

## **BACKGROUND**

March 2011. Grantown Grammar School Travel Plan report \*1

October 2018 Community Council Engagement in the Square on a variety of issues

January 2019 Active Travel in Badenoch and Strathspey CNPA open meeting in Grantown

April 2020 Consultation with Acting Head of Grantown Grammar

April 2020 Receipt of letters of support from numerous local and Regional Groups

## **STAGE ZERO**

*Sustrans invited The Grantown Society to submit a proposal for an Active Travel Project in Grantown. The Places For Everyone Initiative duly provided funding in July 2020 for an initial investigation. Following conversations with key stakeholders, The Grantown Society (TGS) identified a recognised need for a network of routes which were attractive and accessible to all for active travel to some 20 locations within the town. The initial funding allowed background information to be collected and a strategic definition prepared including an extensive list of stakeholders and an engagement strategy.*

May 2020 Society submit funding application

July 2020 Funding award from Sustrans "Places for Everyone" :  
Stage 0 definition £7,200 Stage 1 preparation and brief £20,800

August 2020 Inception meeting. Bill Sadler, David Clyne (CNPA), Craig Irvine (THC), Sheena Corcoran, Mike Barras, Bo Hickey (Sustrans)

August 2020 Presence at Farmers' Market. Public engagement and Interview with wheel chair user.

August 2020 Letter requesting all cyclists should have lights, bell, helmet and high vis jacket/bib

October 2020 Contract signed with TGP Landscape Architects

October 2020 90 minute cycle tour around Grantown with reps from TGS 3As and TGP

October 2020 Start of engagement process with a Stall at Cairngorm Farmers Market in Grantown

November 2020 Stall at Cairngorm Farmers Market in Grantown Square including post it survey

December 2020 Engagement Strategy formulated

December 2020 Grantown Does Christmas Display in the Square; "bike tree" in Community Centre

December 2020 Stage 0 Strategy and Engagement Reports received.

## **STAGE ONE**

*As the scale of the vision was very much long term, further funded investigation and engagement identified a set of project proposals and from these a key diagonal route was selected. This ran from SW, where most people live, through the Square, to the NE, where schools and most sports facilities are situated. This would provide a safe route to schools, thus encouraging more to walk and cycle to school and consequently less use of motor vehicles.*

January 2021 Post card survey for all in PH26 3 with collection boxes in Co-op and paper shop \*2

January 2021 Information on Websites and social media

- March 2021 Consultation meetings with key stake holders
- April 2021 Pop-up banners in Shop window, Vaccination Centre and at Farmers market stall
- May 2021 Virtual exhibition launched with questionnaire and media information
- May 2021 Farmers Market presence
- June 2021 Stage One Report received and Stage 2 and 3 funding applied for.
- July 2021 Minutes of Stakeholders meeting sent to Sustrans
- September 2021 Stages 0 and 1 signed off.

**STAGE TWO**

*Despite challenging Covid restrictions, the Society continued to run its series of Community engagement activities. This included: a mail drop to all houses in PH26 3, a virtual exhibition, publicity on social media and a continued presence in the Square at farmers’ markets, “Grantown Does Christmas” and “Greentown Grantown”.*



**1 Grantown Does Christmas**



**2 Farmers' Market**



**3 Further out door consultation**



**4 Options Folder**

*In addition there was a month long display in the Grantown Library, Community engagement folders in Rosehall, the Schools and Playgroup and the Craig Maclean Centre, a limited mail drop to properties adjacent to the proposed route including all of Speyside Garden residents and a feature at a significant afternoon and evening exhibition in the Grant Arms.*



**5 Library based consultation**



**6 School consultation under covid rules**

Progress was regularly reported at Community Council meetings and in the Strathy.



7 Strathy reporter



8 Strathy article

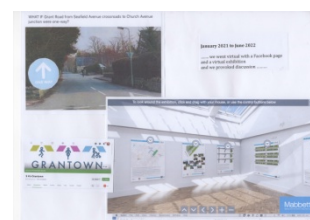


9 Playgroup: Covid and in winter

10 – 13 Ongoing EQIA consultation



All of these activities reinforced the need previously expressed by the Community, for safe walking and cycling routes in Granttown. From this information the Project produced a set of preferred routes, which in turn due to financial constraints, was simplified to a single route from the Seafield Avenue cross roads to South Street. This route was considered to best to meet the priority criteria, in that it links up Granttown's main residential areas with the schools, playgroup and key sports facilities. A pictorial summary \*16 was produced to summarise the work done.



14 – 16 A 3 Easy access folders

September 2021 Stall again at Farmers' Market and "Greentown Show" \*3

November 2021 Application for stage 2 with 4 project phases identified

February 2022 Dulaig Park walk through with Park improvement leader

March 2022 Walks and trails forum with consultants and information with over 50 visitors \*4

March 2022 Individual consultations using A4 engagement files notably playgroup parents \*5

March 2022 School walk with mother and child

March 2022 Offer of consultation with Inverallan Church leaders but no response

March 22 noted no response from Access panel and no data from THC

March 2022 Exhibition on Grantown Library with visitor book, cards, post box and maps \*6

April 2022 Options route walk with visually disable lady, guide and guide dog

April 2022 Exhibition boards and 5 A3 engagement folders in several places \*7

May 2022 Facebook posting on single issue option \*8

May 2022 Leaflet drop around areas around project phases

May 2022 Note from stakeholders' meeting – road table across main road suggested; CNPA constructive

June 2022 further responses to an outside organisation facebook posting

June 2022 Four day exhibition and consultation in the community Centre \*9 \*10 \*11

August 2022 Welcoming GBA views and confirmation that there were no proposals only options

October 2022 Meeting with CNPA re apparent absence of Grantown during CNPA consultations

October 2022 TGP 3As Amended stage two proposal \*12

December 2022 Meeting in CNPA offices to discuss future directions for Grantown Active Travel

February 2023 CNPA Community Drop-ins – series of roadshow events.

March 2023 Enlarged steering group meeting in Court House including Pat Douglass CNPA/Sustrans

June 2023 Change proposal request submitted

January 2024 2 day exhibition in The Community Centre with planning for real table top layout \*13

January 2024 3As led walk through the route

January 2024 Primary School interactive display \*14 (attached)

February 2024 Route walk with partially sighted gentleman \*15 (attached)

June 22 and January 24 Summary A3 folders \*16

March 2024 Meeting with residents and owners of Strathspey Gardens \*17 (attached)

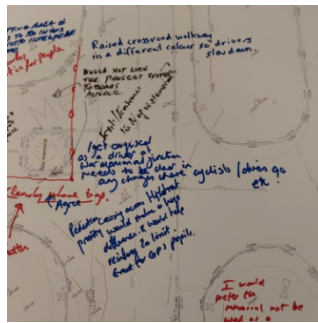
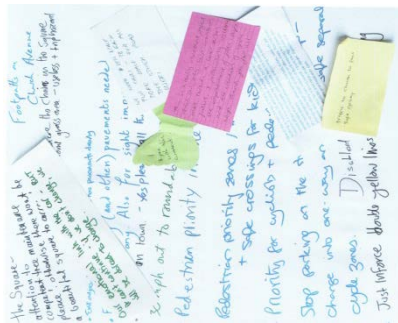
Since this project started four years ago, there has been strong support from many quarters for increasing the opportunities for safer and more active travel. Extensive research and community engagement has been conducted, aided by consultants and supported by Sustrans. Whilst this is a community project, face to face consultation and full community involvement, especially from School staff, has been extremely difficult due to Covid restrictions and subsequent pressures. There have been further delays because of a hostile campaign generated on the basis of inaccurate information which left many in the community unclear as to exactly what was being considered. There followed the opportunity to create greater community involvement in managing the project and of reviewing the best way forward.



17 First Community Centre Exhibition and engagement



18 Planning for real 2nd Community Centre event



19 – 21 Some of the many many records collected

Research was conducted using a variety of methods from personal interview to an on-line virtual exhibition, from meetings with key stakeholders to a household mailing. One result of this was the need to develop a NW-SE safe travel route connecting schools and main leisure facilities to the main housing areas. There are many possible routes across town and many choices for school travel by foot and bicycle. Research suggested that, within funds possibly available, a route from the Seafield Avenue-Grant Road cross roads, along Grant Road and Church Avenue and across the Square at its central point with a link to the Primary school down the Grant Arms Lane was a popular option.

A final small group consultation involved owners and residents of Strathspey Gardens who, apparently, own the former public road leading to South Street. \*17

This option has been pursued and taken forward as a concept design to be developed in detail in stages three and four with developed and technical designs. A great deal of useful information has been gathered in the engagements to date all the results having been thoroughly examined, which will assist this process. This will lead to further funding and full involvement of the CNPA who will carry the project forward with input from the 3As team.

- \*1 GGS Schools Travel Plan although dated is still available on request**
- \*2 Postal postcard survey results (included in stage 1 report)**
- \*3 Greentown Show collected comments (paper copy)**
- \* 4 Walks and Trails forum Report (paper copy)**
- \*5 A4 engagement files also used in conjunction with A3 folders.**
- \*6 Library Display April 2022 (paper copy)**
- \*7 Comments for A3 books included Grant Road Mossie Road should be one-way throughout.  
Is it to be a raised platform across the main road? (copy file)**
- \*8 Comprehensive analysis of results and contributors available. Also rebuttal of premises and statements in the petition paper. Some comments attached (paper copy) Summary also attached.**
- \*9 Flip chart and post card comments from June exhibition (paper copy)**
- \*10 The case for change – from June exhibition (paper copy)**
- \*11 options appraisal (attached)**
- \*12 amended proposal Oct 2022 (paper copy)**
- \*13 consultation report – not currently available**
- \*14 School report (attached)**
- \*15 route walk notes (attached)**
- \*16 summary A3 folders**
- \*17 Notes from Strathspey Gardens Consultations (attached)**

**\*8** A note of Facebook comments and petition. 11.03.2023

Fb received some 260 comments (of which many were negative, several abusive and a few which had to be deleted) from 2,500 views. 100 of the comments were from eight contributors. 48 individuals said “no” or “no need” (these included references to one way and parking across the the town) 11 commented on the problems with the crossroads, 5 suggested there were better options and 10 were supportive in some way or another including the need for better and more pavements. Many of the comments were in the context of possible restrictions for motorists (free access and parking). Also many were in the context of children under 12 walking to school and not about cyclists or other walkers or wheelers.

The petition asked signatories to “disagree with the proposals from The 3A’s because you do not want to lose parking areas within Grantown or reduce road capacity” It included references to selected options and generalised to include such erroneous items as “removing parking at both ends of the High Street” It contained 765 signatures of whom 41% had addresses in Grantown and Strathspey the other 59% were from the rest of the UK and worldwide.

## \* 11 Options appraisal

### Options Appraisal: Active Travel in Grantown

#### 1) General comments from engagements supporting improvements for walkers, wheelers and cyclists

- Considerable support for 20mph speed limit
- Discussions demonstrated numerable NW-SE routes across town with one potential safe and attractive route from Seafield Avenue/Grant Road crossroads to Schools and Sports facilities via Grant Road, Church Avenue, The War Memorial, across the Square and thence either by Burnfield of Grant Arms Lane
- Danger points identified as narrow and non-existent pavements in general and in particular the Co-op corner for both pedestrians and cyclists, along the High Street and along the Square due to traffic and parking.
- Considerable support for better/improved routes for active travel
- “The proposed improvements for the High Street, Square and associated routes look really good
- Strathy report Feb 23. GGS supplied with Helmets and bike maintenance tools from Sustrans “She Cycles Club Fund” “Teachers at the school are hoping to support the overall physical, mental and emotional health of girls with low attendance and self-esteem. Cycling has proven to be a popular hit with the students so the funding will enable them to encourage more girls to join the club.”

#### 2) Specific comments supporting different options for selected project phases.

The Square and Primary School Link  
Seafield Avenue, Grant Road, Church Avenue – junction and footpaths  
Cycle parking and storage throughout the town  
Dulaig court links

#### 1. Dulaig Park and infrastructure

#### 2. Grant Road and Church Avenue

##### (a) Grant Road Junctions

Option 3 – with 2-way traffic and pavement . Need to add in work on the Seafield Ave/Grant Road crossroads.

- Despite considerable support for various one-way options (ref especially comments from engagement in September 2021) this option has been dropped by virtue of a wealth of comment opposing any such schemes.

##### (b) Church Avenue

Option1 – with two way traffic and footpath through trees. Is this sufficient for Sustrans (Possible PP – existing conditions and option 1 with text)

### 3. The Square

Options 2 and 3 have some acceptable elements. Total or partial pedestrianisation not seen as desirable. Pavement provision on both sides of the memorial is a possible alternative. A form of pedestrianised treatment of the road surfaces as in option 2 could be extended to around the war memorial.

- Support for textured surfaces for pedestrians showing the difference between the road and the path (comment from visually impaired)
- “The proposed improvements for th High Street, Square and associated routes look really good

### 4. South Street Link

Option 1 is good. Two community engagements are planned as part of stage 2 of our project: January and March.

## **\*14 School report Active Travel Survey Routes to School Granttown Primary School 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January**

Based on “Planning for Real” table top route plan and managed by senior pupils

Summary of written, collated and scribed post card comments

(numbers of youngsters supporting comments not known and not all comments recorded.)

Crossings:

- Children said they would not feel safe crossing at war memorial even if Zebra in place
- More zebra crossings
- Crossing at church
- Zebra crossing at school

Traffic

- Road in front of school is biggest problem. Need traffic slowed down
- Moving school crossing patroller to opposite the end on the path could cause a bottle neck with busses
- Traffic calming required
- Grant Road at sunset looking straight into the sun

Parking

- More parking required – especially at Inverallan
- “Park and Stride” from Burnfield carpark to be actively encouraged

Paths and Pavements  
(in general)

- Child in wheelchair needs wider pavements
- Wider paths and pavements especially at Inverallan and School
- Need to cut branches down a wee bit
- More grit bins
- More paths and pavements
- Need for a “bit of nature”

(school lane in particular)

- Not safe for walkers and cyclists to use the same small path
- I like the rocks and not the new path
- Lots upset about removal of rocks “Our Mums used to sit on them when they were wee
- I don’t like the bumpy path
- Route too “towny” – not good for nature
- Encourage more wildlife. Grow more trees. Add bird feeders
- Path Unsafe
- Add dog bins

General

- Most children do not use suggested route. Mostly use the other lane and cross with lollypop lady.

# Active Travel Survey Routes to School

Class ..... Number in group ..... *c. 69 responses.*

## Survey question 1 and 2

1. How do you usually come to school on fine days?

Number by bus ..... *7* ..... by car ..... *17* ..... on foot ..... *29* ..... Cycling ..... *6* .....  
wheelchair ..... scooter .....

2. Who do you usually come to school with on fine days?

Number with other children ..... *18* ..... an adult ..... *26* ..... pets ..... *2* .....  
on your own ..... *9* .....

## Survey questions 3 and 4

3. Would it be possible for you to come to school along this route?

Yes ..... *15* ..... no ..... *22* ..... maybe ..... *14* ..

4. But why is it not a good route at present? What's making it not so good?

*no pavements, ✓✓ vehicles, cars everywhere, no parking ✓  
not safe, no traffic lights, path on the side is bad  
not fun on the bike parents too small crossings are annoying*

## Survey questions 5 and 6

5. What do you like about this route? What is good about it?

*Scenic good route "nature full"  
pretty ✓ Keep the bike jump "been a long time" ✓  
lots of trees, not too many cars Wider down at Green Rd*

6. What could be done to make it better?

*Safer, surfaces, more parking ✓ grand young trees  
pavements parking area Zebra crossings  
walking path put a pump track bins about  
more access for disabled people*

\*15 Route walk with partially sighted gentleman

Hi Mike

We were pleased to be able to help.

Your list seems to cover most of the points but you might want to consider:

Uneven/rough footpaths

The boulders at either end of the unmade track are a real hazard. A barrier at the bottom end would negate the need for some of them but how about black and white posts (attached image 2) to replace the others?

It would be good if the path through the trees was as straight as possible and was edged in some sort of contrasting colour.

Can black and white posts also be put at either end of the stretch of road near the Seafield/Grant Road crossroads. where there is no chance of a pavement or perhaps the stone walls there could be painted? Are there are road signs warning drivers about pedestrians using the road (image 1)?

I'm concerned about running the marked path behind the (disabled) parking bays outside the CNPA. It would be all too easy for someone to back out of these spaces into a passing pedestrian.

The posts and chains mean it is not easy to step up on to the grass if a vehicle comes by. Could these be moved further away from the kerb? Alternatively/additionally could you put down some of the plastic mesh they use to protect grass areas from foot/vehicular traffic (see this link [Grass Protection Plastic Mesh Grass Protection Car Park Mesh Grass Turf Reinforcement Mesh Car Park Ground Protection Mesh Turf Protection Mats Grass Mat Net \(0.4m x 4m=\(1.3Ft x 13.1Ft\), Black\) : Amazon.co.uk: Garden](#)

\*17 Notes from Meeting with occupants of Strathspey Gardens Granttown on Spey, 7/3/24 at Grant Arms Hotel.

Meeting attended by Mike Barras (Granttown 3As) and Pat Douglass (CNPA)

Drop in session was attended by 5 residents of Strathspey Gardens who have a share of the ownership of the area under discussion, plus the resident from number 7 who does not own any of the road or path. Residents included one lady who is partially sighted and a wheelchair user.

The owner of number 7 raised the following points:

- She did not get a direct invite (explained that this session was for landowners but she was made welcome and her questions answered)
- Not a land owner
- Concern footpath too close to property, dislikes people walking so close to her house concerned that we would increase number of walkers and cyclists going past. She stated that the footpath was not constructed correctly according to the original planning application and should be further away. Discussed possibility of shared space rather than designated footpath which would avoid people being funnelled past her house and allow them to choose their own route. Also has the advantage of making a straighter line across the Square if footpath is constructed on north side of Church Avenue.
- Raised difficulty of getting out of street re visibility (foot or driving)
- Agreed new footpath connecting to Church Avenue would be beneficial
- Overall supportive of scheme

Owners

- Main concern public liability. Clear from initial discussion that it was less a concern about ownership but a concern re public liability and who would be responsible for any accidents/collisions. Explained that if any work was carried out and the path became part of a wider walking/cycling network then the liability would be transferred to either CNPA or Highland Council (if the route became adopted). This would need legal agreements to be drawn up and signed by all parties and be subject to all relevant negotiations. (Legal expenses would be covered by the funding for the scheme not by the residents) The group were pleased to hear that they would not be liable under these circumstances. However we did point out that as the public already use the route and if we made no changes to the current situation that would still be so and the owners would continue to be liable.
- Concerns raised that construction of a path would remove the existing flowers, grass, trees and urbanise the path. Also concerned that the boulders would be removed. (Resident stated that boulders were a planning condition when the houses were originally built) Able to reassure them that we would retain all of these and would look to enhance the natural feel further, possibly along with input from the adjacent school who have expressed an interest in so doing.
- Some concern that scheme would only encourage more parents to drive into Strathspey Gardens to drop off their children as they would have a safe route to the school from there. Residents stated that parents already do this, causing some disturbance to the residents. Discussion about the fact that as an unadopted (ie private) road the residents have the power to stop the public from driving or parking there. Reassured them that we were not going to be promoting driving to school and by providing a safer route for walking

and cycling across the town as part of a wider programme of new routes it would encourage more people to go by foot or bike rather than car.

- Some discussion about the existing streetlights took place, residents were concerned that we might introduce more high level streetlighting which they did not want. They would like some low-level lights along the line of the path and we discussed options such as small lights set into the path. Also able to advise them on how to contact Highland Council (who they believe look after the existing streetlights) and request baffles to be fitted to the streetlights to prevent them shining into their bedrooms which is causing a nuisance for residents.
- The resident who uses a wheelchair stated that she could not use the path at present due to its existing surface of mud and stones and other residents agreed that it is unpleasant when it has rained due to it being so muddy. Discussed how we could replace the surface with something sympathetic to the locality but that would provide a more usable surface, eg a porous recycled 'pavement' would allow water to drain, be less likely to freeze, would be resilient to the nearby tree routes and provide a more usable surface for everyone.
- Drainage: Residents stated several times how at present heavy rain leads to water flowing down the path and in cold weather this water freezes. They were concerned that we might make this worse. Discussed with them how we could design an appropriate drainage scheme such that we could improve the existing situation and remove water flowing down Strathspey Gardens before it reached the path and then build in appropriate drains along the path too. Explained that drainage was something we would be considering, and we would not design a path without suitable drainage.
- Church Avenue: although not the original focus for this meeting, all of the attendees had experienced problems accessing Church Avenue as a pedestrian and being forced to walk in the road due to the lack of pavement. They said that they all avoid going there because it is so unpleasant, and this was particularly so for the wheelchair user.
- Overall residents were pleased to have had an opportunity to meet and discuss their concerns and were generally supportive of the aspiration to make the town safer and more attractive for those walking around it.

Further Letter dated March 11<sup>th</sup> to 2 residents not able to attend.

Thank you for your message, I am sorry you couldn't make the meeting last week. As I am sure your neighbours will have told you, we discussed several options for the path by your houses and as you say adopting the path was one of those options. We discussed the reason for this route being the preferred one, which is due to the alternatives being less direct or involving significant remodelling of the towns roads e.g. if the preferred route came alongside the Coop and past the legion it would be necessary to restrict traffic around the Coop to get enough space to build a safe footpath. As we know from the earlier consultation, the local community do not want us to consider any significant changes to the way traffic moves, e.g. they do not want a one way system, or to lose parking spaces etc. So with all that in mind the current proposal to use Grant Road and Church Avenue allows us the opportunity to develop a cross town route with improved footpaths and crossing points that does not impact on the traffic around the coop.

Through the discussion with your neighbours it became apparent that the greatest concern was the question of public liability and who would be responsible for any accidents that might occur on the path through Strathspey Gardens. I explained that if we were to fund any changes to the path here we would expect the path to become part of the adopted cycle path network and that would mean all public liability

would be transferred to either CNPA or to Highland Council – the exact arrangement would depend on the extent of the works involved and whether Highland Council adopt the path and would obviously be subject to further negotiation with all of you who own the land, your legal representatives and also Highland Council.

If at any time you and your neighbours decide you do not want any changes to be made we can of course do nothing to this section of the route and allow people to use it informally as they do at present.

At present we are only looking at the concept of where the route could go, we have not designed the final details. The funding received from Sustrans has allowed a feasibility study to be produced to show that it is possible to develop this route with the aim to create a safer link for pedestrians from the residential area to the west of the town to the amenities (school, leisure centre etc) to the east. The meeting last week was one of the final stages of engagement with one more public engagement activity due to be held later this spring. After that Sustrans need to review the work completed so far and if they are satisfied that everything they funded has been done they will sign the project off. In previous years Sustrans could then have funded the next stage of the project however the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland have changed the way 'Active Travel' funding is administered from this year such that community groups can no longer apply directly for funding, instead funds will be allocated through either the Local Authority, the Regional Transport Partnerships or the National Park. This is why CNPA are looking at including the project in their proposed list of active travel routes for development through Cairngorms 2030.

Once Sustrans sign off the project Grantown 3As will then be able to pass the project to CNPA for further development. CNPA have funds available as part of Cairngorms 2030 and through other active travel funding. We expect Sustrans to complete the sign off sometime in April 2024, and I would also emphasise that although CNPA will then look at managing the project we will still involve the community in all stages of its development. The next phase will involve creating a detailed design, this is the stage that will look at both the physical characteristics (size, gradients, exact location etc) as well as placemaking features such as colour and type of surface. This phase will also involve designing drainage schemes, lighting etc. Once that phase is complete it will be ready for construction. As for timing, I have told your neighbours we are unlikely to progress any detailed work this year (we already have a committed schedule for the current financial year) so the earliest we would expect to carry out the detailed design stage would be spring 2025, and it is likely any construction would not take place until the following year. This also gives plenty of time for the various legal negotiations, any planning permissions etc, as well as allowing us to procure the contractors for construction.

We are also aware that other opportunities to improve the town layout are likely to rise through the development of the community led town plans and placemaking schemes and ideally we would like to see all of the town centre considered as one wider project. The work carried out by Grantown 3As to develop this feasibility study and determine a preferred route should feed into the wider plans for the town in due course.

I hope that answers your questions and gives you an idea of what has been done so far and what is likely to happen in future. If you want any more detailed information, or if there is anything else that I can help with please don't hesitate to contact me.

Observation following the meeting

Overall, I think it was a positive meeting and worth doing. The chance for them to ask questions and raise their concerns was well received and I think we were able to offer relevant information, address those concerns, and outline what will happen next such that they went away reassured about our intentions at least!

Further letter to 2 residents

I am happy to share information with you however it is not as simple as a single document. When Sustrans fund a feasibility scheme like this they require the recipients to produce many different reports from concept designs to a detailed report on all the engagement activities, proposed behaviour change interventions etc. We could share the final engagement report once that is completed and also the concept designs as I think those two reports will give you the information you require.

However I will reiterate what I said to your neighbours and perhaps didn't make clear to you in my earlier response: with regard to legal costs if the scheme goes ahead and the route is adopted CNPA will cover all legal costs (including your own solicitors) out of the project funds such that there would be no cost to yourselves. We are already doing this with the ongoing Dulnain Bridge to Grantown path and is standard practise in situations where we are looking to introduce a new route. I hope that reassures you that if the scheme proceeds you will not be expected to pay for any legal costs though we understand your desire for independent legal advice.