

The Connecting Communities Programme

Supporting Organisations with
Insight, Innovation and Impact



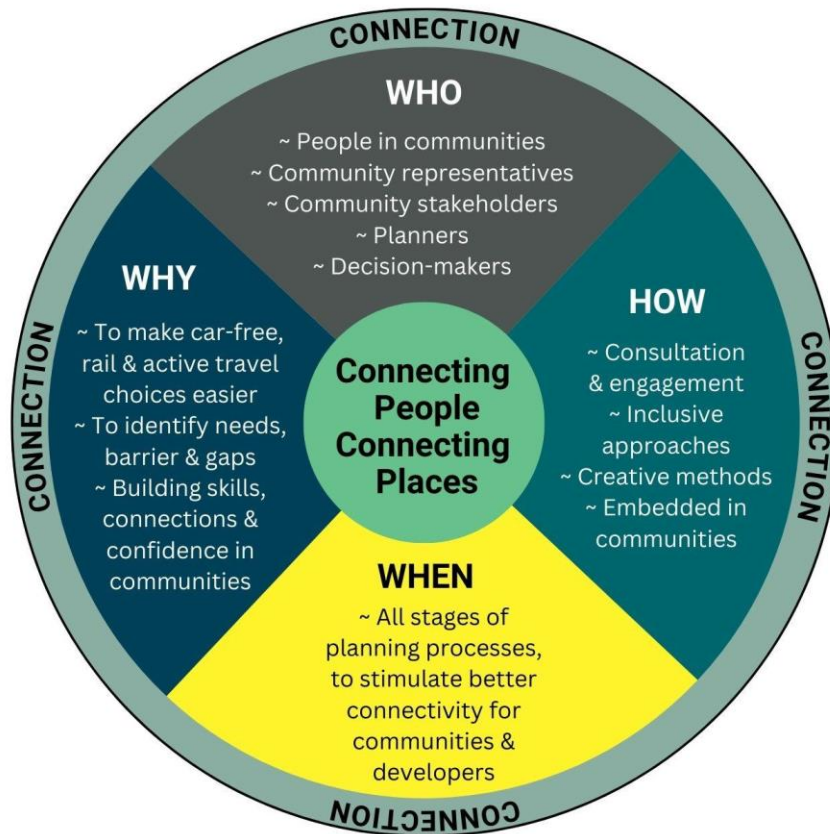
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What is The Connecting Communities Programme?

The Connecting Communities Programme promotes car-free, rail, and active travel choices through community engagement and consultation. By connecting with people in communities, the Programme identifies transport needs, gaps and barriers to access, while gaining insight into people’s preferred journey types and routes. We provide sustainable transport information to support modal shift, making this data available to businesses in construction, planning, and the public sector.

The Connecting Communities Programme Model of Engagement



How Can The Connecting Communities Programme Support Your Organisation?

Our innovative engagement strategies enable us to gather direct insights from people including under represented communities about their travel choices, needs and motivations. Through community events, and engagement we provide opportunities for residents to express their needs, concerns and preferences regarding travel, transport, and connectivity. These insights are highly valuable for businesses and organisations focused on access, planning and construction, as well as the public sector.

Key Services We Provide

- 1) Community Engagement and Participation
- 2) Community-Led Planning and Development
- 3) Partnership and Collaboration

Community Engagement and Participation

Innovation is central to engaging communities effectively across different geographical and demographic areas. We adopt a creative and inclusive mixed-method strategy to reach diverse groups. This includes organising community events, creating interactive posters, and conducting surveys to understand travel habits and barriers to sustainable transport.

Our innovative and participatory methods provide a deep understanding of people's needs and challenges. By revealing the travel and transport challenges and needs of community members, we offer insights that many organisations struggle to achieve. This data is invaluable for businesses aiming to improve transport connectivity, access and infrastructure planning.

Community-Led Planning and Development

We understand the importance of developing co-design strategies with community members. Connecting Communities achieves this through a grassroots and inclusive approach, ensuring the direct involvement of community members and stakeholders in

planning processes. This approach can significantly shift planning paradigms, helping planners better understand and value community input.

We design and deliver practical tools and resources, like access maps and guides, which support communities in advocating for sustainable travel and accessibility. These tools empower communities and provide businesses and organisations with evidence-based actionable insights for planning and development.

Partnership and Collaboration

Collaborative working underpins The Connecting Communities Programme, resulting in local action, goodwill, and enhanced delivery. We have a 'tried and tested' Community Engagement Model that enables effective cooperation and shared objectives. Our inclusive framework supports comprehensive stakeholder engagement and partnership working, strengthening ties with local communities and leaders. This can increase your insight, enhance your visibility and influence.

Connecting Communities Case Study: Great Oldbury, Gloucestershire

What did we do?

Connecting Communities in Great Oldbury brought together local community organisations, transport planning consultants, and community leaders from Oldbury, Brockworth, and Sedbury. The primary objective was to support sustainable transport promotion and community capacity building through participative planning and placemaking.

What methods did we use?

The engagement process began with a half-day scoping workshop involving core stakeholders to explore engagement principles, establish a project vision, and set a timeline. Following this, two one-day place-based events were organised to inspire community discussions about transport and connections.

The engagement activities included creative sessions where residents could freely express their thoughts, issues, ambitions, and ideas, supplemented by mapping exercises to identify transport needs and barriers. An interactive online and place-based questionnaire

further ensured broad participation. These activities were designed to provide safe, supportive spaces for meaningful community contributions, fostering a sense of place and cohesion. The project promoted sustainable travel through access maps and initiatives, facilitating discussions on public transport usage and barriers, contributing to future planning improvements. A community celebration event promoted cohesion and shared findings with a wider audience, showcasing diverse community voices and facilitating a broader understanding of community needs.

What did we learn?

The project led to a deeper understanding among community leaders and members about their roles in planning and transport decisions. Creative engagement methods provided planners with reliable and meaningful data, crucial for addressing community needs effectively.

What happened next?

Local groups, such as The Door Youth Project and Access Bike, continued engagement activities independently, demonstrating success in fostering community-driven action. Initiatives like home-to-school transport and cycling groups emerged directly from the identified needs. The legacy of the project highlighted the importance of long-term community engagement and the need for patience in community building. Creative, inclusive methods proved more effective than traditional questionnaires for gathering community input, emphasising the value of local partnerships in driving meaningful and sustained community development.

Key Insights

The Great Oldbury case study shows the significance of The Connecting Communities Programme's approach to community engagement, particularly in new developments. The methods employed fostered a participatory culture, empowered residents, and provided valuable insights for sustainable transport planning.

Work with Us to Gain Deeper Insight and Greater Impact

Our methods increase the visibility of sustainable transport and connectivity options, needs, and gaps, as well as barriers faced by communities. This is crucial for organisations and businesses looking to create impactful and sustainable development and accessibility plans.

By placing community voices at the centre of planning and development processes, we help businesses and organisations provide meaningful services that meet community needs. Our methods empower communities to advocate for sustainable travel and accessibility, building travel confidence and raising awareness of sustainable transport options.

Our 'pop-up' engagement days are an effective tool for building relationships with communities. These events allow organisations to learn more about local communities' needs, aspirations and preferences.

It is estimated that for every hour invested through The Connecting Communities Programme, another three hours of goodwill, local action, and delivery are triggered. This amplifies the impact of your investment in community engagement and sustainable planning.

Why Work With Us

We can provide your organisation with valuable insights and data to lead your projects with innovation and impact.

- 1) Innovative Engagement Methods: we are known for our creative engagement strategies and research-led insights.
- 2) Community-Based Insights: our data supports organisations to make informed decisions and drive innovation.
- 3) Increased Reach and Impact: working with us can help increase your reach, evidence base, and overall impact.

Contact Us

For more information on working with our Connecting Communities Programme, please get in touch!

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