# WelTAG Supplementary Guidance

## Engagement Plan

This note provides additional guidance on preparing an engagement plan that sets out how and when stakeholders will be involved throughout the WelTAG process. The guidance includes a suggested contents list for an engagement plan and a template for an engagement table`.

This is one of a series of notes that supplement WelTAG. It assumes that you have read and are familiar with WelTAG.

Please note that these supplementary guidance notes are still in development. We would welcome any feedback to [weltag@gov.wales](mailto:weltag@gov.wales).

### Guidance

If you are using WelTAG you will need to prepare an engagement plan as part of the scoping exercise.

An engagement plan sets out who, how, when and why you will engage and collaborate with different groups during the design and development of your policy, project or programme. It explains how you will incorporate the feedback you receive.

An engagement plan is a live document that should be updated as the proposed project, policy or programme progresses through the WelTAG process and stages of design.

Note that engagement is much more than simply consulting on a final proposal. It is about involving people in the design and development of a project, policy or programme, in line with the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).

Welsh Government is committed to stakeholder engagement and recognises the benefits it can bring to a study. However, engagement can be a time consuming and costly exercise and it is essential that the scale of engagement is proportionate to the proposal being considered. Planners should be clear on what will be achieved by engagement and what the most effective methods are and make sure it counts.

**Who will you engage with?**

The first step is to identify the different groups of people who you will need to engage with.

A wide range of people may potentially have an interest your potential programme, policy or project. Some may be directly involved in transport, such as:

* transport users,
* the public,
* transport organisations or providers,
* local government or Welsh Government,
* cross-border agencies involved in transport.

Others may not be directly involved, but you might need to engage with them to understand key issues or develop your project. These could include:

* people who share protected characteristics or the groups that represent them,
* specialists in other areas that your project might have an impact on, such as planning, biodiversity or heritage,
* people or organisations involved in other policy areas such as health, environment, planning or economic development.

**Why will you engage with them?**

The next step is to note why it is important to engage with each of these groups. Think about the reasons for engaging with each group, and why you need their input.

You might find it useful to map the groups in terms of their influence and interest – what is their level of interest in the project, and what is their influence on the outcome likely to be.

**How will you engage with them?**

Once you have listed main groups of people that you need to engage with, the next step is to think about how you will do that.

It can be useful to use the concept of a ‘ladder of engagement’ (originally developed by Sherry Arnstein but subsequently modified by others). It thinks about engagement in terms of different levels that go from simply telling people about what you are doing to working with people to develop a project to enabling others to community control.

**Communication**

This is the most basic level of engagement but should not be overlooked.Telling people about your project is often vital to its success. At the early stages you may need to let people know that you are thinking about you may want to announce your project, and let people know how it is going. Afterwards you might need to tell people about what it achieved. Communication strategies are also vital to keeping key stakeholders engaged with the project. You may want to raise awareness of a consultation exercise or workshops.

Think about communication, including who you want to communicate with. You also need to think about how to communicate – social media? Through the press? Are there other ways? You can tailor your communication strategy to the different levels of interest and influence that groups may have.

**Engagement**

Engagement is about talking to people to understand their concerns and issues. It should be a regular part of the work of public organisations, especially where new policies are being considered. This can be through face-to-face or online meetings and discussions, or through other means (including consultation below). You can also engage with people through more formal structures, for example by attending regular forums or meetings. Or you can set up a regular review process to engage stakeholders.

Whose views and experiences do you need to listen to and draw on for your project? How will you do that?

Note that the easiest way to engage with people is often through existing groups or networks. You can reach out to national or local networks – for example those who represent people who share protected characteristics.

**Formal consultation**

This differs from engagement in that it refers to the more formal process of capturing the views of interested groups and individuals on proposed decisions or policies, especially where there is a duty to consult. The views are gathered to inform a decision or suggest another way of doing something – the purpose of consultation is not to make the final decision. There are often statutory timescales for formal consultation. Generally Welsh Government needs to consult on new policies and programmes.

For individual transport projects consultation is particularly important where schemes will have a significant impact on local places or specific groups of people. It is important to be clear about the purpose of consultation. If a decision has already been made it may be better to inform people of that.

**Participation and co-creation**

This is where people are actively involved in service planning or policy making, from an early stage. It may be important for key stakeholders to be more directly involved in your project.

A good example of participation is setting up a project review group or steering group to help with your project. The main WelTAG guidance provides further information on project review groups.

You could also involve people more directly as part of the delivery of the project. For example, you may involve local community groups in refurbishing a station.

Co-creation is an even more active form of participation, where you enable others to play a more active role in developing and leading your project. The core principles of co-creation are Engage Design and Decide (rather than decide, announce and defend). The Five Ways of working include collaboration and involvement. It is useful to think about these when developing a strategy.

**When will you engage with them?**

You will also need to think about when you need to engage with people.

Engagement begins in the earliest stages of thinking about your project. You will need to work with the senior team in your organisation to gain their support for taking something forward. Talk to other transport groups in your area. Talk to representatives of protected groups to understand the barriers that people face in accessing transport.

The stage 0 case for change will be much stronger if you have already spoken to key people.

At **WelTAG stages 1 and 2** – developing and choosing options – engage with users, partners and affected groups around the choice of options and their impact on people.

The **WelTAG stage 3** business case should be supported by an integrated well-being appraisal that draws on the results of the consultation you have already undertaken and shows how issues such as barriers to accessibility have been addressed in the design of the scheme. The management dimension of the business case should show how some of the well-being benefits will be secured as part of the project.

If you are successful in obtaining funding for the project, it will be important to keep people informed of the outcomes of Stage 3 and what will happen next.

During **WelTAG stage 4** – the delivery of your project – there may need to be regular updates on the project, especially if there are disruptions to existing services. For large complex projects where there are further issues to be resolved there may need to be additional engagement.

The **WelTAG stage 5** annual performance report or final evaluation should report on how feedback shaped the project and what benefits were delivered and to whom.

**What will you do with the feedback?**

Engagement is often seen as a tick-box exercise. This is a waste of time for both the team leading the project and people providing feedback or input or working directly with the project team. As well as thinking about why you need to engage with different groups you also need to commit to making use of the information or feedback. This does not mean acting directly on all feedback, but it does mean being open to challenge, and being prepared to change or rethink a project in the light of feedback. Your engagement plan should state how you will make use of the feedback.

**Formal consultation**

As noted above, consultation is a more formal process involving issuing a document and asking for feedback on it. It is an important particularly for major schemes or new policies. However, engaging with key partners during the design process can often be a more effective way of taking different concerns into account.

### Further reading

The field of community planning and engagement is a rapidly developing one with new tools and resources emerging all the time.

**Active Travel Act**

Model Engagement Report

<https://www.gov.wales/active-travel-act-guidance-model-engagement-report-appendix-d>

**Keep Cardiff Moving**

This website includes examples of engagement during the development and delivery of transport projects.

<https://keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk/project/cardiff-road-user-payment-scheme/>

**National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales**

<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/resources/national-principles-for-public-engagement-in-wales/>

**Community planning**

This website sets out principles, methods and scenarios to assist in community planning. There is also a useful toolbox and other resources.

<http://www.communityplanning.net/useful/toolbox.php>

### Template: suggested contents list for an engagement plan

This is a suggested list of the topics to include in an engagement plan. This list is not definitive – adapt it to suit the requirement of your project, policy or programme.

The key things are to identify who you are going to engage with, why, when and how, and what you will do with feedback.

Your engagement plan will develop or change over the of the project, so it needs to be a live and evolving document.

There is also an engagement plan checklist in the WelTAG supplementary guidance on checklists. The checklist can be used by a review group to read through an engagement plan to check that it covers key topics.

**Background and context**

* explain where you are in the WelTAG process and the purpose of engagement,
* summarise the key points in the case for change (or attach it to the plan),
* note who has written or developed the plan and who has been involved.

**Previous engagement**

* note any previous stakeholder engagement around this or related projects, and what you have learned from it (for example, if the route has been identified on an active travel network map – describe any engagement around developing that map)

**Who you will engage with**

* identify the different stakeholders groups and why you need to engage with them,
* explain how you will engage with them (use the table if easier) setting out different methods and the purpose of that engagement,
* if you are setting up a Project Review group, note the proposed membership, terms of reference and role,
* describe any project check-in or progress update requirements with, for example, Transport for Wales, Welsh Government or project partners, and any timetables and milestones,
* describe any other engagement requirements, for example, collaborating with project partners.

**Equality, diversity and ethical issues**

* note any equality requirements, including how you will engage with groups who share protected characteristics,
* identify any particular requirements, such as meeting Welsh language standards or providing information in more accessible formats for different groups and ensuring engagement events are accessible,
* identify any ethical issues around, for example, information sharing.

**Results**

* explain how you will use and respond to any feedback including how the feedback will shape the design of any future programme, policy or project.

**Timescale**

* set out the programme of work and timetable for engagement with different groups.

**Risks**

* note any risks that you are aware of and how they might be addressed.

**Next steps**

* explain what happens next.

**Other information**

* provide any other relevant supporting information.

### Template: project or programme engagement table

This table is simply designed to help you get started on thinking about who you need to engagement, why and how. Adapt it to the needs of your policy, project or programme.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who will you engage with (right)**  **How will you engage with them (below),**  Explain why you need to engage and when you will do so | **Specialist Groups**  eg wildlife groups, health bodies, | **Groups who represent people with protected characteristics** | **The public**  People who live in the local area or region | **Transport user groups**  Bus, rail, road  active travel | **Key transport bodies** eg  Network Rail  TFW, community transport providers | **Government**  town councils, local authorities, Welsh Government, cross border agencies |
| **Delivery partner** – potentially directly involved in delivering elements of the project |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Internal steering group** – key players from within your organisation or partner organisation who need to get together frequently |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Project Review group** – who needs to be on the group who meet regularly to oversee project delivery and milestones |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Formal consultation**- do you need to consult formally and if so with whom? How will you deal with language and other accessibility requirements? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Face-to-face meetings** – groups or people that you need to engage with individually |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Communications** – do you need to issue a regular bulletin or social media updates to key people and if so, who do you need to target? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Attend meetings –** is there an opportunity for you to attend their regular group meetings to update them on the project and ask for feedback |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other -** are there other ways to engage with people perhaps through events, social media or other activities? |  |  |  |  |  |  |