

CONSULTATION PLAN



Active Travel Fund projects

Following the Covid-19 lockdown in early 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) made funding available via the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to provide temporary new infrastructure which would aid with social distancing measures. This included reallocating roadspace for non-motorised users, such as providing cycle lanes or widening footways.

The DfT has subsequently announced a second round of funding (Tranche 2) which is being made available to local authorities to help deliver objectives set out in their initial funding bid. This is known as the Active Travel Fund (ATF) and grants will be made available in the period 2020/21.

Requirement for consultation

The DfT requires that evidence is provided to confirm the scope of the proposed schemes (e.g. that design standards are met). Furthermore, the DfT requires a consultation plan is submitted alongside the funding application, detailing how consultation on the proposed scheme will take place.

Prior to construction, the DfT requires confirmation that the applicant has undertaken appropriate consultation:

- *Consult with key local stakeholders.*
- *Obtain broad support and made changes to account for feedback.*
- *Implement a communications plan.*
- *Discuss plans with local MPs and provided a summary of responses.*

'Appropriate' Consultation

We will ensure that our engagement with key stakeholders and the local community happens in-line with the Gunning Principles for public consultation, to ensure that engagement activities constitute a fair and worthwhile exercise. These can be summarised as follows:

- *Engagement must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;*
- *The proponent must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;*
- *Adequate time is given for consideration and response.*

Consultation objectives

We consider the following to be the objectives for undertaking meaningful consultation with local stakeholders regarding the proposed Active Travel Funded projects in Harrogate and Whitby.

1. To raise awareness of the Active Travel Fund and its purpose.
2. To raise awareness of the proposed Active Travel Funded projects among the local community and key stakeholders in the relevant local areas.
3. To engage with local stakeholders to ensure that they are well-informed about the proposed scheme and its wider objectives.
4. To encourage better informed decision-making.
5. To seek to involve local communities and encourage them to give feedback on our proposals.
6. To give local communities a real opportunity to shape designs.

Our Approach

We propose to adopt a two phase approach to consultation regarding the proposed ATF schemes. This approach will also reduce risk by ensuring that there is early engagement prior to the start of formal consultation. The phases will be as follows:

- Pre-consultation planning.
- Phase 1 Consultation.
- Phase 2 Consultation.

Pre-consultation planning

Prior to informal consultation (Phase 1), it will be necessary to identify the stakeholders that need to be communicated with regarding the plan.

We will undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise which identifies local stakeholders as well as the relevant statutory consultees relating to the proposed ATF schemes.

We will also ensure that the stakeholder mapping stage includes the identification of key stakeholders in the business community as well as professional road users – such as haulage firms and taxi and bus operators.

Important to this process will be engagement with County Councillors and local MP's to ensure they have buy in and are fully aware of all of the proposals. Councillors and MP's will also have a role in encouraging local residents and other stakeholders to engage in the consultation process.

Furthermore, to ensure that our engagement is inclusive, we will communicate with seldom heard groups and disability groups. At the pre-consultation stage, we will undertake an exercise to identify the key user groups and panels including those representing people with disabilities, or minority communities.

We will take all reasonable steps to provide materials in accessible formats. This includes providing a plain text version of the information materials, compatible with screen reader software.

Phase 1 Consultation

We will engage with the local community at an early stage in the development of the proposed schemes. This will provide the opportunity to raise awareness of the proposals, as well as giving an early opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal in principle.

This reduces risk to successful scheme delivery, allowing issues to be identified earlier and mitigated where appropriate prior to formal engagement.

Phase 1 Community Consultation

We will use a range of channels to consult with local stakeholders and direct them towards information and materials on a project webpage:

- *Posters will be sited in local community facilities / libraries if these are open at the time.*
- *We will make use of the organisation's social media accounts to further raise awareness.*

To ensure inclusive access to the materials, hard copies will also be made available on request, subject to an appointment being made. We will make clear that other formats are available on request.

The information about the various ATF schemes will be made available online for a period of around three weeks, setting out the types of improvement being considered and providing broadly defined scopes for each of the schemes. Opportunity for initial feedback will be given via an online feedback form for each scheme, considering the principle of the proposed schemes, plus potential changes to travel behaviour that may result.

We will undertake appropriate attitude surveys for the programme of schemes at this stage with a view to gaining data public support for improving walking and cycling facilities in the local area.

Phase 1 Key Stakeholder Consultation

Key stakeholders will be identified as part of the Stakeholder Mapping, taking place during Pre-consultation planning. Our approach to key stakeholders will be more direct, with each receiving a stakeholder email for comments on the proposals, and an invitation to an online workshop event relevant to their ATF scheme. Feedback received will inform the design being consulted on in Phase 2.

Phase 2 Consultation (formal)

The second phase of consultation will use the feedback collected in Phase 1 to modify and adapt the proposed designs according to the feedback received. This engagement will take part outside any pre election period or any planned elections.

In Phase 2, a more detailed plan for the relevant scheme will have been produced, which will include specific design aspects of the proposal. Having already engaged stakeholders and the local community, we will be well-placed for them to give informed feedback on our detailed designs.

As in Phase 1, we will host the scheme information materials online, with posters and adverts in print and social media, being used to raise awareness of the formal consultation period.

In Phase 2, these will be supplemented by the issue of information posters and/ or leaflets in the local community, plus planned exhibition events. Ideally we would host these in-person, but due to Covid-19, we would host these in a virtual room or teleconference format. We will hold further workshops with key stakeholders to consider detailed design and provide opportunity for final design inputs.

Area Constituency Committee's will be consulted for their views during this period.

Feedback on the proposed ATF schemes will be possible throughout a 3 week Phase 2 engagement period for each scheme, using an online questionnaire or via representations made by letter or email.

Analysis and reporting

The feedback received will be used to finalise our proposed designs and will inform a report will inform a report to the Council's Corporate Director and Business and Environmental Services (BES) Executive Members. The report will include recommendations on the final programme for delivery based on the consultation and engagement outcomes. Following approval from this group delivery of schemes will begin.

Programme of works:

