

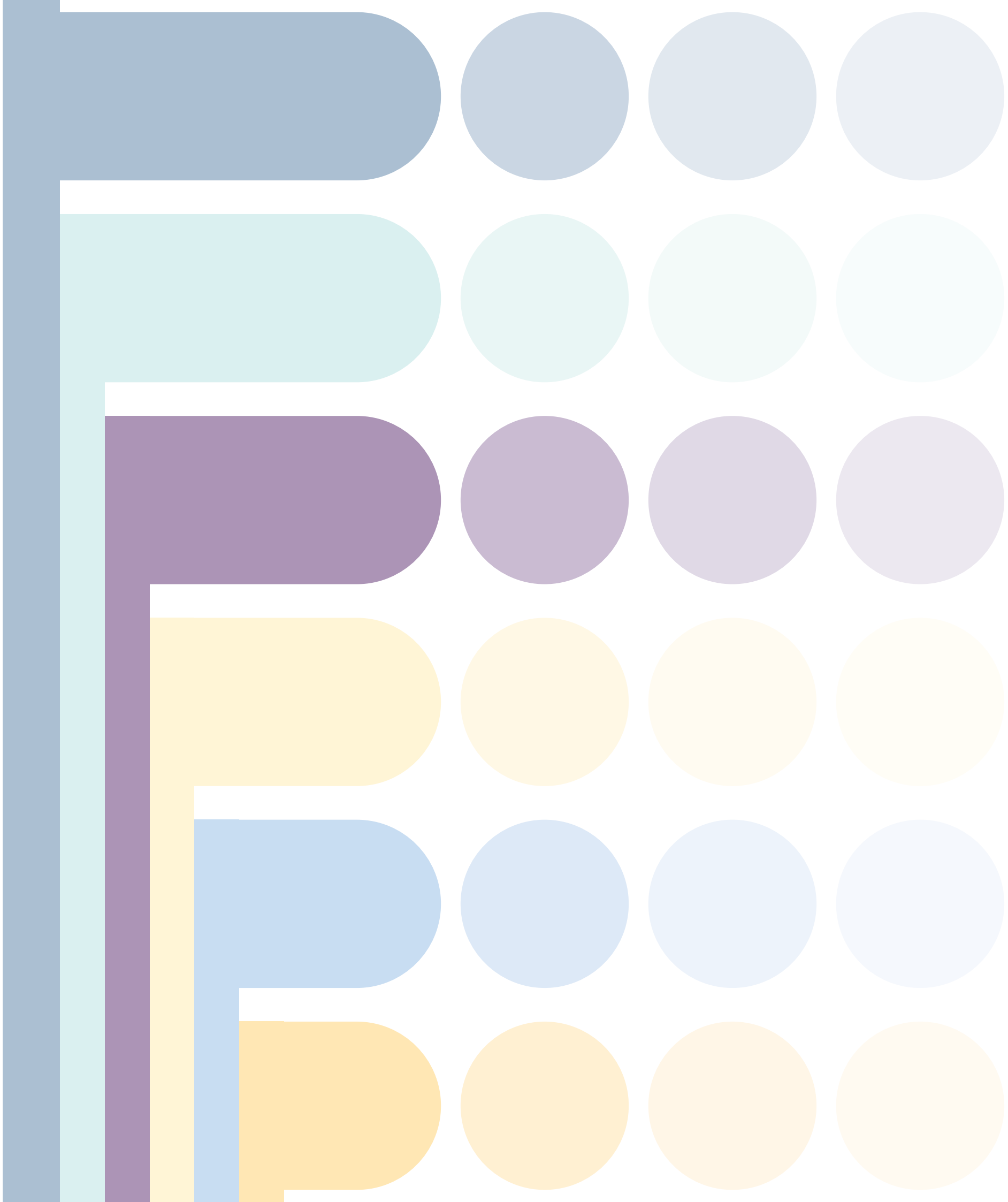
Approaches to consultation

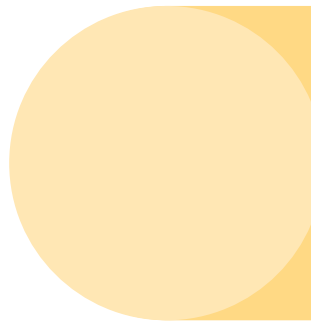
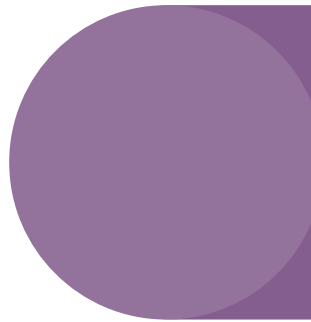
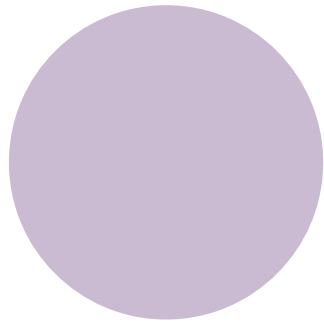
A guide for Highways Agency Major Projects staff



December 2009







Approaches to Consultation – A guide for Highways Agency Major Projects staff.

Purpose

Welcome to MP's Approaches to Consultation guidance. Its purpose is to stimulate thinking into ways to consult with all MP's stakeholders and to offer a series of possible solutions, to ensure we carry out fully our diversity and equality duties as a public body.

The guide was put together working with our consultants, Social Research Associates who are acknowledged industry experts in the fields of equality and diversity and its social impact on communities and specific groups.

Format

The guide is split into five key stages of project delivery:

6 Scheme Preparation and Design

32 Detailed Consultation

54 Public Inquiry

58 Construction

62 Post Scheme Evaluation

Approaches to Consultation – A guide for Highways Agency Major Projects staff.

INTRODUCTION

Links to Procedures

The guide will be linked electronically to the respective stages of Major Projects' Project Control Framework (PCF) and Way we Work (WwW) processes. It can thus be easily accessed electronically through the Major Projects pages on the HA Portal, and used at the appropriate stage of a project's lifecycle to enable forward planning of effective public consultation that reaches all identified groups affected by a scheme.

Internal Support and Liaison

Support and further advice about diversity and equality related matters is available from the HA Diversity team, located in the NetServe directorate.

Nicky Ensert – GTN 6189 8113

MP has a diversity champion who is located in the MP Organisational Development team.

Steve Woodward – GTN 3013 6603

Further Training

HA offers training in diversity and equality awareness to all its employees. Details can be found on both the Diversity and the Learning & Development pages of the HA Portal.



Indicative Surveys

Description

The preparation and design of schemes can be materially enhanced by a variety of 'asking' techniques, and by monitoring and evaluation. Surveys can contribute to the picture of present usage of the network, to desired improvements and potential usage of planned schemes. They help to establish baseline information for later comparison, and hence to judge the impacts attributable to a scheme.

Members of a target group are asked to complete questionnaires which are then analysed to find out what people think about the issues relating to the preparation and design of a scheme. The starting point is usually to find out what respondents already know, and to seek reactions to policies which underpin a specific scheme and the way it is being developed.

The resulting data can be used to establish stakeholders' principal concerns, areas of conflict and the level of support for action by the HA.

Uses

To get a snapshot of the opinions of a target audience on an issue or scheme early in the decision-making process, or after the implementation of a scheme;

When it is important to know the spread or strength of opinion on one or a range of options;

When it is important to have a representative picture of opinions across the whole community - for example to establish the views of minority or socially excluded groups;

Surveys are less appropriate as a mode of public involvement where issues are complex or controversial.

Indicative Surveys

Potential problems

Low response rates

Solution

Make a special effort to contact a small sample of non respondents to gauge whether those who did not respond had different views from those who did.

Potential problems

Insufficient numbers for statistical analysis

Solution

Each cell for analysis should have at least 50 cases - thus if the views of men and women are to be analysed separately the total sample will need to be at least 100.

Where a sample (say 1 in 10 of households) results in low representative of certain groups (e.g. disabled people) it is possible to boost numbers to allow robust analysis.

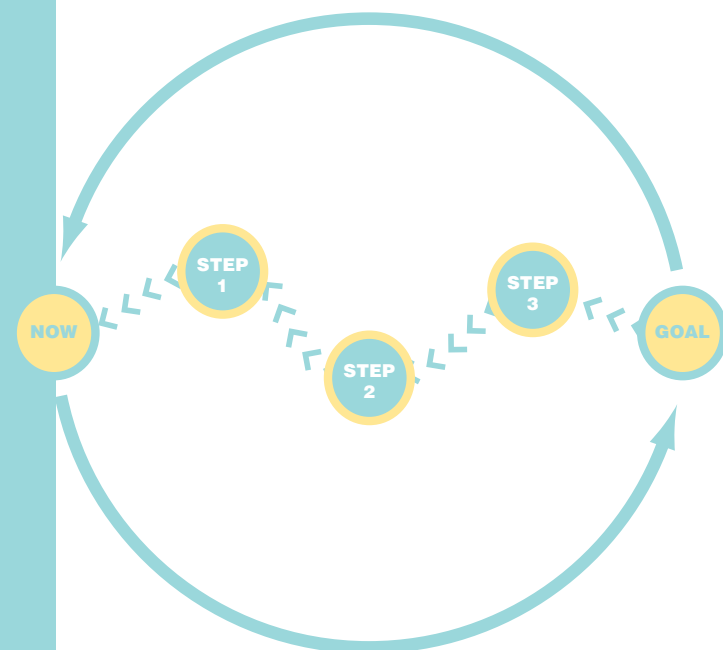
Cost Ratings: flexible - quota sampling is cheaper than stratified random sampling although only the latter allows formal confidence testing.

Case Study: For the Tyneside multimodal study questionnaires were distributed as newspaper wraprounds. Although some groups were under-represented in the returns (e.g. women) there were sufficient numbers to reweight the results where the views of men and women varied.

SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN

Visioning

SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN



“Backcasting” Process

Description

Visioning is a technique that can be used with a group of key stakeholders who are concerned to find the solution to a transport problem and are willing to work with HA staff in addressing it. The technique is not likely to be effective where views about a particular scheme have already become fixed or polarized. It is best done in a workshop format, with the aid of an expert facilitator who can help participants to expand and evaluate potential scenarios for the future. Some preparatory work is usually needed to assemble key facts and figures, from which the participants can extrapolate trends, and assess how far these can or should be influenced to achieve their vision of movement modes and patterns for the future.

Participants are then encouraged

to discuss their hopes for the future without giving any strong emphasis to existing problems or constraints. The focus is on high-level goals and sets a context for the type of desired society and economy. It asks the prior questions about such issues as quality of life, access and accessibility; and recognises transport policies as one of a range of instruments that government can use in shaping the way we live, without making any presumptions about the suitability of particular solutions, schemes or routes. This is sometimes seen as “backcasting”.

The outcome is not a definitive plan but an over-view of possibilities which people have expressed. It provides some understanding of their longer term priorities which the HA can then translate into more specific solutions.

Visioning



Uses

Best used for forward plans for an area as a whole to be developed in partnership with groups and individuals;

Visioning may also be suitable where several key stakeholders have recognised a transport problem, but are prepared to be open-minded about the potential solutions.

Potential problems

Raising expectations

Solution

Make clear that the exercise is intended to develop a range of solutions for further investigation and that different groups will have different priorities.

Potential problems

Visioning may be constrained by past experience

Solution

Incorporate information about new ideas (e.g. the potential of integrated demand management and intelligent transport system technology) into the visioning exercise.

Cost Ratings: modest depending on the number of different group sessions

Case Study: The HA held a series of visioning exercises with a range of stakeholder groups and internal staff to develop priorities for long term strategies. The results were used to feed into the HA's corporate plan.

SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN



Citizens Panel

Description

A citizens' panel uses a representative sample of the public to obtain their views, in order to ascertain what the community as a whole thinks about a particular issue. The views of this sample can be sought on a regular basis, using a survey instrument. Until recently, this was usually a postal questionnaire although newer technologies such as the Internet are increasingly used nowadays.

To maintain participants' interest in the process, it is important to give them feed-back. For this purpose, newsletters can be used; or it may be possible to use samples drawn from a Panel to constitute smaller discussion groups. The technique demands carefully monitoring and management, to ensure that the sample remains balanced and representative since there is a risk that, after a while,

some of the more enthusiastic members of the Panel may come to dominate because others are less conscientious in forwarding their input.

Uses

To obtain a representative picture of what the community as a whole thinks, alternatively, recruitment can target specific groups.

To track changes in public attitudes or the 'community climate' over time. Results can deliver valuable trend information, based on the repeated surveying of the same or a similar group of respondents;

When regular sounding board for issues is needed.

To gain publicity and interest the media.

When there is a need to counteract criticism based on

Citizens Panel

unrepresentative views in the media. This is especially useful if the Panel is electronic and can respond quickly.

Potential problems

Fatigue and loss of interest by members of the Panel

Solution

Membership will be renewed on a rolling basis (a third every year).

Potential problems

Participation in the Panel is higher on the part of certain groups

Solution

Incorporate information about new ideas (e.g. the potential of integrated demand management and intelligent transport system technology) into the visioning exercise

Potential problems

The methods of participation in the Panel may exclude some groups

Solution

Ensure that special communication needs are met (e.g. language barriers, visual or auditory impairments, lack of access to computers)

Cost Ratings: Modest and an ongoing resource on a call off basis within the Agency

Case Study: The Department for Transport has set up a national electronic panel of disabled people. This panel is available for the HA to use for specific consultations.

SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN



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Identification of Stakeholders

Description

The identification of stakeholders is an important step towards establishing a positive approach to consultation, rather than the merely responsive posture implied, for example, by placing notices in local newspapers and waiting for reactions. Finding organisations is generally easier than finding individuals, and some organisations routinely appear on any invitation list for a public consultation. The HA now maintains a list of stakeholders which is available on the HA portal and Network Strategy also carries out an annual partnership performance survey. The list is divided into National Stakeholders, Delivery Partners, Operational Partners and Regional Stakeholders.

Beyond these contacts: for particular projects, local stakeholders can be added using the local authority database of organisations, societies and community groups operating in the area concerned. In predominantly rural areas, it will be advisable to contact parish councils; in urban areas, there may be town councils, residents' associations or neighbourhood groups who are interested and able to respond. Chambers of Commerce and Trade are a vitally important source of contacts within the business community, which may have a direct economic interest in how highway proposals are developed, as well perhaps as a legal interest through the medium of section 278 agreements and other such partnership or contractual arrangements. Identifying stakeholders can be treated as a 'snowball' exercise, where those

Identification of Stakeholders

who are initially contacted are asked to suggest names of other bodies that may have an interest.

There is not necessarily a single 'best practice' technique for ensuring effective participation of marginalised sections of the community. Rather, it is the combination of methods, appropriate to the circumstances of the target group and the particular transport issue, that will be most effective. In the past, official attitudes to this problem were inclined to be unsympathetic: if people did not come forward, they could not expect to be listened to. But nowadays public bodies are more aware of the insidious harm that can be done by ignoring people, especially those from minority or disadvantaged groups, who nonetheless have valid opinions.

Uses

Stakeholder involvement is increasingly a statutory requirement (for example in relation to Environmental Statements) but in other cases it is embodied in statutory duties such as the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).

Potential problems

Stakeholders do not receive feedback

Solution

Develop a plan for communication with stakeholders using the project web page, switchboard and helpline as far as possible. This needs to include flagging up reasons for delays.



SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN

Identification of Stakeholders

Potential problems

A tendency for organisations to claim after the event that they were not informed

Solution

Keep a detailed log of approaches made to stakeholders and responses given:

Cost Ratings: Modest but need strategic management such as protocol about cost effective management of communication - for example, it may not be sensible to reply individually to every letter.

Case Study: The HA held meetings with local authority stakeholders in relation to integrating Interactive Demand Management (IDM) into the M25 widening programme. The co-operation of such stakeholders in the form of partnership working was crucial if the information needed for the modelling and also decisions about priorities were to be agreed.

Ancillary Consultation on the Environmental Statement (ES)

Description

Following the selection of the route for a scheme, detailed plans and designs are drawn up and, in accordance with EU legislation, an Environmental Statement (ES) is prepared. The ES consists of a summary in non-technical language of the anticipated impacts which the scheme may have on the natural environment. The second and third parts of the ES typically consist of a more detailed technical description of flora, fauna, landscape, geology, ecology etc of the area affected, and a book of plans, illustrations and other supporting material. Note that the ES covers both the constructional phases of a project and the longer-term impacts resulting from the completion of the scheme.

The ES is a public document, although in practice lay attention

tends to focus chiefly on the summary. Comments are invited on the ES from any interested party. Although this consultation is not expected to lead to changes in the ES, and the progress of a scheme does not directly depend on its acceptance, it is a useful litmus of local opinion. There are good reasons therefore why the ES should be made widely accessible, both in the language used and in the availability of copies. The ES also offers an informal way of finding out where there may be serious concerns outstanding, and hence where mitigating measures to protect wild-life and the landscape may need to be incorporated into the final design of a scheme. Such modifications will also be helpful should the scheme progress to public inquiry in providing evidence of the HA taking account of stakeholder views.

SCHEME PREPARATION & DESIGN





Ancillary Consultation on the Environmental Statement (ES)

Uses

A useful gauge of local opinion.
An helpful informal way of finding out early in the project process where there may be serious concerns.

To provide evidence that the HA has engaged in early and meaningful debate with stakeholders and the public.

Potential problems

The ES has a clear purpose in itself, and should not be loaded with peripheral information that it may be useful to publish for other reasons, or with non-environmental issues for debate.

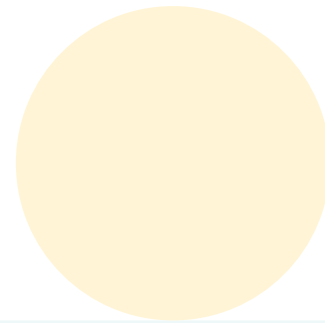
Solution

The format of the ES is now well established, and a consultation related to it should be should be explained in a separate leaflet, newsletter, web-page etc.

Cost Ratings: Medium - depending on the geographical spread of the scheme. This can be reduced by using common generic material customised for different local areas.

Case Study: For the M25 widening project, the ES was summarised in a user friendly manner and customised for local areas and presented (using half hour slots within the normal agenda) to meetings of relevant Parish Councils. An A3 coloured summary was left with the Councils for dissemination locally and a set time scale indicated for feedback. A number of mitigation measures were built in following the exercise which have been incorporated into the final ES.

Managing Blight



Description

The announcement of a scheme may have the effect of creating a blight on land and property values in the vicinity, and general policy advice is given in the HA Procedures Manual (q.v.) Indeed, blight may begin to occur well before a scheme is announced if local media or informal networks give currency to the possibility that a scheme should, or may, be brought forward. In these situations, it is vital that effective communication techniques are used, in order that stakeholders can understand what exactly is in prospect, and how the machinery for representations, valuation, compensation, compulsory purchase (if appropriate) and mitigating or other measures can be expected to operate.

Dealing with blight issues is principally a matter between the owners of land and property and the HA; developers and property agents may also have an interest. But it is not something in which the public at large can claim a strong interest, or which benefits from extensive discussion; in fact, rather the reverse. Blight is regrettable but often inevitable, and the focus of consultation should be on which areas, how seriously and when it is liable to become an issue.

Where blight is threatening, communication should be conceived as a two-way process: owners of land and property may have views and ideas about measures that could be taken to reduce the negative impact of a scheme, and thereby contain the spread of blight.

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Managing Blight

Use of techniques

Leaflets - to provide written information to groups of intended recipients.

User education - to apply positive educational messages that help to improve knowledge, understanding and awareness.

Media briefings - There may be a case for limited media briefings in order to reduce the possibility of 'scare stories' circulating about blight.

Direct comment line - Feedback on perceptions of blight can be obtained through the use of Freepost comment cards, free telephone 'hotline' numbers and web-sites.

Potential problem

Blight can affect a wider area than the particular properties affected

Solution

Partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders to mitigate the spread of blight - in part reassurance and communication although there will always be legal constraints. Sometimes short term temporary leasing to community groups can protect an area from vandalism and graffiti.



Scenario Exercises

Description

Scenario exercises are aimed at obtaining insights from specialists, or people with particular experiences, and to use that information systematically in developing a practical solution. Scenario exercises may also be suitable where there is difficulty in agreeing objectives, and a 'ground-clearing' exercise is needed as a prior step to clarify thinking and priorities. One of the most widely used techniques for exploiting scenarios is through the 'Delphi technique'. The usual objective of the technique is 'the reliable and creative exploration of ideas or the production of suitable information for decision-making'.

The basis of the technique is that a group of panellists (usually specialists in their own field) pool their judgements in order to arrive at a satisfactory course of

action. Views and information are collected by means of a series of questionnaires - preferably electronic, interspersed with controlled rounds of feed-back and ideally a final face to face discussion.

Uses

When the aim is to generate forecasts in an area where there is little or no 'hard' data to draw upon, or where issues relate to attitudes or life-styles and cannot be quantified;

To get a feel for the direction of expert opinion on contentious issues;

The Delphi technique is applicable to consultation for multi-modal studies, especially in relation to the evaluation of alternative scenarios being developed;

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Scenario Exercises

There is also potential for using Delphi exercises in consultation processes that are likely to contain an element of confrontation but where there is a willingness to co-operate in finding a consensus-based solution.

Potential problem

Failing to recruit the most knowledgeable experts for the exercise.

Solution

Give a clear statement of the time required and design the exercise to minimise the time required.

Cost Ratings: Modest especially if the exercise is largely electronic.

Case Study: A DfT study of unlicensed driving set up a panel of experts comprising road safety professionals, academics, police, motorist organizations, etc. Some members of the panel were based overseas. A list of proposals to reduce unlicensed driving were presented for rating High to Low for “effectiveness” and “acceptability”. Those rated low on both counts were eliminated for the next round and so on. The final round comprised a face to face workshop where the results were explored in more detail and refined to agree recommendations to Government.

Community Indicators

Description

Increasing the impact of schemes cannot be left to experts.

Concerns such as severance or personal security are in part dependent on perception as well as objective facts and figures. In these situations the HA can work with local people to set up community indicators which will be accepted as a measure of the scheme's impact during construction or at various time periods following construction.

Careful preparation is necessary to identify boundaries for feasible choices and it can help to present some options - perhaps following informal discussions with a range of stakeholders. Areas of choice for indicators could include effects on flora or fauna, air quality or effects on local business. The choices will depend on the particular area priorities.

The techniques for choice can include a variety of approaches ranging from 'voting' at the village hall to small workshops with different interest groups.

Uses

To improve the post evaluation process by including local preferences along with the usual technical measures.

To feed into mitigation measures both pre and post construction.

To gain co-operation and sign up to the scheme.

Potential problem

Indicators chosen are untenable given the scheme design and objectives

Solution

Tell people about such constraints - help to identify feasible indicators which would also be supported locally.

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Community Indicators

Cost Ratings: Modest especially if built into other stakeholder and public involvement activities.

Case Study: In Fife the local community identified an increase in kilometers of dedicated cycle routes as an indicator.

In Sutton the indicator was days when air quality levels were 'very good' as per national standards was selected.

In Lancashire the choice was wildlife diversity as measured by the total number of species which were threatened before and after a planned development.



GIS Analysis

Description

Analysis based on Geographical Information Systems will be familiar to HA staff. There are many software packages and most public sector organizations have the ability to input layers of data at relatively low output costs. The most recent policy initiative is the Accessibility mapping tool which local authorities are using to identify accessibility to education, employment, health, fresh food and leisure.

However, the use of these techniques is less well developed for use in stakeholder and public involvement. Yet they can be converted into very user friendly and interesting materials for discussion and information especially when superimposed on aerial photographs or by using three dimensional key landmarks.

Uses

To explain the effects of new road schemes and accessibility for different journey purposes such as visits to hospital, schools, employment and so on.

To map improvements in air quality or road safety.

To show impacts of schemes targeting people with low levels of literacy.

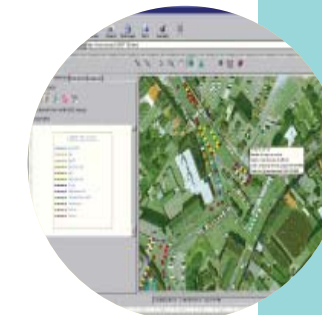
Potential problem

Some GIS data is getting out of date or was not very accurate to start with if based on 2001 Census data

Solution

Use alternative data and professional judgement to update and re weight.

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GIS Analysis

Potential problem

Maps can be difficult for people to interpret

Solution

Careful choice of colour coding (remember 8% of the male population in the UK are colour blind) Use of photographs of familiar landmarks superimposed on the map can help people to identify reference points (many people do not know that maps point north).

Cost ratings: Modest to produce - dissemination costs will depend on purpose and size of area.

Case Study: Sheffield City Council used GIS data to show areas of high casualties superimposed on indices of deprivation. This led to discussions about reasons for the clustering thus identified.



Representative Surveys

Description

The use of social surveys to gain an impression of public feeling, notably at the stage of scheme preparation and design, is described in the notes on 'Indicative surveys'. But there may be occasions when a more rigorous and extensive canvass of opinion is desirable.

Design and execution of a representative survey needs professional skills to:

- draw the sample of respondents;
- construct an appropriate questionnaire;
- select the interview method (face-to-face, postal, electronic etc);
- carry out the interviews;
- process the data; and
- analyse the results.

It will normally be advisable to engage specialist consultants who can provide these skills and present a report; indeed, it may help to ensure that the findings are recognised as impartial if an organisation which is independent of the HA conducts the representative survey.

Uses

Representative surveys take time and, depending on the interview method used, may also prove expensive. They are therefore most suitable where:

A major scheme is proving contentious, and it is important to have a reliable and accurate picture of what the broad majority of people think.

Well-organised campaign groups are capturing media headlines with their views, and it is necessary to discover how representative these are.

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Representative Surveys

Some other agency or authority is apparently speaking on behalf of the community, but doubts may exist as to how far this is actually so.

Potential problem

Some lobby groups may not accept the results.

Solution

Make sure that the survey process is robust and open for audit.

Potential problem

The results might not support the HA's strategy

Solution

Either accept this and rethink or conduct pilot studies beforehand to get an idea of the likely results before going ahead.

Cost Ratings: Medium to high depending on sample size

Case Study: Gloucester Safer City (a national road safety demonstration project) introduced bus lanes as part of a series of traffic management initiatives. A few people wrote to local councillors objecting and giving the impression that they spoke for the whole community. A carefully constructed stratified randomly selected household survey showed that the majority of local people were in fact supportive of the bus lanes.

Media Communication Web Page



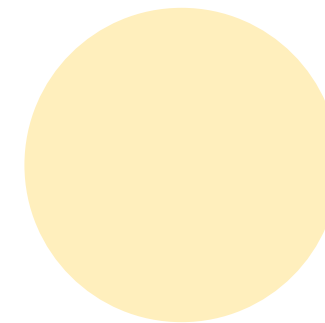
Description

The media - press, radio and television - is an important channel for communicating with the public at large, but it can also be used to target information at particular groups; for example, radio can be used to reach commuters travelling by car. Similarly radio is a good medium for reaching the Muslim community during Ramadan since many Muslims do not watch television at this time. Other methods of communication can be targeted to communicate with groups of people who may not otherwise seek information or who have difficulties with printed material. HA staff may need training before dealing directly with the media and should certainly seek specialist advice from the HA Communication Unit. The development of the concept of “The Project Storyline” is also a useful resource.

There is increasing potential for using electronic communications to provide for public information and participation. The HA has already adopted a policy of creating web-sites to convey information about major highway schemes, and to receive feedback from members of the public. While significant segments of the population are either not connected to the Internet or are unfamiliar with how to use it, usage is undoubtedly growing at a rapid rate. It offers a level of interaction between the public and decision-makers which is unattainable with traditional techniques because it cuts across physical, bureaucratic and cultural boundaries.

It is important however that any project-related web-site is easily navigated and information is both comprehensible and relevant to users. The needs of particular groups (such as ethnic minorities

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Media Communication Web Page

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or the visually impaired) must be considered. Use of web-sites also requires careful design to ensure a reasonably uniform style, and internal liaison to ensure that information provided to the public is consistent and authoritative. Consultation with Regional Communication Managers and the HA Website Manager is essential before any decisions on use of this technique are made.

Uses

When public awareness needs to be raised and the participation base (particularly among non-traditional groups) needs to be broadened.

When it is important that participants have access to information, on a regular basis to ensure effective participation, or greater transparency in process and policy implementation is required;

When the project or proposal affects a wide geographical area and breadth of social, cultural or other interests, and it is important to access the views of as many groups and individuals as possible by using targeted media.

When exhibitions, road-shows, telephone hotline numbers and newsletters need to be publicised.

Potential problem

Feeding stories and information to the media can backfire - they tend to be looking for bad news rather than the good

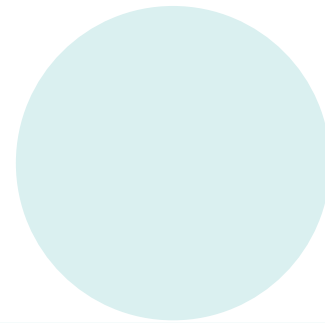
Solution

Staff training and working through specialist HA communications team.

Potential problem

Interactive web pages can be 'captured' by unrepresentative interests.

Media Communication Web Page



Solution

Preference for avoiding 'chat line formats' and regular monitoring of senders of messages.



Cost Ratings: Mainly staff time although advertising costs can vary.

Case Study: For the M62 J25-J30 scheme, HA used a combination of web page, press, radio and TV to ensure they reached all potential groups, and explained the impact of the new Managed Motorways schemes on local residents. Through an exhibition they were able to reach 200 people. They were able to reach another 2,000 via their web page. By requesting statistics from the web team, they were able to evaluate the effectiveness of the all communications channels in driving all groups of people to find out more about the scheme.

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'Hard to Reach' Groups



Description

One of the most challenging and necessary aspects of an effective consultation strategy is to reach all segments of the target population. There is however a range of social groups who, for various reasons, may not be reached by traditional techniques for communication and involvement. They include low income groups, disabled, young people, women, the elderly and ethnic minorities. It is important to develop approaches to consultation that attract such groups to participate, and wherever possible secure their engagement. Experience has shown that, as the shortcomings of traditional methods have become clearer, fresh approaches and a stronger emphasis on direct outreach are needed.

There is not necessarily a single best practice technique for

ensuring effective participation by marginalized sections of the community; rather, it is a combination of methods, appropriate to the circumstances of the target group and the particular transport issue, that is likely to be most effective. Choosing the techniques will benefit from informal enquiries beforehand with community groups and social agencies, so that the structure of the target population can be characterised. Such background work may reveal the need for certain types of media rather than others (e.g. translation of printed material into tape recordings for deaf people with auditory; use of large-type leaflets for people who suffer from visual impairment). It may also indicate that public events would be better held at certain times rather than others, for example to cater for shift workers.

'Hard to Reach' Groups

Uses

Where it is important to include groups who do not usually become involved in participatory activities;

To gain a fuller understanding of the potential impact of a transport proposal on specific sections of the community;

To empower disadvantaged groups and give a sense of ownership for transport schemes and initiatives

Potential problem

Specialist knowledge lacking

Solution

Use detailed good practice guidance as developed by different diversity groups for the newly created Equality Rights Commission which represents race, sex, age, disability and additional minority interests

Cost Ratings: Flexible - plenty of cost effective avenues

Case Study: A document translated into Urdu was produced at considerable expense to target the Pakistan community in Manchester for opinions about a road scheme. This was useful to very few people since if people from such a community cannot read simple English, the chances are that they cannot read (although they can speak) their own mother tongue.

Further information:

DfT "Good practice Guidance: "The transport requirements of minority ethnic and faith communities" with accompanying video.

Disability Rights Commission: "Access for All"

Highways Agency "Introduction to Equality Impact Assessment"

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Exhibitions



Description

Exhibitions are widely used by the HA. They are used to take the message about plans, schemes of work, routes and the final Environmental Statement to a wide range of stakeholders and public. The conventional way of doing this is by means of a public exhibition, usually held over two days and overlapping with the weekend: Friday from 10 am till 8 pm and Saturday from 10 am till 4 pm is a typical pattern, with a private view for local councillors and other community leaders on the Thursday.

Inevitably, given the nature of the HA's work, the majority of these exhibitions are dispersed around the geographical areas affected and so the choice of location is important in offering access to as many as people as possible. This includes consideration of

the ease of access for public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists. For example, it is no use having evening meetings if there are no bus services to the venue. Often the final decision about location is driven by practicalities such as availability of venues. To overcome this constraint the HA experimented with a mobile bus but there were problems with parking and accessibility. An alternative is a marquee or even a portable market stall which can be erected in places of high footfall. Where access and accessibility problems seem difficult to overcome there is a need to find alternative means by which consultees might be encouraged to make their input.

A key requirement is that access to and movement within the exhibition is available to all visitors and staff including wheelchair users. Other considerations are the availability

Exhibitions

of suitable accessible toilets, large format material, display heights, colour choices and alternative forms of information for people with visual or auditory impairment.

The material for public exhibitions needs to be simple and easy to understand. Over the UK as a whole it is estimated that 1 in 7 of the population are functionally illiterate and in some areas it will be higher. There is also a limit to how much people can take in at one time so using back up material or face to face discussions is helpful. There are also many ways of involving visitors to exhibitions via interactive tasks which themselves can provide the HA with feedback.

Uses

To explain complex plans

To meet stakeholders and the public face to face to discuss individual concerns.

To identify mitigation measures and 'showstoppers'.

To target particular local geographical areas to gain information to build into scheme detailed design.

Potential problem

Venues are inaccessible

Solution

Set standards which cannot be compromised

Potential problem

Materials are hard to understand to many visitors

Solution

Use more imaginative and simpler forms of display

Potential problem

Visitors to the exhibition are not representative of the communities affected

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Exhibitions



Solution

Take the exhibition to the 'missing' groups (see example below)

Record who is attending in order to identify the groups who are missing.

Cost Ratings: High

Case Study: In Birmingham, a small portable marquee was erected in a high footfall shopping centre to engage a cross section of local people in discussions about transport needs. Posters gave simple information about the choices available and people asked to consider these and then to allocate chips to their preferred strategies. The visual nature of the 'voting tubes' gave rise to an emphasis on civic choices rather than in terms of individual self interest.

Pamphlets, Posters, Leaflets



Description

These types of media can be used to provide a cheap and easy way of giving information to the general public or to groups of targeted recipients. They can be used to expand on shorter and more generalised announcements, for example through a press release or radio bulletin. They can act as an intermediate link between such announcements and the more detailed technical documents that are produced as part of scheme preparation and design, and are of interest only to people with specialist concerns.

Pamphlets and leaflets are generally more specific than newsletters, and may be used to build up knowledge and understanding of a project gradually over time. In this case giving them a distinct identity can 'badge' the project and underline

the process. Another option is to design as a set of leaflets covering separate aspects of a scheme and giving more precise details about each. Sometimes they may be used to report on progress, forming a series over time; or they may be used to summarise feedback already given by consultees, so that people can see an overview of the main arguments surrounding a proposed scheme. Pamphlets and leaflets may also be used to provide a response mechanism for questions and concerns with a point of contact is provided.

Posters are mainly of value in drawing attention to some other consultation opportunity such as a public exhibition or meeting. Another use is to attract attention to a pamphlet in an attached box.

One of the problems with many HA pamphlets is that they focus

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Pamphlets, Posters, Leaflets

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on images of roads and not the people using the roads.

Uses

At the beginning of a project to inform those potentially affected by it;

When it is important to provide a target group or neighbourhood with specific

information about a scheme, plan or proposal;

To announce when major works, tunnel closures, maintenance operations, bridge repairs and other changes are planned to occur;

Useful to have available at exhibitions to give visitors information

Potential problem

Distribution quality and timescales

Solution

The options are: the post office (sole delivery but a relatively long period of notice required - 3 weeks) or commercial firms who typically deliver as an insert along with a local free paper . Commercial distribution systems frequently result in non delivery (especially in rural areas or blocks of council flats).

Potential problem

The information in the pamphlets is too dense and complex for the average member of the public

Solution

If there is a need to provide detailed information refer people on to inquiry points including the project Storyline.

Pamphlets, Posters, Leaflets

Potential problem

It is difficult to monitor who is reading the material

Solution

Sometimes leaflets are combined with freepost questionnaires which include some information about respondents' socio economic profile.

Cost Ratings: Modest - economies of scale for production but distribution costs higher

Case Study: The A556 Knutsford to Bowden Improvement scheme leaflet used a wealth of information to clearly explain to members of the public about options for a supplementary consultation. By considering all local groups and by working together with the Graphics, MP Communications and MP Knowledge teams, the scheme team were able to produce a leaflet using simple Plain English and a user-friendly format, which successfully met the public's needs.

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Piggybacking

Description

Piggybacking is a method of using existing organisations and structures to involve the public. Britain is a nation of 'joiners' and it is estimated that the average person belongs to four non work networks - either based on area of residence of interest. The membership lists of some interest groups (for example the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - with more than a million members) are sought after by commercial firms anxious to target particular groups. Similarly many of the HA's statutory and non statutory consultees such as Regional and National Road User Committees or Regional Planning Bodies can be used in this way.

Organisations also have events which attract large numbers of people. Thus it might be more sensible for the HA to take a stall

at such an event than mounting their own separate exhibition. This approach is well developed at large professional events (for example at the annual Intelligent Traffic Systems Conference) but less used for local or voluntary sector events such as school or village fetes. Yet these smaller groups are frequently cash strapped and would welcome contributions or even joint working.

Another advantage of such an approach is that it can target particular interest groups - some of whom are hard for the HA to reach otherwise. Examples are lorry drivers, tourists or horse riders. In all these cases there are publications and events which could be used to 'piggyback'. Examples of events for these groups could be Truckfests, National Trust special days and Show Programme.

Piggybacking

Sometimes piggybacking can be more informal - for example a stall or poster point could be set up at one of the meeting points such as on the A3 where hundreds of motorcyclists gather each Sunday or at one of the big trunk road lorry park facilities.

Uses

When consultation will need to cover a wide geographical area.
To reach groups in the community who would not generally attend a dedicated Highways Agency exhibition.
When time is short and there are suitable events taking place.

Potential problem

The HA might not want to be associated with certain external groups

Solution

Avoid groups with 'political' agendas. However, there is also no need to be too cautious - thus the HA could take a stall at an environmental fayre without identifying with all the views expressed.

Potential problem

Health and Safety or accessibility standards might not match HA standards

Solution

This is something to check and decide about before going ahead with any 'piggybacking' plan. At a minimum there should be access for disabled people.



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Piggybacking

Cost Ratings: Modest

Case Study: As part of the Watford “Green Zone” the County and District Councils worked in partnership with the local primary school’s annual fete. Performance art, music, a poster competition and an information stall were used along with the school’s activities to explain the concept. As a result the event attracted twice as many local people as usual and the event was pivotal in disseminating the project throughout the neighbourhood.

Civic Resolution

Description

The HA is frequently faced with conflict between different interests especially in terms of route selection. Whilst there is no perfect way of resolving such problems there are techniques which can reduce the intensity and even sometimes 'resolve' issues.

The key is to emphasise the wider civic issues throughout and also to give everyone the chance of a fair hearing.

Techniques of conflict resolution include role playing whereby people are asked to rate alternatives according to particular interests. Thus route options could be rated separately according to what is best for the local economy, for pedestrians, for children, for disabled people, for private motorists, for people in particular villages, for asthmatics, and so on. This is a good way of encouraging people to take a wider view and

understand that a final decision is never completely negative or positive for anyone. There are many other techniques such as giving points or colour coded cards to different aspects. Points systems are also useful in allowing weighting and adding up to give an overall rating for different options - although in some cases where people are lined up very strongly in separate camps it might be better not to do this.

It is also important to be open about such civic resolution processes. This can be achieved by published results in as wide a range of media as possible but also in terms of events by using transparent voting techniques and encouraging open debate. For many people, having an opportunity to put their case and have this fairly acknowledged will be enough for them to accept a final outcome even when it is not their preferred choice.



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Civic Resolution

Uses

When there are contentious issues and it is necessary to gain support for the final decision.

When there is a need to demonstrate (for example in the case of a judicial review) that there has been widespread public involvement.

Potential problem

Certain groups perceive they are excluded

Solution

Preliminary research to ensure that all views and/or groups are represented.

Potential problem

The process is 'hijacked' by a particular vociferous lobby group

Solution

If such a group exists it is important that they have the chance to express their views but

equally important to ensure that other voices are heard. It is also best not count 'votes' one by one but to list the views of different groups.

Cost Ratings: Flexible - resources for research and preparation time important.

Case Study: In Northamptonshire the villages of Crick and West Haddon were faced with choosing between different bypass routes for bypasses or traffic calming to mitigate the effects of the nearby Daventry Freight Terminal development. Via exhibitions, workshops and questionnaires, the different options were assessed and rated one by one resulting in all options 'winning' on some counts. The overall results were announced in the church or village hall and the consequent constructions accepted without major discontent.

'Planning for Real' and Temporary Infrastructure

Description

Planning for real (PFR) aims to involve, at the early planning stages, people who will be affected by proposed changes in their locality. The technique is based on the production of a three-dimensional model, to help individuals and groups visualise the impact of transport decisions on their neighbourhoods. An advantage of the PFR method is that compromise and consensus may become easier, as participants' efforts are focused on the physical model, which allows practical, non-threatening modes of interaction and a reduced tendency to confrontation.

A related technique is to create temporary infrastructure (rather than a model) which replicates as nearly as possible the proposed initiative. This enables all sections of the community to experience at

first hand the planned measures (conditions and impacts) and respond to them. The use of temporary infrastructure is particularly relevant to the implementation of local traffic management schemes. Using this approach gives scope for various innovations to be tested 'on the ground' and evaluated by residents, road users, pedestrians and others. For example:

- Short term changes to road infrastructure (mobile road humps and other traffic calming);
- Traffic priority (road signs, road narrowing);
- Changes in road function (introducing street furniture or designated lanes);
- Temporary barriers to redirect traffic flow.

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'Planning for Real' and Temporary Infrastructure

Uses

Where choice is to be made about the location, extent and/or type of transport infrastructure measure to be implemented on a local level;

Where a local consensus on infrastructure schemes is important, involving all groups in the deliberation process to resolve tensions;

Where it is important to raise awareness about proposals and their likely impacts widely across communities.

To explore options and ideas before firm measures are decided on;

To avoid unforeseen problems or issues arising after the implementation of local infrastructure schemes.

Potential problem

Events can become very crowded

Solution

Inviting different groups at different times to participate will stagger flows and staff availability.

Potential problem

The participation of people with visual and other disabilities can be marginalised

Solution

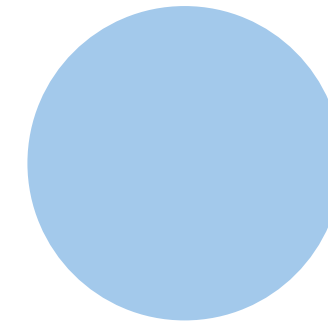
It is important to have staff and alternative material available - three dimensional models can also be helpful.



'Planning for Real' and Temporary Infrastructure

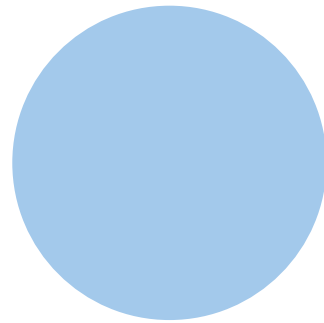
Cost Ratings: Medium - depends on how many 'events' and the models elaborateness

Case Study: Highway Engineers in Ipswich wanted to understand public views about proposed changes to traffic flows in Ipswich town centre. Local children made a model of the town and this was set up in shopping centres and local leisure events to explain the different options and ask for views. Although cheap and simple, the model was easy to understand in the context of the different options and generated a lot of interest from both children and parents.



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Video, Photography and Vox Pops

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Description

Videos and other forms of visual imaging can be an innovative and eye catching approach to information dissemination. Powerful images created through computer-aided design and simulation can illustrate the nature, scale and mechanics of a proposal or scheme. This can be an effective visual communication tool used to increase public understanding of a project as well as enabling a more informed response.

Videos and other visual representation are particularly useful when the design of a proposed transport infrastructure or traffic management strategy is complex. These representations help give people a clear sense of what is involved, and show how schemes would look and function. They can help illustrate how particular projects fit into broader based plans.

Another use of video is to enable people to 'have their say' by speaking to a video camera. This material can then be played back, shown to others or edited for a presentation.

Photography and video cameras can also be used to work with community groups to illustrate local traffic problems or to comment on views about proposed developments.

Uses

To convey complex, innovative or highly technical ideas and plans.

At meetings, exhibitions or similar events, to introduce plans, demonstrate alternative scenarios, or as a starting point for discussion.

When the audience would be more responsive to a visual image than written material, for example, young children, older persons,



Video, Photography and Vox Pops

those whose first language is not English.

Potential problem

The video presentation is too long to hold attention

Solution

This needs to be tested in advance with a sample of potential viewers. One way of overcoming the problem is to have a number of breaks between sections which are self standing.

Potential problem

The presentation is too technical

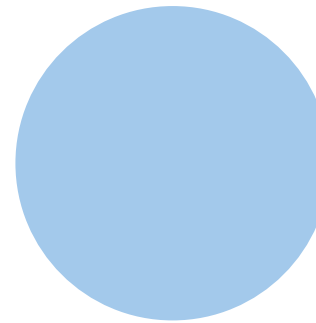
Solution

This can be avoided by involving potential users in the planning of the material.

Cost Ratings: Medium to high

Case Study 1: For discussions with local authorities in relation to the role of integrated demand management (IDM) in the widening of the M25, a video was produced showing how various IDM measures would work in typical incident occurrences or maintenance programmes. This helped to make a complex approach far more understandable and allowed a faster progression to the next stage of partnership working.

Case Study 2: To help develop a Masterplan in Hinckley and Bosworth, children and young people were given disposable cameras to photograph what they liked and disliked about the town. The images were used to inform the plan itself and also used as base line material for the study evaluation.



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Self-standing Information Sets



Description

Staff at the HA are very busy and there is a danger that stakeholder and public involvement can overwhelm. There is never a point (unlike a construction project) when it is safe to say - it's finished. Yet there is a tendency for consultation to be reactive and not properly budgeted - for example replies may be sent in detail to every single letter received.

A preferable option is to have some products available which can be sent to either individuals or groups to provide feedback in a structured manner. This can take the form of a leaflet with a questionnaire or something more interactive such as an exercise which can be carried out with a group of people.

The cumulative information can then be fed into the project consultation process as well

as forming an evidence trail of involvement.

Uses

When stakeholder and public involvement is required over a large geographical area especially where there are remote pockets.

When some groups are not mobile.

When resources are constrained.

When there is a need to increase participation amongst certain target group

Potential problem

The material can be copied and results high jacked by lobby groups

Solution

Insert unique identification to the material sent out and make it clear that this is a feature of the process.

Self-standing Information Sets

Potential problem

The presentation is too technical

Solution

This can be avoided by piloting the material with potential users.

Cost Ratings: Modest

Case Study: A game was designed for stakeholders in Worcestershire to develop priorities for waste management and conduct sustainability appraisals. This comprised a pack of background information with colour coded cards for different objectives and strategies. The pack has also been used by neighbourhood groups to carry out the exercise and the results have been compared with those of the stakeholders.

DETAILED CONSULTATION

Impact Testing (but not focus groups)



DETAILED CONSULTATION



Description

Highway projects can have significant impacts on the economic life of a neighbourhood or area, for example small firms, and these impacts may be unforeseen and unexpected by many of those who are potentially affected. A technique which addresses this problem is to invite a sample of small firms and local businesses to estimate the nature and scale of transport factors which would increase or reduce their turnover or other aspects of doing business. Such factors could include the introduction of parking restrictions, one-way schemes, by-passes, alterations to pedestrian flow etc that are associated with a new construction project.

While some impacts may be difficult to visualise, the technique may be useful in exposing local

economic aspects of a scheme which might otherwise be neglected. It may also be helpful where local businesses are run by people from ethnic minority groups which are proving hard to reach, or to engage with a proposal. A more general consultation within a local area might simply produce a series of objections, without revealing much about the underlying reasons, because people affected have not thought through the implications. The technique requires individual approaches to organisations potentially affected, and the analysis may be improved by placing it in the context of other economic data from local statistical sources.

One of the techniques sometimes associated with this approach is to use focus groups. These are used by the market research industry to understand consumer behaviour but in recent years have been

Impact Testing (but not focus groups)

overused by the public sector to gauge public opinion. The danger of this tendency is that participants are confused about whether their views are being fed into the consultation process or just used for the HAs own ends. Another problem is that focus groups are very expensive in relation to the number of people involved (typically 8-10 and costing over £1,000). It is also difficult to argue that they speak for others. Thus overall they are not very good value compared to some of the more democratic and participative techniques described in this guide.

Uses

Where local economic development is an important part of the policies being pursued by other agencies and local authorities;

Where other consultation techniques seem unlikely to reveal

the extent and nature of objections from small businesses or other organisations, such as a religious organisation, school or social centre.

Potential problem

Gaining the trust of participants - the small business is notoriously conservative

Solution

Make it clear that views will be recorded and feedback provided including why some things cannot be carried out.

Potential problem

Many of the issues raised are likely to be outside the HA's remit

DETAILED CONSULTATION



Impact Testing (but not focus groups)

Solution

Although difficult to work across organisations this problem can be overcome by partnership working and this in itself is a growing need with many HA projects.

Cost Ratings: Expensive but can be useful to tease out important potential 'show stoppers' and therefore address solutions at an early stage.

Case Study: Crossrail are working with local businesses in the Spitalfields area to minimise the disruption caused by the proposed construction works. The need to support small owner managed businesses with partnership working with training and business advisory organisations has been identified.

PUBLIC INQUIRY



To some extent the HA prefer to avoid public inquiries and the quality of the prior stakeholder and public involvement processes is a key factor in achieving this aim. However, there are many reasons why public inquiries are called and the way in which the HA relate to other participants can have an important effect on the outcome.

Encouraging attendance (at public inquiry or other major event)

A public inquiry is the opportunity for a scheme to be explained and debated in a public forum and, unlike consultation techniques in general, the outcome has a direct effect on whether and how a scheme might progress. It is important therefore that local people and organizations should understand the process and where necessary be able to participate in it. Many of the issues relating to a public inquiry will have

been exposed and considered well beforehand, but the relative weight accorded to them will not be known until the inquiry has been held and the Inspector has prepared a report.

Factors affecting the attendance at a public inquiry will be:

The choice of location - sometimes, inquiries are held a considerable distance from the site of the proposal concerned, making attendance by local people difficult. Where this occurs, it may be necessary to explore how temporary transport, or advice on transport options, could be provided for those who wish to attend;

Understanding of the significance of a public inquiry. Where local people either do not appreciate why an inquiry is being held, or may even have dismissed the outcome as a foregone conclusion,



they will be unlikely to attend. To some extent public information can help to counteract this: it may well be worth 'building in' references to the public inquiry process in earlier leaflets and communications about the scheme, so that people can see how it fits into the overall development;

Timing of the inquiry. Most inquiries are necessarily held in working hours, which makes it difficult for many working people to attend. The implications of this can be at least partly offset by encouraging local press and radio to provide regular feedback, and by encouraging local interest groups (concerned with conservation for example) to provide feedback through their network of members;

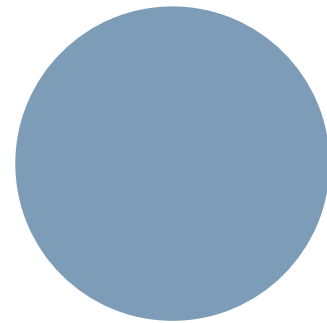
Resources needed to make an input. This may be a serious problem where large-scale

projects are at issue, and an inquiry seems likely to run for some considerable time. Charitable or voluntary bodies may be able to raise funds to help with attendance or representation at an inquiry, and it is not unknown for local authorities to assist such bodies financially; but it would be impractical for the HA to provide resources to work against its own interests. There may however be other ways in which lack of resources to attend an inquiry can be offset - see other techniques below.

PUBLIC INQUIRY



Process Advice



PUBLIC INQUIRY



The public inquiry has many features of a quasi-legal process, and these may be daunting to people who are not used to them. In the interests of achieving an outcome which is seen to be balanced and fair, there is a case for providing information and simple advice to people who may seek to participate in an inquiry. Inspectors themselves are normally sympathetic to ordinary people and interest groups who want to make their arguments directly to an inquiry, within certain limits. These include avoiding repetition of arguments already made, producing evidence and views that are relevant to the case, and not taking an undue time to make representations (i.e. no filibustering).

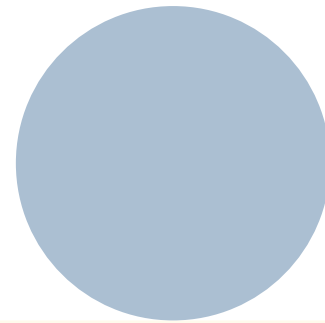
Where it appears that an inquiry is likely to attract substantial interest from individuals or groups who are not able to be professionally

represented, some advice can be given on:

- How the overall process of an inquiry works, including the role of the Inspector, the method and timing of a decision, kinds of evidence that are admissible;
- Gathering relevant information and evidence that can be put to the inquiry;
- How to present a case in a simple, economical and effective way.

There is a debate about the extent to which the HA should work with groups who wish to be represented at a public inquiry. Not all submissions are adversarial and there is value in looking at the potential for pre inquiry agreements.

Static Exhibition and Publicity



As an adjunct to other coverage in the media, it may be helpful to maintain a simple exhibition at or near where the public inquiry is taking place. This could be designed to help people understand the issues surrounding the proposed scheme and how they will be dealt with at the inquiry. Many of the same points apply as in the notes on mobile facilities - ensuring readability, clarity, and visual appeal.

On the other hand, care should be taken to avoid the impression that the exhibition is an invitation to drop into the inquiry and raise new points that have not previously been notified, or that it represents the view of a particular interest group. This means that the exhibition material should be reviewed to avoid an impression of pre-judging the outcome;

rather it should strive to give an impartial statement of the proposals, potential implications (positive and adverse) and ways of addressing these implications.

PUBLIC INQUIRY



Complaints System

Description

Many of the issues arising from the limited-term disruption caused by construction works will have been identified and addressed in the course of earlier stages in the project. In addition it is routine for the HA to insist that suppliers follow the Considerate Construction Scheme code of conduct.

Even so, it is often difficult for local people to appreciate how construction traffic, noise, diversions etc will affect them. Hence it is important for the successful delivery of the project that concerns about such matters are reported promptly and, where practicable, some mitigating measures are taken.

Without encouraging spurious complaints, it is advisable to have a mechanism in place which can receive and respond to genuine

hardships and disruptions experienced by people while construction is under way. The HA has already adopted techniques such as the 'Cones Hot-line' enabling motorists to report what appear to be unnecessary lane closures etc while motorway projects are in progress. Similar techniques can be used for other construction projects, by displaying clear notices at the site which identify who is the responsible agent to contact, in the event of a complaint (and if necessary, an indication of agencies that are not involved). It is, for example, not really helpful if complainants go direct to their MP or to the contractor's or consultant's head office if HA staff have arranged to be the receiving point for complaints.

The implications are that:

Before any publicity is given, on site or elsewhere, a designated



Complaints System

focal point needs to be agreed for receipt of complaints;

A procedure for logging complaints should be set up;

Some guidance needs to be agreed between key parties to the project (contractor, consultants, HA staff etc) on how complaints will be dealt with, and any necessary budgetary implications.

Potential problem

The supplier does not manage the construction project well and the HA is blamed

Solution

Quality control of supplier and sharing of complaints to develop strategies for dealing with the problem.

Potential problem

Complaints take a long time to deal with and/or no feedback is given

Solution

A public information linkage needs to be set up, so that people can see that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with in a prompt and reasonable way.

Potential problem

The HA may be judged by the number and trends in the incidence of complaints

Solution

Stop seeing complaints as necessarily negative - redefine and analyse as useful management information

Potential problem

Complaints about HA may not be sent to HA but to press, politicians, etc

Solution

Develop user friendly complaints systems with good feedback

CONSTRUCTION

Events to mark Progress and Opening



CONSTRUCTION

Description

Among other public communications and activities, there may be scope for public events to mark the progress of a scheme, including the start of construction, opportunities for people to view the works in progress at a safe distance, and the opening of the completed project. These can be designed partly to inform the public about the design and implementation of the scheme, and also to generate feedback. Events may also serve an educational purpose for schools, conservation groups, parish or town councillors and other local bodies. There may also be a need to inform drivers about new ways of using the trunk road system.

Events in themselves may seem peripheral to the main purpose of a project, but they can be designed

to support and enhance a variety of communication and consultation techniques in a direct and graphic way. They can be marked by a gathering of vintage vehicles, balloon ascent, charity walk, display of some kind or 'open day' at which the work of the HA and the role of the particular scheme are explained and discussed.

Uses

To maintain interest in projects, especially where there is a need for public co-operation or tolerance of disruption.

To obtain positive media coverage.

To affect behavioural change following the opening of the project.

Potential problem

Event may be 'hijacked' by politicians

Events to mark Progress and Opening

Solution

Not necessarily a problem - still goodwill for HA

Potential problem

Press may search for 'negative' stories

Solution

Prepare positive human interest stories



Case Study: The A46 Newark to Widmerpool Improvement scheme marked their Start of Works with a ceremony and an exhibition. To maximise the opportunity for all groups to attend, the exhibition was held at two venues. This helped to ensure that all members of the public could gain information to help them plan their journeys and understand the potential impact of the works. It was also an opportunity to meet with local media and key stakeholders, to thank them for their contribution to the scheme reaching this point, and remind them of the key objectives of the scheme.

CONSTRUCTION

Feedback



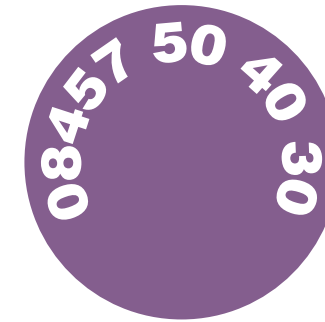
Description

At various stages in the progress of a scheme it will be essential to obtain feedback from individuals, organisations and groups. The aim should be to give local communities the opportunity to comment not only on plans, designs, route options, etc before a scheme commences, but also on aspects that may emerge as construction progresses. Feedback can be obtained in a variety of ways. This might be through a comment card, or freephone 'hotline' number - perhaps distributed in the form of a pamphlet, leaflet or poster (see separate note on these techniques) and/or it could be advertised in local media. Some organisations see complaints as part of this process and indeed encourage complaints from customers as a form of market research.

Participation in feedback needs to be made easy, with clear information about how to comment and where. As feedback is received, a system needs to be devised which records the date, time, origin and substance of the comments, and makes this accessible to people so that they can see how their reactions have been handled and, if possible, responded to. The operation of such a system is made considerably easier through the use of electronic media. Although a substantial section of the population may be catered for through a web-based approach, some consideration needs to be given to other methods (for example regular summaries in local media), so that feedback does not appear to be exclusive.

The introduction of stand-alone information lines requires very careful consideration and internal

Feedback



liaison. Consultation with Regional Communication Managers is essential before any decision on specific-specific information lines can be made.

Uses

To reassure people that their views have been considered and to explain what happened including why some suggestions were not possible.

To create interest in order to publicise the next stage of the project.

To influence subsequent behaviour - for example to correct misperceptions - such as the reason for lane closures.

Potential problem

People interpret not doing what they wanted as rejections and bias

Solution

Give reasons why their suggestions could not be incorporated.

Potential problem

It can be costly

Solution

Limit feedback to general communication techniques rather than focusing on individuals.

Cost: Modest

Case Study:

Following public consultation, the A160/A180 Port of Immingham improvements scheme developed an additional option based on feedback from members of the public. The project team worked hard to ensure that local residents from all groups understood that their feedback

had been taken onboard to develop this additional option. They also made sure that this message came across clearly in the Preferred Route Announcement leaflet, and met with Parish Councils and local media to thank them for their help in delivering this message..



Monitoring and Observation



Description

Monitoring and observing peoples' behaviour can be enlightening because their actions don't always match with their stated comments and views. The attitudes expressed do not always predict the actual behaviour. It is, therefore, useful to use Monitoring and Observation techniques to evaluate patterns of movement and assess the use of established or newly introduced routes.

Observation is a method which is much more readily available, due to the use of CCTV and traffic monitoring systems. Patterns of movement, which are hard to identify from isolated journeys, can be more readily understood when looked at cumulatively. Monitoring techniques can provide data which can be used to plan and suggest improvements to existing routes or

even to plan new routes

Uses

When it is important to access specialist local knowledge in order to improve the 'transport environment'.

In order to ensure a 'transport environment' that is both accessible and safe for all to use.

To make the most effective and efficient use of resources by understanding what is important to people.

Potential problem

Potential to fall foul of Human Rights Act and civil liberties

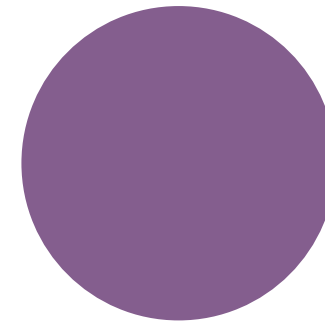
Solution

Introduce procedures and protocols to avoid non compliance..

Monitoring and Observation

Cost Ratings: Modest

Case Study: The new traffic information centre at Redhill is used by the HA and the police for incident management on all trunk roads in the south east area of the UK. Staff at the centre constantly monitor traffic with links to the BBC and blue light services. Apart from day to day management the observations and recordings can be used for crime prevention and behavioural research - for example into the effects of variable message signals.



'Passing the Parcel'



Description

Members of a selected group are asked to complete questionnaires which are used to define what they think about a particular issue. The aim is to find out what people already know, or seek public reaction to policies being developed. They can also be used to probe attitudes and allow respondents to make comments on issues. This can be useful in establishing concerns, areas of conflict and the level of support.

Once the results are known the views of one group are 'parced on' to another group for comment. This gradually builds up a larger picture and encourages each group to consider the views of others.

Uses

To get a snapshot of the opinions of a target audience on an issue or scheme early in the decision making process, or after the

implementation of a scheme.

When it is important to know the spread or strength of opinion on one or a range of options.

When it is important to have a representative picture of opinions of the whole community.

When it is important to establish the views of minority or socially excluded groups.

Potential problem

The technique may give new participants the impression that decisions have already been taken

Solution

Set out materials and forms to make it clear that this is a continuing process and give a clear indication of the programme and feedback process..

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Potential problem

Some participant groups may require a lot of support especially where the consultation involves the HA going to the group rather than the group coming to the HA

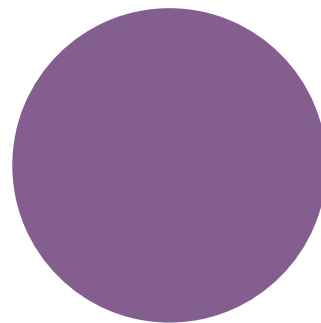
Solution

Work with partners at the group venues to provide support to the HA (e.g. teachers, voluntary groups, chambers of commerce).

Case Study: As part of the HA's Managing Integration research, elderly people attending daycentres were invited to use laptops to read about what other elderly people at other day centres had said about long distance coach travel problems and asked whether they agreed or had anything to add.



Workshops and Round-Tables



Description

Workshops and round-tables are used where the HA has a need to draw upon the ideas and suggestions from local interests or experts in order to develop solutions to a transport problem. They may be used also to help reach an agreement on the strategic vision for a transport corridor, or a set of objectives, in order to guide planning.

Workshops also play a role in making community representatives or local councillors feel involved and respected for their views. It is important in such situations that the participants are brought together for a specific purpose and not merely to air general complaints about traffic and transport problems. It may be helpful to divide participants into small groups to work through relevant issues and report back

in plenary session, because this gives a clear focus to the activity and the outputs expected. Good chairmanship and organisation will help to put the emphasis on achieving consensus and looking to the future.

The purpose of round-tables is similar, and brings together major stakeholders with differing views to develop solutions which all can support.

Uses

When it is important to work towards a community consensus with a range of local stakeholders; for example in developing objectives for a proposal or plan, or where issues are contentious (e.g. in relation to road scheme).

In situations where there is no clear preferred option for a particular transport issue and it is important to generate ideas and

Workshops and Round-Tables

perspectives within the community to inform decisions.

Potential problem

On the other hand, If an issue is contentious there is a danger that the workshop will result in highlighting divisions.

Solution

Careful planning so that separate aspects of the issue are rated individually and no overall final 'verdict' is required.

Cost Ratings: Modest - main costs incurred via need for careful recruitment. May be necessary to offer "out of pocket travel and care costs" to avoid excluding certain groups.

Case Study: In examining different routes for a new trunk road, people in villages along the route worked in small groups to rate on a scale of 1-10 the best routes for accessibility, impact on wildlife, visual intrusion, noise impact, impact on business, and so on. The different ratings were recorded and viewed overall but this was not translated into an overall decision. A summary of the results were then circulated to those involved and on a wider basis for further discussion.



Public meetings



Description

Public Meetings are, normally, largish meetings whereby information, about plans, decisions taken and options available, are presented to the public, whilst assessing their views about relevant issues. They are a conventional way of involving the public in discussion about schemes of work and projects. To present a more interactive approach a meeting can, after the initial presentation, be split into smaller discussion groups. The groups can then report back their discussions to the meeting. It is likely to lead to a better understanding on all sides and increase the chances of common ground. This approach seeks to encourage a consultative rather than confrontational attitude.

Uses

To inform the public about decisions that have been taken.

To assess public opinion about a particular issue and gauge the depth of feeling surrounding it.

To use public knowledge and awareness to identify problems and issues and invite ideas for solutions before commencing with a project.

As a way of including people in a long term consultation process.

Potential problem

If not carefully managed some attendees can cause disruption

Solution

Careful management of the process especially with tasks for all attendees built into the process can discourage such problems.

Public meetings

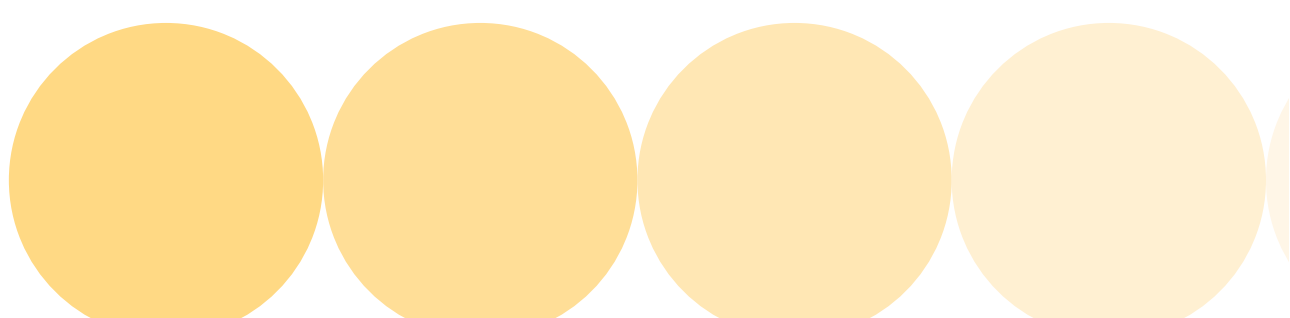
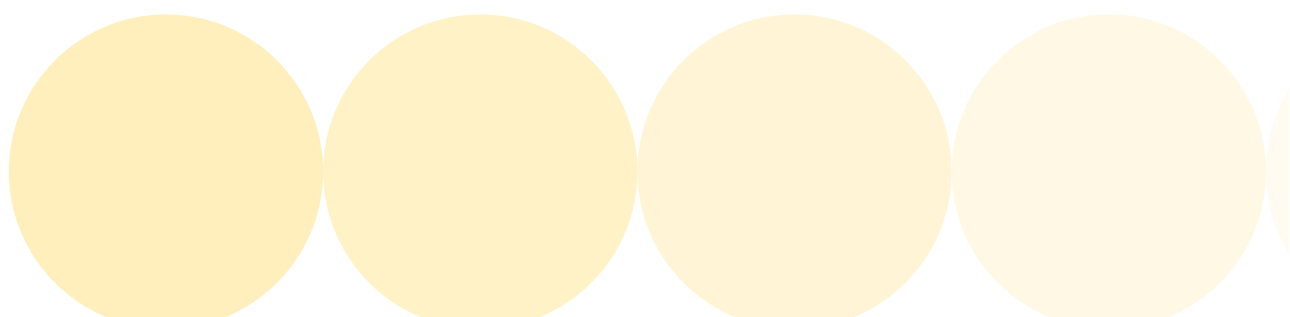
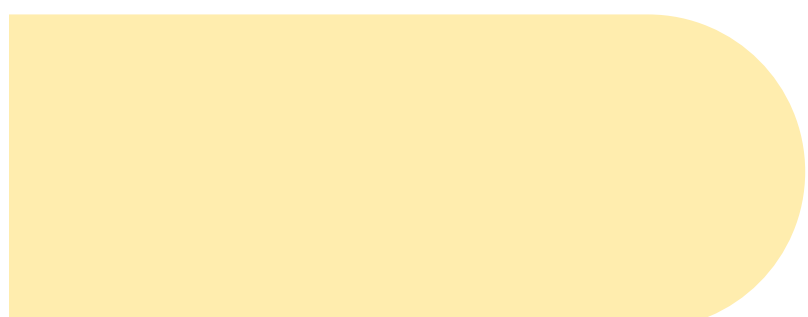
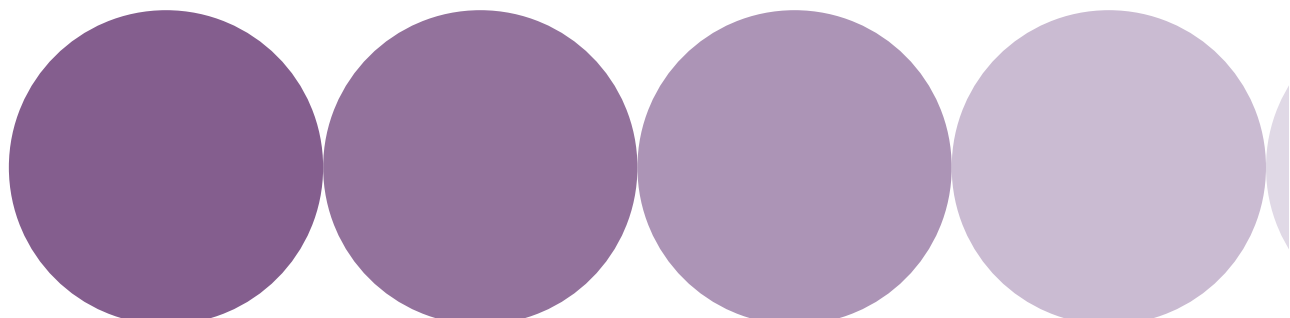
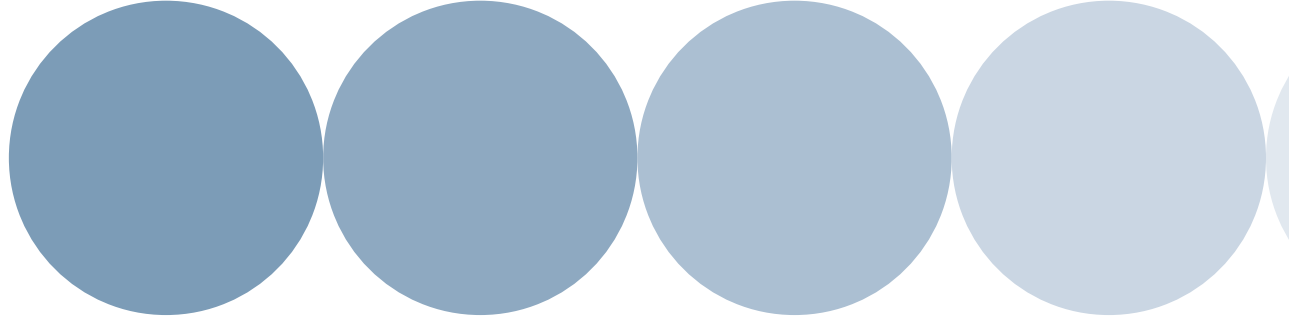
Cost Ratings: Modest

Case Study: A meeting was called in villages affected by the proposed new routes for the A391. There were clear divisions about the need for a new road in the first place especially between the relatively affluent newcomers (against a new road) and the lower income long standing local residents (in favour). Local businesses and residents of a traveller's site also had particular agendas.

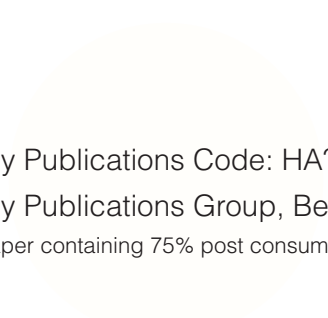
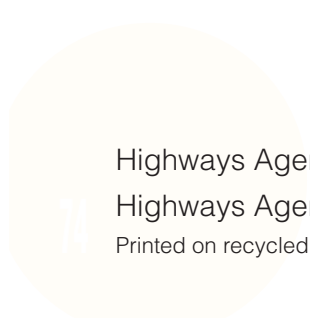
Rather than hold a traditional presentation followed by questions and answers attendees took part in a number of ten minute small group round table exercises. For each consecutive exercise membership of the groups was changed. Each round was followed by 1 minute reports back with recorded sheets amalgamated. The whole

operation was summarised at the end of the meeting and everyone agreed that their views had been recorded. A final show of hands indicated the general support for each option but it was made clear that this was not a binding vote and that the views and results of the meeting would be added to those of other village meetings.

Apart from the eventual decision (which has not yet been made due to funding problems) there was general agreement that the meetings had been worthwhile in giving everyone a chance to air their views without rancour.







Highways Agency Publications Code: HA??/06

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