

CHAPTER 5

Consultation and best practice

Introduction

This chapter describes how our transport strategy and programme has evolved since last year as a result of feedback from Government, the public and from local stakeholders. It reports our consultation on the APR and how we have taken on board and disseminated best practice.

Consultation

Our consultation process on transport schemes is guided by our corporate *Listening and Involving Strategy*¹² which sets out the Council's approach to consultation and user involvement. This policy aims for a consistent and co-ordinated approach to consultation.

The following are the key messages contained in the strategy.

- The Council is committed to consulting users and residents.
- Consultation is a mainstream activity of the Council, not an add-on.
- The consultation techniques used will be appropriate to the people to be consulted, the use to which the consultation will be put and the resources available.
- Findings and how they have influenced decisions will be reported to the people who were consulted, and the wider public.
- Information collected will be shared across the Council so as not to waste resources and people's time duplicating surveys.

We will make special efforts to contact groups who, in the past, have not always had their voice heard by the Council - such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and young people.

We take the following approach when applying this consultation strategy to transport.

For the Annual Progress Report

- A summary document to the APR is produced, in parallel to this document containing a questionnaire seeking views on our progress over the past year. This is sent out with all copies of the APR, and is available on the County Council's website. The questionnaire is also included at the end of this document.
- A transport panel has been set up to give continued guidance and feedback on APRs in the future, and provide a consistent, regular view of our progress. The panel consists of representatives from local transport operators, user groups, voluntary groups, commerce, health authorities and other interest groups.
- Regular and detailed consultation is carried out to inform development of new strategies in the LTP, which includes door to door leafleting and arranging meetings and exhibitions. This type of consultation is being used for example in developing the Huntingdon & Godmanchester and Wisbech Market Town Strategies (details below).



Last year's APR Summary document

In keeping with our overall approach, we have been making special efforts to reach those in the age group 16-24, as they have not responded particularly well to previous consultations such as those for the Market Town Strategies. As part of the consultation on the Local Transport Plan, we introduced a 'school pack', targeted at 14-18 year olds, containing a simplified questionnaire and offering the opportunity to respond to the questions through a number of different media, including text messaging. This proved extremely successful, with over 2,000 responses received. We will be looking to adopt a similar approach in the future, as part of our transport consultations and also - through the assistance of a corporate group - to share the success of this approach with others in the Council.

We engage with businesses, transport operators, educational establishments and other stakeholders who will be affected by our schemes and policies.

At the County Council, there is a team, which is solely responsible for transport and environmental improvement schemes in Cambridge. Its remit is to consult on, develop, implement, manage and monitor the Cambridge Access Strategy. The team is responsible for implementing some of the more controversial schemes within the city and therefore see the involvement and support of local businesses as key to their success.

As part of the preliminary work on the Core Scheme Stage 3, informal briefing sessions were held with stakeholder groups, to help draw up the plans for formal consultation in more detail. These stakeholders included CRACA (Cambridge Retail and Commercial Association), public transport operators and the University, and were instrumental in shaping the options that went out to consultation. These stakeholders have subsequently been involved in every stage of consultation on the scheme. We will continue to involve local businesses from a very early stage in decisions that affect them, and a similar approach will be taken this coming year with projects that are being implemented in Cambridge.

¹² The *Listening and Involving Strategy* can be viewed on the County Council's website <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/sub/listen/index.htm>



Text messaging campaign for LTP consultation

We have also investigated ways of developing consultation through the World Wide Web. As part of the consultations on the market town strategies, we advertised on the Internet sites of local newspapers and on the search facility of Google. The results have shown that there was an increase in the numbers of people

responding to these consultations through the internet, therefore we will continue to develop this form of consultation further to maximise the levels of response.

For scheme implementation

- Local consultation is carried out with the public, parish councils and appropriate stakeholders, including transport operators and businesses, on highway and transport infrastructure, prior to any statutory consultation. Methods used and breadth of consultation will vary so as to be appropriate to the scheme in question.
- For schemes that are sensitive locally, post implementation consultation and monitoring is carried out (for example, the continued monitoring of the Cambridge Core Scheme). This work also informs the development of future schemes.

Table 12 below page gives examples of consultation methods used on a number of transport schemes and initiatives that have been implemented or planned in the past year. It describes the particular consultation methods that were utilised, and how the results of the consultation influenced the final outcomes.

Table 12 The influence of consultation on transport policy and scheme implementation

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Consultation methods used</i>	<i>Influence of consultation response on outcome</i>
Wisbech Transport Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24,000 leaflets and questionnaires delivered to households in Wisbech and surrounding villages • 3 days of manned public exhibitions • 5 unmanned exhibitions throughout consultation period • press releases • consultation documentation available on County Council's website, with facility to complete questionnaire online • consultation documents/web pages also registered with Google and placed on Wisbech Standard newspaper web pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schemes added to strategy and priorities within strategy influenced
Riverside Cycle Bridge over River Cam, Cambridge, as part of new NW-SE cycle route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information leaflet posted to 17,000 addresses within a mile radius of the site (1,661 responses) • 3 public exhibitions held at different locations • consultation documentation available on County Council's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 options were consulted upon, and Councillors decided upon the option most favoured in consultation responses.
New Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Panel was set up consisting of a wide range of stakeholders • young people targeted by 'school pack' and presentations at sixth form colleges • stakeholder meetings held, including Local Strategic Partnerships and business workshops • 240,000 leaflets distributed to all households in Cambridgeshire • manned and unmanned exhibitions across the county, including hospitals, libraries, village colleges, sports centres, supermarkets and tourist information offices • all post offices and doctors and dentist surgeries had copies of the consultation leaflet and exhibition timetable. • press releases • consultation documentation available on County Council's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new objectives added: to emphasise the importance of transport to the economy in the county; and to protect the environment; • LTP concentrated on three key strategies for corridors, urban and rural areas • LTP placed greater emphasis on public transport improvements, particularly accessibility in rural areas • LTP focuses measures on reducing congestion and improving safety • LTP priorities developed to public opinion reflect • Major schemes included within the programme

Best practice

We are committed to raising the standard of our own work and also assisting others in improving theirs. There are a number of ways that we are involved in sharing best practice. This varies from responding to other authorities approaching us for advice and using our authority as a benchmark, to us proactively trying to spread our own knowledge. The importance of doing this is recognised at the highest levels, with senior managers presenting our achievements at conferences organised, for example, for the Transport Planning Society, and contributing to articles in journals such as *Local Transport Today* and *Surveyor*. We are also keen to improve our own working practices and a number of schemes described below have been improved by learning from good practice established by other authorities.

We have sent staff on a wide-range of conferences and seminars, with the aim of both improving our knowledge of existing good practice and to seek to understand how we can effectively engage with emerging policy and best practice. These include:

- Highway Maintenance 2002: Arresting decline, eliminating backlog
- Public Private Partnership for Local Highways Maintenance
- Lighting 2002: A Light Asset
- Implementing Asset Management for Roads
- 2002 TRICS Conference
- Improving Local Bus Services
- National Travelwise conference
- Transport, Social Inclusion and the Community Strategy



LTP Consultation exhibition

How we have disseminated best practice

Park and Ride

Cambridge Park and Ride is an award-winning service. Accolades include, 'Best Park and Ride', 'Overall Winner' and runner-up for 'Employee of the Year' in the British Parking Awards 2003, runner-up for 'Employee of the Year' in the Bus Industry Awards, together with 'The Interchange Award 2002' and a second Charter Mark in 2002.

We receive many visits from councils around the country seeking to benchmark their own Park and Ride proposals and sites against the Cambridge service, and who are considering incorporating Park and Ride into their strategies. Recent visitors have included Councillors from Essex, traffic engineers from Cork, and Park and Ride Managers from York, Bristol, West Lothian and Borders Councils.

Rising bollards

Cambridgeshire has taken a lead role in developing rising bollard technology for access control. We have established best practice through the formation of a Local Authority user group and have received visits from representatives from authorities such as Oxford, Liverpool, Nottingham and Devon. Representatives from Durham also visited Cambridge to find out how they could use rising bollards in conjunction with their road pricing scheme. As a result of the interest shown in this area, we will be producing a best practice guide later in 2003.



Bridge Street, Cambridge

How we have learnt from other's best practice

The Council is represented on various regional groups, for example the Eastern Accident Reduction Working Group and the Travel Monitoring Group. These enable us to share ideas and best practice with our regional neighbours. We are not confined to the regional level when we seek examples of best practice.

The following examples detail some areas where we have taken the lessons learnt from other authorities and organisations forward in the implementation of our programmes. The methods we that we have used to learn from others and how we are using the knowledge we have gained are described below.

Best Value review of Highways Division

As part of the Best Value review of our Highways Division, we visited a number of authorities to learn how their best practice could be utilised to improve our own performance. Authorities visited included most of our neighbours in the eastern region, including Hertfordshire for best practice in asset management and consultation and Norfolk and Suffolk for best practice in procurement.

The Lincolnshire bus model

For reasons set out in Appendix 3, we are submitting a new LTP this year. At the core of the plan lies a new bus strategy. We needed to consider how we could orientate the strategy to enhance accessibility in the rural parts of the county. Council officers from Cambridgeshire and the district councils visited Lincolnshire to find out how their successful InterConnect rural bus scheme worked. The scheme consists of a number of bus 'corridors' running between the larger towns. These corridors are then 'fed' by a large number of rural feeder routes using demand-responsive transport. As a consequence of this visit and after extensive consultation, a proposal - influenced by the Lincolnshire scheme, but catering for the special needs of Cambridgeshire - has now been adopted as an essential element of the bus strategy contained within the new LTP.

Coach parking

Part of the Cambridge Core Traffic Scheme Stage 3 will involve relocating coach parking away from Silver Street, which is a very busy, congested area of the city. Coach parking within a confined historical city environment raises specific problems, so officers from the County Council and Cambridge City Council visited colleagues in Kent to see how they addressed the problem in Canterbury. The visit highlighted the need to work in partnership with the tourist trade to ensure that the transport network continues to operate efficiently, but at the same time meeting the needs of visitors as far as possible.

One of the recommendations from officers in Canterbury was to locate the coach parking as near as possible to the tourist attractions. This was because it was found that coach drivers stop at locations convenient for their passengers rather than other road users, potentially causing traffic jams and an unsafe environment. As a result of this advice, alternatives to Silver Street were sought in locations that were still relatively close to the main attractions in the city, namely the colleges. The coach parking will now be relocated to Queen's Road, which is only a short walk from the original Silver Street parking.

Safer roundabouts

A particular roundabout on the Cambridge ring-road suffered from a poor accident record and hence was targeted for safety improvements. A study tour to Denmark revealed an interesting solution to the problem. In Denmark, accident rates on roundabouts are relatively low and this is attributed to the fact that the entry arms and the circulatory width are reduced to a single lane. This approach was subsequently implemented at the Cherry Hinton Road/Mowbray Road roundabout and since this work was carried out, there have been no further accidents.

Cycle parking

As part of the process of installing cycle racks at the Babraham Road Park and Ride site, a visit to Covent Garden was undertaken. The visit highlighted the need to ensure racks are vandal proof, well-lit, in a visible location, covered and aesthetically pleasing. We have strived to ensure that these characteristics are included in our cycle parking facilities we provide.

Evidence of improvement

Table 13 summarises the actions that have been taken and the changes that have been made to this year's Annual Progress Report, following the feedback received in the settlement decision letter of December 2002.

Conclusion

We are proud of the way that we involve local people in our decisions and we are continually looking for ways that we can better engage them. We are also keen to help other authorities improve, by offering advice on the things that we do well ourselves, such as Park and Ride. Likewise, the valuable advice that we have been given from other authorities has led to improved schemes in Cambridgeshire.

Table 13 Action taken as a result of Government feedback

Summary of the comments contained in the December 2002 LTP settlement decision letter (and any outstanding comments from 2000 and 2001 decision letters), indicating the improvements that we wished to see)	Summary of actions taken in response to comments contained in the decision letter (where appropriate, cross references are made to any information contained in the APR)
<p>Changes to LTP strategies</p> <p>Targets</p> <p>The 2001/02 APR could have expressed the position regarding numbers of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) with greater clarity.</p> <p>The data provided for the condition of non-principal and unclassified roads was insufficient to support the assessment that these targets were on track.</p> <p>The data provided for bus satisfaction was insufficient to support the assessment that these targets were on track.</p> <p>The 2001/02 APR reported setting new targets for public transport usage, road condition and road casualties as part of the Public Service Agreement programme, but did not say whether stakeholders and the public were consulted on the changes.</p> <p>Clear explanation is needed of proposed action(s) taken where targets are not on course.</p> <p>More stretching targets should be set where targets are being delivered ahead of schedule.</p>	<p>KSIs information presented in accordance with guidance using Proforma A, and clearly discussed in supporting text. (See Chapter 3 and Appendix 4.)</p> <p>Acknowledged. Baseline position was established last year for the condition of all non-principal and unclassified roads and therefore did not support the assessment made. Data is now available to allow measured consideration of progress towards these targets. (See Chapter 3 and Appendix 4.)</p> <p>Acknowledged. Interim monitoring carried out to establish current levels of user satisfaction in bus services and passenger information, and will be repeated annually. (See Chapter 3 and Appendix 4.)</p> <p>Extensive consultation carried out on new targets as part of the new LTP. Process now in place whereby any changes to targets will be consulted on with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Additional column added to a simplified table showing actions to be taken to put targets on course; this is expanded upon in supporting narrative where necessary. (See Chapter 3 and Appendix 4.)</p> <p>Acknowledged. Several targets have now been revised as a result of good progress made in the past two years and are reported at the appropriate points in the text (see Chapter 3). Table in Appendix 4 summarises all changes to targets made in the past year for any reason. Consultation on these changes has taken place as part of the consultation on the new LTP.</p>
<p>Finance</p> <p>The Government Office found it very difficult to identify what was actually spent on schemes because the only cost table in the 2001/02 APR (Table 9) showed splits of allocations that did not match the Finance forms.</p> <p>The APR did not identify actual breakdown of costs on individual work areas. Improvements are therefore needed for the future in the presentation of financial information.</p> <p>The statement that we had been proactive in securing funding from sources outside Government should have been supported by a fuller explanation, giving details of the amounts and their sources.</p>	<p>Acknowledged and rectified in this year's report.</p> <p>Acknowledged and rectified in this year's report.</p> <p>Details of other sources of funding now summarised in tables (see Chapter 4) and discussed in the supporting text.</p>

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<p>Changes to LTP strategies</p>	
<p>Good practice The 2001/02 APR recorded steps we had taken both to learn from and impart information to others, and gave some indication of how lessons learnt had been applied and that best practice had been considered. Improvements could be made for the future by providing stronger evidence about these activities and by developing them to include the consideration of their application to other areas of policy.</p>	<p>The links of these activities to other policy areas considered in more detail than last year and discussed in Chapter 5. Links to other policy areas are also made in the rest of the document where appropriate.</p>
<p>Consultation The APR states that good consultation has been carried out and that this has influenced your implementation programme. However, you provide little supporting evidence, such as details of your consultation methodology, so it is difficult to determine how the results have helped to shape your implementation programme.</p> <p>It would also be helpful to make it clear whether formal assessment of the 2001/02 APR has been carried out, for example by following through on the consultation, and, if it has, to record the results.</p>	<p>Progress on this issue is reported in detail in Chapter 5, including details of how the Council's corporate consultation strategy guides individual consultations. Additional detail is provided on consultation on a selection of schemes and initiatives, summarised in Table 12 in Chapter 5.</p> <p>Follow through consultation has now been carried out and is briefly discussed in Chapter 5. An ongoing programme of consultation and public/stakeholder involvement has been arranged for the replacement LTP, and the APR summary document includes a questionnaire survey.</p>
<p>Other issues The 2001/02 APR pointed to clear links between schemes delivered and local and national transport targets, and provided evidence of outcomes, but could usefully have demonstrated causal links by reference to, for example post-implementation studies.</p> <p>The APR was attractively presented and easy to read with some good case studies included but it was rather longer than recommended, emphasising the absence of a printed summary document.</p> <p>The use of maps might have been greater to illustrate delivery on the ground.</p> <p>The availability on request of the APR in accessible formats was apparent, and our web address is provided, it was not clear whether the APR itself was available on our website.</p>	<p>Causal links described in Chapter 2 where post implementation data is available.</p> <p>A particular example is noted in Case Study 2.</p> <p>Summary document subsequently produced for the 2001/02 APR and widely circulated. Similar document produced for this APR. The main text is 36 pages long.</p> <p>Acknowledged and addressed in 2002/03 APR.</p> <p>Acknowledged and addressed in 2002/03 APR.</p>