



# Customer engagement

## Transportation 2010

**West Lothian Council** delivers

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**West Lothian**  
Council

Document history

Prepared by Billy Thompson

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## Introduction

Transportation, part of Development and Regulatory Services, comprises five teams covering key areas of council responsibility. These are:

- Transportation Development Planning
- Transportation Projects
- Road Safety & Traffic Management
- Structures
- Transportation Policy

Within each of these teams there are a number of specialist services and activities. Almost all of these involve the provision of services to, and interaction with, a very wide range of customers.

Our activities include: to facilitate the delivery of new transport infrastructure; to maintain and repair structures; and to monitor and improve road safety. We also ensure the delivery of transport related infrastructure required by planning consents and we work with a range of local, regional and national partners and stakeholders to deliver a wide range of transportation improvements.

Customers include, those who contact us directly, affected individuals and groups, and, referrals from planning applications including agents and consultants. We work in partnership, to deliver improvements in road safety, with national and regional transport projects and initiatives, and, with groups, communities, committees and authorities.

We have both internal and external customers including many from within



other council services. The customer is central to everything we do and how we respond to clients and stakeholders is crucial to the experience they received and how we are perceived.

It is important, therefore, that we recognise and have an in-depth understanding of our customer groups and engage with them regularly to understand their needs and preferences. To that end we have developed this strategy which pulls

together and builds on a range of initiatives and actions across the service.

This strategy outlines how we identify and understand our customers. The principal systems we use for engaging with and consulting them and for monitoring the outcome of services as perceived by our customers.

## Customers, partners and stakeholders

### Customers

A customer is any individual, agent, group, company or organisation that uses our services. This can include: applicants for road construction consents; residents requesting disabled parking bays; residents requesting new facilities such as footways or traffic calming; individuals seeking information or guidance; people making unsolicited complaints; agents and designers. Other council services that we agree to undertake work for (such as the preparation of planning applications for Property Services or design and project management of car parking at schools for Education) are also customers. These are known as 'internal customers'.

### Partners

A partner is a person or organisation we work with to provide services. The police, public transport operators, consultants, other council services and external organisations can all fit into this category. Those who fund our projects and initiatives are also partners. This can be in a regional or national context, where we seek to promote and secure West Lothian interests within the wider picture.

### Stakeholders

A stakeholder will normally be an individual, group or organisation who has direct interest in the delivery or consequences of our services. Neighbours adjoining a site identified for an infrastructure improvement, community groups with an interest in or views on a proposal and land managers and landowners affected by planned works are all stakeholders. Special interest groups, such as those representing cyclists or equestrians, are also stakeholders.

### The wider community

The wider community, such as the people of West Lothian or Scotland, or larger groups, such as children or the elderly, or large groups such as the workforce, the voluntary sector or tourist visitors are also an important consideration.

There are situations where individuals and organisations can be a customer, partner and stakeholder at the same time. Each of these groups can be segmented in accordance with their relationship with us and the appropriate means of engagement with them identified.

## Mapping transportation services customers, partners and stakeholders

Given the extensive scope and variety of services provided by Transportation Services we have a large range of customers, partners and stakeholders. The table below was compiled in late 2008. It builds on information already identified in our Charter Mark submission, service/management plans and other initiatives. It brings together a comprehensive map of all of our broad customer groups, their broad characteristics and how they can be segmented for better understanding and response.

The follow tables show contact groupings and segmentation.

<b>Transportation</b>		
Type	Segment	
<b>Customers</b>		
Political		
Public	National Government	MP
Public	National Government	MSP
Public	Local Government	Adjoining authorities:
Public	Local Government	Other Scottish authorities
Public	Transport	SEStran
Public	WLC	Committees
Public	WLC	Community councils
Public	WLC	Local area committees
Public	WLC	Elected Members
External		
Private	Members of the public	Disabled residents parking applicants
Private	Members of the public	Residents
Private	Members of the public	Visitors
Commercial	Planning	RCC applicants and developers
Commercial	Transport	Consultants
Internal		
Public	WLC	Building Standards
Public	WLC	Construction Services
Public	WLC	Education

Public	WLC	Planning Development Management
Public	WLC	Property Services
Public	WLC	Public Transport
Public	WLC	Roads Operational Services
<b>Partners</b>		
Political		
Public	Transport	FETA
Public	Transport	SCOTS
Public	Local Government	Adjoining authorities:
Public	Government	Scottish Government
Public	Transport	SEStran
External		
Public	Environmental	Historic Scotland
Public	Environmental	SEPA
Public	Planning	SESplan
Public	Road Safety	L&B Fire Service
Public	Road Safety	Lothian and Borders Police
Public	Road Safety	NHS Lothian
Public	Road Safety	Road Safety Scotland
Public	Road Safety	Safety Camera Partnership
Public	Transport	BEAR Scotland
Not for Profit	Transport	SUSTRANS
Not for Profit	Transport	Network Rail
Public	Transport	Transport Scotland
Internal		
Public	WLC	Building Standards
Public	WLC	Construction Services
Public	WLC	Community Safety Forum
Public	WLC	Customer Information Services
Public	WLC	Education
Public	WLC	Environmental Health
Public	WLC	Housing
Public	WLC	Planning Development Management
Public	WLC	NETS and Land Services
Public	WLC	Property Services
Public	WLC	Public Transport
Public	WLC	Roads Operational Services

<b>Stakeholders</b>		
Political		
Public	Local Government	Adjoining authorities:
Public	Local Government	Other Scottish authorities
Public	National Government	MP
Public	National Government	MSP
Public	Transport	FETA
Public	Transport	SEStran
Public	WLC	Community councils
Public	WLC	Elected Members
External		
Not for profit	Cycling	Cyclists Touring Club
Not for profit	Cycling	Linlithgow cycle action group
Not for profit	Cycling	Spokes
Not for profit	Cycling	SUSTRANS
Not for profit	Disabled people	Disability West Lothian
Not for profit	Disabled people	RNIB
Public	Disabled people	Scottish Disability Forum
Public	Environmental	Historic Scotland
Not for profit	Environmental	Linlithgow Climate Change group
Public	Environmental	SEPA
Community	Environmental	Transform Scotland
Not for profit	Equestrian	British Horse Society
Not for profit	Pedestrians	Living Streets
Not for profit	Rail	Network Rail
Public	Road Safety	L&B Fire Service
Public	Road Safety	Lothian and Borders Police
Public	Road Safety	Road Safety Scotland
Public	Transport	Traffic Commissioner
Public	Transport	British Waterways
Public	Road Safety	Scottish Ambulance Service
Public	Safety	Health and Safety Executive
Commercial	Transport	Public Utility companies
Commercial/ public	Town centres	Town centre management groups
Commercial	Transport	AA

Public	Transport	BEAR Scotland
Commercial	Transport	Bus operators
Commercial	Transport	First ScotRail
Not for profit	Transport	Freight Transport Association
Not for profit	Transport	Institute of Advanced Motorists
Commercial	Transport	RAC
Not for profit	Transport	Road Haulage Association
Public	Transport	Transport Scotland
Not for profit	Walking	Friends of the Pentlands
Internal		
Public	WLC	Building Standards
Public	WLC	Construction Services
Public	WLC	Education
Public	WLC	Planning Development Management
Public	WLC	Property Services
Public	WLC	Public Transport
Public	WLC	Roads Operational Services

## How we engage with our customers, partners and stakeholders

There are three principal components to our approach:

- 1 Our strategy for engaging, consulting and involving customers, partners and stakeholders is built on of a range of methods, each selected and tailored to suit the needs and characteristics of each group, to gather opinions on the scope and content of our service standards, complaints procedure, etc.
- 2 We employ a range of methods to elicit and measure customer satisfaction in terms of:
  - Customer satisfaction levels
  - Delivery
  - Timeliness
  - Information
  - Access
  - Quality of customer service

This information is used to set challenging targets and as the basis for action plans and improvements.

- 3 Also, we regularly consult customers, partners and stakeholders on specific initiatives, schemes, policies and plans (such as the Local Transport Strategy and Road Safety) that we are developing or promoting.

These involve a number of principal methods of engagement:

### **Customer surveys**

Focused customer surveys are undertaken annually for specific service delivery of our disabled residents parking scheme and our road construction consent process.

Customer satisfaction surveys are also undertaken following engagement with our service to gauge customer views on other issues or to help us with changes. These allow us to identify failings and good practice and share this across the teams.

Questionnaires are mailed to participants and paid postage return envelopes are provided.

Returns on surveys are variable with higher levels of response being secured in the customer facing parts of the service. In other areas, particularly Structures, the asset based nature of the work makes obtaining responses on general customer satisfaction much more difficult. Some of our sample sizes are very low because of the customer base we are dealing with. Our road construction consent survey is an example of this.

To support service surveys, and since much of our work is project based, we are now undertaking customer satisfaction surveys at the conclusion of each significant project.

### **Electronic surveys**

All emails generated by the service carry an invitation to participate in a continuous online survey and feedback channel through Opiniantaker™ or SurveyMonkey™. This allows customers an easy opportunity to respond.

### **Focus and working groups**

Transportation staff participate in a large number and range of working and focus groups. These are an invaluable means of gaining customer insight. Such groups can be ongoing or ad hoc in nature.

### **One to one meetings**

Managers regularly meet with their counterparts in other services and with customers, partners and stakeholders on both a formal and an informal basis.

### **Unsolicited comments and complaints**

All services receive such communications from time to time. Transportation Services values all unsolicited comments and record and report these before using them to inform improvements.

### **Local area committees**

Transportation staff regularly attend local area committees where customer insights are gained. There are nine such committees in West Lothian.

### **Community councils / residents' groups**

Transportation staff regularly attend, and consult with, community councils and area specific residents' groups over matters of interest to their residents. Material is routinely sent to these organisations for consultation and special meetings are held.

### **Town centre management groups**

These regeneration and business development focused groups comprising mainly community and business representatives cover the five traditional towns in West Lothian.

### **Private meetings**

Transportation is always willing to have meetings with developers, applicants, landowners, community, voluntary and campaigning groups etc. and these can provide excellent broader customer insight.

### **Special seminars**

We work in partnership with other services in participating in special or one-off seminars with customers and partners. For example, we recently arranged a series of three short seminars to inform council members and colleagues of the revised Scottish Transportation Assessment Guidance. Transportation staff have attended recent seminars on Communication protocol for multi member wards and for increased awareness of the Data Protection Act.

### **Partnership meetings**

We engage in working with a wide range of partners and such activity provides a unique opportunity for gaining feedback and insights. Our involvement in the South East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership is a good example of this type of meeting. The Community Safety Forum and the Safety Camera Partnership are other examples.

### **Council committees**

The regular programme of council scrutiny panels, committees, executive and council meetings is an important source of feedback from elected members who interface with our communities.

### **Performance scrutiny meetings**

These internal meetings allow customer and partner feedback at a high level and involve elected members.

### **Public talks**

Transportation staff on occasion give public talks on their work. These are often with specialist groups such as schoolchildren, clubs or societies such as Probus or West Lothian Disabled access Forum. This is an effective means of two-way communication which can be effective with hard to reach groups.

### **Consultation meetings**

Consultation prior to decision making and policy formulation is a major component of Transportation's work and a wide range of methods is used for undertaking this ranging from public and private meetings through to published consultations.

### **Project meetings**

Meetings held to discuss and gain insights through discrete projects. This is particularly relevant where we are working in partnership or delivering services with others.

### **Participation in events**

Transportation participates in events and these informal gatherings are an invaluable means of gaining customer insight. For example in the last year we attended cycle encouragement, green travel and West Drive events.

### **Staff insight and suggestions**

Our own staff, particularly those in customer facing roles, have a valuable role in helping the service gain customer insight. The use of the West Lothian Assessment Model, personal performance reviews and personal development planning, team meetings and staff consultations and suggestions are all important tools in this regard. Staff surveys are carried out.

Key examples are outlined in more detail in the tables below

### **Hard to reach groups**

It is a constant challenge to us to ensure that we recognise and respond to the needs of the widest range of customers. To that end we have taken special steps to ensure that certain, traditionally hard to reach groups, are included. For example we engage with the West Lothian Disability Committee and equalities groups. Consultations are routinely held with the council's Equalities Officer on specific issues and cases. In many situations, special consultation groups and forums are assembled to address the specific needs of the case in hand rather than using a generic consultation approach.

We engage with colleagues in Education Services and Lothian Borders Police to develop initiatives targeted at young drivers.

We have traditionally struggled to obtain views on schemes from a wide section of the community and therefore, on discrete projects, we are now putting additional effort into eliciting views from the widest customer base. We are introducing on-street perception surveys and will utilise doorstep interviews to help address this.

### Analysis and publication of customer feedback

The following table maps the full range of customer engagement undertaken by Transportation Services. It is not exhaustive and it is being continually developed. The table contains information about the consultation group, the types of consultation used including the timescale, method used and feedback method used.

<b>Customer engagement - customers</b>			
<b>Type of consultation</b>	<b>Frequency of consultation</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Feedback method</b>
<b>Political</b>			
Committee meetings	Monthly	Meeting	<i>Committee report</i>
On 2 One	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Immediate response</i>
Site visits	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Email</i>
			<i>Letter</i>
			<i>Telephone</i>
<b>External</b>			
Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire	Following contact	Postal questionnaire	<i>Management Plan</i>
RCC Customer Feedback Survey	Annual	Postal questionnaire	<i>Committee report</i>
Disabled residents parking customer survey	Annual	Postal questionnaire	<i>Immediate response</i>
e-surveys	Following contact	Internet or email survey	<i>Email</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Letter</i>
One 2 One	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Telephone</i>
Site visits	Ad-hoc	Meeting	

Internal			
e-surveys	Following contact	Internet or email survey	<i>Immediate response</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Email Telephone</i>

<b>Customer engagement - partners</b>			
<b>Type of consultation</b>	<b>Frequency of consultation</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Feedback method</b>
External			
Questionnaires	Following contact	Questionnaire	<i>Immediate response</i>
e-surveys	Annual	Internet or email survey	<i>Email Letter</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Telephone</i>
Internal			
e-surveys	Following contact	Internet or email survey	<i>Immediate response</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Email Telephone</i>

<b>Customer engagement - stakeholders</b>			
<b>Type of consultation</b>	<b>Frequency of consultation</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Feedback method</b>
Project stakeholders			
Questionnaires	Following contact	Questionnaire	<i>Verbal response Email</i>
e-surveys	Annual	Internet or email survey	<i>Letter</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	
Process stakeholders			
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	<i>Verbal response</i>
Consultation workshops	Ad-hoc	Workshop information gathering	<i>Email Letter</i>
Consultees			
Questionnaires	Ad hoc	Questionnaire	<i>Verbal response</i>
e-surveys	Annual	Internet or email survey	<i>Email Letter</i>
Meetings	Ad-hoc	Meeting	

## Customers with special requirements

Information is available in **Braille**, **tape** and **large print** and **community languages**. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on **01506 775000**

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