



Wokingham Borough Council

ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND SCHEMES

Detailed Consultation Plan





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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1. This document is the Detailed Consultation Plan for the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Active Travel Fund (Tranche 2) scheme programme.
- 1.1.2. The purpose of this plan is to outline how project stakeholders - including local residents, businesses and wider interest groups - will have opportunities to shape the development of Active Travel Fund (ATF) schemes in the borough.
- 1.1.3. This Detailed Consultation Plan has been prepared to align with requirements issued by the Department for Transport as a condition of funding awards. This plan expands on consultation approach outlined in the 'Summary Consultation Plan' for ATF Tranche 2 schemes published by WBC in December 2020.

1.2 BACKGROUND ON THE ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND IN WOKINGHAM

- 1.2.1. In May 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport announced a £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to support the introduction of traffic calming measures, wider pavements and more cycle lanes to facilitate social distancing within town and city centres in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2.2. Wokingham Borough Council received EATF Tranche 1 funding from the Department of Transport (DfT), which was used to implement temporary footway widening schemes in Wokingham Town. Given these were emergency measures, the Government set a tight deadline of 12 weeks for the schemes to be delivered. As a result, the level of engagement the council was able to undertake when developing the scheme proposals was limited.
- 1.2.3. The Government subsequently announced a second round of funding and invited applications from local authorities for projects that will give people more opportunities to choose walking and cycling for their day-to-day journeys. The types of measures the funding is designed to support include segregated cycle lanes, filtered permeability and pedestrian improvements.
- 1.2.4. On 13 November 2020, the DfT announced that Wokingham Council was awarded £576,650 through the ATF Tranche 2. This funding will be used for the design and implementation of schemes that reflect the latest cycle infrastructure design principles (LTN 01/20).
- 1.2.5. The schemes being *provisionally* considered are:
 - 1. Earley / Reading Active Travel Route (Scheme 1) – A4 London Road and potential link to Thames Valley Park / Reading Borough boundary.
 - 2. Woodley / Reading Active Travel Route (Scheme 2) – Woodley town centre to the Reading Borough boundary via Woodlands Avenue.
 - 3. Wokingham Town Centre / A329 London Road Active Travel Route (Scheme 3) – via Seaford Road and Denton Road.
- 1.2.6. An essential part of the process will be ensuring residents, businesses and wider stakeholders are identified and appropriately consulted on the council's plans for these schemes; to be delivered in the 2021/22 financial year. This will require both engagement (an on-going process of developing and sharing information



with stakeholders) and consultation, where more formal processes are undertaken to determine stakeholder views on scheme proposals for decisions to be made.

2 ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

2.1 ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

2.1.1. To support the ATF2 scheme development process in Wokingham the focus of engagement and consultation activities will be on delivering the following outcomes:

(1) Raising awareness and securing support

Explaining the rationale behind the scheme proposals and their benefits, to raise awareness of the improvements and to encourage participation in the engagement process.

(2) Shaping designs

Meet the DfT requirements for consultation, through a two-phase process based around:

- Early stakeholder engagement (Phase 1): engaging local communities and interest groups, and determining broad views and issue relating to the scheme concept proposals.
- Formal public consultation (Phase 2): to inform stakeholders on scheme design work and inviting feedback to inform decision-making on the best solution for the scheme proposals.

(3) Building trust

Establish productive relationships with key stakeholders by demonstrating that the schemes are being developed collaboratively, in an open and transparent way, and views and feedback are considered and applied to shape the schemes.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

2.2.1. The principles that will guide engagement and consultation activities are as follows:

Robust practices

2.2.2. The council will ensure that engagement with local communities and wider stakeholders is appropriate and advanced in an open, timely and consistent approach, embracing the followings 'Gunning principles' for consultation:

- (1) Initial consultation will be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- (2) The council will give enough information on each scheme proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;
- (3) Adequate time will be given for consideration and response by stakeholders.
- (4) Consultation responses will be conscientiously considered for scheme development

Inclusive and accessible consultation

2.2.3. Engagement and consultation must be inclusive, and the council will identify groups that may be traditionally under-represented in scheme consultations. This will include identifying organisations and working with representatives of protected characteristics groups, such as Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, faith communities, disability groups, children and young people, and LGBTQ+ as appropriate.



- 2.2.4. The council 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.

3 STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS

3.1 STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

- 3.1.1. Prior to commencing engagement and consultation, the council will identify the stakeholders to be communicated with regarding the scheme proposals.
- 3.1.2. A stakeholder mapping exercise will be completed to identify all key audiences that need to be involved throughout the process, and in parallel the most effective channels for communicating with them will be determined. In line with the requirements set out by DfT, the council will ensure the process captures a wide range of consultees including, but not limited to:
- Local elected representatives responsible for the areas within which the proposed schemes are located or may affect, including MPs, borough, town and parish councillors
 - Residents and community groups, including active travel and accessibility groups
 - Local businesses and the wider business community
 - Healthcare and education sectors
 - Transport operators and professional road user groups (e.g. bus operators and Royal Mail)
 - Environmental bodies
 - Emergency services
- 3.1.3. Stakeholders will be categorised on a programme-wide and scheme-specific basis, to help ensure activities are not only relevant to the audience but can also be delivered as efficiently as possible. This is explained in further detail below.

3.2 PROGRAMME-WIDE STAKEHOLDERS

- 3.2.1. Stakeholders that have either a borough-wide coverage or an interest in walking and cycling improvements across Wokingham will be classified as programme-wide. They will be informed on both proposed schemes from an early stage and will be given the opportunity to offer their views and suggestions. Examples of these programme-wide stakeholders include:
- WBC Executive Member for Highways and Transport
 - Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
 - Cycling UK
 - Sustrans
 - Deaf Association
 - Ambulance Service
 - Royal National Institute of Blind People
 - Royal Mail
 - Bus operators, such as Reading Buses

3.3 SCHEME-SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDERS

3.3.1. Those that live within a defined radius of a scheme and groups that represent a very localised audience, will be classified as scheme-specific. Some of these stakeholders will be invited to briefing sessions, while others will be sent a postcard or email directing them online to view information about the scheme proposals and offering them the opportunity to submit their comments via a feedback form.

3.3.2. In addition to the above, local groups and representatives who may an interest in the scheme will be identified. Project-specific stakeholders will include (but will not be limited to):

Earley / Reading (Scheme 1) & Woodley / Reading (Scheme 2)

- Elected Members for the Bulmershe and Whitegates Ward
- Elected Members for the South Lake Ward
- Earley Town Council
- Woodley Town Council
- Sonning Parish Council
- WATCH Wokingham
- Addington School
- Bulmershe School
- Highwood School
- Aisha Masjid & Islamic Centre (old London Road)
- Thames Valley Park Business Park Management Company

Wokingham Town Centre / A329 London Road (Scheme 3)

- Elected Members for the Norreys and Wescott Wards
- Wokingham Town Council
- WATCH Wokingham
- St Crispin's School
- Westende Junior School
- Wescott School



3.4 ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS

- 3.4.1. The stakeholder mapping exercise will also help inform the most appropriate means of engaging with different groups. Table 1 outlines some of the key stakeholder groups and our proposed method of communications and engagement.
- 3.4.2. More information on the channels to be used is outlined in section 4.

Table 1: Audience/channel matrix

Audience/Channels	Stakeholder email	One-to-one briefings	Engagement briefings/work	Postcard/consultation letter	WBC website	My Journey Social media	Telephone queries	Commonplace	Virtual Consultation	WBC Connect bulletin	Press release
Department for Transport											
Statutory bodies (incl. emergency services, utilities and other statutory undertakers; excl.: Environmental bodies, Heritage groups)											
MPs											
Local elected representatives (incl. Cabinet members/Ward Councillors and Parish Councillors; excl. MPs)											
Local planning authority officers											
Landowners (if any landownership implications)											
Local community (directly affected residents and local businesses)											
Wider general public											
Transport operators											
Accessibility and sustainable travel groups (incl. disability access groups, cycling groups, and horse-riding clubs)											
Wider business community (incl. freight/logistics industry representatives, Royal Mail)											
Environmental/Heritage groups (incl. statutory bodies and NGOs)											
Health sector (hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists)											
Education sector (schools, colleges, universities)											
Press/Media											

4 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH AND PHASING

4.1 PHASING APPROACH

4.1.1. The council will adopt a two-phase approach to engagement for the proposed ATF schemes. This approach will ensure local views can help influence design decisions at the earliest possible stage and communities remain engaged through the development and delivery stages. The phases will be as follows:

- **March 2021:** Phase 1 Early Stage Engagement – four-week period of initial stakeholder engagement to understand broad issues and views on scheme proposals.
- **September 2021 (assumed):** Phase 2 Formal Scheme Consultation – six-week formal consultation on scheme proposals ahead of design completion and implementation stage.

4.1.2. Both phases of engagement will be supported using **Commonplace**; an online public engagement platform that can be used to host information on schemes and invite comment from the general public and interested parties. The council will also make significant use of **My Journey Wokingham** as a key engagement platform.

4.2 PHASE 1: EARLY STAGE ENGAGEMENT

4.2.1. An initial phase of engagement will commence to provide the opportunity to raise awareness of concept scheme proposals and give an early opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposals in principle. There will be internal stakeholder briefings and a four-week public engagement period starting from 01 March 2021.

4.2.2. This will help identify key scheme constraints, issues and opportunities that may influence scheme design and implementation and help manage risks to successful scheme delivery.

4.2.3. The council will use a range of channels to engage with stakeholders. Channels will include:

- A short survey outlining scheme concept proposals and inviting feedback.
- A postcard produced and distributed to local communities and business stakeholders within a defined radius of the scheme to raise awareness of the engagement exercise locally and encourage them to visit the website to find out more and provide feedback.
- Posters in local community facilities/libraries/schools (if these are open at the time) to engage with those who may not receive a postcard but may still be affected by the proposed scheme.
- Council social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, to further raise awareness.
- Advertisements in local media

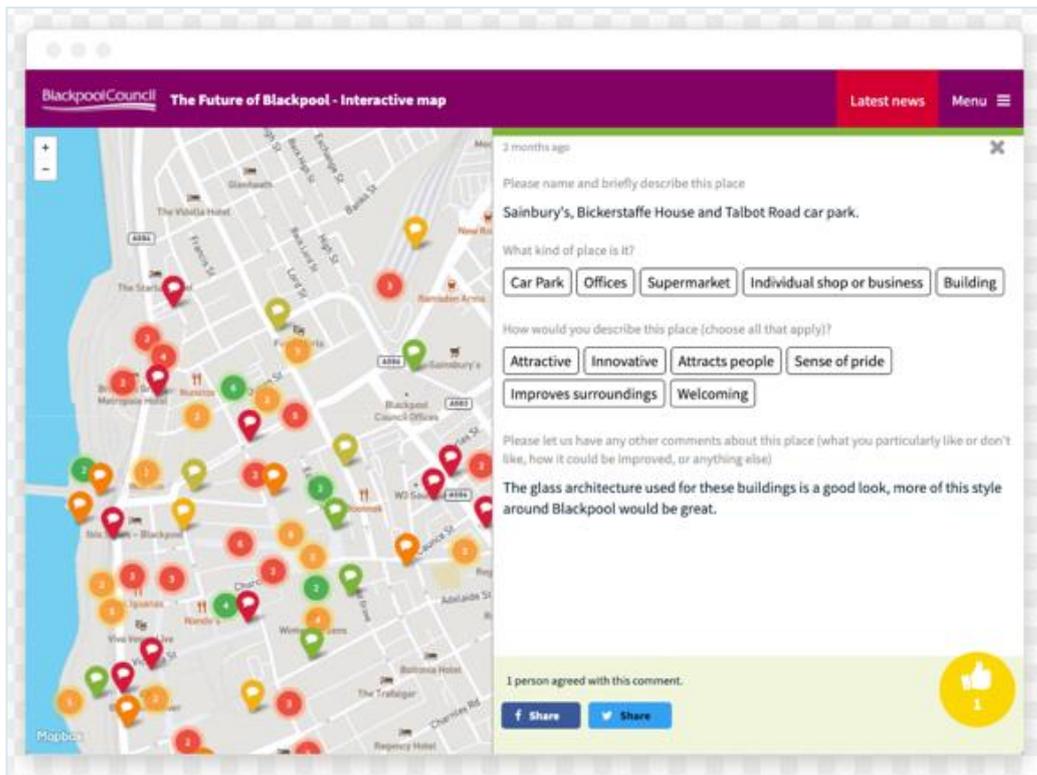
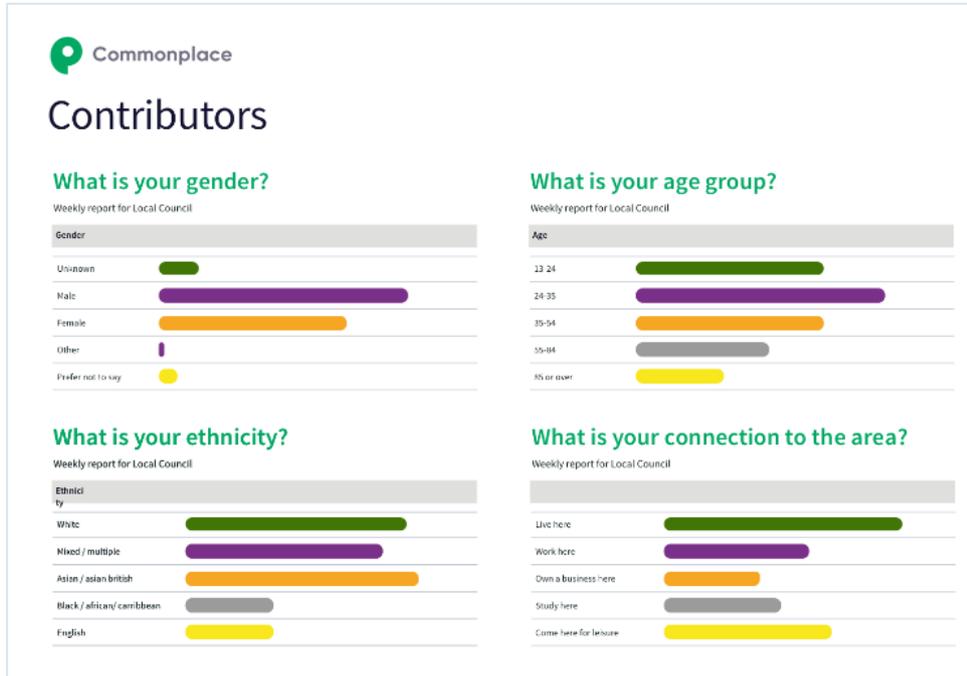
4.2.4. The scale of consultation activity will be tailored and proportionate to the scale of each scheme proposal.

4.2.5. Due to the likelihood of Covid-19 restrictions remaining in place for the early part of 2021, this initial engagement phase will be limited to online. The information will be made available for a four-week period and will set out the location, timeframe, and type of scheme improvement being considered.

4.2.6. This information will be presented on the council's webpage, with a link to the Commonplace platform.

4.2.7. The Commonplace platform will provide the opportunity for initial feedback via an online feedback form. The site will also host an interactive map, where people will be able to provide location-based comments and suggestions on the types of proposals being considered. More information on how the feedback will be used to shape the designs of the schemes is outlined below in Section 5.

Images: *Commonplace Engagement Platform can capture information on respondents and their specific views on scheme proposals in a local area.*



- 4.2.8. More targeted engagement will also take place with elected representatives and other key intermediaries. This will include each receiving specific correspondence via email inviting comments on scheme proposals, and an invitation to attend an online briefing session. The feedback received will inform the design being consulted on in the formal consultation.

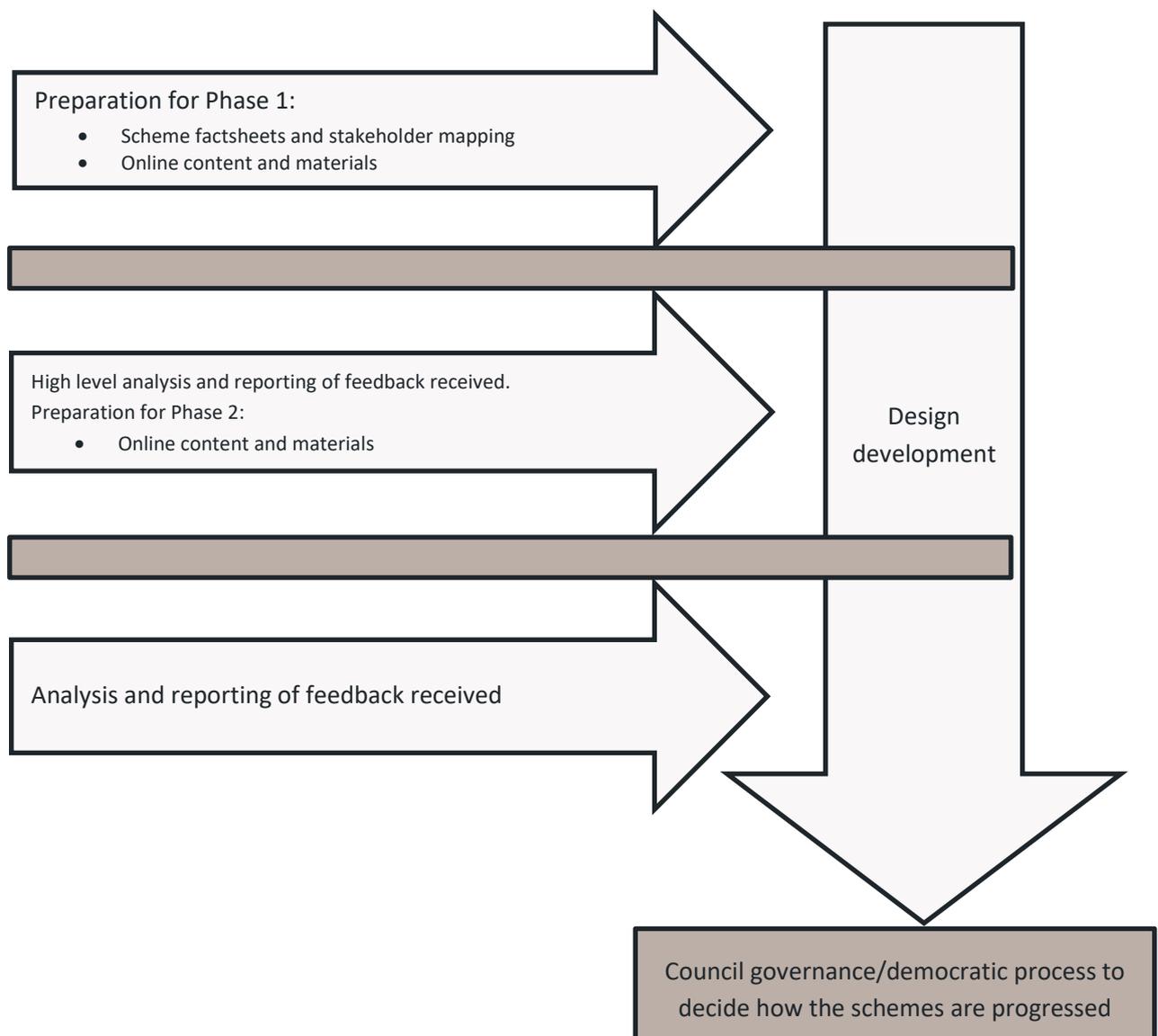
4.3 PHASE 2: FORMAL SCHEME CONSULTATION

- 4.3.1. Using the feedback collected from the early engagement, the council will prepare more detailed scheme design proposals for each location ahead of a formal consultation period later in 2021. Formal scheme consultation will last six weeks.
- 4.3.2. The consultation will present detail on the specific design and traffic management aspects of the proposed schemes and offer greater clarity around the planned timeframe for scheme commencement and completion.
- 4.3.3. The council will host the scheme information materials online via the council's webpage and Commonplace Platform, with stakeholders notified via a combination of direct correspondence, posters, postcards and adverts in print and social media, being used to raise awareness. In addition to this, Variable Message Signs (VMS) and engagement with local media will also be explored as channels during this second phase.
- 4.3.4. The council plan to host consultation exhibitions, where visitors will be able to ask questions to the project team. These sessions will be either be physical events or virtual sessions, or a combination, depending on the public health guidance at the time. Residents will be given the opportunity to provide their comments on the proposed schemes via a consultation questionnaire, which will be hosted using the online Commonplace public engagement platform.
- 4.3.5. Further briefing sessions with key stakeholders will be held prior to the start of the consultation to consider the emerging scheme designs and provide opportunities for comment before moving into the detailed design stage.
- 4.3.6. Decision makers within the council will be informed of the consultation responses from both the initial engagement and formal consultation. Feedback will be reviewed carefully and taken into consideration for scheme development and democratic processes.

5 GATHERING AND APPLYING FEEDBACK

- 5.1.1. Online surveys, embedded within Commonplace, will represent the primary means of collecting responses during both stages of engagement. Questions will gauge opinion and offer an opportunity to comment on aspects of the scheme design.
- 5.1.2. Letters will also be accepted during the consultation period for anyone who is unable to participate online. Requests for further information or alternative formats can also be made via email - to a dedicated mailbox - or telephone.
- 5.1.3. Figure 1 outlines the process of how the feedback received during both phases of consultation will be used to influence the design of the schemes.

Figure 1: Feedback process





- 5.1.4. A concise consultation report will be prepared and published on the council website following the conclusion of the formal consultation. This will summarise the key points raised through the consultation and how matters raised have been considered through the scheme development process.

6 PRORAMME OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1.1. The council will develop and implement the engagement process outlined in this plan.
- 6.1.2. This will include considering stakeholder responses received through engagement activity and determining how this information should inform and influence both ATF2 schemes through the scheme development process. As the schemes develop there will be an ongoing process evaluation to ensure engagement and consultation processes are followed and stakeholder input considered.
- 6.1.3. It is anticipated that the exact timeframe for individual engagement and consultation activities will be subject to change and therefore tasks and timescales will be subject to update.
- 6.1.4. Content for each activity will be prepared by the council and WSP, working across council departments as required, to ensure the correct content is published on the relevant channels and at the right stage in the scheme development schedules.
- 6.1.5. A detailed programme of tasks to support engagement activities for the ATF2 scheme package has been prepared and will be implemented by the project team.



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