



**CAMPAIGNER'S
GUIDE TO:**

Stopping damaging roads



Contents:

Introduction	3
1. Understand your targets	4
2. Make a plan	7
3. Set up a campaign	10
4. Raise funds	14
5. Get help	16
6. Learn from past successes	18
7. Tackle the issues	20
8. Lots of great ideas for tactics	23



Most new road building is simply not needed.

Introduction

Who is this guide for?

If you think a new or bigger road in your local area is a bad idea and want to stop it, this guide from Campaign for Better Transport's Roads to Nowhere campaign will help show you what to do.

The strategies and tactics you use will depend on who is promoting the road scheme and what stage it has reached in the funding and planning processes. The best way to campaign when construction is about to begin will be different from getting a proposal removed from a council's long-term plans.

This document covers a wide range of campaigning advice, from the first steps of gathering information to the tactics to use as your campaign grows.

You might already be part of a group representing local residents, a local branch of a larger campaigning organisation, or a small group of concerned people without any campaigning experience. Whatever your situation, this guide will help you campaign against the road and find new allies, resources and inspiration.

The detailed sections on planning and funding refer to how proposals for roads are developed in England – different processes work in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but the principles outlined will still be useful.

You can also sign up to various online resources from Campaign for Better Transport:

- Roads to Nowhere campaign [homepage](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- To receive our newsletter for road campaigners and news about road building, sign up [here](#)

Why object to road proposals?

There are many different reasons to object to new or widened roads.

Your reasons for opposing local plans might include that they would:

- increase traffic and congestion on existing local roads
- increase air pollution
- spoil an area of tranquility or a well-used local green space
- damage a landscape or countryside you care about
- harm protected or locally valuable wildlife sites and natural habitats
- increase carbon emissions (make climate change worse)
- make it worse for people to walk or cycle because of increased or faster traffic
- threaten local bus or rail services by encouraging people to use their cars instead
- threaten council services such as swimming pools or libraries because your local council plans to use its money to fund the road (or you might prefer they fix the potholes!)
- be part of a big new housing development that would increase car dependency because it is far away from local facilities and jobs without good public transport links
- come with an industrial, retail or business development which would take business away from the town centre and existing local firms, rather than create new jobs.

1. Understand your targets

To be built, a road needs to obtain both funding approval and planning permission. For each type of road, decisions along each of these paths follow different processes, with different opportunities for your campaign to influence them.

If possible, it's worth spending time before you start a campaign to ask questions of the Highways England or the local authority to establish exactly where the road lies on the funding and planning path, and whether decisions that have already been made can be challenged or changed.

The person or authority that is set to make the next decision in each of these processes will also be an important target for your campaigning, so find out as much as possible about them and what they know.

The Strategic Road Network (trunk roads) run by the Highways Agency:



This section is about how to find the answers to these questions.

Whose road is it?

Different types of roads are the responsibility of different bodies, and these bodies will normally be the 'promoters' of any plans on their networks.

Trunk roads: Highways England

Highways England roads are called 'trunk roads' or the 'Strategic Road Network' and this network includes motorways and a number of the larger A-roads (see map).

Local roads: the local highways authority

In most areas the county council is the highways authority, with district or borough councils controlling planning. In areas with unitary authorities the same council takes responsibility for both planning and transport.

Private proposals

Occasionally, a road will be proposed by a private developer. Even if it won't form part of either the local authority or Highways England network, the road will still need to get planning permission.

Maps:

The interactive [road proposals map](#) on our website is constantly updated, and new road schemes in local authority, Highways England and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) plans will be added as they emerge.

Using open data from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, we have put online a map showing all the [local authority Air Quality Management Areas](#), which you can use to compare with road plans in your area.

We have also mapped [Local Enterprise Partnership areas](#) using government data, and added useful links to each LEP's Growth Deal plans.

Who makes the final decisions on planning?

Local roads and private proposals: local planning authorities

This is the same process as any other planning decision - the road plans will be considered by the relevant local planning committee and approved or rejected after a short period for objections (usually at least three weeks).

If the road is particularly significant or controversial, the decision may be 'called in' by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This means the plans will be looked at in more detail through a public inquiry, where a planning inspector hears both sides and writes a report to the Secretary of State who then decides.

If the proposal is large it can also be put through the planning process for 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' (see below), if the Secretary of State decides.

Trunk roads: Secretary of State

All major developments on trunk roads will automatically be considered 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' (NSIPs) and will go through a special planning process that combines planning permission and compulsory purchase orders into one six-month examination process.

See our [NSIP guide](#) for more information.

Who makes the final decisions on funding?

Road-building funds come from a range of sources, and this which determines who decides on their funding. Generally, trunk roads funding is decided by Highways England or/ the Department for Transport (DfT), whereas local roads can be funded by a whole range of partners, including DfT, local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Trunk roads:

Government

- The Government sets the budget for a 5- yearly Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) which is then used by Highways England to deliver on the schemes in its business plan. We are currently in the first RIS period which runs until 2020. From 2020, the Government intends on ringfencing income from Vehicle Excise Duty for use on the trunk roads network to give it a permanent and steady income stream.

Private investors and pension funds

- The Government has been looking for ways to get large pension funds to invest in infrastructure, but the high risks of toll road investment mean only a few bridge projects are currently funded this way.

Local roads:

Government

- DfT direct grants (for the largest local schemes, usually over £20-30 million).

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- LEP Local Growth Deals (led by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with input from Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)).

Local Authority

- Capital budget.
- Most transport funding is now merged into Local Growth Deals, run by LEPs (see above).
- Developer contributions (via Section 106 contributions or the Community Infrastructure Levy).
- New Homes Bonus payments.

Where large amounts of public money are being spent, there are conditions on achieving value for money, but the final decision to fund a road scheme is often made with little oversight.

More about the decision-makers

See our [companion guide](#) for more detail on the decision makers.

Using Freedom of Information and EIR laws to find out information

Freedom of Information laws and Environmental Information Regulations mean that public bodies, including local authorities and the DfT, have to release documents and details of their work when you ask for them, unless they can give a good reason.

Find out more about how to use these laws to find out more about transport plans and roads in our [companion guide](#).

Don't wait to be consulted before starting a campaign

There are various points in the funding and planning processes where public consultations and 'stakeholder engagement' are supposed to take place, but don't think that your campaign's influence is limited to these points. In fact, waiting for these opportunities to raise problems with the plans may be a mistake.

Acting early, asking questions and investigating the plans before they are consulted on means that you may be able to change the plans and even delay the next step in the process.

Raising issues early in public is also a good way to make sure that, when a consultation process does start, you have a group of concerned local people ready to act and recruit even more supporters to your cause.

Statutory Environmental Bodies

The Government has several 'independent' environmental watchdogs, known as statutory environmental bodies, which comment on road schemes:

- Natural England, which focuses on landscape and biodiversity issues.
- The Environment Agency, which is concerned with flooding, rivers, air pollution and climate change.

- Historic England, concerned with heritage issues.

These bodies can be lobbied by campaigners, and may call for amendments to plans. However, they are unlikely to oppose a road proposal outright and may even support it, particularly if they think they will get improved infrastructure out of the proposal. They have also suffered significant budget cuts in recent years so have less capacity to get involved in individual schemes.

2. Make a plan

After you have an idea of the process and players involved in influencing the road you're opposing, it's time to make a campaign plan.

This doesn't have to be a very formal process. A simple way of making a plan is to get together with other people in the campaign, talk through the goals you want to achieve and who you need to influence (your strategy) and come up with some ideas for things to do (your tactics). Put your agreed ideas on paper and there's your campaign plan!

Strategy

In general, your strategy will need to have both short and long-term goals linked to the formal decision-making processes as well as influencing the wider political environment and local public opinion.

Tactics

You will need to plan activities and events to help achieve your goals. These can include making your case directly to decision-makers or gathering and demonstrating support for your campaign in order to apply public pressure.

You will probably want to work with other groups and experts to help make your case. And you will almost certainly need to fundraise and have ideas for getting press coverage.

Section 10 of this guide has examples of specific tactics you might think about using to support your strategy. This section aims to help you gather some final bits of information and decide on your overall plan.

Campaign plan checklist

1. List your objectives:

- What is your long term aim?
- What decisions are you aiming to influence in the short term and when will they be made?
- Plan tactics that will influence these decisions at the right time.
- Look up and note any key dates over the next 6-12 months, but remember you don't have to work to the promoters' timetable or wait for formal processes to begin.

2. Find your targets:

- Who will be making the decision?
- What is their current view of the road project and how might their views be changed?
- Who will influence their decision or might change their views?
- How aware is the local community of what is being planned? Who are the community leaders who might help spread the word?

3. Note any opportunities:

- As well as decisions about the road, are any public consultations, exhibitions, council meetings, elections, or related budget decisions coming up where you could raise the issue?
- What information could you uncover to increase the prominence of the issue with the press and public?
- Add any dates to your planning timeline and think of tactics to influence these processes at the right times.

Key question 1: What are the major reasons to object to the road?

While making your plan, try to find out more about the specific problems the planned road might cause (and don't always believe the headline statistics presented by the scheme's promoters).

To discover problems you can point to, look closely at the details in published documents about the road's impact on the environment, economy and transport.

- The business case (and particularly the simple Appraisal Summary Table) are the best places to look for this information.
- If there is no business case yet, find out as much as you can about any assessments that have taken place. Use FOI/EIR to ask questions about what the council or Highways England has done to start assessing the potential impact of a proposed scheme.

In particular, look out for the following pieces of information:

- What is the carbon impact of the scheme?
- Will more traffic be generated by the road?
- Will it increase air pollution or delay compliance with legal limits?
- Will some streets see higher traffic than others?
- Does it go through any protected wildlife sites or habitats?
- Will it impact on flooding?
- Does it affect historic sites?
- Will it damage areas of local amenity, such as parks, woods, commons, footpaths or playing fields?
- Will it impact on a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other area of much loved countryside?
- What is the latest cost of the scheme? (costs tend to rise relentlessly during the planning stages)
- What else could be done with that money?
- What does the risk register document say about any problems the road might cause that are not highlighted in the main papers?

Study maps closely

Many things of value to your community, such as parks, walks, trees and nature sites may not be shown properly on official maps. Take time to study route maps and proposals very carefully to see what will really be affected.



The interactive *MAGIC map* from Natural England is a good place to start, showing many natural assets, but your own local knowledge can be just as useful!

You can also look at Campaign for Better Transport's objection letters about specific road schemes for ideas of what to say and the sorts of issues that are most likely to be taken notice of. You can find them on our main research page under '*Road Building*'.

To analyse these documents in more detail, you may want to hire experts – see chapter 5 for advice on doing this.

Key question 2: Who are your potential allies?

- Is there already a campaign group opposing the scheme? A web search may answer this question.
- What other groups – such as parish councils, residents' associations, or local branches of green groups – have an interest in the scheme?
- What are the attitudes of the statutory environmental bodies Historic England, Natural England and The Environment Agency? To find out, you can simply phone one of their regional offices to discuss the road scheme.
- Do businesses have a view on the road? Don't assume all businesses support road building and you might be able to recruit some useful allies.
- Do any of the proposed routes run through parks, nature reserves, local beauty spots or specially designated spaces? If so, you may be able to enlist the support of other people who value the space – see page 9.

- You could also speak to local nature reserves and wildlife groups about harm to habitats of protected species (such as bats, dormice or newts) or ancient woodland.
- Is there any official opposition? What is the attitude of local councils? Search council meeting minutes or contact your local councillor.
- What is your MP's view? Could you get him or her on side? Attend their next surgery and find out
- *Contact your local MP and councillors*

District and parish councils

Where these exist, they are statutory consultees for higher tier local authorities and will therefore be sent planning applications and draft local development plans. But they are often not equipped to make an informed response and, without a lot of capacity to investigate, may just agree to proposals without much debate.

For your campaign, these councils may therefore be an important level of government to inform and influence. Getting parish councils on board can also help to counter local authority arguments that 'the local community' agrees with their plans.

Business groups

Roads are often justified on the basis of supposed economic benefits and promoters of road schemes will try to demonstrate business backing. But don't assume that all businesses will want a big new road scheme.

For instance, there is evidence that local street improvements and better public transport are better for local high streets. Big new roads can often suck people out of towns and villages, rather than improving their economic and social well-being.

Other wildlife and conservation groups

Other groups may also be concerned about new road schemes. Campaign for Better Transport has shown that the current proposals could mean damage to National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and irreplaceable ancient woods, and almost all road schemes are likely to affect areas of natural or historical interest.

Members of groups like the Woodland Trust, RSPB and Wildlife Trusts are likely to be concerned about the impact of road schemes and are important allies to seek out – see the box below for some useful web addresses.

Environmental groups to look for in your area

If there are local spokespeople for these organisations in your area, contact them to ask for support and help.

Environmental groups may only be able to get involved if something they are tasked with protecting is threatened (for example a woodland).



- *Campaign to Protect Rural England*
- *Friends of the Earth*
- *Woodland Trust*
- *Wildlife Trusts*
- *RSPB*
- *Ramblers*
- *CTC – the cycling charity*
- *Campaign for National Parks – national park societies*
- *Landscapes for Life – support organisations for AONBs*

3. Set up a campaign

Running a campaign takes some dedication but, with a group of committed people rounding up support, making your case, publicising your views and getting others involved in activities, it is fun, creative and very rewarding.

To help make the practical side easier, we've assembled some advice, tips and ideas from road campaigns past and present, so that you don't have to work out how to deal with every detail from scratch.

If you find better ways to do some of these things or have great ideas you want to share, let us know and we'll add them to future editions of this guide. Contact Chris Todd: chris.todd@bettertransport.org.uk

Organising and mobilising

You can get some good advice on how to set up a group and run it successfully from:

- The Ecologist website: [How to start a student campaigning group](#)
- Rising Tide: [Managing groups, meetings and talks](#)
- Seeds for Change: [Advice and resources](#)

Call a meeting

Once you have decided go ahead, call an organising meeting to get things started. Set a date and a venue, then call or email other local organisations whose officers or members might join the campaign. This first meeting is definitely for organising and you shouldn't invite the press, but you might want to advertise at a local library or community centre to find other interested local residents.

Choose a good name for your campaign



If you're a new group, before you can do almost anything - even set up an email address - you'll need a name for your campaign. It may be obvious what to call yourselves. If not, here are some ideas and examples:

- Including the **name of your town** (or a specific area within it) helps to show who you represent and that you're concerned about your area.
- If there's a particular green space, park or other precious thing at risk, 'Save XXX' is often perfect.
- Names containing 'Alliance', 'United' or similar words are good if you have members of different local groups involved.
- Names of the form 'Stop the XX road' can work well. However, promoters often change what they call a road over time. What was a 'bypass' may be called 'link road', 'relief road' or 'improvement' before long!
- If your campaign is likely to involve promoting alternatives as well as arguing against the road, a **flexible name** like 'X Town Transport Action' might be better.
- **Acronyms** can be great. One alliance of road groups called itself 'SCAR' (South Coast Against Road-building). Bear in mind that if you pick a long name, people are likely to start calling it by its initials anyway, so make sure to avoid unfortunate combinations!

Choose officers and set up working groups

At the first meeting, the main task is to confirm that you want to create a campaign group and decide on an initial strategy, divide up some practical tasks (e.g. research work, setting up email, websites, bank accounts etc) and next steps.

How you structure your campaign organisation is up to you, but having a non-hierarchical structure can be a good idea so that everyone can contribute and all the responsibility doesn't fall onto one person, as this can lead to burnout.

A common structure is to form a 'core group' and several 'working groups' to take on specific areas of work. Try to focus on doing things and avoid creating too much bureaucracy (which can lead to lots of meetings and not much action).

You should choose at least two officers (such as a Treasurer and Secretary) for admin and bank account purposes. You will need to agree a simple constitution in order to apply for a bank account and grants.

Voluntary Action Leicestershire's [template constitution](#) is a good model.

Keep in touch regularly

Getting your team and working groups together in person is ideal, but some people with family commitments may not be able to come to a lot of evening meetings, and people who work may not be free during the day.

Email is a great tool to keep everyone involved whatever their circumstances - set up a couple of 'Google group' type mailing lists, one for posting news to supporters and one for sending organisational info to the key people organising your campaign.

It's good to keep these two lists separate as otherwise supporters can be swamped with emails discussing details such as catering for a public meeting (which puts them off and risks them leaving the group).



To fight the proposed Bexhill-Hastings Link Road, local people including Derrick Coffee set up the Hastings Alliance, made up of individuals, local groups and national organisations.

"It's important to build up good relationships with other local groups and national organisations; national organisations are able to help with getting the message out there," says Derrick. [Read more.](#)

Campaign email addresses

For campaign email, register an address with a service such as Google or Yahoo, and give officers passwords.

Use these dedicated emails for campaign business such as sending newsletters and press releases, rather than someone's private address. They can be passed on to others with a complete archive if anyone moves away, and they help keep campaign business separate from personal work as well.

Keep supporters informed

As soon as possible, start collecting names, phone numbers, addresses and email addresses from people who support your campaign and want to get involved. Get these supporters to collect more names from their contacts and friends, and help build up a mailing list.

Most supporters will expect you to contact them by email. To start with, you can simply 'blind copy' or 'bcc' a list of subscribers you keep on file (never openly share emails using the 'cc' field), but eventually you'll want a proper list. This is also important for data protection reasons: newsletter services ensure that personal data is managed via secure passwords and that there is always an easy way for people to unsubscribe.



One example of a free e-newsletter service is [MailChimp](#), which is (managed online, integrates with things like Facebook and is free for low- traffic lists (- normally under 2,000 subscribers).

Another is [Phplist](#), which is open source and free to download and install in your web domain. Phplist also has a new hosted option where everything is managed online (- also free for low-traffic lists).

Get a web presence

Every campaign needs an internet presence, even if just to post basic details and contact information. Even without a technical whizz on the team, creating a simple online presence isn't hard to do. Here are some tips.

Facebook page

The simplest and quickest way to get visible online within minutes of choosing your campaign name is to set up a Facebook page (go for a 'page' rather than a 'group', and don't set an account up for your campaign as if it's a person, as this breaks Facebook rules and these accounts often get deleted). Make all members of the core group administrators of the page, and you have a ready-made forum to attract supporters and share news, photos and links.

Twitter

Twitter isn't for everyone, but you'll almost certainly have someone willing to look after an account. It's a useful way of advertising your presence and pointing people towards your Facebook page and website where more complicated issues can be explained.

Watch out for data protection rules

If you are a non-profit organisation you won't need to register with the Information Commissioner's office but you will still need to abide by the basic principles of data protection.

Organisations that are exempt from registering must:

- only process information necessary to establish or maintain membership or support;
- only process information necessary to provide or administer activities for people who are members of the organisation or have regular contact with it;
- only share the information with people and organisations necessary to carry out the organisation's activities. Important – you can only do this if individuals give you permission to share their information;
- only keep the information while the individual is a member or supporter or as long as necessary for member/supporter administration.

More on the Information Commissioner's [website](#)

Website

Quite quickly you'll need a website that isn't restricted to the posts and shares that Facebook allows. On your site you can set out your case against the road in more detail and post your press releases, documents and other items.

For the non-technical, we'd recommend using Wordpress.com, where you can set up a free site with a web address in the format 'yourcampaignname.wordpress.com'. On this site, you can choose a simple template, upload your logo, add blog posts and/or as many static pages as you need, and integrate with Twitter and Facebook.

Wordpress is easy to get the hang of and because it has a wide user-base. Most people will be able to use it.

Make sure that at least two members of your core group have passwords, so that everything doesn't rely on one person and that things don't grind to a halt when they go on holiday.

Announce yourselves with a public meeting

Once your campaign group has a strategy and some good reasons to oppose a road plan, a good next step is to hold a public meeting.

This doesn't have to be complicated. You can simply book a hall, present the facts you've uncovered and state your concerns. Then, encourage local people to ask questions and discuss how the road might affect them. Make sure you invite relevant local groups along too, and any businesses affected by the plans.

Don't forget to collect contact details from everyone who attends!

If you have identified specific problems (loss of green space, more air pollution or increased traffic, for example) have separate short presentations on these issues. Academics researching these problems or expert speakers from local or national campaign groups can be asked to present these segments and answer questions.

Make sure you invite the press, and put a lot of effort into promotion to ensure a good turnout. Send notices to local residents' groups, advertise in shop windows and local notice boards, place an event notice in the local newspaper, tell community websites and radio stations, and put leaflets through as many doors as you can.

London campaigners No Silvertown Tunnel invited traffic and air pollution experts to speak at meetings held in the communities affected by plans for a new river crossing.

Watch the six presentations [online](#)



Inform the press

Generating media coverage can help establish your campaign with the public, raise awareness of the issues, gain new supporters, and influence local decision makers. The Media Trust have produced [guidance](#) on this and what you need to think about before contacting the media.

A press release is a great way of informing the media about your concerns and what you are doing and can contain several different kinds of 'news':

- news of a campaign launch
- information about an upcoming event or meeting
- your campaign's reaction to a new announcement or event
- new data uncovered by your research, Freedom of Information requests or expert analysis.

Campaign for Better Transport's press officer has written a [guide](#) to contacting the media and writing a press release.

Once written, you need to send your press release to all the relevant media. It is also worth sending your story to [Community Newswire](#) which is run by the Media Trust to help community and voluntary groups get their stories into the national and regional media.

If you are contacted by the media, it is worth being prepared, particularly for a radio or TV interview. Friends of the Earth have produced some [good advice](#) on this.

4. Raise funds

Get a bank account

A campaign needs to handle money. A dedicated bank account can take a while to set up so it's best to do this immediately after you appoint your officers.

Try to find an ethically aware bank, such as Unity Trust Bank or one of the remaining building societies, and choose a type of account that's intended for use by voluntary groups.

Get donations

A good way to ensure your campaign has a regular income is to ask supporters to set up a small monthly standing order.

People can do this themselves by filling in a form at their bank, or using online banking (which they can cancel at any time if they want to). To set up a standing order they just need the name, sort code and number of your campaign account.

Holding a fundraising event early in the campaign is recommended too to help create a fighting fund as well as being another way of raising awareness about your campaign. Friends of the Earth has produced a [guide](#) on the many different ways to fundraise.

Online donations

Online is the easiest way for people to donate to your campaign as few people nowadays will go to the trouble of writing a cheque (if they have a cheque book) and putting it in the post. PayPal is the most famous online payment method, but there are other options too, such as [localgiving.com](#). All methods will charge for this service so check out the costs first so you know what you're letting yourself in for.

An online payment account with one of these sites in the name of your campaign doesn't take long to set up. Your Treasurer will need to submit their personal details and your campaign's bank account details.



Using funding from Lush Charity Pot, the Stonehenge Alliance was able to set up a [website](#), print fliers, get a banner printed and pay travelling expenses for its campaigners to attend meetings and actions. It has helped make a big difference to the success of the campaign.

You can start taking donations into the account almost straight away – on PayPal use the 'merchant tools' to get code for a donate button that you simply add to your website.

It can take a little longer, however, before you can withdraw money from any of these sites. You may need to verify your identity first, but if you have any queries there is normally help available get you through the process.

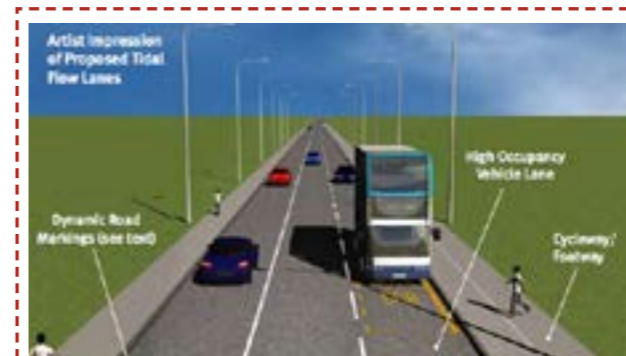
Crowdfunding sites

Sites that let you crowdfund towards a specific target are another way to raise funds and can be useful for road campaigns that need money for expert help, legal fees, newspaper adverts or a big event. This is an important way of raising funds now that some funders of community campaigns won't pay for consultants, expert help or legal fees.

Once registered with the site, you set a target, upload some pictures and text telling your story and making your ask and start collecting pledges.

A number of good sites are up and running:

- [Just Giving Crowdfunding](#)
- [IndieGoGo](#)
- [Kickstarter](#)
- [Crowdfunder](#)



The Kingskerswell Alliance commissioned experts to look at alternative ways of reducing congestion without a bypass, and published a [report](#) showing these new ideas.



By presenting and promoting a detailed alternative plan with no new road through a water meadow, campaign group Witney First defeated the Cogges Link Road at a public inquiry in 2012.

Apply for grants

A number of organisations can provide grants to small grassroots campaign groups that are not registered charities. Applying for and receiving these is a process that takes weeks if not months, so, if you know you are going to need some money in the future (for an action, public meeting, stunt, etc), apply for it as soon as possible.

Most grant funders have a standard application form where you tell them what your campaign is for, and what you are planning to spend the money on, as well as if you are also fundraising from other sources. However, make sure you read any guidelines carefully so that you don't waste your time applying for money for a project that the grant giver won't fund. For example, Lush won't pay for consultancy fees, so if you need an expert to write a report, they wouldn't be an appropriate source to ask for funding. Make sure you are aware of any grant conditions such as needing a bank account or reporting back on the success of your project.

Always get rough estimates of your costs before applying, as it will help show that you've planned your project carefully, and don't be afraid to ask for as much as you need to get the job done (within the stated limit for the grants).

Most funders will also ask for references - Roads to Nowhere's campaigners can help with this if you are known to us (but please check with us first!).

Lush Charity Pot:

[Lush](#) gives grants up to £4,000. Although the stated maximum is £10,000 this is extremely rare.

Edge Fund:

[The Edge Fund](#) giving grants to grassroots campaigning organisations.

Patagonia:

[Patagonia](#) (the outdoor clothing company) gives grants to small, grassroots environmental groups with provocative direct-action agendas. "We... think the individual battles to protect a specific stand of forest, stretch of river or indigenous wild species are the most effective in raising more complicated issues... in the public mind."

Localgiving:

Set up a fundraising page for your group on the [Localgiving website](#) and you will benefit from its regular 'Grow Your Tenner' events. During these events, Localgiving will match-fund donations to your group of up to £10 - so all donations could be worth double.

Funding advice from Roads to Nowhere

For much smaller amounts that are needed in a hurry, e.g. the cost of a banner or emergency leaflet, we can sometimes help find quick funds, so get in touch if you have a crisis.

There are also a small number of funders and organisations who do not take applications but look out for grassroots groups to support pro-actively. When they ask, we tell them about groups that are currently active and in need of help, so make sure to keep us informed about your work and funding needs.

5. Get help

Hiring consultants and transport experts

Some problems caused by the road will be clearly laid out in the business plan or environmental statement. However, it is important to remember that the officials who draw up these documents may make mistakes and their studies may downplay any harm. Expert help is needed to root out these issues or to give credibility to any alternatives you might want to propose.

When you reach this point in your campaign, it's worth thinking about hiring consultants with expertise in transport planning and modelling. This costs money (an experienced consultant will need to work for several days in order to do the analysis), so you'll need to fundraise or apply for grants to afford it. You'll also need to write a detailed brief and provide all the relevant background information and documents to the consultants before they start.

The results can be well worth it, showing up flaws in plans, and raising questions about value for money and the impact of the road, which can be decisive.

Reports produced by experts should be shared as widely as possible. Release the key points to the press, put the findings in your leaflets and - most importantly - send the documents to decision-makers and promoters and ask for a response.

The Roads to Nowhere campaign can help put you in touch with good consultants when you need them

Legal advice

Road promoters have to get their project through a number of highly technical processes before they can start building. At any point, they may – usually unintentionally – do something that breaches the law, and your campaign should be alert to anything that you don't think has followed the correct procedures.

If you want to challenge decisions or stop unlawful activities, legal advice is essential. Solicitors and barristers experienced in planning and development law can be hired to take a look at an issue and give you an opinion on what to do. They can also help you launch a legal challenge or write letters to the promoters pointing out their errors.

Again, this will usually cost money (though many lawyers may work for reduced rates and, for court cases, you can often apply to the judge for an order limiting the costs you will pay if you lose). It can take up to three months or more for a grant to come through, however, so for initial legal advice it is a good idea to keep a fighting fund topped up with local fundraising for when you might need it.

These organisations can help find lawyers who offer free or low cost legal advice to campaigners:

- [Friends of the Earth Rights and Justice Centre](#)
- [iProbono](#)
- The [Environmental Law Foundation](#) is a charity set up to primarily help socially and economically disadvantaged communities have a voice on proposals that will affect their environment

You can also find out more about Environmental Law in the UK via the [Law and Your Environment website](#).

Studies and evidence given by consultants to the Thames Gateway Bridge public inquiry in 2007 were very influential in persuading the Planning Inspector to recommend against the proposals



Link up with other road campaigns

One reason that the 1990s anti-road movement was successful in stopping so many road schemes was the way groups linked up to give each other advice and help. The national umbrella group 'ALARM UK' helped these networks to develop, provided regular newsletters and brought different campaign groups together for demonstrations, meeting and conferences.

By working on both a national level (to change government policy) and a local level (supporting and networking individual campaigns) ALARM UK and the wider anti-roads movement was able to defeat large numbers of schemes and turn national policy against major road-building.

The Roads to Nowhere campaign aims to work in a similar way and, while we can't oppose every road individually, we will be there to offer advice and help for your campaign and to share news between groups around the country.

This guide is part of that work, and you can also contact our campaigners, Bridget Fox and Chris Todd at: bridget.fox@bettertransport.org.uk 020 7566 6488 chris.todd@bettertransport.org.uk 07889 302229

Make sure you're on our mailing list for local groups to hear news about other campaigns. Sign up here by emailing Bridget: bridget.fox@bettertransport.org.uk



Use our logo

The 'Another Road to Nowhere' logo is free for local campaigns to use and adapt, helping to show we're all part of a growing movement.

- [Download web images and artwork](#)

Borrow our banners

We have several large, eye-catching mesh banners available to borrow for protests, camps, backdrops for meetings and many other uses.

- [Get in touch with Chris to find out more:](#) chris.todd@bettertransport.org.uk



Roads to Nowhere holds regular conferences for road campaigners, to share experiences and get practical advice from the experts.

6. Learn from past successes

The movement became a national force after the Roads for Prosperity programme was launched in 1989 with more than 600 schemes. After huge protests, by November 1995 the number of new roads had dropped to 300, and by 1997 only 150 were left. Labour put the whole programme on hold after the general election that year.

"When six of us were imprisoned for breaking a court order, it spectacularly backfired on the Government."

- Read Becca's [account](#) of the Twyford Down campaign.



John's advice

John Stewart was a key figure in ALARM UK and talks about the positive lessons and tactics we can learn from its work in the 1990s.



- We worked with groups like CBT to put forward non-road-based solutions.
- We undermined the economic and transport arguments for road building by showing that, in a mature economy like the UK, more roads were not critical to economic success. Indeed, new roads simply generated more traffic.

The Economist in 1994 said: *"Protesting about new roads has become that rarest of British phenomena, a truly populist movement drawing supporters from all walks of life."*

We had taken on the Government and the roads lobby and won.



Here's how we did it:

- We formed a broad coalition. 250 local groups came together under the umbrella of ALARM UK. We received support from national organizations like Campaign for Better Transport (then Transport 2000) and Friends of the Earth.
- We focused on pro-active campaigning – eye-catching local and national stunts and demonstrations – to put the other side on the defensive. We didn't put all our faith in public consultations and public inquiries.
- We linked up with the direct action activists who emerged at Twyford Down. Everybody in ALARM UK did not take direct action but these links between local people and young activists frightened the authorities.

Becca's advice

Becca Lush Blum was a key figure in the 1990s road protests.



Key factors behind our success in the 1990s were:

- Forming alliances, no matter how unlikely.
- Direct action, working alongside conventional campaigning, never split off. My group Road Alert! helped to support this activity.
- Lobbying groups – Transport 2000 (the old name for Campaign for Better Transport), the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth.
- Local groups and corridor groups – supported nationally by ALARM UK (see John's advice).

- Academics winning arguments.
- No 'leaders' – a genuine people's movement.
- Delay, delay, delay as an important tactic.
- "Quiet victories, noisy defeats" – the most high profile schemes were built, but many more were quietly dropped.
- Media coverage – national and international.

My advice for current road campaigners:

- Link with other groups and make alliances.
- Climate activists in your area will provide loads of energy.
- Link with campaigners against cuts – UK Uncut, unions etc – about the phenomenal waste of money on roads.
- Use the compelling technical arguments about lack of traffic growth

Lessons from the 1990s

"A sure sign of the growing strength and maturity of the anti-roads movement is the way local groups have banded together over the last few years to fight road construction along specific corridors."



"The A36 Corridor Alliance, formed in October 1993, consists of over thirty groups each opposing a particular scheme along the A36/46 between Southampton and Bristol."

"SCAR (South Coast Against Road-building), started in April 1994, is made up of nearly forty groups opposing DoT plans to construct a 230 mile superhighway from the Channel Tunnel to the West Country."

The short book [Roadblock](#) about road campaigning in the 1990s is full of stories about how ALARM UK evolved.



ALARM UK features in this [BBC2 documentary](#) from 1994, presented by Fiona Bruce and including a Dimpleby-chaired meeting of an alliance of A36 campaigners in the south west.

The programme also interviews Barbara Cartland about her support for the campaigners!

7. Tackle the issues

An important part of your campaign is to gauge public opinion and seek to influence it. You will often find that some local people are in favour of the new road, but also that their support is based on taking the claims of promoters at face value. You can change these opinions by presenting people with new evidence.

Debunking the claims of promoters

People may be fed up with recurring congestion in their area, so they may be inclined to believe assertions that the new road is the only way of solving this problem. But there is plenty of evidence that *new roads create new traffic* and that *congestion returns within a few years* of new capacity being provided.

London campaigners No Silvertown Tunnel invited traffic and air pollution experts to speak at meetings held in the communities affected by plans for a new river crossing, to *find out what was wrong with new roads* in the area.



A popular argument in favour of a new road is that it will help the local economy by creating road access to a new 'employment area'. It is worth spending time examining and challenging the basis of these arguments, with expert help when necessary. You are likely to find that the economic impact of the scheme is almost entirely calculated from small time savings for drivers, while any job claims are likely to be exaggerated.

Another is that a new road is needed to serve new development, but there are plenty of examples where new development, such as new housing has been focussed on public transport, with great success.

See the *Getting There* report.

See our *Factsheets* for more information.

Several wider studies have cast doubt on the transport and economic claims for new roads, and these can also be cited as evidence:

Bypasses don't work

- Campaign for Better Transport's *website article*
- Our *report* looking at the Highways England's (formerly Highways Agency) project evaluation (POPE) studies

Induced traffic

- Professor Phil Goodwin's excellent *summary* of the issue
- *A study of induced traffic at Newbury*, by Transport for Quality of Life

The 1994 report *Trunk Roads and the Generation of Traffic* was produced by an independent panel of experts set up to advise the Department for Transport. The conclusion was: "An average road improvement, for which traffic growth due to all other factors is forecast correctly, will see an additional [i.e. induced] 10% of base traffic in the short term and 20% in the long term."

Air pollution

The UK Government has consistently failed to meet legally binding targets to reduce air pollution. On average transport is responsible for 80% of NOx emissions at the roadside, with diesel vehicles the largest source. So whether the road scheme you are opposing is on a local road – where the council takes the decision – or the Strategic Road Network, the need to tackle air pollution will be an important part of your case. Find out more in our *companion guide*.

Economic effects

Beyond Transport Infrastructure - Lessons for the future from recent road projects is the definitive study of the economic effects of road-building.

Inaccurate traffic forecasts and lack of traffic growth

Seeing the back of the car. A useful *overview of 'peak car' evidence* from the Economist in September 2012

- *Due diligence, traffic forecasts and pensions* by Prof Phil Goodwin
- Several interesting academic articles from this edition of *Transport Reviews* are free to access
- Former DfT Chief Scientist David Metz's book *Peak Car* is an accessible introduction to the topic
- The New Zealand Government organised a seminar with UWE in 2014 discussing the most up-to-date evidence, which is written up *here*

Most people want better ideas

Don't allow those promoting new roads to claim that they hold the majority view, just because they may have support from the local paper or the constituency MP.

Opinion polls and surveys consistently show that most people prefer to improve public transport, and for roads money to go to fix potholes, not add new capacity. Often, supporters of new roads as the way to beat congestion are in a minority.

Your campaign can work with these underlying opinions – spread the findings of national polls, do your own surveys locally, or demolish a promoter's claim that their road will solve traffic problems, showing instead that it will make traffic worse – you will find people are likely to be receptive to your findings!

Often a new road is promoted as necessary to support new housing and other development but it doesn't have to be that way. Campaign for Better Transport has produced a report, '*Getting There: How sustainable transport can support new development*'.

Smarter choices and public transport alternatives

Evidence and case studies from Campaign for Better Transport:

- *Reopening railways: the case for growing the rail network* June 2012
- *Smarter spending to boost the economy* November 2011
- *Improving local transport helps the economy* July 2014



The council claimed that the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road had high levels of local public support, but campaigners in the village of Crowhurst proved otherwise by carrying out their own door-to-door survey. This showed that 81% were against the road and the destruction and developments that come with it.

- *Read more* from the Crowhurst campaigners.

Question the process and follow the money

Sometimes it can seem baffling when a road proposal is suddenly revived, especially if there are clear alternatives and more urgent funding priorities for your area.

In these cases, using Freedom of Information and some good detective work can help to uncover why a scheme is being given public money now, and these revelations can be a valuable tool in persuading the public to turn against a proposal if they can see vested interests being served.

Questions you can seek answers to might include:

- Does a particular business or development benefit from the road being built?
- What are their ties to the decision makers?
- What meetings have been held between officials and businesses in the run up to the decision being made?
- Do the businesses that benefit donate to local or national political parties?
- Have contractors been appointed early in the process, and have they influenced the decision to proceed?
- What other contracts does the company have?
- Is there an election coming up, where support for the road could help win votes?

Asking questions under Freedom of Information in the right way is important so that you don't exceed the time and cost limits for providing answers.

For example, if you know when discussions about funding a road are likely to have taken place, include a time period in your request rather than asking for all the information related to the road on your council's files.

- Read the [Campaign for Freedom of Information's guide](#) to getting the most out of questions to public bodies



Freedom of Information requests by Campaign for Better Transport uncovered the influence of Liberal Democrat ministers in the Treasury and local MPs on the surprise funding for this road announced in the 2011 Autumn Statement. Read about it [here](#).

"I can remember when the bypass was first built. We were told it would solve all the local congestion but it just attracted more traffic. Now, not only is the bypass clogged up, but the traffic in town is as bad as it ever was. Worse, if anything."

Jill Archer from Save Ambridge Vale Environment (fictional but correct in the BBC radio drama!)

8. Lots of great ideas for tactics

Using the right tactic at the right time is key to a successful campaign. This section gives examples of tactics road campaigners have used to address strategic problems and communicate campaign messages.

Are people in the dark about the plans? Then try some tactics to raise awareness. Is the council dismissing your concerns as from a niche minority? Use tactics that show them the breadth of your support. Is an important funding decision coming up? Tactics that show the alternatives or apply political pressure might work best in these circumstances.

We're always looking for more examples, so please send us details and photos if you come up with a creative tactic that you want to share with other campaigners. We also host regular guest blogs from local campaigners to talk about their ideas and how they have addressed strategic problems.

Read our roads blog [here](#)

CPRE has also produced advice on campaigning. [Chapter 7](#) of its branch handbook gives advice on some of the various tactics listed below.

Raising public awareness

Producing campaign materials

Window posters, street signs and banners

These are a very visual way for people and businesses in the local area to demonstrate support. Different examples include simple A4 posters for house and shop windows, poster boards for front gardens and larger banners for willing homeowners and businesses to display.



These banners, along the route of the proposed Manchester Airport Link Road, highlight to local people the chance to object to the plans.

A local pub banner demonstrates community support for the BLINKRR campaign to save the Hastings battle site.



Maps and photos to illustrate the impact

Showing the planned road on a map or superimposing an artist's impression on landscape photos can really help bring home what the plans will mean. Council exhibitions will often feature versions of these that minimise the real impact – for example by showing trees that will be planted to mask the road fully grown, when in reality that will take many decades!



Using maps, as on this postcard and leaflet from Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group, helps to show the impact of road building.

Logos and merchandise

A good logo can really help to make window posters, leaflets and banners stand out if you can find a local artist or designer to create one. For photo calls, colourful matching t-shirts can make a real splash, and badges worn by supporters can help spread awareness in the local community.

To help pay for these items, you can ask for small donations, though their value is usually more in spreading your message than making money for the campaign.

In the 1990s, badges and t-shirts supporting the Twyford Down road campaigners were everywhere. Transport Solutions for Lancaster and Morecambe produced these badges to help people show their objection to the Heysham-M6 Link Road.



Leaflets and posters

Producing a good, simple leaflet with key facts and information about how to help the campaign should be one of the first things your campaign does. These are invaluable and can be distributed in many different ways.

Make sure the information on your leaflets is concise and easy to understand. Including a map or photos is a good idea. Printing up some larger poster-sized versions can also be handy for putting up at events and on local noticeboards.

- Leave piles of the leaflets in local libraries and community centres.
- Drop them through doors to cover a large area more quickly than with door-knocking.
- Have them on street stalls.
- Give out batches at public meetings so supporters can spread the word at work, at the school gates and other organisations' meetings and events.

The Combe Haven Defenders created this distinctive artwork to promote their action pledge, drawing on the heritage of their area (a possible site of the Battle of Hastings!).



Activities

Street stalls

Street campaigning is a very traditional, and effective, way of drumming up support. Some shopping areas have rules on setting up stalls, though there's likely to be a well-known and accepted spot for this kind of activity somewhere on your high street.

Take the stall to local events and fairs too, where you're likely to find lots of potential supporters.



Take a campaign stall to local events, or out on the high street, to collect signatures for petition or collect email signups for your mailing list.

Going door to door

Knocking on the doors of homes in areas that will be affected by traffic and pollution generated by the road can be much more effective than a simple leaflet drop. Take along some information sheets or leaflets about the plans and how they can get involved, or simply collect names and emails for your petition.

Public meetings and exhibitions

These are tactics that can help local people examine the plans and the impact on their lives in more detail.

A public meeting is a great way to launch your campaign, but it's also a great way to present results of expert studies, to raise awareness of a consultation or deadline, or to prepare people for a Public Inquiry.

It's good to encourage other organisations, such as residents' associations, to host debates between supporters and opponents of the plans. The local press are more likely to report on these events as they are seen to be presenting both sides. If you have compelling facts and evidence that need a wider audience, these meetings can only work to your campaign's benefit (and don't forget to make sure plenty of your supporters attend!).

Benefits, gigs and fundraisers

Events don't always have to be dry and factual. Local artists, poets, comedians, bands and other local figures who support your cause may be willing to perform, speak or present at paid events to benefit your fighting fund. These events may appeal to local newspapers, who love reporting 'celebrity' goings on.



Holding rallies and cultural events in the landscapes under threat helps to get more local people involved in your campaign.

Broadening your campaign

Quotes of support

An effective use of your campaign website is to show quotes, photos and logos from a range of supporters, demonstrating that a wide range of people support the aims of your campaign.

Mix up quotes giving different reasons to oppose the road, and include a broad range of local residents of different ages, professions and backgrounds as well as some notable people such as local celebrities, business owners and leaders of different local groups.

Photo calls

A picture speaks a thousand words, and this is particularly true when people are reading the newspaper. Unless a story is already of personal interest, most people only scan headlines, photos and captions, so make the most of this by providing photos and photo opportunities every chance you get.

Wherever possible, try to be creative and colourful with your photo ideas, and try to make sure that the key point you want to make will come across in the picture - even if a less than ideal article or caption is written to go with it you'll have achieved a lot.

At every campaign event, make sure someone is in charge of taking photos for your files. These photos are useful for your website and social media feeds to show what you're doing, and can be supplied to local papers.

It's also a good idea to take portrait-style photos of your key spokespeople, which can be sent to local papers to print alongside quotes and articles.



The Combe Haven Defenders dramatically showed they had a wide range of supporters at their protests with this 'granny tree' photo call.



Transport Solutions for Lancaster and Morecambe held a photo call to show the huge height of a proposed flyover.

Joint letters and statements

At many points in your campaign, having the support of other organisations and groups – local, regional or national – can be very useful. A joint statement or letter is a good way to demonstrate this.

Draft something concise with just the most compelling reasons to oppose the road and you'll find it easier to get a wider range of groups to sign up (and can avoid a lot of rewriting and quibbling over minor points). Make sure you get copies of any logos to add to the final letter too.

When it's ready, don't just send it to the decision makers – the local paper will often be interested in covering this.

If possible, back up the publication of the letter with a photo call too – it's a bit of a cliché to have people standing around with logos, but it is an effective way of showing a joint effort.

Leaders from six major charities visited the Combe Haven protests in January 2013.



Newspaper adverts

Press and TV reports are great, but they don't always give the full story about why you're opposing a road, or get across the urgency of - for example - a consultation deadline. One answer is to place a paid advert in local newspapers with exactly what you want to say.

Don't just include the arguments against the road. Make sure these adverts also show how wide your support is, leaving plenty of space in the design for a list of organisations who are signed up and their logos.

Newspaper adverts aren't cheap, but they are simple to fundraise for as there's a clear target to reach. If you produce the design in advance, you can show people exactly what their donations will be spent on.



As the Combe Haven protests hit the headlines, campaign groups placed an *advert* in all the local newspapers with reasons to oppose the road, getting a wide range of local and national groups to support them.

The fundraising period will also provide many extra chances to raise awareness of your campaign more generally, engage your supporters, and air the points you're making in the advert.

Putting pressure on promoters and decision makers

Write-in campaigns

Getting lots of people to write individually to a decision-maker opposing a road can make a real difference to how seriously they take your campaign. This tactic can be used at any time, – not just in response to standard deadlines and consultation periods.

Many road campaigns have used postcards effectively to employ this tactic. The front can carry a key image, such as a map or photo showing the impact of the road, along with a slogan, and the back can be a standard message of objection with space for someone to write in their name and address.

If you ask people to give the postcards back to you for a mass 'hand-in' rather than them having to pay for postage, this can be a good way to collect sign-ups to the campaign and an excuse for a photo call.

Getting people to write in their own words is most effective. This is best done by email via your website or Facebook page, where you can provide the email address of the target and some key points, from which people can expand with their own experiences and concerns.

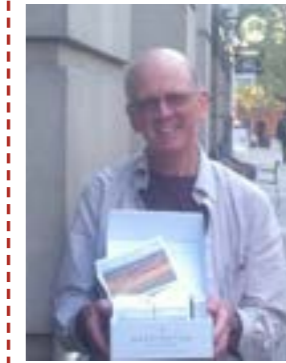
Tips from a winning campaign

In 2012, campaigners in Oxfordshire won a 27-year fight to stop the Cogges Link Road from being built through precious farmland and a country park, obliterating a children's play area and roaring across the river Windrush.

Campaigner Alex Kinchesh shares her top tips for success:

- Any anti-road fight needs a core group of campaigners with tenacity, determination, focus, strategy and no social life!
- Keep a small group of like-minded, dedicated objectors. This enables the group to make decisions quickly.
- Be totally factual, scrutinise all information, understand it and properly criticise it
- Create a local website and a Facebook group to publicise information and enable feedback from others.
- Collect as many objectors' email addresses as possible and keep people informed of actions and progress.
- Turn up to every planning meeting where the scheme will be mentioned and if you cannot speak, have a silent protest with posters.
- Engage with the public by knocking on doors and petitioning on the streets.
- Organise peaceful protests and invite the press.
- Use local reporters and press to full effect.
- Use opportunities wisely to draw attention to the campaign, such as local elections.
- Above all, never give up the struggle. Good luck, think positive and keep pushing forward.

Read more about this campaign on our [website](#)



The Hastings Alliance delivered hundreds of postcards to the door of the Department for Transport at the end of a public consultation on funding.

Petitions

In official consultations, the number of signatures on a petition tend not to be taken as seriously as individual postcards, letters and emails. However they can be a good, simple way to engage supporters initially (and once you have their details you can ask them to do something more personal later).

As an alternative to traditional paper petitions, online petition systems have become popular in recent years.

Petitions hosted by other organisations vary in how much contact the petition organiser is able to have with signatories.

For example the official government petitions site doesn't allow any contact, while change.org and 38 Degrees will let you send several messages as you gain signatures, enabling you to give campaign updates and ask people to sign up to your mailing list (though no site will hand over email addresses directly to you).

If you have a good website administrator, then a widget or page with a form to sign up to your own petition sometimes works better, as the signatories give their details directly to you and can agree that you contact them again.

Which option you choose will involve weighing up the benefits of having a more automatic and 'official' petition to publicise and having things more under your own control. Ideally, your core group should discuss these issues before setting up something that could have a big impact on how your campaign works in future.

Here are some of the most commonly used online petition sites to consider:

- [Change.org](#)
- [Care 2 Petitions](#)
- [38 Degrees](#) (only people with UK addresses can sign)
- [Avaaz](#)
- [UK Government and Parliament Petitions](#) (only for petitions aimed at central government ministers)

Challenging questions

If your research findings or expert reports have uncovered new problems with a road proposal, it's important that these are raised in as many places as possible, and put back to officials and decision-makers for a response. Often their answers will reveal new facts or give you important strategic information about their thinking and what might influence it.

Opposition councillors can be approached to ask questions of a local council, and members of the public may also have the opportunity to submit questions to council meetings.

Road promoters may also host public meetings or attend events organised by others, where your campaigners can ask them similar questions in a public setting. This tactic can also catch them off their guard and lead them to reveal important information!

Don't take things at face value: Original research and FOI/EIR requests

Often, early promotional material about a road plan (for example during initial consultation exercises) will leave out important information, or rely on mistaken or very old assumptions about population or traffic growth in your area.

You can help to fill gaps and show up errors and mistakes with your own research - some ideas include:

- Look up recent traffic figures on key roads to show it is not growing as fast as the promoters claim (official data from thousands of real-life traffic count points is available [here](#)).
- Carry out a survey among small businesses showing their concern or support for different options (promoters may only have the support of a few large firms, and claim they represent the whole 'business community').

- Ask local people how many of them would use a new bus service (road promoters often severely underestimate demand for these alternatives).

See, also our [companion guide](#) to making information requests.



At Twyford Down, this demonstration highlighted an upcoming election, urging people to vote for candidates who were against road building.

Elections

Politicians worry most about their support when they are trying to be re-elected, so any tactics from your campaign that are aimed at putting pressure on them will have a much bigger effect at election time.

Tactics you can use during elections include:

- holding a 'hustings' meeting where all the candidates are invited to answer questions from your supporters.
- writing a pledge against the road or in favour of a set of more sensible transport policies, and ask all the candidates to sign up. Anyone who refuses can be named and shamed via letters to the newspaper, leaflets or adverts.

Be mindful of election rules when spending money on materials that mention candidates.

Leaflets that strongly support a particular candidate over a large proportion of their area could potentially count towards that candidate's official expenditure limit.

If in doubt, check your plans with the election officers at your local town hall (who also run general election campaigns) or a candidate's agent – the agent's contact details will be on all the candidate's official materials.



A silent protest was held at the start of the Cogges Link Road public inquiry in Witney. This show of strength from campaigners won a larger venue for the hearings, closer to the communities affected.

Protests and direct action

Protests can be very effective in raising the profile of a campaign. A picket outside an event, a visual, silent protest at a council meeting or a march down an affected high street can all do a lot to raise local awareness of your campaign and show the passion, number and diversity of your supporters.

Protests are a very traditional way of exercising free speech and you have plenty of legal protections for your right to assemble and express your views using this tactic.

If you are planning to protest with large numbers of people, or wish to close a road to traffic for a time, discuss this with local police beforehand. They should provide an officer to liaise with you and make sure things go smoothly.

If you want to protest on private or commercial property, or somewhere owned by the council, either make sure your protest is as brief and non-destructive as possible (and stop when asked) or try to negotiate permission in advance.

On public land with smaller groups of protestors, you don't need to tell anyone in advance, but police or other officials may approach to ask questions when they see what you are doing. Always nominate beforehand a responsible, friendly person who will speak to them. Normally if they are given a polite explanation of what you're doing and how long you plan to stay, whoever approaches you will leave you to get on with things.

Sometimes the police will ask you (rightly or wrongly) to stop at a certain time or move to a different location, especially if requested to by property owners. If this happens, it's best to be cooperative and accommodate their request if you can.



Demonstrations and pickets at key council meetings and other events (in this case, a court hearing) help to make sure your side of the story is reported.



Campaigners brought a very large banner to a council press launch about the Silvertown Tunnel in London, so everyone could clearly see opposition to the plans.

Direct action

Peaceful direct action sounds risky, but can be an important part of a campaign.

The Witney First campaign discovered that contractors were about to start preparation work for the now-cancelled Cogges Link Road before the promoters had secured all the relevant permissions.

They took direct action to stop the contractors from starting work, holding up signs saying 'unlawful works' and prevented a lot of unnecessary damage being done.

Some members of the Combe Haven Defenders risked arrest by occupying trees on the route of the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road, but the campaign also asked supporters, via an online pledge, to commit to a number of different levels of direct action. The activities in the pledge included providing practical help and moral support for their camps, as well as joining in with protests.

Find out more about legal rights and requirements relating to protests and marches:

- [A guide from InBrief on peaceful protest](#)
- [Legal requirements on protests and marches](#) from the Government
- Friends of the Earth's [guide to protests and the law](#)

Promoting the alternatives

Publicise alternative plans

If you produce alternative plans, don't simply submit them to the council or planning inspector, where they might get left on a shelf unnoticed. Send a press release and get them maximum publicity and awareness among the public by holding a launch event or exhibition.



The A556 Lobby Group held a big public meeting to present their alternative simple junction adjustment instead of a huge bypass. Members of the campaign team wore distinctive sashes and were ready to answer questions about the plan.

Visualise the benefits

If you've commissioned experts to develop or analyse better ideas, you may already have maps and diagrams that you can release to the press or print up on leaflets. If not, then produce some.

Superimpose new bus lanes, trams or railway stations on photos, draw maps or produce timetables of new services, draw charts comparing the cost of your plans versus the new road. Anything that will help people imagine the difference your plans would make and contrast them with the destructive impact and expense of the road is a great idea.

Demonstrate support

Use other tactics from this section too, such as gathering quotes, joint letters and petitions to support your plans, showing that they would be more popular than the road.

Legal action

Government rules and local policies are increasingly stacked in favour of development and road-building, but strict processes still have to be followed.

Road promoters, including local and national governments, are only human and can make mistakes which you can challenge legally, forcing them to reconsider decisions that have been made against the rules, or to stop work that has started without clearing all the necessary hurdles.

In these situations, legal action can be the best tactic to use, though it should never be taken on lightly as it can be very time consuming and expensive.

Forms of legal action you may want to take include asking for injunctions and judicially reviewing decisions.

When you think you might want to take action, it is vital to get advice from an experienced solicitor or barrister. See section 5 of this guide for more about getting legal help.

Picture credits:

Cover: banner by Norwich and Norfolk Traffic Action Group, child protester by Adrian Arbib, A27 protester by Bricycles, 'granny tree' protest by Marta Lefler
Page 2: road sign adapted from photo by Infomatique on Flickr
Page 4: Highways Agency map - Crown Copyright
Page 9: Norwich protest - still from ITV News report
Page 10: logo by Save Ambridge Vale Environment
Page 15: proposals diagram by Steer Davies Gleave for the Kingskerswell Alliance
Page 19: John Stewart speech - still from 'Standing Our Ground' film by Marta Lefler (vimeo.com/74656654), interview still from 'Public Eye' BBC2
Page 24: photo by No Silvertown Tunnel
Page 25: protest by Transport Solutions for Lancaster and Morecambe, Combe Haven photo by jimkillock on Flickr
Page 26: leaders by Adrian Arbib
Page 29: Cogges inquiry by Ric Mellis
Page 30: meeting by A556 Lobby Group



Third edition, Spring 2016

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

www.bettertransport.org.uk
@CBTransport
www.roads2nowhere.org.uk
@Roads2Nowhere

16 Waterside, 44-48 Wharf Road, London N1 7UX

Registered Charity 1101929. Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales: 4943428

Better transport, better lives