those who say yes are doomed to oppose just about all progressive schemes. The ULEZ expansion, for instance, will likely worsen congestion and pollution outside the currently planned expansion zone. But does that make it a bad idea overall? Every scheme that takes bold

steps to reduce motor traffic has some negative impacts. No scheme is perfect, but opposition to such schemes rarely, if ever, present any better ideas. The result of this opposition, indeed the aim, is to delay schemes by years, to dilute and weaken them, or to see them abandoned entirely.

Instead, if a scheme is likely to, or does, worsen congestion or air pollution, it is crucial to commit in advance to mitigations, to developing and delivering further schemes as needed. The climate crisis alone demands that we move forward fast, fixing issues as we go. So, monitor the impacts of any scheme you build, mitigate any problems, and roll out the next scheme, learning as you go. The alternative is to continue to do nothing, or very little, in the face of growing, catastrophic crises.

3. CASE STUDIES

The following are brief descriptions of a range of examples of good engagement and consultation that may be helpful or inspirational. Further details can be found by following the links.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING IN GREATER MANCHESTER

Greater Manchester's Bee Network concept has seen co-design workshops across the region run by Urban Movement's Brian Deegan in collaboration with local authorities, campaigners and engaged residents.

Each workshop – one in every council – created the basics of a core network of low traffic neighbourhoods, crossings and major corridor interventions in a single session. Residents effectively took local ownership of the network planning process, and so supported the vision for the final network and considered it feasible. This approach meant all ten districts in Greater Manchester bought into the network concept, paving the way for a joined-up approach to delivery and the setting of design standards.

The method used was that attendees were first presented with a blank map and asked to colour in barriers to walking and cycling with a red pen. These included main roads, rat runs, rivers and railway lines. The red lines created bounded areas, forming cells that could be viewed as the start of the low traffic neighbourhood planning. Blue pen was then applied to plot existing high quality walking and cycling crossings of the barriers already identified. Cells between the barriers were then colour coded: green for those with two or more existing crossings and orange for those with one crossing. If a cell bound by barrier red lines had no crossings, it was hatched red. Potential crossings at optimum locations were identified, and where more than one person agreed, these were marked in green, so that the map now showed ways to open all closed or partially opened cells. Dots were joined by the most direct connecting non-barrier roads. Where this was not possible, the black pen was used to highlight barrier corridors that could feasibly be transformed with substantial investment.

With just a few colours of pen and a simple workshop, attendees rapidly created a vision for their area that officers could then work up into more detailed plans for further engagement, knowing the community was bought in to the network design.

<http://www.urbanmovement.co.uk/beeachampion.html>



Photo credit: Martin Key

CAPTURING VIEWS IN WALTHAM FOREST

Waltham Forest used the online Commonplace platform to carry out engagement and consultation on the Lea Bridge Road corridor prior to a complete redesign of this A road running across the entire borough. With cycle tracks, radical junction redesigns and public realm improvements, the redesign was the centrepiece of their “mini-Holland” programme. Alongside this, the borough pursued door-to-door business parking surveys and other engagement methods to bring residents and businesses along with them and establish an evidence base regarding this complex and, at times controversial, scheme.

When it came to the designing of the low traffic neighbourhood villages, Waltham Forest did multi-level engagement using a co-creation ethos. First, they asked communities to comment on their environment. They then designed options that addressed the issues raised and engaged a second time. Schemes were then adjusted before the formal statutory consultation took place. The online platform allowed for transparency and openness in the process, and the approach overall helped build trust with the local community and is being replicated across the country as best practice.



<http://enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/lea-bridge-road/> and <https://lbrproposals.commonplace.is/>

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING IN HARINGEY

Haringey's 20-year plan to redevelop the Tottenham Area, and Northumberland Park in particular, made residents nervous and so, working in partnership with the private sector, the council made every effort to engage the community.

An extensive stakeholder map was produced, and this indicates what can be done with some research and engagement. If there is a stakeholder map, nobody gets forgotten about or excluded from the process. Haringey showed that the onus was not on the community to find out what was going on but on the council to engage them in a systematic way.

These stakeholder groups were then assessed as to why they were important, what the council wanted from them regarding the project and how it was going to reach them. Methods included interactive digital tools, co-design workshops, and outreach through face-to-face contact, mobile and pop-up events.

<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s94646/Appendix%203a%20Northumberland%20Park%20Business%20Plan%20Appendix%203aviii.pdf>



INCLUSIVITY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN TFL DESIGN

When Transport for London were undertaking research into tactile paving, particularly around some of the new cycling infrastructure introduced in 2015, they worked with Ross Atkin Associates to produce a series of 3D tactile plans that could be interpreted clearly by visually impaired people. This approach is becoming standard on major schemes and gives the people who are most likely to be negatively affected by street design changes a chance to influence the design and engage in a meaningful manner. It is vital that local authorities ensure that changes are communicated in a clear way that is accessible to all those who will be affected.



<http://www.rossatkin.com/wp/?portfolio=tactile-models>

FEEDBACK IN WALTHAM FOREST

The annual Enjoy Waltham Forest account offers a rare chance for a local authority to highlight what people asked for and what it did in response, alongside analysis of the benefits arising from each action. Consultation engagements on the Commonplace platform also offer a chance for residents to look at what everyone has asked for in the local area and what has been designed as a result. It seems such an obvious thing to do, but when it comes to transport, few local authorities do post evaluation of schemes and even fewer publish the results. When public funds are used, it seems incredible that this is the case.

<https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final-Walking-Cycling-Account-201718.pdf>

COLLABORATIVE ROUTE PLANNING ACROSS LONDON

The Cycle Route Implementation and Stakeholder Plan (CRISP) process was used to engage with cycling stakeholders and get them involved in schemes at the pre-feasibility stage. A paper from Professor John Parkin and Brian Deegan published by the Institute of Civil Engineering in 2011 describes the process.

This approach was, and still is, seen as progressive in the transport sector. Before its introduction, cyclists were involved in the design and planning of cycle routes but schemes would face a lot of criticism. In London, many local authorities refused to pursue cycling schemes because they were so heavily criticised and network delivery was slow as a result.

Following the use of CRISP for pre-feasibility engagement, campaigners started championing schemes and pushing for progress. This was because they were actively involved in the decision making and understood the engineering, technical and political constraints.

Local cycling campaigns, such as Camden Cyclists, used this process to establish regular meetings with the council on all transport schemes and got a chance to influence the designs and improve relations with officers. The CRISP process resulted in the rapid expansion of delivery with all thirty-three London boroughs. This process stopped being used in London in 2013, and this could be one of the factors influencing the slow or stalled delivery in some London boroughs.

<https://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/doi/10.1680/ensu.1000018>

PUBLIC EVENTS AROUND THE LONDON PLAN

New London Architecture led a 'charrette' workshop around the Mayor's London Plan, and as such provided an independent forum to influence the plan. The charrette involved 80 people including planners, architects and members of the public. The charrette covered separate elements so people could choose their priority and apply their area of expertise. These included movement, work, form, wellbeing, digital, delivery and structure.

https://newlondonarchitecture.org/docs/nla_insight_report_web_final.pdf

DEVELOPING SURVEYS IN OHIO

A really interesting case study in public participation comes from Ohio where a set of techniques, known as Structured Public Involvement, (SPI) were used to decide on the design of a new bridge.

A "Casewise Visual Evaluation" (CAVE) was undertaken to determine aesthetic preference among residents. This meant showing residents series of pictures in workshops across a range of variables such as height, visual complexity, symmetry, enclosure, colour and gradient, as any bridge can be described in detail using these parameters. Resident responses were then analysed to work out design preferences.

This approach helped the design team finalise the design of the bridge out of 200 bridge design proposals, with residents scoring the process as eight out of ten. The research team also did some analysis on road width and driver speed to provide additional insight.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=ktc_facpub

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING ON AIR QUALITY IN WALTHAM FOREST

Waltham Forest council collaborated on two separate academic studies regarding its mini-Holland programme. Dr Rachel Aldred, University of Westminster, has conducted a longitudinal study of London's three mini-Holland boroughs, tracking changes in behaviour among residents in those areas most impacted by schemes. After one year, she found significant increases in weekly levels of walking and cycling among residents in impacted areas.

King's College modelled life expectancy benefits from increased physical activity in the mini-Holland areas, and found that residents born in 2006 would average an extra 7 to 9 months of life expectancy, with babies born in 2013 at the start of the programme receiving 2 to 3 weeks more life expectancy from changes to school run behaviour alone.

This data is invaluable when making the case for walking and cycling investment in other areas around the UK. Waltham Forest has become an example to emulate because they said they were going to do something, they engaged, they delivered and they monitored it to show it was the right thing to do.

https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/WalthamForest_KingsReportPA_Final_10092018.pdf and <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856417314866>

LIAISON BY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN UK AND DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOODS IN SEATTLE

The Your Health, Your Care, Your Say (YHYCYS) initiative was one of the largest public engagement exercises ever undertaken in the UK with over 41,000 responses. It aimed to engage the public in the process of setting public health policy priorities. However, the evaluation report on the initiative suggests that the engagement fell below its collaborative aspirations. Despite good intentions, there was great difficulty in meaningfully engaging with a public that has, to a large extent, lost faith in public services.

By comparison, Seattle has led the way in citizen participation for over 30 years. The approach is based on three principles: relational organising (systematic one-to-one trust building), asset-based community development (map and mobilise local groups and businesses) and accountable autonomy (neighbourhoods empowered to develop their own plans). Seattle City trained thousands of citizens and set up 12 distinct neighbourhood committees with facilitation from the city. The City has maintained this commitment for over three decades and has become an exemplar of progressive democracy. The evaluation report (Carmen Sirianni, 2007) is cited below.

<https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Making-a-Difference-.pdf> and <https://www.brandeis.edu/sociology/pdfs/faculty-articles/sirianni-neighborhood.pdf>

EVALUATION OF THE CYCLING TOWNS AND CITIES PROJECT

The evaluation of the Cycling Towns and Cities project remains, to date, the most extensive and illuminating post evaluation review of any cycling project in the history of the UK. It helped provide the evidence to support a £1 billion vision for cycling and is essential reading for all those interested in evaluation. It demonstrated that a £43m investment in cycling delivered benefits for individuals, society, the environment and the economy. The way the UK does transport business case appraisals changed as a result and the case for investment in cycling infrastructure became unimpeachable.

<https://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/sites/cycling-embassy.org.uk/files/documents/cct-qualitative-research.pdf>



4. FURTHER READING

Professionals and practitioners interested in the background to some of the methods cited here, including their theoretical and sociological underpinning, please see Urban Movement's blog on this complex and fascinating topic: <http://www.urbanmovement.co.uk/thoughts/better-engagement-for-better-streets>

The blog covers charrettes, power to influence stakeholder mapping, the Arnstein ladder of citizen participation, planned behaviour, behavioural economics and nudge theory, social evolutionary theory, change management, and the Kubler-Ross Change Curve, as we've adapted below slightly cheekily.

