

Guide to engagement on the impacts of sustainable travel to local high streets and town centres

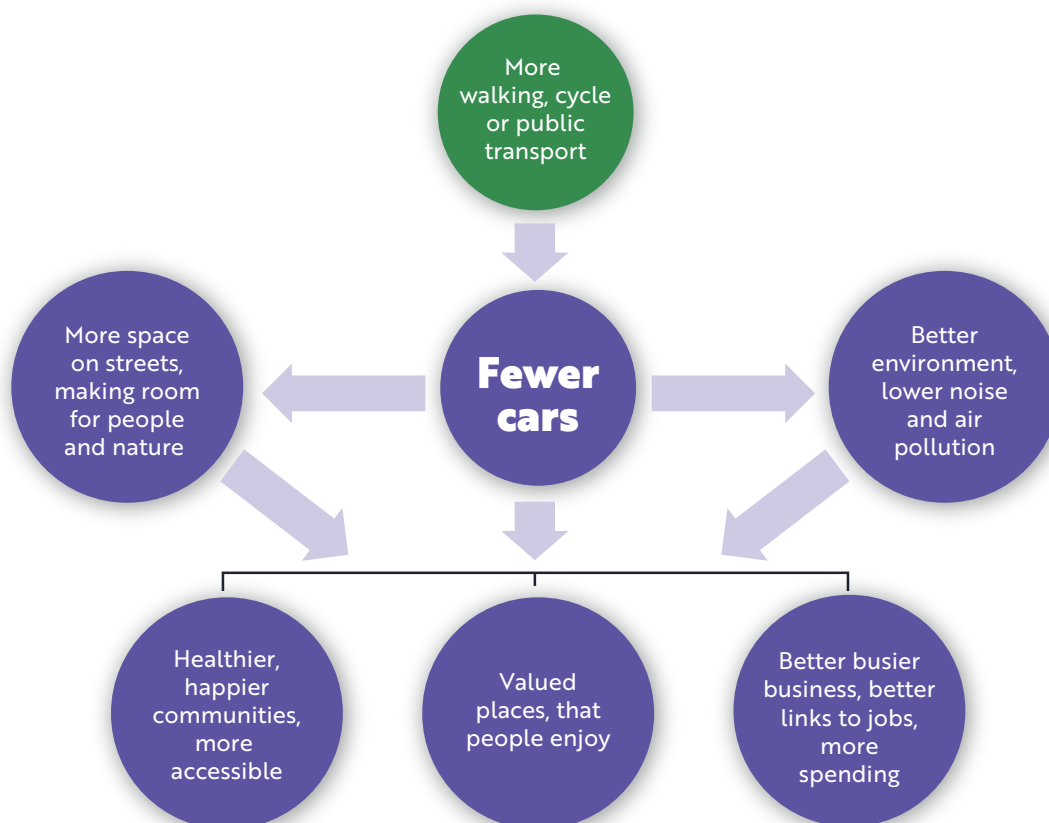


Our research

Our research has collected together impacts of sustainable travel on local high streets and town centres. This information can be used in engagement and consultation in the following ways:

- **To provide those thinking of implementing sustainable travel interventions with background information on the benefits.**
- **The explain to community members why sustainable travel interventions are being implemented.**
- **To help community members to visualise the potential benefits of sustainable travel interventions.**
- **To provide reassurances that other areas have implemented similar measures and seen positive benefits.**

The link between sustainable travel and improving the local high street is not always clear to everyone. The introduction of sustainable travel interventions can have much wider impacts than the immediate change in travel behaviour. Helping communities understand these links can improve the likelihood of a positive reception and attitudes towards any changes.



This pack

This pack includes a number of resources that provide evidence of these impacts and demonstrate the links. This includes:

Infographics

- Facts and figures on the impact of sustainable transport
- Template background for cities, towns, and rural places

These infographics can be used to introduce people to the benefits of sustainable travel interventions. The individual graphics can be added to documents or resources where there is a need to clearly demonstrate the impacts you are hoping to achieve.

Themed information sheets

- **General** – high-level information on the impacts of sustainable travel
- **Business and trade** – high-level information on the economic impacts of sustainable travel
- **Health and wellbeing** – high-level information on the social impacts of sustainable travel

These one page documents are aimed at addressing specific audiences or areas that we have identified through our research as important to the success of sustainable travel interventions.

Case studies

We provide six examples of how cities, towns and villages have implemented sustainable travel. These can be used to inform those who are planning sustainable travel interventions on what has happened elsewhere. They can also be used to help communities visualise what might be possible and to alleviate fears of negative impacts.

- **Pontevedra in Spain**
- **Isle of Arran**
- **Cotham Hill in Bristol**
- **Drone delivery trials**
- **Huntly in Aberdeenshire**
- **Electrek**



There are a number of resources available that provide guidance on good engagement and best practice. We have provided a few links below. One very useful text is the book *Transport for Humans*^[iii], which explores how behaviour change can help improve transportation and implement sustainable travel options, and it provides good guidance on engaging with communities.

Recommendations from the authors include:

- **Good communication** – being clear about what is happening, when and why
- **Going beyond logic** – understanding all the human emotions influencing a reaction to plans is important in engagement
- **Messengers** – this concept ties into strong leadership and support for plans. A messenger could be a local politician, a critical business in the area, or an influential person within the community

Community engagement guidance

Good engagement should treat people's concerns with respect and listen. It should also occur at the right point in the programme. In the accompanying report we have set out the different types and stages of engagement you may wish to consider. Recognising the importance of inclusive engagement, involving stakeholders from the early stages is key to allow opportunity for adaptation to their concerns and address any resentment. While it's understandable that not everyone will be fully satisfied with changes to their local environment, still it is important that planners identify those who may lose out and consider how to accommodate their needs. This includes:

- Planning is based on sound data and a good understanding of local circumstances
- Engagement is genuine when it offers opportunities for input and is clear in the input parameters
- Regularly communicate with groups impacted, listen to concerns, and communicate how they have been considered
- Considered what success looks like for everyone, not just meeting transport or decarbonisation targets

Suggested Reading

- **[Community Engagement 101 | Commonplace](#)**
- **[The Inclusive Co-design Toolkit | Bridgeable](#)**
- **[National Standards for Community Engagement | SCDC - We believe communities matter](#)**

Identifying and understanding your audience

To get the best impact, you need to tailor your engagement for those you are trying to reach. Without a complete understanding of your target groups, it will be a challenge to engage them and gain their support. It is always useful to map out the relevant people, groups, and organisations that you wish to communicate with.

It is strongly recommended that you undertake your own audience identification and empathy mapping e.g. get to know your audience, what matters to them, what they may be worried about and what they are trying to achieve. Below is a high-level evaluation of the three key groups identified in our research, which are likely to be important when engaging with communities on sustainable travel interventions on local high streets and town centres.

Small businesses owners

There are a number of studies that demonstrate how sustainable travel use can boost local economy, increase footfall and make people more likely to shop locally. However, changes that may impact customers access to a service can be worrying for small business owners. Engagement for local businesses may require a different approach as they may not be able to attend meetings away from their place of work and may not live in the area so will have different transport requirements.

Vulnerable users

Grouping all vulnerable users as one is not best practice – we have done so for this example's purposes; however it is very important not to consider people as one homogeneous group. Seeking input from those who are impacted by restricted mobility or who may be considered vulnerable road users is very important in any intervention design and engagement process.

Influencers - community representatives, elected officials

Perhaps one of the most important groups to engage with in order to get a project approved or build support are decision makers and influential community representatives. Elected officials must balance the concerns of their constituents with the many other competing priorities and they require the information and tools to explain why changes are needed and how they have been carefully considered to provide greatest benefits and minimum disruption.

Branding and messaging creating a vision

Considering what will motivate and interest your audience is important as your plan engagement. Sustainable travel interventions can have wide ranging impacts and not all of them will be relevant to everyone. Focus on what will appeal to the people you want to reach and present the impacts that help to demonstrate this. You can research this by visiting social media sites, local press, or websites. You may also wish to link into existing campaigns or activities (for example are the health service running any get fit promotions?).

As part of this package of materials we have created three information sheets designed as an introduction to certain themes linked to some of the key target groups that we have identified:



General

Designed as a general introduction on why you want to consider implementing more sustainable travel and reducing car use.



Social

Designed to address some key health and wellbeing information, alongside the potential for sustainable travel to support accessibility.



Economic

Designed to address the potential economic benefits for businesses and trade in the area.

These can be used to introduce audiences to the benefits and concepts associated with sustainable travel interventions. We would suggest that they are accompanied by specific information about the proposals you are working on or opportunities to find out more. Alternatively, you may wish to use the information provided to create your own resources. This is why we have also provided a selection of infographics and template background for you to compile your own information sheet using knowledge of your community.

Think about the 'story' you are creating. WOOP (Wish, outcome, obstacle, plan) is a behavioural change strategy developed by Gabrielle Oettinger that can be a helpful way to help you plan your communications to the public.

WOOP	Useful Resources	
<p>WISH</p>	<p>Desirable, something important, tell a story - clean air, nicer streets, a vision of a desirable neighbourhood. Here is where case studies or examples of other places can help, and additionally, tools that help to make the potential visible.</p>	<p>Unnamed St – Streetmix</p> <p>Visual Utopias by Jan Kamensky (jan-kamensky.de)</p> <p>Nature Connectedness Research Group - Research centres and groups - University of Derby</p> <p>Placemaking and Green Infrastructure NatureScot</p>
<p>OUTCOME</p>	<p>Be clear about what will change and what impact it will have. This is where it is important to demonstrate the impacts and the links between sustainable travel and benefits to high streets.</p>	<p>What Works Centre for Wellbeing</p>
<p>OBSTACLES</p>	<p>Be honest about difficulty, don't gloss over the hard bits, or the bits that need careful consideration. Don't pretend that there will be no problems. Here is where it is important to think about specific communities needs and challenges.</p>	<p>Make It Toolkit - Behavioral Design made simpler.</p>
<p>PLAN</p>	<p>Put forward a plan for achieving the outcome. Be clear about timescales and next steps. Be careful of our tendency to be optimistic with timescales. There are a number of community engagement tools and resources to help you do this.</p>	<p>myCommunity</p>

