

Connect2 Handbook: A Guide for Steering Groups

Community Involvement



Photograph: The Community of Newtownabbey walk the Connect2 route with 'Considerate Contractor'

Community Involvement is the process in which local communities and individuals become engaged in the decision making, design and management of projects.

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all. Sustrans is the charity behind the award winning National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It, TravelSmart, Active Travel, Connect2 and Liveable Neighbourhoods, all projects that are changing our world one mile at a time.

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1.1. Background

In December of 2007, Sustrans Connect2 won the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks: The Peoples' Millions competition. A total of £50 million was secured in a public vote, beating the competition from three other exciting proposals; the Eden Project, Sherwood Forest and the Black Country as an Urban Park.

In the subsequent analysis of the vote it was revealed that Connect2 was the one project which had the widest support from local communities and it was this factor that enabled Connect2 to win an astonishing 42% of the public vote.

Community Involvement (C.I) was the key to winning the competition and will also be the key to the success of the UK wide Sustrans' Connect2 Project.

From the beginning, Connect2 schemes have been community based and Sustrans role has been to ensure that, the community's views and expertise are included alongside those of the local professionals, politicians and other stakeholders.

Crucially, your community's involvement in Connect2 remains a vital component in the continuing development and successful implementation of the scheme.

This chapter is designed to help your Connect2 Steering Group understand the role of effective Community Involvement in delivering a successful Connect2 scheme.

1.2. What do we mean by Community Involvement?

If partner organisations can engage with the community, local people will take ownership of the project and will use Connect2 in great numbers.

Successful Community Involvement requires a focal point for activity and a Steering Group is a good way to ensure that the local community is active at all stages of the Connect2 journey. Steering Groups can be involved in planning the route, be consulted over design and construction, and can participate in openings and on-going usage promotion.

1.3. What are the benefits of Community Involvement?

Community Involvement and the development of a Steering Group are vital components in increasing support from a wide range of groups and agencies. This can ensure that:

- The local community owns the scheme.

- Once land acquisition is finalised the community are involved in concept and design stages.
- Promotional opportunities are realised during the planning and launch stages
- Volunteers will be more eager to help maintain and promote the route in the future
- Support is mobilised for outstanding planning applications
- That there is local awareness of healthy and environmentally friendly active travel
- Usage of the scheme is maximised
- The scheme has a long term future.

1.4. The role of a Connect2 Steering Group

In order to fulfil the Big Lottery Funds criteria Community Involvement is an essential element of schemes and the development of a working Steering Group is integral within the Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) signed between Sustrans and the Lead Partners.

A Steering Group consists of individuals and stakeholders who are involved in, advising upon and practically supporting the delivery of your Connect2 scheme.

The Steering Group should be a central component to your Connect2 scheme. Your Steering Group will ensure that Connect2 meets its objective of:

Increasing levels of walking and cycling and measure that change over the five year period of Connect2 funding.

Involving communities in planning and delivering schemes that enable people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.

Identifying and implementing opportunities to integrate Connect2 with other successful sustainable transport projects and initiatives.

Steering Groups should refer to Appendix 1: Schedule 5 of the Memorandum of Understanding when using this guide.

Steering Group Membership...

A Steering Group should ideally consist of 8 – 12 individuals who are focussed on delivering the scheme. There should be a **core membership** to your Steering Group:

- Lead Project Officer (already agreed and normally from the Local Authority)
- Representative from Sustrans.
- Skilled Chairperson
- Scheme 'champion' – senior/ high level and influential local person e.g. Lead Environment or Transport Elected Member.

- Local Authority Community Development Officer
- Local Authority Communications / PR Officer.
- A Community Voice – an individual representing the local community.

In addition to the core membership there will be other local stakeholders specific to your scheme who could be drawn from, but not limited to, the following backgrounds;

Community Organisation Representatives, Play Department and Youth Services, Local Authority ‘Technical’ Representative: Cycling / Traffic / Bridge / Highways Engineer, Local Schools and Colleges, School Travel Advisor / Sustrans’ Bike It Officer, Cycling and Walking Groups (e.g CTC, Ramblers Association etc), Partner Organisations such as British Waterways or Network Rail, representatives from local businesses and large local employers, Sustrans’ Supporters, Volunteer Rangers and other volunteers, representatives of special interest group for example Wildlife, Heritage and Sport.

If there are committed individuals whose background compliments the above list, they should still be considered as a member of the Steering Group.

Use the following table to help you identify your Steering Group:

Steering Group Member	Name
1. Lead Project Officer	
2. Sustrans Representative	
3. Chairperson	
4. Local Champion	
5. LA Community Development Officer	
6. LA Communications / PR Officer	
7. Community Voice	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
Occasional Attendees?	
13.	
14.	

Other individuals / community members or organisations with an interest in your scheme should be copied into the notes of meetings and invited to attend on occasion where appropriate.

Sub Groups

If your Steering Group has the appropriate skills and experience you could, following discussion with your lead partner organisation, consider forming sub-groups to focus on specific work areas such as Technical and Design, Community Events or Public Relations – this may help to optimise members’ time and capabilities.

If you have a Steering Group in place already then it should be reviewed with careful consideration now that the emphasis of the group will be changing from vote-winning to implementing the scheme and ensuring usage promotion in the longer term.

Steering Group formalities...

In order to best support the project, your Steering Group might wish to:

- Establish a Terms of Reference (see appendix one) outlining the roles of members and key tasks
- Establish a formal reporting structure to meet quarterly and feed back outcomes to Sustrans and the Local Lead Agency

1.5. Community Involvement Standards

The table on the following two pages can be photocopied and used by your Steering Group in order to be able to review your schemes progress in delivering the Community Involvement element of Connect2. Sustrans' Community Connector representative can give further guidance on how to meet the standards.

Note: In the unlikely event of your schemes not being able to satisfy the Community Involvement Standards the Sustrans Project Management team will continue discussion and development work, but may place schemes 'at risk' or deem some schemes unable to meet the criteria and therefore ineligible for Connect2 funding.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT: WORKSHEET TO ASSIST STEERING GROUPS REVIEW STANDARDS

	STANDARD	COMMENT/ACTION	X	?	√
GOVERNANCE Essential	1	Connect2 Steering Group formed and in operation			
	2	Chairperson and "champion" appointed and acting			
	3	Membership representative of: ~ LA/statutory stakeholders ~ Community organisations ~ Volunteers			
	4	Steering Group (and sub groups) meetings held			
	5	MoU, detailed plans and costed schedules received/commented upon/supported			
	6	Reports to Sustrans for BIG and lead agency received/commented upon/supported			
Best Practice	7	Terms of reference formally adopted			
	8	Networking/"championing" C2 and other wider modal shift/Sustrans type programmes			
	9	Community capacity building encouraged			
	10	Contribute to concept and detailed design stages			
TECHNICAL/ DESIGN Essential	11	Support adoption of agreed Standards(Ref. Schedule 4)			
	12	Arrange community participatory event/s in planning route			

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT: WORKSHEET TO ASSIST STEERING GROUPS REVIEW STANDARDS
continued...

Best Practice	13	Formal comment by Steering Group on final design				
	14	Ensure "considerate contractor" community liaison arrangements				
COMMUNICATION/ PARTICIPATION Essential	15	Arrange community participatory event/s in Public Art planning				
	16	Contribute to C2 website				
	17	Contribute to C2 newsletter				
	18	Community planning participatory event/s publicised				
	19	Participation in regional events and annual national video conference				
	20	Local C2 scheme leaflet/poster produced				
	21	Official opening event/s organised and promoted				
Best Practice	22	Volunteers involved eg Sustrans				
LEGACY Essential	23	Maintenance standards adopted and adhered to				
	24	Ongoing promotional events planned (inc. C2 Day)				
	25	Route usage monitoring programme introduced				
Best Practice	26	C2 adopted as part of Local Cycle Network plan				
	27	Volunteers involved in promotions and Ranger scheme				

1.6. Community Events

Why have events?

Events form an integral part of Connect2. They are the mechanism for ensuring community involvement and celebrating the ultimate success of your project. An opening / launch event will be the opportunity to celebrate being part of the UK wide Connect2 community that promises to be at the vanguard of social change.

Steering Groups should support the delivery of participatory events while Sustrans' will provide advice and support in addition to Connect2 Day event materials.

Planning your community events

Your events will focus upon engaging the local community at key stages of the project. Participatory events could be organised for:

- A community participatory event involving finalising / "road testing" design aspects of the scheme (this will be subject to the current status of your local Connect2 scheme).
- A community participatory event involving Public Arts planning
- A community participatory event for scheme launch / opening
- A community participatory event for Connect2 Day and / or on-going usage promotion

Connect2 Day

Effective ways to raise awareness of your Connect2 scheme include talking to local people, using displays and literature in public areas and running events.

Nationally, there will be an annual Connect2 Day in June / July each year designed to celebrate progress across all 79 Connect2 projects until all schemes are completed in 2013. This will run alongside Sustrans' national campaign 'Change Your World' Week which is scheduled for 29 June – 4 July in 2009. Change Your World encourages people to swap a car trip during Change Your World Week.

Change Your World will complement your scheme and make it easier for people to swap their car journey for a sustainable mode of travel – Sustrans' will help by providing postcards, posters and other tools to help promote your event.

Sustrans will provide support for Steering Groups planning events for Connect2 Day and will also provide Connect2 events materials. To gain public support for Connect2 Day you may consider:

- Organising rides and walks
- Producing an event leaflet
- Taking advantage of existing community events or regular meetings to plug Connect2 and Connect2 Day
- Presenting to community groups

- Placing posters in local amenities e.g. hairdressers, cafes, pubs etc
- Public Displays in Libraries, Leisure Centres, GP's and Hospitals, Council Offices etc
- Distributing information via charities and other local organisations e.g. Wildlife Trust, Women's Institute, Scouts, Big Issue vendors etc.
- Arranging School visits using School Travel Advisors and / or Sustrans' Bike It Officers.
- Featuring your event in the Local press
- Using Council organised Health events / initiatives
- Producing a calendar

Event Ideas

Your Steering Group should consider events that meet people's needs, are accessible and entertaining. Even if your Connect2 scheme is not fully in place you can still use an event to generate excitement for its impending arrival and use the project site for your event location – this will provide a fantastic opportunity to engage with local media and thrust your project back into the spotlight.

The nature and purpose of your event will be significantly different if your project has been completed; the emphasis should then turn to promoting usage and increasing levels of use year on year.

1.7. The role of volunteers

Your Steering Group may wish to consider how volunteers get involved in your Connect2 scheme in order to help look after and promote the project.

Volunteers can.....

- get or keep in touch with the Local Authority Project Lead and/or Sustrans Regional Director or Area Manager to assist with your local scheme
- be invited to sit on the local Steering Group or to feed back views on the scheme to the Steering Group as part of working up the detailed design
- support the organisation of or take part in any “planning for real” type events as part of pre publicising and road testing the final design
- as part of the work of the local Steering Group, offer to take part in liaison arrangements with contractors during the construction phase.
- help plan the ultimate launch event along with other follow up events promoting on-going use.
- support the promotion of the scheme by supporting the submission of articles in the Connect2 newsletter and the development of website material while helping with distributing launch promotional material and assisting with on-going usage promotion.

- help to maintain the finished route and lobby for more support to deliver aspirational routes beyond Connect2 funding.

1.8. Resources and Communication

Sustrans provides an active communications and promotions programme to assist in informing and involving local communities. This includes:

- A dedicated Press Officer
- A dedicated Marketing Executive
- A dedicated Community Involvement Manager
- The Sustrans Connect2 Website
- An annual Connect2 Conference
- Updates and twice yearly Connect2 newsletter
- Community Involvement workshops
- An array of promotional materials for individual schemes, events and publications, including logos, templates images, banners and flags.

Links

www.sustransconnect2.org.uk

As the Connect2 projects evolve guidance will be updated via the Connect2 site and available for download to supplement and / or replace this document.

www.changeyourworld.org.uk

The Sustrans' Change Your World campaign can be the focal point of your Connect2 Day.

www.cdf.org.uk

020 7833 1772 Information from the government funded Community Development Foundation (Local Community Involvement: A Handbook for Good Practice – available for purchase)

1.9 Appendix One

SCHEDULE 5: Terms of reference for a steering group and key aspects of community engagement

Objectives of (name of scheme):

- to increase levels of walking and cycling and measure that change over the five year period of Connect2 funding.
- *to involve communities in planning and delivering schemes* that enable people to choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.
- to identify and take opportunities to integrate Connect2 with other successful sustainable transport projects and initiatives

Roles of the Steering Group:

- to ensure strong local stakeholder and community involvement in advising and practically supporting (name of organisation) and Sustrans in supporting the implementation of and adherence to the joint Memorandum of Understanding as the basis for planning, designing and building, and sustaining the maintenance, promotion, usage and evaluation of the (name of scheme). Tasks are as follows:

Governance/accountability:

- Establish and agree a Terms of Reference outlining the tasks of the Steering Group and roles of its members.
- Ensure that the Steering Group establishes and supports formal reporting/ accountability arrangements to both the appropriate local authority (or other lead agency), committee and the national Sustrans Connect2 programme.
- Consider the merits of possibly establishing sub groups to use members' time and capabilities more effectively e.g. Technical and Design, Community Involvement and PR.

Stakeholder Involvement:

- Identify and involve an appropriate and representative range of key local stakeholders including members of the community
- Appoint an experienced and committed Chairperson, and ensure Steering Group servicing and regular working arrangements
- Ensure that a high level "champion" is nominated and acts as and when appropriate in progressing the scheme. (For example, the Chair, senior officer, lead elected member, or appropriate local resident or volunteer.)

Community involvement:

- Encourage the identification and involvement of interested members of the local community including Sustrans' and other volunteers
- Develop agreed roles (as part of the Terms of Reference) and tasks for the community representatives to undertake

Networking/additionality:

In order to optimise the impact of the BIG Peoples Millions and the matched funding invested by (name of organisation), the Steering Group will:

- Link Connect2 to other key national, regional and local policies, provision and programmes.
- Seek to attract additional resources in order to further develop Connect2 aspirational plans and/or other local forms of sustainable transport.