Considering inclusion in construction

INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY
AID TO BEST PRACTICE

Our objective is to support contractors, to consider the effects and social impact on our communities and customers during construction.

This document is aimed at those who are responsible for project delivery during the construction phase and is intended to act as a prompt to ensure people with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected by actions carried out during this time.

BACKGROUND

Considering Inclusion in Construction was identified through consultation and gap analysis as part of the Disability Awareness in Construction project.

This project stems from a Major Project scheme – A63 Castle Street in Hull – in which traditional public consultation guidelines were followed but poor feedback was received afterwards, specifically from representatives of disability groups. In order to improve the approach towards considering inclusion during construction, a new workshop was held with full engagement of these groups. as this proved to be successful Jacqui Allen (the previous RIP North Director) decided to capture this best practice and roll it out across its upcoming schemes.

A working group consisting of Highways England, Costain, Morgan Sindall, Balfour Beatty, BDV Recovery and Skanska was set up to review the impact of construction projects during development and delivery.

It was agreed this work would be separate but compatible with the work being undertaken on the consultation and design.

The document was circulated to various interest groups and Ian Streets (Accessibility Consultant), Hull access improvement group, Rights and Equality Sandwell and West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre all provided constructive comments that have been incorporated into the final draft.

SCOPE

This guide should be read alongside the Disability Awareness Group Toolkit concerning engagement with disabled groups and design in permanent works solutions. This guide is intended for constructors to consider the impact their work has on our neighbours and communities, and in particular those with protected characteristics.

The scope of this guide is to:

- Drive correct behaviours on sites.
- Share best practice for process development and solutions
- Promote a consistency of approach across Highways England Major Projects Operations.
- Raise the Bar in our considerations of and interactions with neighbours and communities using and living alongside the strategic road network.

It will focus on diverse needs in relation to the following:

- Access/Egress
- Who is being cut off and what from
- Diversions
- Breakdown & Recovery
- Construction activities vs time of year
- Impact on local road network
- How to communicate and engage

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Equality Act requires public bodies to evidence how they show due regard to equalities. Although the Act is non prescriptive about how consideration of these aspects are recorded, Highways England require an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is completed and that it should be reviewed and updated at all the scheme stages. This document assumes that an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has already been carried out and any vulnerable populations (those customers and communities with protected characteristics) affected by the design have been mitigated against. However, the EqIA should be revisited at others stages particularly where there a possibility of further impacts for protected groups.

This guidance is in addition to any mitigating actions identified within an EqIA.

PEOPLE WILL STILL NEED TO GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES EVEN THOUGH CONSTRUCTION WORK IS ONGOING AND THEREFORE CONSIDERATION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE MOTORISED OR NON-MOTORISED USERS ACCESSING THEM.

HOW CAN WE BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR?

By taking a social model approach to understanding disability, we will strive to eliminate or minimise the negative impacts and barriers that disabled people often experience. So we will actively look at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices. Similarly, by ensuring the built environment is safe, accessible and inclusive we can also meet some of the key components to providing a 'lifetime neighbourhood'.

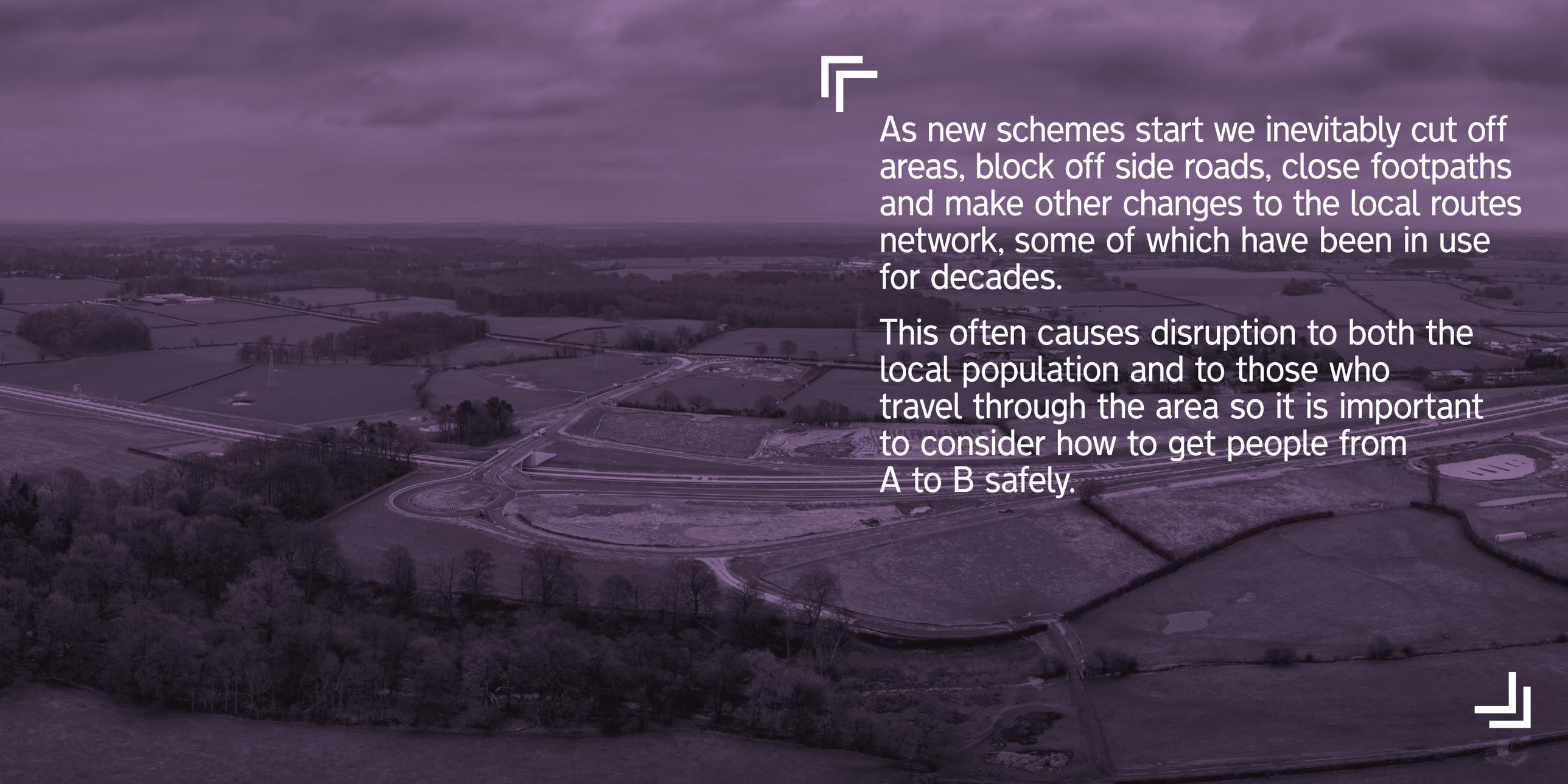
No two construction projects are exactly the same with design, size, capacity, utilities, location and orientation often varying. Large projects can also involve extensive land disturbance and reshaping topography. When arriving in a new area it is always important to consider the environment and the local population. As new schemes start we inevitably cut off areas, block off side roads, close footpaths and make other changes to the local routes network, some of which have been in use for decades.

This often causes disruption to both the local population and to those who travel through the area so it is important to consider how to get people from A to B safely.

Initial surveys, assessments and strategies will be required to change local routes. The planning of the works is essential as well as knowing who uses them and what businesses and establishments are affected. Knowledge of which routes will change and how they will change throughout the project is crucial especially when dealing with the general public in order to ensure messages are clear and disruption kept to a minimum.

The treatment of a rural area will be different to that of an urban area as will the management of an aging population to one with a high density of families.

Once construction commences, the initial assessment and management strategies should be reviewed. Inspection and monitoring will identify new issues or when there are changes to the project. People will still need to go about their daily lives even though construction work is ongoing and therefore consideration needs to be given to the motorised or non-motorised users accessing them. The EQIA will be essential to informing all of this.



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WHAT DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER?

There are a number of things that need to be considered prior to beginning any construction works, these include but are not limited to;

1. Do we know the position of underground services which could be impacted or damaged by the works and which have the potential to cause disruption to the local residents, and have these positions been highlighted and recorded for the construction team
2. Have we chosen the most efficient construction methodology which takes into account the requirements of the design, site constraints and available resources and safety
3. Have the appropriate authorities been advised when construction work will start, and have neighbours and others who will be impacted by the work been consulted with/notified of the potential disruption and/or impacts

WHO AND WHAT IS NEARBY?

Within the local or surrounding area, there may be community facilities, groups and people with diverse needs who will be affected during the construction life cycle.

Things such as schools, faith buildings, care homes, businesses and residents with specific needs will all need considering. Collecting and analysing demographic data, engaging with the public, speaking to the local authorities, parish councils, holding pre-start exhibitions and community drop-in events will all assist in developing understanding about any specific issues in each area. Additional information can be obtained from community groups or specialist charities that focus on specific characteristics. It may also alert you to traffic passing through the area for strategic or even local journeys, footpaths or bridleways and help identify whether proposed alternatives would be suitable for prolonged periods of time.

Using the Equality Diversity Inclusion Tool (EDIT) a Project Control Framework product, EqIA and any Non-Motorised User reports (if relevant) will provide much of the information suggested above. The local authority may also have more detailed demographic data that can be used.

ACCESS AND EGRESS

Access and egress is a specific form of accessibility. It includes footpaths, corridors, doorways, gates, steps etc., which provide a means of entering or leaving somewhere and needs to be suitably constructed, kept free from obstruction and to be well maintained.

There may be reduced access and egress whilst works are being undertaken which may impact in the following ways:

- → People having to pre-plan alternative routes.
- → Diversions to local bus routes and other forms of public transport.
- → Changes to the accessibility of safe crossing places.

THINGS SUCH AS SCHOOLS, FAITH BUILDINGS, CARE HOMES, BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS WILL ALL NEED CONSIDERING.

EXAMPLES OF WHERE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS WILL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED ARE SHOWN IN THE TABLE:

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	ISSUE	MITIGATION
Age	Younger children having to learn new routes. Changes to the accessibility of safe crossing places. The onset of daylight saving hours may mean that areas near works are more dangerous for children walking to and from schools. Within areas where there are elderly residents, routes to bus services and other local facilities may be further away.	Any temporary footpaths need to be completed so that they accommodate wheelchairs. Ensure recovery teams consider the needs of diverse road users. Signage and communications tested with a variety of stakeholders covering all relevant groups before implementation.
Disability	There may be reduced access to routes that may impact upon groups with mobility difficulties such as access to crossing places. Disabled drivers or drivers with disabled passengers may need specific recovery assistance in a breakdown situation. People with learning difficulties may be unfamiliar with different layouts to the normal routes they take to travel whilst works are being undertaken. People with other disabilities that may not be visibly apparent such as people with mental health conditions need also to be considered.	Any temporary footpaths need to be completed so that they accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility aids. Ensure recovery teams consider the needs of diverse road users. Signage and communications tested with a variety of stakeholders covering all relevant groups before implementation.
Pregnancy & Maternity	There may be an impact on people who use buggies and prams – the reduction of dropped kerbs etc. may mean there are fewer safe stopping places.	Consideration to implementation of crossings or other means of support for vulnerable road users.
Race	Consideration needs to be given if first language is not English and that there is suitable communication to meet language need.	In cases where English is not a first language, engaging with local groups may help to identify how to communicate messages including the use of images or interpretation for letter drops and communications regarding any changes.
Religion or Belief	There may be impacts on access to places of worship where those establishments are near works and there may be reduced access.	Particular religious groups may hold meetings or festivals on specific days/times of the year and therefore short-term road closures could be planned to maintain access during these periods. Liaising with religious leaders can ensure minimum disruption

ENSURING ACCURATE AND TIMELY INFORMATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE EMERGENCY SERVICES, ACCOMMODATING INCIDENT RESPONSE TIMES WHERE POSSIBLE.

Other groups of people with protected characteristics to consider include gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and sex. At the time of developing this guidance it was considered that there may not be issues that would adversely impact upon someone with these particular protected characteristics. However, any new project must ensure that they consider all of the above. Regular monitoring of information and queries received from the local community should be undertaken and where any issues are identified, appropriate action is taken to mitigate any impact.

Other factors that need to be considered include things such as but are not exclusive to:

Schools
planning works around holiday and peak drop off/pick up times.

Care homes
ensuring works accommodate need for visitors, emergency services, deliveries.

Emergency services
ensuring accurate and timely information is made available – accommodating incident response times where possible.

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IMPACT ON LOCAL ROAD NETWORK: DIVERSIONS

When assessing potential diversion routes the team should not only look at the shortest possible route but also the most suitable for all users. It is important to understand that when closing a carriageway traffic can only be diverted onto a similar class route as the one being closed. For example, when closing an 'A' road traffic must be diverted along other 'A' roads, they cannot be diverted onto a motorway in order to ensure those drivers not permitted to use motorways do not do so. Additionally, when closing 'A' roads you should avoid using 'B' roads as they may not be suitable for larger vehicles.

The below list is by no means conclusive but is a useful aid when planning diversions that could impact on customers and communities:

- Consider impact on non-motorised users
- Consider measures required to prevent incursions.
- Consider impact on all businesses and properties on both carriageway closed and diversion route.
- Consider most appropriate route, not simply the shortest including how much time and distance is added to journeys.
- Consider impact on area around chosen diversion route.
- Ensure a scheme board with contact details visible where required.
- Ensure Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) process is adhered to, liaise and consult with Local Highway Authorities/Highways England to ensure timescales are met
- Ensure minimum two week notice given to road users but where possible give further advance notification particularly when the level of disruption will be major or severe.
- Utilise all modern technology wherever this will improve communications with and for road users
- Notifications to roadworks.org and trafficengland.com

Ensure that stakeholders/interested parties are aware of diversion route and communicated using a variety of channels including both local radio and press. It is essential to notify people who may use the current route daily as well as those living nearby. Be clear about what and where is being impacted by the works and include the name of roads/area as well as road/junction number.

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ROAD & FOOTPATH CLOSURES

Where footways and pedestrian areas are affected by road/street works, it is your responsibility to ensure pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians passing the works are safe. This means protecting them from both the works and passing traffic.

If the minimum footway requirement cannot be maintained, then consultation with the Local Highway Authority is required to provide/process footpath closures and/or public rights of way closures. This process can take up to 12 weeks so careful consideration must be given with regards to the construction programme.

Once the revised route has been agreed walk the route, discover what is there, and conduct a mini access audit paying attention to mobility, visual and learning difficulty impairments. Ensure there is clear signage and lighting throughout the route for both motorised and non-motorised users. Any temporary paths need to have firm and even surfaces and be aware of temporary ramp gradients for different users. Ensure the change in path level/ramp is clearly marked.

When deciding any new crossing places consideration should be given to the number and type of pedestrians who may use it and need to be similar to what has been removed. Any replacement drop kerbs should meet all design standards relating to drop kerbs.

If changes will impact bus services, work with the bus companies on changes to routes and bus stops. Temporary bus stops should have raised kerbs for access to bus. Providing directions and useful information would also be helpful if the bus stop has moved.

BREAKDOWN AND RECOVERY

Vehicles that are incapacitated due to a breakdown or accident in roadworks carry a high risk of causing danger to their occupants, other road users and potentially to the workforce. They are also very likely to cause traffic congestion, and therefore the use of a dedicated and unhindered vehicle recovery service is recommended as a means to reduce these risks.

When assessing vehicle recovery provision, a number of factors should be taken to ensure that the diverse needs of customers are met, and to reduce the risks associated with breaking down at roadworks. Consider the length of the area covered in relation to the location of the recovery service base(s). Consider the number and type of recovery units that are to be provided, along with the drop-off area and the provisions available. Most importantly, establish the means of identifying the vehicle in need of recovery.

A useful tool to aid in the design of the recovery service can be found in Chapter 8 of the manual, Part 1 Design (D3.35), which covers these points in detail.

The vehicle recovery service needs to be able to accommodate diverse people's needs so that no group or individual is discriminated against. The scheme and recovery provider should have a recovery plan in place with detailed systems to ensure that from the point of engagement until being dropped off, all occupants are treated equitably and that the health, safety and welfare of those occupants is at the forefront of that plan. This also needs to take into account safety and welfare at the drop off locations.

Special consideration needs to be made as to how a motorist (or passenger) with a disability who has broken down or has been involved in an incident can be accommodated by the scheme. This consideration should not just focus on the recovery element, but also on the location and facilities of the dedicated drop off area, including making sure that 24/7 access can be provided and full facilities that cater for their needs are met.

When planning the recovery service contact Disabled Motoring UK on 01508 489444, who can offer specific guidance to the scheme, and provide information to its members as the scheme progresses.

As a guide, the drop off area should offer a safe environment and have as a minimum:

- → Security
- → Disabled access points
- → 24/7 welfare provisions including access to a free drinking water supply
- → Access to disabled toilets
- → Seating area and space large enough to accommodate motorised wheel chairs
- → Access to a phone

Though there is no requirement in the Equality Act for recovery vehicles to be physically altered to make them accessible for disabled people, a recovery service must consider how it will accommodate differing people's needs including sourcing an accessible taxi or similar. For guidance on minimum suitability requirements of the recovery provider, the following documents should be consulted:

1. Pas 43:2015
2. National Highway Sector Scheme 17

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DURING THE DRIER SUMMER MONTHS CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY OFTEN INCREASES AND THE CONSTRUCTION TEAMS WORK LONGER HOURS. DURING WINTER THE WORKING HOURS ARE OFTEN REDUCED.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF YEAR

Weather and seasonal variations have two distinct influences on construction. During the drier summer months construction activity often increases and the construction teams work longer hours. During winter the working hours are often reduced. The seasons have an effect on transport of staff, materials, waste, deliveries and workforce car parking which can all disturb the local community. Hours of work and late nights therefore, require careful consideration. The construction team should identify, assess and rank risks to the environment, local population, nuisance and loss of amenity from plans of the proposed scheme.

During normal business hours when traffic densities are high, deliveries of materials and large equipment can cause delays and even pose a danger to other vehicles.

The construction teams should ensure routes to site are well identified and keep deliveries out of sensitive areas during early evening or peak traffic times.

Planning permissions are increasingly setting limits on how much road transport a construction site can produce along with restrictions on noise, vibration and other factors.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

It is important that all affected stakeholders are identified and engaged with the scheme from the start. If the scheme has been through the planning process, refer to planning documents to identify any local concerns. Highways England's EDIT Tool and Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) will also be able to provide information relating to this. The EQIA should have highlighted who may experience adverse impacts and any mitigating actions to lessen this impact.

The local authority may have details of diverse groups and possible forums.

Other intelligence on the local area may come from:

- Public Health
- Local Authority
- NMU (non-motorised users) reports
- Land Plans
- Voluntary sector
- Road Haulage Association

Once identified, groups or organisations will need to be added to the stakeholder engagement database and included within the communications plan. Check if Local Authorities have demographic data of communities that are impacted by the works to be undertaken and if the EqIA anticipates impacts on diverse groups from the planned transformational works to be undertaken.

The EqIA should have considered possible mitigating actions to lessen the impact on such groups which should assist you when considering which affected groups to consult with and the actions you can take to consider diverse needs. The local authority should also be able to assist you in identifying areas and groups with diverse needs.

Some examples of who to consult and engage with may include groups such as:

- National and local disability or accessibility groups representing physical, sensory and non-physical impairments
- Learning disability groups
- Local Age Concern/Age UK
- Age – The local authority or the voluntary sector council should have details of age-related groups in the local areas.
- Schools/youth groups
- Faith communities

Engaging with different people will assist your understanding of how different groups are impacted. Groups may also be able to provide training sessions to increase your understanding of diverse needs. It is good practice to maintain a record of consultation and actions taken with groups as well as a record of groups which did not require so much consultation and reasons why.

HOW TO ENGAGE

Once the stakeholders have been identified and information has been gathered, it is important that the project seeks to engage with the interested parties.

The stakeholder engagement plan helps to shape the communications plan, ensuring that there is clarity regarding who needs to be engaged, what level of interest that they hold, how frequently they need to be consulted and how we plan to communicate to them taking into account diverse needs and providing reasonable adjustments when required. E.g. ensuring, that hearing loops or sign language interpreters are available upon request, and that buildings used for any consultation / engagement activity follow the Highways England building accessibility checklist or the Costain Skanska Event Planning Accessibility Checklist.

This includes selecting an appropriate venue and location with good public transport links and facilities.

All communication should be carried out in line with the Clients Communication Guidelines (or as agreed). Make sure any written notifications are clear and simple using a sans serif font size 14.

Some other useful points which you may want to consider:

- Use of tablet or board to be able to hand to wheelchair users to view plans
- If using videos, add subtitles and sign-language
- Consider making any models or plans tactile for blind or partially sighted people
- Make sure the venue is accessible e.g. disabled parking spaces are free and nothing blocking any dropped kerbs
- Laminate any plans or drawings so that they are easy to handle and robust
- Visuals and communications are appropriate for people with dyslexia, colour blindness or other visual impairments
- Provide diversity/disability awareness training for the project team involved in organising the PIE event

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

SOME USEFUL REFERENCES/LINKS

SAFETY AT STREET WORKS & ROAD WORKS (A CODE OF PRACTICE)

LOCAL AUTHORITY TTRO (TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ORDER) PROCESS

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND'S EDIT AND EQIA

DESIGN MANUAL FOR ROADS & BRIDGES (DMRB)

DISABILITY AWARENESS TOOLKIT

TRAFFIC SIGNS MANUAL

SAFE WORKING OF VEHICLE BREAKDOWN, RECOVERY AND REMOVAL OPERATIONS. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SPECIFICATION

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SECTOR SCHEME 17

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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