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Research into community engagement best practice

An Ipsos MORI Scotland report for Citizens Advice Scotland, Scottish Water
and the Customer Forum

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Executive summary

Background and methodology

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), Scottish Water and the Customer Forum jointly commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out research to identify the components that make community engagement successful. Ultimately the research aimed to help Scottish Water develop robust consumer engagement policy and practice that places the interests of consumers front and centre.

The research comprised two sequential elements:

- Desk research to review and describe: a definition for community engagement and its potential scope; existing models and frameworks for community engagement; the legislative, local and governmental drivers for community engagement; and previous research on processes and methods of community engagement.
- A review of four recent community engagement programmes to identify components of successful community engagement practice. The four programmes were:
 - *Scottish Canals, Glasgow Canal Project*, which aimed to regenerate the heritage environment surrounding the canal network. The community engagement elements of the project primarily involved the use of charrettes¹ with residents of the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill areas of the city.
 - *Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), Solent Achieving Value from Efficiency (SAVE) project*, which used a Community Coaching approach in two communities (Shirley Warren in Southampton, and Kings Worthy in Winchester) to establish to what extent energy efficiency measures could be used as a tool for managing peak energy demand.
 - *Yarra Valley Water (Australia), Citizens Jury* to explore customer expectations in relation to price and service, to inform Yarra Valley Water's price submission for its regulator, the Essential Services Commission.
 - *Piloting of the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestanes*. The Place Standard is a tool intended to support the delivery of high quality places in Scotland and to maximise the potential of the physical and social environment in supporting health, wellbeing and a high quality of life. The Standard was piloted with the communities of Hillhead and Harestanes in Kirkintilloch, by a partnership of Keep Scotland Beautiful, East Dunbartonshire Council, and NHS Health Scotland.

Community engagement: definition, drivers and good practice

The literature makes clear the importance of public engagement as a central aspect of policy decision making, at a UK, Scotland and local level. The legislative drivers for public engagement, including the UK Government's National Planning Framework and Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, are increasingly reflected in a number of frameworks and

¹ Involve define a charrette as "an intensive, hands-on workshop that brings people from different disciplines and backgrounds together with members of the community to explore design options for a particular area." <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/design-charrettes>

models that guide and promote good practice in public and community engagement and that have clear application in the regulated industries. These good practice principles are perhaps most clearly defined by the National Standards for Community Engagement and their accompanying indicators of progress. Further, the Sciencewise principles for best practice in public dialogue provide useful additional dimensions, particularly in relation to the practical delivery and evaluation of engagement activities.

What is clear from research into previous examples of community engagement, both within the regulated industries and beyond, is that it can take many different forms, reflecting the range of different purposes it is designed to serve. The desk research identified three broad types, or “layers” of engagement – awareness raising, consultation and empowerment – and a range of associated engagement methods. It is clear that no single method emerges as the “best”. Indeed, the desk research includes examples of mixed-method approaches to community engagement, for example combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The most appropriate engagement method will depend on a number of factors, including:

- the overall aims and objectives of the engagement;
- the characteristics of the community in question;
- the types of information or decisions that are sought from the community; and
- the resource and timescale available.

Nonetheless, there are some good practice elements that were evident across the examples, and indeed in the four community engagement programmes reviewed.

Learnings from recent community engagement programmes

Best practice learning from the four programmes is set out below in relation to the main thematic categories of the National Standards for Community Engagement:

- Planning;
- Working together;
- Methods;
- Inclusion;
- Communication;
- Impact; and
- Evaluation.

Planning

- Have a written programme plan in place, so that all partners and stakeholders are clear on the aims and objectives and on their own roles and responsibilities in helping to achieve these.

- Build a degree of flexibility into the programme plan so that it can adapt to any unanticipated issues or new ideas or suggestions made by community members.
- Consider drawing on existing community engagement frameworks or models that have been used successfully in similar contexts.
- Involve partners and stakeholders in programme planning from the outset, and use meetings or workshops to help reach agreement on desired outcomes and respective roles and responsibilities.
- Where appropriate, use independent facilitators to help partners and stakeholders to work together and reach agreement.
- Involve community members in developing the programme plan, or in shaping specific aspects of it, to encourage a sense of ownership.
- Ensure the plan includes realistic timescales and resource requirements, based on careful scoping of activities.

Working together

- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of lead organisations and partners are clearly defined from the outset. These should ideally be agreed through meetings and formalised in writing.
- Ensure an appropriate and equitable balance of tasks among lead organisations and partners.
- Have regular and ongoing meetings between partners to review progress.
- Encourage community members to work together by engaging them on a topic that is of direct relevance to them/their community and clearly defining their roles and responsibilities in the process.

Methods

- Use research-based engagement methods rather than more traditional open-invitation approaches, such as public meetings.
- When selecting methods consider the target groups for the engagement and the nature of the feedback sought. Wherever possible use robust tried-and-tested methods (such as focus groups, citizens juries and other deliberative approaches) to ensure the credibility of the work. However, for sections of the community who do not traditionally engage or who might find mainstream methods difficult or unappealing, consider alternative, innovative approaches (such as guided walks, arts-based activities, or cookery-themed activities).
- When using group-based methods, keep groups small in size to help ensure participants feel at ease expressing their views and have maximum opportunity to contribute.
- Enlist the services of independent, professional facilitators where budget allows. In cases where this is not possible/desirable, use individuals with at least some experience of facilitation.

- Have lead organisations/their partners/other experts present at engagement activities to deliver information and answers questions, in order to give the process credibility among participants and help ensure informed discussions.
- Provide information in a range of formats to accommodate different preferences in this regard and help maintain participants' engagement.
- Where possible, provide participants with opportunities to have a say in the nature of the information with which they are presented, and to request further information as they see fit.
- Where the issues under discussion are many or complex, consider reconvened engagement sessions to avoid trying to cover too much in one session and to give participants an opportunity for 'down time' and reflection.
- Seek participant feedback at every engagement session/activity and build this feedback into subsequent sessions and activities as appropriate.

Inclusion

- Consider how engagement activities should be labelled and described to avoid these appearing intimidating. Use informal language rather than research/consultation speak or develop some form of eponymous branding for the programme.
- Provide communications about programmes in multiple formats and languages (reflecting the profile of the local population).
- Consider door-to-door and or/in-street recruitment to help ensure the profile of participants is reflective of the community as a whole.
- Enlist the support of community groups when attempting to recruit disengaged or otherwise harder to reach audiences. Scope-out relevant community groups at the earliest opportunity.
- Offer prospective participants a financial incentive where the programme budget allows, particularly where participation requires travel, childcare or taking time off work.
- During engagement activities, provide participants with an opportunity to identify and define issues in their own terms to ensure the agenda reflects the issues that truly matter to them.
- Ensure any exercises/activities and information are accessible to a lay audience – consider commissioning a third party organisation to assist with this.
- Consider adapting exercises/activities and information for specific sub-groups of the population, such as children or people with learning disabilities, and seek the support of relevant representative bodies in doing so.

Communication

- Provide information about the programme well in advance, to provide community members with as much opportunity to participate as possible.

- Provide communication materials in a range of formats – including both on- and off-line – to encourage participation from a diverse range of community members.
- Avoid jargon and overly-technical language when communicating information about the programme to the community.
- During the programme, use interactive and visually engaging forms of communication, such as presentations, meetings and videos.
- Continue to provide information to participants after the engagement, to help them maintain a sense of ownership over the outcomes.

Impact

- Engagement can:
 - lead to the forging of new relationships with previously ‘untapped’ sections of the community, which in turn can help deepen understanding of the community’s needs;
 - help lead organisations forge new or improved relationships with partner organisations, promoting mutual understanding and opportunities for future joint working;
 - have reputational benefits, demonstrating a customer-centric approach;
 - promote integration between different, formally disparate, sections of the community.
- Additional impact can be achieved by communicating the outcomes to the community. Ways of doing this include:
 - workshops/events,
 - social media;
 - websites; and
 - videos.

Evaluation

- Build into community engagement programmes an evaluation element to provide a check on the quality of engagement and the achievement of outcomes.
- Use evaluation to inform future engagement programmes, including in relation to engagement methods and processes.
- Consider using independent, third party, evaluators to add rigour and credibility to the findings, and act as a check against the programme’s own self-assessment.
- Use a range of evaluation techniques, including formative evaluation throughout the programme, to help community members feel genuinely involved in the process and therefore help to maintain their engagement.

1 Introduction and methodology

Background

Community engagement – and public engagement more broadly – has an important role to play in democratic societies. As the Wellcome Trust² has observed: “Most agree that decision-making in a democratic society should take account of public attitudes, and that elections alone can be a poor way of gauging the public’s views on a range of issues”.

In Scotland, a growing body of work, policy and legislation has built momentum towards a greater role for community engagement in public life. This includes:

- The National Standards for Community Engagement, developed in 2005 – a set of best-practice guidelines to support public bodies in Scotland to engage users and the local community in the development of services. The guidelines were reviewed and updated by What Works Scotland and the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) in 2016³.
- The 2011 Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services, which identified “recognising that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities - not delivered 'top down' for administrative convenience” as a key priority for public service reform.⁴
- The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which aimed to “empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services”.

This emphasis on community participation in decision making can be seen in key strategy documents emanating from across the UK and Scottish Government – and, indeed, the wider public sector. In the water industry specifically, the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS) publication *‘Innovation and Collaboration: future proofing the water industry for customers. Methodology for the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027’*, sets out the economic regulator’s commitment to “enhance the level of customer engagement in the Strategic Review of Charges” on the basis that it sees “customer engagement as an essential element of the economic regulatory process”⁵.

Similarly, Scottish Water has stated that “Knowing what our customers want and need” is an essential prerequisite to its being trusted to care for the water on which Scotland depends⁶. Scottish Water has a Consultation Code, which is “intended to provide a framework for our consultation, giving clarity to customers and our employees on how we will consult on our activities.”⁷ The Consultation Code sets out the basic standards that Scottish Water consultations will meet and summarises the process that will be followed.

² Wellcome Trust, 2005, *Information and Attitudes: Consulting the public about biomedical science* www.wellcome.ac.uk

³ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/national-standards-for-community-engagement/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/pages/2/>

⁵ https://www.watercommission.co.uk/UserFiles/Documents/SRC21_Innovation%20and%20Collaboration_Methodology_WICS_amended.pdf

⁶ <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/contact-us/our-promise-to-you/customer-engagement>

⁷ <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/about-us/publications/key-publications/consultation-code>

However previous research carried out by Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) has contended that there is still more the water industry could do to develop innovative engagement mechanisms, increase customer dialogue with the industry, and move disengaged users of water services to willing and informed participants⁸.

Likewise, the Customer Forum⁹ has encouraged greater engagement with communities and WICS, within the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-27, has introduced a clear aim¹⁰ to bring the community voice into the planning and delivery of capital investment. Reflecting this, Scottish Water has committed to moving to a position where community engagement becomes the default norm, and in response to CAS' recommendations¹¹, is developing a clear and visible community engagement strategy¹².

There are numerous stated benefits to involving communities in decision-making. The OECD¹³ outline three key benefits; namely:

- better public policy – public services will be developed based on the needs, and context, of local communities;
- greater trust – building relationships between citizens and the public sector by listening to the opinion of the community, and including that input into policy and service development, fosters greater trust; and
- stronger democracy – the involvement of the community in the development of policy and services encourages both greater transparency and accountability in the public sector and more active civic participation among the public.

It must be noted, however, that these are benefits associated with 'good' community engagement. Currently a wide range of activities may be referred to as community engagement, from token gesture consultation to the co-production of services.

Further, these activities can vary in terms of their level of inclusivity. As noted in the 2017 What Works Scotland Review *'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement*¹⁴, ensuring equal access to community engagement is not an easy process. Multiple inequalities mean that individuals face complex barriers preventing access to community engagements and, even if they do gain access, barriers to a continued presence in the engagement process.

Additionally, while individual community engagement activities conducted on an ad-hoc basis can be successful in isolation, without a wider plan or framework the purpose, scope and outcomes of the activities can be unclear to citizens.

Against this background, CAS, Scottish Water and the Customer Forum jointly commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out research to identify the components that make community engagement successful, to help Scottish Water develop robust consumer engagement policy and practice that place the interests of consumers front and centre.

⁸ https://www.cas.org.uk/system/files/publications/17-007524-01_cfu_water_report_final_internal_and_client_use_only_090617_amended_figure_2.7.pdf

⁹ The Customer Forum undertakes a formal role in the price setting process for 2021-2027 to negotiate on behalf of Scotland's water customers the best possible service from Scottish Water for the fairest price.

¹⁰ https://www.watercommission.co.uk/UserFiles/Documents/2021-27_2018%20Decision%20Paper%201_Strategic%20Projections_1.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.cas.org.uk/publications/untapped-potential-consumer-views-water-policy>

¹² Scottish Water 'Shaping the future of your water and wastewater services – draft strategic projections' 2018

¹³ OECD, 2001, Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making. Accessed at:

<https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-as-Partners-OECD-Handbook.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WWSHardToReachOrEasyToIgnoreEvidenceReview.pdf>

Research objectives

The research aimed to provide insight into the processes and methods that make community engagement successful. In the process, it aimed to look beyond high level community engagement frameworks and provide evidence of practical application of engagement methods. The primary research question, therefore, was: *what are the components of successful community engagement policy and practice?*

The objectives of the research were:

- to review and describe: a definition for community engagement and its potential scope; existing models and frameworks for community engagement; the legislative, local and governmental drivers for community engagement; and previous research on processes and methods of community engagement.
- focussing on four examples of community engagement programmes, to:
 - understand how the organisations involved defined community engagement, what prompted them to deliver engagement programmes, and what models or frameworks they applied;
 - understand how organisations delivered the programmes and how they measured performance;
 - explore community members' expectations from the engagement and how they experienced the process;
 - understand what characteristics made communities more or less easy for organisations to engage with, and identify barriers to or opportunities for successful engagement;
 - understand and compare processes and methods used, including how they contributed to outcomes for communities;
 - understand how community engagement contributed to the achievement of wider internal and external strategies;
 - understand what key recommendations or lessons organisations would take away from community engagement processes, and how these were adopted into future projects; and
 - understand how community engagement was maintained with the community in cases where long term contact was required.

Methodology

The research comprised two sequential elements: desk research, and a review of four community engagement programmes.

Desk research

The desk research involved a review of relevant literature, policy documents, and websites which provided examples of community engagement frameworks, drivers and previous research. For the review of previous research, a pro-forma was

developed to record details of the key learnings from project, such as their aims and objectives, the community engagement methods used, positive features of the engagement approaches, and any lessons learned.

Review of community engagement programmes.

A review of four community engagement programmes was carried out. The four programmes were pre-identified by CAS, Scottish Water and the Customer Forum as offering particularly good and relevant examples of community engagement. They are summarised briefly below, and described in more detail in Chapter 3.

- *Scottish Canals, Glasgow Canal Project*: The Glasgow Canal Project involved collaboration between Scottish Canals and local organisations, residents and stakeholders to regenerate the heritage environment around the canal network. The community engagement aspects of the project primarily involved the use of charrettes with residents of the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill areas of the city.
- *Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), Solent Achieving Value from Efficiency (SAVE) project*: Led by SSEN, the SAVE programme aimed to establish to what extent energy efficiency measures could be used as a tool for managing peak energy demand as an alternative to network enforcement. The community engagement programme sought to understand how community members could work together to change their energy consumption. It used a 'Community Coaching' approach among residents of two communities: Kings Worthy in Winchester and Shirley Warren in Southampton.
- *Yarra Valley Water, Citizens Jury*: Yarra Valley Water, Australia, is Melbourne's largest retail water utility. They carried out a community engagement programme to support its price submission for its regulator, the Essential Services Commission. The community engagement programme involved a citizens jury¹⁵ of Yarra Valley residents, exploring consumer expectations in relation to price and service. The programme was delivered in line with the water regulator's pricing framework guidelines, which had consumer engagement as a central area of focus.
- *Piloting of the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestaness*. Keep Scotland Beautiful, East Dunbartonshire Council, and NHS Health Scotland undertook this pilot jointly. The Place Standard is a tool intended to support the delivery of high quality places in Scotland and to maximise the potential of the physical and social environment in supporting health, wellbeing and a high quality of life. The programme involved a range of methods to engage with local residents including focus groups, an online survey and public meetings.

The review was conducted in three key stages:

Immersion phase

The aim of the immersion phase was to develop a detailed understanding of:

- the strategic context for each community engagement programme;
- the stated aims and objectives of the programmes, and any guiding principles or frameworks applied;

¹⁵ Citizens juries works in a similar way to judicial juries by bringing together a small, representative group of citizens to hear evidence, deliberate among themselves and reach a conclusion on the research question.

- progress and how this was measured; and
- lessons learned from the programme.

The immersion was carried out through a desk-based review of background documentation, reports and websites for each programme, and in-depth telephone interviews with representatives from the lead organisations.

Framework of research questions

The findings from the desk research and the immersion phase were used to develop a framework of research questions. This set out the questions to be answered by the review, and the sources of evidence that would be drawn on to answer each of the questions.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork carried out for each community engagement programme consisted of:

- In-depth telephone interviews with lead organisations and key delivery partners and stakeholders. A list of partners and stakeholders was provided by representatives from the lead organisations, and the research team contacted each individual by e-mail to provide details about the research and invite them to participate.
- Focus groups and/or in-depth interviews with community members who participated in engagement activities. Community members were recruited to take part in the research by the lead or partner organisations, rather than by Ipsos MORI directly, as Ipsos MORI did not have access to their contact details. Community members were therefore contacted in the first instance by the lead or partner organisations and invited to take part in the research. Those who expressed a willing to do so were asked to opt-in to the research by contacting the Ipsos MORI research team directly. All community members who took part were given £30 as a 'thank you' for their time and to cover any expenses incurred.

The number of community members that ultimately took part in the research was lower than anticipated, particularly for the Place Standard and Scottish Canals pilot programmes. Once interviews with the lead and partner organisations on the Place Standard pilot were carried out, it became apparent that they did not have means of contacting community members that had participated in the programme. As an alternative, interviews were therefore carried out with a representative of community organisations who had worked on the programme, who were able to provide the community perspective. For the Scottish Canals programme, the lead organisation was unable to arrange fieldwork until fairly late in the study due to existing, conflicting commitments on their time. Once they contacted the community members they had contact details for, four of these opted-in to the research and three ultimately took part.

The table below summarises the number of participants who took part in the interviews and/or focus groups for each programme:

Table 1.1: Number of participants from each community engagement programme

<i>Community engagement programme</i>	Number of participants		
	Lead organisations	Partners and stakeholders	Community members/representatives
Glasgow Canals (Scottish Canals)	1	3	3
SAVE (SSEN)	1	4	12
Place Standard pilot (Keep Scotland Beautiful)	1	4	2
Yarra Valley Water Citizens Jury (Yarra Valley Water)	1	3	6

All interviews and focus groups were structured around discussion guides, designed by Ipsos MORI in consultation with CAS, Scottish Water and the Customer Forum. The discussion guides were informed by the review framework developed during the immersion phase of the project.

Approach to analysis

All interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded (with participants' permission) and the facilitators also took notes throughout. Some of the recordings were transcribed for analysis purposes. The transcripts and interviewer notes were then systematically analysed to identify the substantive themes that emerged in relation to each question in the framework, along with key points and illustrative verbatim comments. This ensured that the analysis of the data was rigorous, balanced and accurate, and that key messages or concepts were brought out. It was also flexible enough to allow links and connections across different themes or sub-themes to be made, and for moments of interpretive insight and inspiration to be recorded.

Interpreting qualitative findings

Qualitative research aims to identify and explore the different issues and themes relating to the subject being researched. The assumption is that issues and themes affecting participants are a reflection of issues and themes in the wider population concerned. Although the extent to which they apply to the wider population, or specific sub-groups, cannot be quantified, the value of qualitative research is in identifying the range of different issues involved and the way in which these impact on people.

Structure of the report

The next chapter of the report presents the findings from the desk research. It considers, respectively, definitions of community engagement; drivers, models and frameworks aimed at guiding and promoting good practice in community engagement; and methods of community engagement used in the regulated industries and beyond. This is followed by chapter 3, which outlines best practice learnings from the review of the four community engagement programmes.

Acknowledgements

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2 Community engagement: definitions, drivers and good practice

This chapter presents the findings of the desk research. It considers how community engagement has been defined in the literature and in policy terms, before describing key legislative, governmental and local drivers of engagement. The second half of the chapter describes existing models and frameworks for community engagement, before considering different methods of engagement and relevant examples of good practice.

Definitions of community engagement

The desk research identified a number of definitions of community engagement. One of the most commonly cited definitions is that used in the National Standards for Community Engagement¹⁶. Here engagement is defined as: *"A purposeful process which develops a working relationship between communities, community organisations and public and private bodies to help them to identify and act on community needs and ambitions. It involves respectful dialogue between everyone involved, aimed at improving understanding between them and taking joint action to achieve positive change."* The National Standards go on to state that community engagement is supported by the key principles of fairness and equality, and a commitment to learning and continuous improvement.

A similar definition is evident in the earlier Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan¹⁷, though here there is a specific focus on empowerment. This echoes the themes of working together and affecting change seen in the definition above, but with empowerment as a key outcome of the process. Thus the definition states that community engagement is a *"process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them."*

The Local Government Association (LGA),¹⁸ covering England and Wales, goes somewhat further in its definition of community engagement by explicitly distinguishing engagement from consultation. In its Guide to Engagement, it states that consultation tends to have a finite remit, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. It states that engagement, on the other hand, is a "looser" and more varied approach, that is ultimately *"about encouraging productive relationships between communities and a public body"* and that ideally happens on a continual, ongoing basis. The Association further suggests that engagement offers a positive experience for participants as it offers greater opportunity to see the productive impact they have had.

Other definitions similarly seek to clarify what community engagement is *not*. For example, in its Engaging Communities Toolkit¹⁹, West Lothian Council states that community engagement does not involve *"gaining community input when a decision has already been made and citizens can have little or no influence; a coercive process that obliges people to agree; or a single event or activity"*.

¹⁶ http://www.voicescotland.org.uk/media/resources/NSfCE%20online_October.pdf

¹⁷ Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan: Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change 3 (2009) the Scottish Government and COSLA

¹⁸ <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New%20Conversations%20Guide%202012.pdf>

¹⁹ https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/8652/Engaging-Communities-Toolkit/pdf/Engaging_Communities_Toolkit.pdf

Common themes across the definitions then are the concepts of community members working together, a degree of influence on decision making, and the aim of action being taken as a result. These principles are echoed and expanded upon within existing models and frameworks for engagement, explored later in this chapter.

Drivers of community engagement

UK-wide drivers

As Aitken²⁰ has highlighted, public engagement began to emerge as a central theme within policy-making in the UK around two decades ago. A key impetus for this development was the emergence of a range of new and unprecedented risk situations – including “mad cow disease”, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and global warming – which prompted calls for “greater acknowledgement of doubt and uncertainty in scientific research and for a change in the culture of science communication and decision-making [...] A new consensus emerged in the early 2000s which suggested that science would gain legitimate authority only if citizens were given a voice”²¹. This also reflected a wider belief that “new relationships between citizens and institutions of governance must emerge if a crisis of democratic legitimacy and accountability is to be averted.”²²

A focus on engaging the public in scientific, and wider technological, debates remains as, if not more, evident in today’s political discourse. For example, a report by the UK Parliament Science and Technology Committee published in March 2017, stated that “The Government recognises the importance of engaging the public on science and technology issues, including to inform policy-making...It should maintain and strengthen national programmes such as Sciencewise and the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. Their programmes should be routinely used across all government departments, so that public opinion is fully captured in developing government policy where science is involved.”²³

This focus has gradually extended beyond the scientific realm into areas of policy making in the public sector. Several of these focus solely on England and Wales, but nonetheless have relevant lessons for Scotland. For example, and of particular relevance in the context of this project, the UK Government’s National Planning Framework for England, adopted in March 2012, emphasises the importance of pre-application engagement with communities potentially affected by development. It states that “Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”²⁴ In addition, Section 122 of the Localism Act 2011 requires applicants in England and Wales to consult prior to the submission of a planning application. People reasonably expected to be affected by the proposals must be informed and consulted and the applicant should take account of the representations received through the consultation process. This focus on engagement in the public sector in England and Wales is similarly echoed in Scotland, as outlined below.

²⁰ Aitken (2013) ‘Literature Review: Empowering Citizens in Decision Making’, in Davidson, S et al, (2013), Public Acceptability of Data Sharing Between the Public, Private and Third Sectors for Research Purposes: <https://www2.gov.scot/resource/0043/00435458.pdf>

²¹ (Wakeford 2010: 88 as cited in Aitken 2013 – Ibid)

²² (Coleman & Gotze 2010: 4 as cited in Aiken 2013 - Ibid).

²³ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmsctech/319/31902.htm>

²⁴ National Planning Policy Framework. p45 section 188

Additional drivers of community engagement in Scotland – national level

In Scotland a broad commitment to public engagement has been embedded in institutions of government since the devolved Scottish Parliament was first established in 1999. One of the founding principles of the Scottish Parliament was that it should “be accessible and involve the people of Scotland in its decisions as much as possible.” At the time of writing, the Parliament has begun embedding deliberative public engagement processes into its committee system.

The Scottish Government has similarly built the principle of public/community engagement into its decision making processes and its guidance to public services, reflecting its contention that “better community engagement and participation leads to the delivery of better, more responsive services and better outcomes for communities.”²⁵ The original Scottish Government National Performance Framework and, more specifically, the “Sustainable Places” National outcome, centred around a conviction that the development of well-designed, sustainable places [would] “only happen through effective partnerships between central and local government, and between the public, private and third sectors [...] and, most crucially, with the individuals who live in those places and keep them vibrant.”

This perspective was given renewed impetus in 2011, with the publication of the Report of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services. A key recommendation of the report was “that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities - not delivered ‘top down’ for administrative convenience”²⁶. In responding to the report, the Scottish Government set out *inter alia*, its intention to develop a Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill that would “significantly improve community participation in the design and delivery of public services, alongside action to build community capacity, recognising the particular needs of communities facing multiple social and economic challenges.”²⁷

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, covered 11 topics, the most significant of which in the context of this review were:

- *Part 1: National outcomes:* Ministers must continue to develop and publish a set of national outcomes but before doing so they must consult people who represent communities in Scotland, and the Scottish Parliament.
- *Part 2: Community planning:* (See ‘Additional drivers for community engagement at a local level’, below)
- *Part 3: Participation requests:* These will allow a community body to enter into dialogue with public authorities about local issues and local services on their terms. Where a community body believes it could help to improve an outcome which is delivered by a public service, it will be able to request to take part in a process with the public service authority to improve that outcome. The public body must agree to the request and set up a process unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal. At the end of the process the public body must publish a report on whether the outcomes were improved and how the community body contributed to that improvement.
- *Part 10: Participation in public decision making:* A new regulation-making power enabling Ministers to require Scottish public authorities to promote and facilitate the participation of members of the public in the decisions and activities of the authority, including in the allocation of its resources.

²⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-future-delivery-public-services/pages/2/>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/renewing-scotlands-public-services-priorities-reform-response-christie-commission/>

Since the Act was passed, the Scottish Government has produced an updated National Performance Framework (2018). The Framework comprises 11 National Outcomes, including a 'communities' outcome: "We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe." The "empowered" dimension is defined as being encouraged to "volunteer, take responsibility for our community and engage with decisions about it."²⁸

This emphasis on community participation in decision making can be seen in key strategy documents emanating from across the Scottish Government – and the wider public sector in Scotland. In the water industry specifically, the WICS publication *'Innovation and Collaboration: future proofing the water industry for customers. Methodology for the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027'*, sets out the economic regulator's commitment to "enhance the level of customer engagement in the Strategic Review of Charges" on the basis that it sees "customer engagement as an essential element of the economic regulatory process"²⁹. Similarly, Scottish Water has stated that "Knowing what our customers want and need" is an essential prerequisite to its being trusted to care for the water on which Scotland depends³⁰.

Additional drivers for community engagement in Scotland at a local level

A number of legislative and strategic drivers, beyond those outlined above, have further promoted a focus on community engagement at the local level specifically. The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 required local authorities to introduce Community Council schemes for their area. Building on this, the 2003 Local Government Scotland Act introduced a duty on local authorities to undertake Community Planning in partnership with relevant local public bodies and community bodies. The guidance on the Act states that "Community Planning is essentially a process to secure greater engagement from communities in the planning and delivery of services."

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, discussed above, placed new duties on Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to prepare and publish a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP) setting out the local outcomes which the CPP would prioritise. Participation with communities is a key element of these new duties: CPPs must support community bodies to participate in all parts of the process, in the development, design and delivery of plans and in review, revision and reporting of progress.

The case for community engagement at local level (and, indeed, more broadly) is often seen to have been given added impetus by the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent fiscal austerity. The Improvement Service for example, has stated that at such times community engagement can encourage cost-effective solutions that can help communities be more resilient and self-resourcing, by: aiding a better understanding of the impact on communities of the different cost-cutting options; identifying costs savings not apparent to councils and their partners; and helping find alternative and potentially better ways of achieving local outcomes through shared activities (often called co-production) or supporting community initiatives".³¹

²⁸ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/communities>

²⁹ https://www.watercommission.co.uk/UserFiles/Documents/SRC21_Innovation%20and%20Collaboration_Methodology_WICS_amended.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/contact-us/our-promise-to-you/customer-engagement>

³¹ (Improvement service doc for elected members 2011

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5943c23a440243c1fa28585f/t/5a84521071c10b85cc3d5730/1518621207284/EM+Briefing+7+-+comm+engagement.pdf>)

Models and frameworks for community engagement

The last decade or so has seen the emergence of a number of frameworks and models aimed at guiding and promoting good practice in community engagement (often also labelled as “public” engagement). These range from key questions sets or considerations that may be helpful in establishing the parameters of an engagement exercise, to more detailed practical guidance covering all stages of the process.

The former UK Government’s Central Office of Information (COI) suggested the following five basic questions as helpful in establishing the aims of any public engagement exercise:

- “Why are you carrying out public engagement?”
- What is the role you want audiences to play in the process?
- What are you asking them to participate in?
- What will change as a result of the engagement?
- What are the benefits of participating in engagement? Why should the participant get involved?”

These questions are elaborated upon in INVOLVE’s nine stages for planning public engagement activities³², which aim to help organisations both establish whether engagement is appropriate and feasible; and, if so, to make early decisions around design, implementation and analysis. The nine steps have been effectively summarised elsewhere³³ as:

- **Defining the scope:** In this initial stage important questions to ask include: How much can really change? Is participation appropriate at all? What are the risks? What level of participation is being sought?
- **Defining the purpose:** INVOLVE suggest that this is a crucial step since: “Establishing a clear purpose and getting agreement on it within the commissioning body is the single most important stage of any engagement process [...] A measure of a good purpose is its ability to create a commonly shared understanding of the potential impact of the project. [...] a purpose must be easy to understand and an accurate reflection of what is going to happen”.
- **Deciding who to involve:** Important questions to ask at this stage include: Who is directly responsible for the decisions on the issues? Who is influential in the area, community and/or organisation? Who will be affected by any decisions on the issue (individuals and organisations)? Who runs organisations with relevant interests? Who is influential on this issue? Who can obstruct a decision if not involved? Who has been involved in this issue in the past? Who has not been involved, but should have been?
- **Deciding what the outputs will be:** INVOLVE suggest that in the preparation stage it is important to determine what the outputs of the exercise are expected to be as “Outputs can be seen as the building blocks that help to create the desired outcomes”.

³² INVOLVE (2005) People and Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making.
http://www.sharedpractice.org.uk/Downloads/involve_publication.pdf

³³ Scottish Health Informatics Programme (2010), *Public Engagement: Why, What and How and Implications for SHIP*. (University of Edinburgh paper)

- **Deciding what outcomes you expect:** In the preparation stage it is also important to decide what is expected in terms of outcomes: "Outcomes are the fundamental difference that a process makes. Its overall results and impacts. Outcomes are more specific than 'purpose' and are the clear statement of exactly what is sought from the process."
- **Considering the context:** In the preparation stage it is important to consider the wider context (such any previous engagement the community has taken part in, and the characteristics and capabilities of participants) in order to ensure that the exercise links with other relevant activities going on at the same time; builds on previous experience and learns lessons from the past; and does not duplicate other activities.
- **Final design of the process:** The last element of the preparation stage is coming up with the final design: when all the key issues have been broadly considered a detailed design will be needed for the whole participatory process. "It is at this stage that the decisions about timing, numbers, costs, techniques, use of results etc. will finally be made".
- **Institutional response:** "An institutional response can be the most significant change that occurs following a participation process. It might be a policy change [...] or a reaction" INVOLVE maintain that it is important to determine early on what the scope for institutional response is and how this might occur as this "requires agreement to change from the institution itself and preparation within the institution. It is essential that explicit links are made between the participatory process and the location of the decision that will affect future action".
- **Review:** Finally, given that "Participation is an emerging field, evaluation and review of practice is very important". INVOLVE suggest that the review of the public engagement process should be planned for from an early stage.

The Involve steps find clear expression in the National Standards for Community Engagement. Introduced in 2005 and updated during 2015/16, the Standards comprise good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement and improve what happens as a result. Each comprises a short headline statement, a set of indicators to show progress towards meeting each standard, and some examples of good practice (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Updated National Standards for Community Engagement

Principle	Headline statement	Indicators
Inclusion	We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.	<p>The people and groups who are affected by the focus of the engagement are involved at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Measures are taken to involve groups with protected characteristics (see below) and people who are excluded from participating due to disadvantage relating to social or economic factors.</p> <p>Participants in the community engagement process commit to continued two-way communication with the people they work with or represent.</p> <p>A wide range of opinions, including minority and opposing views, are valued in the engagement process.</p>
Support	We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation.	<p>An assessment of support needs is carried out, involving all participants.</p> <p>Action is taken to remove or reduce any practical barriers which make it difficult for people to take part in engagement activities.</p> <p>Access to impartial and independent development support is provided for groups involved in the community engagement process.</p>
Planning	There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions.	<p>Partners are involved at the start of the process in identifying and defining the focus that the engagement will explore.</p> <p>A clear and agreed engagement plan is in place.</p> <p>All available information which can affect the engagement process has been shared and used to develop the community engagement plan.</p> <p>Partners agree what the outcomes of the engagement process should be, what indicators will be used to measure success, and what evidence will be gathered.</p> <p>The timescales for the engagement process are realistic.</p> <p>There are sufficient resources to support an effective engagement process.</p>

Working together	We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement.	<p>The roles and responsibilities of everyone involved are clear and understood.</p> <p>Decision-making processes and procedures are agreed and followed.</p> <p>The methods of communication used during the engagement process meet the needs of all participants.</p> <p>Information that is important to the engagement process is accessible and shared in time for all participants to properly read and understand it.</p> <p>Communication between all participants is open, honest and clear.</p> <p>The community engagement process is based on trust and mutual respect.</p> <p>Participants are supported to develop their skills and confidence during the engagement.</p>
Methods	We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose.	<p>The methods used are appropriate for the purpose of the engagement.</p> <p>The methods used are acceptable and accessible to participants.</p> <p>A variety of methods are used throughout the engagement to make sure that a wide range of voices is heard.</p> <p>Full use is made of creative methods which encourage maximum participation and effective dialogue.</p> <p>The methods used are evaluated and adapted, if necessary, in response to feedback from participants and partners.</p>
Communication	We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement.	<p>Information on the community engagement process, and what has happened as a result, is clear and easy to access and understand.</p> <p>Information is made available in appropriate formats.</p> <p>Without breaking confidentiality, participants have access to all information that is relevant to the engagement.</p> <p>Systems are in place to make sure the views of the wider community</p>

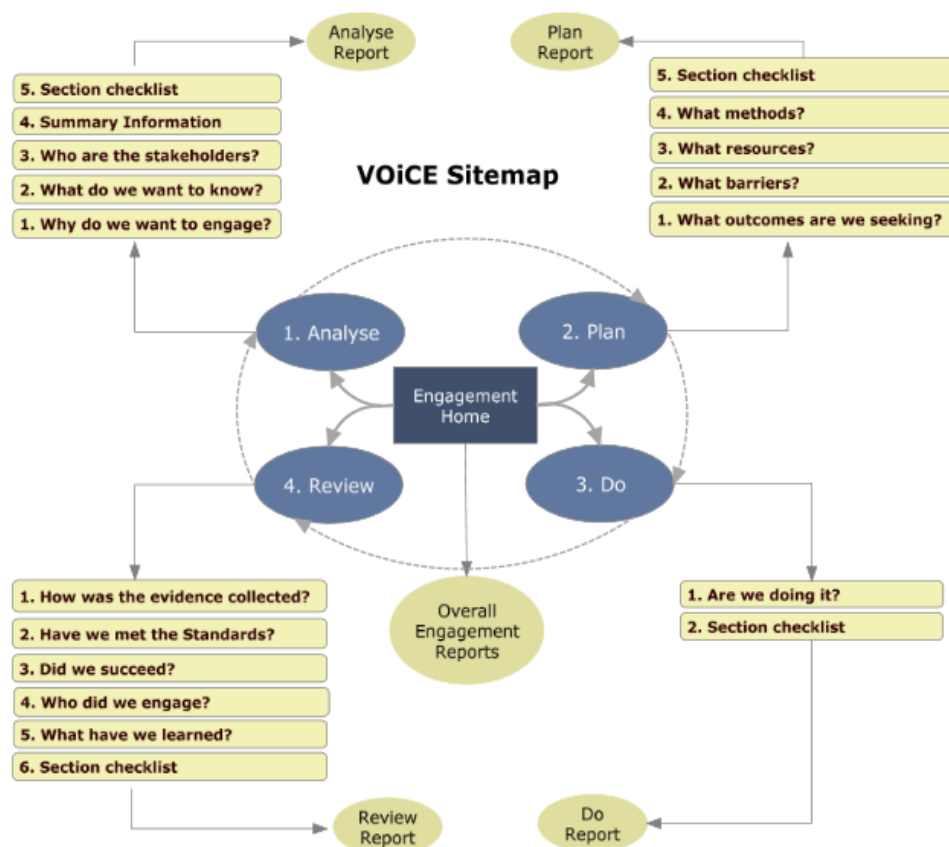
		<p>continuously help to shape the engagement process.</p> <p>Feedback is a true representation of the range of views expressed during the engagement process.</p> <p>Feedback includes information on: the engagement process; the options which have been considered; and the decisions and actions that have been agreed, and the reasons why.</p>
Impact	We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what we have learned to improve our future community engagement.	<p>The outcomes the engagement process intended to achieve are met.</p> <p>Decisions which are taken reflect the views of participants in the community engagement process.</p> <p>Local outcomes, or services, are improved as result of the engagement process.</p> <p>Participants have improved skills, confidence and ability to take part in community engagement in the future.</p> <p>Partners are involved in monitoring and reviewing the quality of the engagement process and what has happened as a result.</p> <p>Feedback is provided to the wider community on how the engagement process has influenced decisions and what has changed as a result.</p> <p>Learning and evaluation helps to shape future community engagement processes.</p>

The Scottish Community Development Centre has developed a number of resources aimed at helping organisations to plan and mainstream community empowerment – and specifically at supporting implementation of the National Standards for Community Engagement. The most relevant is VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement)³⁴, a web based tool aimed at helping individuals and organisations to design and deliver effective community engagement, and specifically to:

- plan community engagement and service user participation;
- monitor and record the process; and
- evaluate the process against the National Standards.

The software invites users to address questions under the headings: Analyse, Plan, Do and Review, as they become relevant to the engagement they are conducting, and to record relevant information in the process. These recordings build up throughout the process of engagement, with the aim of helping the user, with other participants, to reflect on what they are doing and whether it is helping achieve their purposes (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: The VOiCE framework



³⁴ The VOiCE Framework built on the LEAP model:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5943c23a440243c1fa28585f/t/5c6d72d9e79c709697c127a9/1550676718254/LEAP+Step-By-Step.pdf>

Other public or community engagement frameworks that have emerged over recent years have tended to be more domain-specific. Nonetheless, some of them have wider application. A particularly influential and relevant example is the Sciencewise principles for best practice in public dialogue. The Sciencewise programme is managed and funded by the UK government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and provides assistance to policy makers to carry out public dialogue, to inform their decision-making on science and technology issues. The Sciencewise principles are based on theoretical understandings and practical experience, and cover five key dimensions of engagement:

- *Context*: the conditions leading to the dialogue process are conducive to the best outcomes
- *Scope*: the range of issues and policy opinions covered in the dialogue reflects the participants' interests
- *Delivery*: the dialogue process itself represents best practice in design and execution
- *Impact*: the dialogue can deliver the desired outcomes
- *Evaluation*: the process is shown to be robust and contributes to learning

Many of the Sciencewise principles overlap with Involve's nine principles and the National Standards for Community Engagement, and as such are not replicated here. However, a number usefully add to these frameworks, particularly in relation to the Scope, Delivery and Evaluation of engagement activities:

- *Scope*:
 - Be focused on specific issues, with clarity about the scope of the dialogue. Where appropriate we will work with participants to agree framings that focus on broad questions and a range of alternatives to encourage more in-depth discussion. For example, we might start by asking, "How do we provide for our energy needs in the future?" rather than by asking "should we build new nuclear power stations?"
- *Delivery*:
 - Involve relevant stakeholders at appropriate times in the oversight of the dialogue process including the production of materials to inform the public participants
 - Where the objectives require it, the use of appropriate conventional and digital media may be needed to ensure that the process reaches the wider population
 - Be conducted fairly with no in-built bias; non-confrontational, with no faction allowed to dominate; all participants treated respectfully; and all participants enabled to understand and question others' claims and knowledge
 - Provide participants with information and views from a range of perspectives, and encourage access to information from other sources, to enable participants to be adequately informed
 - Be deliberative – allow time for participants to become informed in the area; be able to reflect on their own and others' views; and explore issues in depth with other participants. The context and objectives for the process will determine whether it is desirable to seek consensus, to identify where there is or is not consensus, and/or to map out the range of views

- Be open about areas where there remains plurality and a lack of consensus. The outputs of deliberation should present the rationales and implications of divergent views. Clearly explained reasons for disagreement are as important as carefully crafted collective statements
- *Evaluation*
 - Evaluate in terms of impacts and process, so that the outcomes and impacts of public dialogue can be identified, and that experience and learning gained can contribute to good practice
 - Ensure that evaluation commences as early as possible, and continues throughout the process
 - Ensure that evaluation addresses the objectives and expectations of all participants in the process
 - Ensure evaluation is by independent parties
 - Be clear that evaluation itself depends on frameworks that should be open to deliberative scrutiny

Methods of community engagement

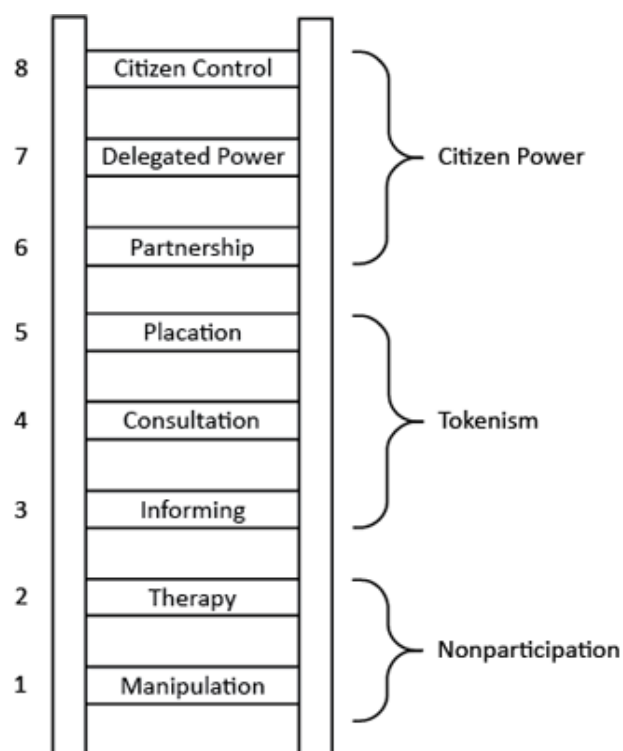
This section reviews previous research on community engagement methods and identifies examples of best practice in the water industry and beyond. It also explores advantages and disadvantages of each of the main methods identified.

Community engagement can be conducted in a range of ways. Rowe and Frewer (as cited in Aitken, Davidson et al, 2013) argue that although there is an international trend towards increased public involvement in policy areas, this is understood as meaning a variety of different things and in turn is used to describe a variety of different approaches and projects. The methods of community engagement used typically reflect the objectives or purpose of the exercise; therefore, community engagement can take many different forms in serving many different purposes.

In much of the literature on community engagement, and public engagement more generally, reference is frequently made to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public participation³⁵ (Figure 2.2), which sets out eight levels of participation broadly summarised as representing: 'Non-Participation', 'Tokenism' and 'Citizen Power'. On the bottom rungs on the ladder (Non-Participation) public engagement is viewed as an opportunity to educate the public and/or engineer support. In the middle of the ladder, Tokenistic forms of participation include informing and consulting members of the public. Further up the ladder are levels of Citizen Power with increasing degrees of decision making, with the top rungs of the ladder involving redistribution of power to members of the public.

³⁵ "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224. It should be noted that while this is an influential framework, and is still relevant today, it has been extensively critiqued since publication.

Figure 2.2: Arnstein's (1969) Model of Public Participation



This model has been adapted in many ways and variations on the tiers of participation have been identified (as cited in Aitken, Davidson et al, 2013). For example, Wilcox (1994) simplifies the model into five levels of participation: Information; Consultation; Deciding Together; Acting Together; and Supporting Independent Community Interests. Fife Council has produced a guidance document entitled "An introduction to consultation methods" which refers to three purposes of public consultation (Informing; Seeking Views; and Participation and Partnership). The International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) (2007) 'spectrum' of public participation has five levels: Inform; Consult; Involve; Collaborate and; Empower.

Although these models use different terminology, and different number of levels, it is possible to identify common patterns and themes within them. Each starts with a 'bottom' layer of engagement which is essentially concerned with **awareness raising** and information provision. They then have one (or more) layer(s) involving public **consultation**, and finally they each have a 'top' layer which gives greater control to participants and ultimately **empowerment** for the community members involved. These three categories provide a useful framework for considering best practice in community engagement.

Table 2.2 summarises the key characteristics of the three broad categories. It should be noted, however, that the categories are not mutually exclusive and many community engagement methods will overlap over two or three of these. Acknowledging this potential overlap, The Wellcome Trust³⁶ has contended that "serious efforts at public engagement are likely to employ a mixed strategy".

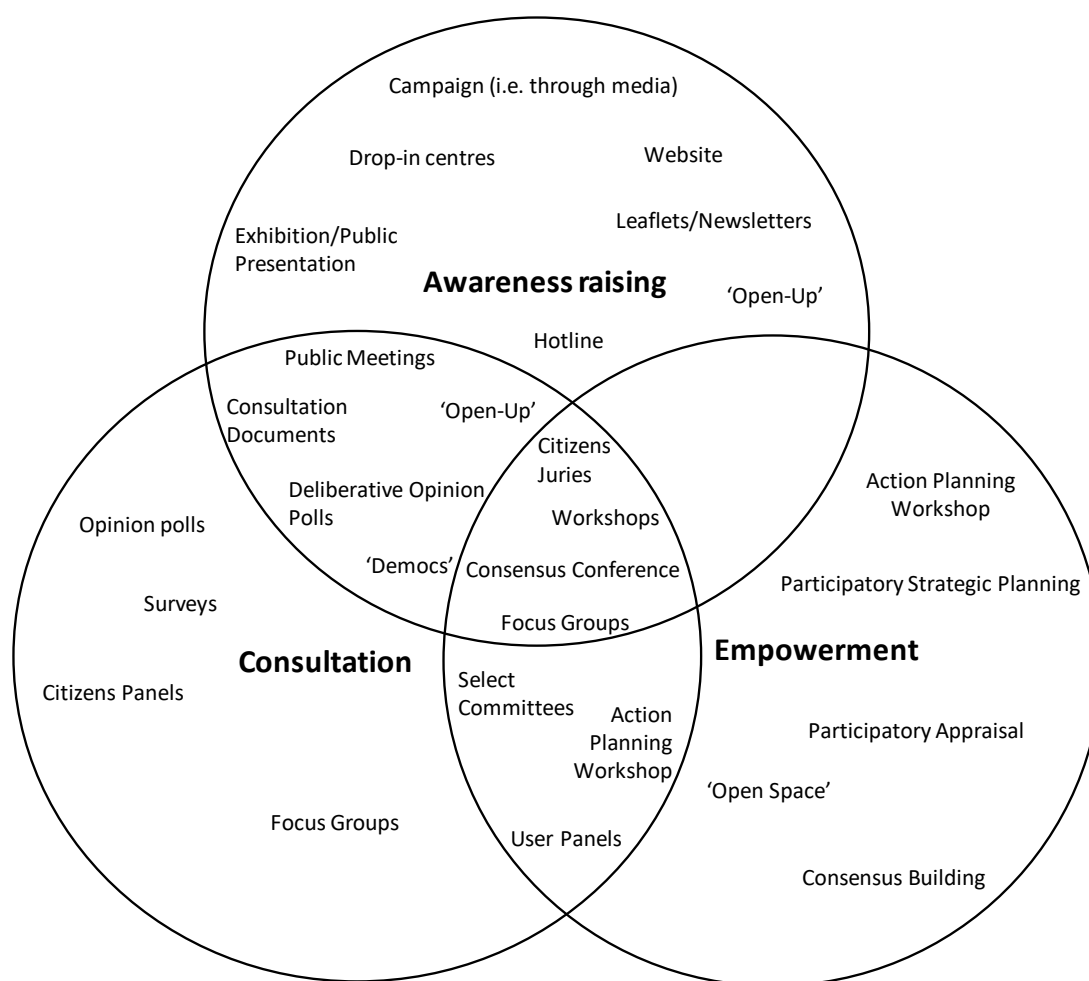
³⁶ Wellcome Trust, 2005, *Information and Attitudes: Consulting the public about biomedical science* www.wellcome.ac.uk

Table 2.2: Summary of categories of public engagement

	Purpose	Desired Outcome	Potential Methods
Awareness Raising	Information provision and public education.	Greater public acceptance or legitimacy for policy/project.	Media campaign. Public exhibition/ presentations. Leaflets.
Consultation	To gain insight into public opinion/views.	Creation of appropriate/socially acceptable policy/project.	Surveys. Focus groups. Online engagement.
Empowerment	To work with the public enabling them to play key roles in decision-making.	Greater social capital. Capacity building. Enhanced democracy.	Co-production. User panels. Deliberative engagement.

Figure 2.3 summarises the range of public engagement methods that can be used for the purpose of awareness raising, consultation, or empowerment (as suggested by Aitken, Davidson et al, 2013).

Figure 2.3: Potential methods associated with each category of public engagement



Examples of best practice identified in the desk research are highlighted under these three categories below, including case studies to illustrate approaches that are of particular relevance for future community engagement in the water industry. The relative advantages and disadvantages of each of the methods identified are then presented together at Table 2.3.

Awareness raising

Examples of awareness-raising activities identified in the review typically took the form of information campaigns, delivered through websites, social media, newsletters and leaflets. Recent campaigns designed to raise awareness of different aspects of the water environment include:

- Scottish Water's *Keep the water cycle running smoothly*³⁷ campaign, which aims to highlight how everyone can do their part in helping to keep Scotland's water cycle moving. It includes a series of TV adverts and online videos highlighting various stages of the water cycle (e.g. using water, flushing, disposing of oil etc).
- South West Water's *Love your loo*³⁸ campaign, aimed at discouraging flushing of cleansing wipes and other products that contribute to blocked drains. The campaign was communicated through videos and materials on the South West Water website, as well as through direct contact with consumers at various events. South West Water won an award for the campaign at the Institute of Water National Innovation Awards 2018.
- Welsh Water's *Pest smart* campaign to encourage people to consider alternative methods of pest, weed and disease control that do not impact on people, water or wildlife. The campaign was awarded £1million of Welsh Government funding, and was communicated through information on the Welsh Water website and via staff appearing at various community events.

While the examples above demonstrate best practice in awareness-raising activities, what distinguishes this category of community engagement from consultation and empowerment is it tends to involve a one-way flow of information, rather than involving community members in the development of ideas or in decision making. Indeed, some commentators argue that the one-way nature of awareness raising approaches means they should not be considered forms of public engagement, unless they are combined with other approaches such as consultation³⁹.

Consultation

Consultation seeks to elicit information from the public to inform decision-making. Wilcox (1994) contends that: "Consultation is appropriate when you can offer some choices on what you are going to do – but not the opportunity [for the public] to develop their own ideas or participate in putting plans into action". Consultation can take many forms, including focus groups, surveys, online or digital engagement, road shows or mobile engagement, and public meetings. Best practice examples of each of these methods are outlined below.

³⁷ <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/you-and-your-home/your-home/keep-the-water-cycle-running-smoothly>

³⁸ <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/water-advice-and-services/love-your-loo/>

³⁹ Dialogue by Design, 2008, *Dialogue by Design: A handbook of public and stakeholder engagement* (Version 2) www.dialoguebydesign.net

Focus groups

The review identified a number of examples of focus groups being used to consult with community members. Focus groups were used in a multi-strand piece of research for the Consumer Futures Unit (CFU)⁴⁰ by Ipsos MORI and Involve, which explored consumers' views on water service standards across urban and rural areas, and how consumers related to water and the environment⁴¹, and in a parallel study exploring views on the use of incentives or regulation as means of encouraging householders to engage in home energy efficiency improvements.⁴² Focus groups have also been used by several water companies, including Scottish Water's 2013 focus groups with household bill payers across Scotland to help understand end users' priorities for service improvement and their evaluation of the relative benefits of different possible improvements to water and waste services.

CASE STUDY: Yorkshire Water focus groups

As part of the development of its business plan in the lead up to the 2014 strategic pricing review, Yorkshire Water carried out a programme of research to test customers' levels of acceptance of the draft plan, and to ensure it fairly reflected their views. The main objectives of the consultation were to: understand how customers felt about specific investment scenarios contained within the plan; and determine how acceptable they considered it to be overall.

Six focus groups were carried out with current domestic customers and two groups with customers of the future. Participants were recruited to represent the domestic customer profile in terms of: gender, age, socio-economic grouping and metered and unmetered customers. The focus groups were carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the investment scenarios contained in the draft business plan were tested. Based on the feedback collected, Yorkshire Water redrafted the scenarios and tested them again in a second stage of focus groups. As with other examples of consultation, this engagement project did not use focus groups in isolation. To target specific audiences of interest, the groups were supplemented with 10 face-to-face in depth interviews with 'hard to reach' customers and 16 with business customers.

In its assessment of the impact of this research, Yorkshire Water's Customer Forum concluded that the findings provided reassurance that the business plan met the needs of customers.

Surveys

The review uncovered numerous examples of surveys being used as a method of engaging with communities. These included examples of consultation on specific aspects of service provision within geographic communities; for example, Scottish Water's 2018 survey of business and residents of Leith to explore their experiences of odour originating from the Seafeld waste disposal site⁴³; and its 2018 survey of residents of Badenoch and Strathspey into their perceptions of their

⁴⁰ Previous name for the utilities function within CAS, now simply referred to as 'CAS'.

⁴¹ <https://www.cas.org.uk/publications/untapped-potential-consumer-views-water-policy>

⁴² <https://www.cas.org.uk/publications/warming-scotland-energy-efficiency-putting-consumers-first>

⁴³ <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/-/media/domestic/files/investment-and-communities/id1031scottishwaterseafeldresearchfinalreportoctober2018.pdf?la=en>

tap water supply⁴⁴. Outwith the water sector, Fraserburgh Community Development Trust⁴⁵ carried out a survey-based community engagement exercise with residents in the north of town to identify their priorities for services in the local area. Recognising that the area had a large number of migrant workers speaking different languages, the Trust supported participants to contribute to the engagement process by filling in a questionnaire produced in five different languages. Local multi-lingual research volunteers were used to help residents respond to the questionnaire.

Surveys are often used in conjunction with other methods of engagement (for example, Scottish Water's consultation in Badenoch and Strathspey combined a survey with qualitative interviews with residents and businesses) and some organisations have contended⁴⁶ that they have greatest value when used this way. Ofwat⁴⁷ has made this point with specific reference to willingness to pay surveys used by water companies in England and Wales in the lead up to water pricing reviews in 2014 and 2017, noting that "a 'one size fits all' approach to customer engagement does not work."

Online and digital engagement

The desk research identified a number of examples of online community/public engagement techniques being used with in the regulated industries and beyond. Scottish Water used 'Citizens Space', an online tool, to launch its 'Shaping the future of your water and waste water services' consultation, while Anglian Water used online tools as part of its five year consultation programme (see Case Study below). Other, similar examples can be found in the transport sector, with Highways England and Transport Scotland both regularly using their online consultation hubs to seek views on infrastructure projects.

CASE STUDY: Anglian Water online budget simulator

As part of its mixed-method 'Discover, Discuss, Decide' consultation, Anglian Water asked customers for feedback online via a bespoke consultation website. The website included a range of different methods for customers to share their ideas, including discussion forums and quick polls on specific questions posed by Anglian Water.

The website also included a 'My 2020 Water View' budget simulator tool. This interactive tool allowed Anglian Water customers to explore different scenarios in relation to future spending on water, and the impacts those spending decisions would have on the environment as well as bills. Users could allocate their own budgets to key areas, such as sewer maintenance and increase or decrease their spend to see the impact of these decision; for example, if they cut too much spending on sewer maintenance, the website would show images of sewage overflowing in the streets.

Once customers submitted their proposed budget via the online tool, Anglian Water used the responses in aggregate to help gauge customer preference in relation to future price setting priorities.

⁴⁴<https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/assets/domestic/files/investment%20and%20communities/aviemore/bssumrreplan17.pdf>

⁴⁵<http://www.fraserburghdevelopmenttrust.com/>

⁴⁶ Community Places (2014) *Community Planning Toolkit*, Available at <https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/community-planning>

⁴⁷https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/pap_tec201507engagement.pdf

Beyond such web-based consultations, other examples of digital engagement include that used by Levenmouth New School Liaison Group – a local group set up to consult on plans for the new school – which included a poster and flyer with QR codes which local people could scan with a smart phone to suggest a new name for the school.

As with survey research, online and digital engagement are often used alongside other methods; indeed each of the examples above were part of mixed-method engagement approaches.

Roadshows and mobile consultations

These forms of consultation involve bringing engagement techniques “to the community”. Examples include Scottish Water’s programme of consultation to inform its strategic projections and business plan. Most recently this involved consultation events being held across Scotland in summer 2018. Northumbrian Water⁴⁸ carried out visits to different locations in a branded vehicle (“Flo”), during which staff distributed information and invited feedback from community members about the service they were receiving from Northumbrian Water or about issues specific to their area (e.g. in 2017 community members in Darlington were asked for their views on issues relating to flood risk). Other water companies, such as United Utilities⁴⁹ and South Staffordshire Water (see Case Study below) carried out road show visits to inform customers about how they could save money on their water bills.

CASE STUDY: South Staffordshire Water customer roadshows

South Staffordshire Water held a series of roadshows to help customers get advice about their water bills. The aim of the roadshows was to make sure customers that may be struggling with their household bills were aware of the range of support options available. Customers were encouraged to take their bill along to their local roadshow to get face-to-face advice from staff from South Staffordshire Water, and to discuss flexible payment arrangements and special tariffs available.

At the road shows staff were also available to discuss other aspects of water service provision with customers, including the quality of supplies and the use of water meters.

Each roadshow lasted from 10am until 4pm, and was located within town centres and community facilities across the region.

Public meetings

Public meetings are distinct from focus groups or workshops as they are typically “open invitation”, so any member of the community can attend. There are numerous examples of public meetings being held by local authorities to consult communities on planned or proposed developments in their area, such as windfarms (e.g. in Moray West, Orkney and Shetland), transport projects (e.g. Edinburgh trams) or facilities such as leisure centres (e.g. Whitehill, Glasgow). Public meetings were also used as a consultation method in Scottish and Southern Electricity Network (SSEN)’s SAVE community engagement programme which explored drivers of energy efficiency in two communities in Southampton and Winchester (one of the four programmes reviewed for this study).

⁴⁸ <https://www.nwl.co.uk/your-home/have-your-say.aspx>

⁴⁹ <https://www.unitedutilities.com/my-account/your-bill/uu-on-the-road/>

Charrettes

Charrettes “bring together the public, stakeholders and designers over a number of days to draw up proposals to make their towns and villages better places to live”⁵⁰. They are distinct from other forms of group discussion and dialogue in that they are design-based, and are therefore typically used in community redevelopment or regeneration projects. Examples of charrettes include a series held as part of Scottish Canals’ redevelopment of Bowling Harbour and of the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill in Glasgow, both of which brought together local residents and stakeholders to develop local areas masterplans (the latter being covered in detail in Chapter 3). Yorkshire Water also used charrettes to engage consumers in discussions of how flood risk in Hull and Haltemprice could be addressed⁵¹.

Panels

Panels involve regular engagement with the same members of a community over an extended period and can be delivered either online or through face-to-face means. A number of water companies use online customer panels as a means of engaging with customers. Scottish Water has used its online customer panel, Water Matters, to explore what water means to its customers and their priorities in relation to customer service. Bristol Water’s online customer panel invites members to complete surveys every three months on topics such as service satisfaction and customer priorities, and has a regular online quiz about water bills, with feedback being used to help make decisions about how the organisation invests. Outside of the water sector, a number of local authorities have also used panels to inform decision making, for example Highland Council has set up a steering group with residents in Nairn to help inform decisions about how it allocated budget in the area.

CASE STUDY: United Utilities customer panels

As part of its commitment to gathering ongoing feedback from customers, United Utilities’ set up an online panel, *WaterTalk*, in 2017. The panel has around 8,000 members, who sign up via the United Utilities website, and who are periodically invited to take part in surveys exploring customers’ service needs and priorities. Panel members are provided with a financial incentive for taking part in surveys

Complementing the online panel is the United Utilities *YourVoice* customer panel, which was set up to gather feedback on the company’s performance and to ensure that customers are at the heart of its business planning decisions. Representation on the panel includes a mix of customer, environmental and regulatory representatives.

Empowerment

Public engagement approaches that might be classified under the heading of empowerment are those which would be positioned at the top of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation. These approaches involve giving control to public participants and aim to create benefits not simply for the decisions and/or projects under consideration, but also for the participants and broader society. Examples of empowerment uncovered in the review took the form of co-production and deliberative engagement (including workshops and citizens juries).

⁵⁰ Scottish Government (2016) *Design Charrettes and Activities Ideas Fund* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/design-charrettes-and-activating-ideas-winners-2016-17/>

⁵¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jx0BxwVXWQ>

Co-production

Co-production, or co-design, is an approach to decision-making and service design rather than a specific method. The Scottish Co-production Network defines it as a relationship between service provider and user that “draws on the knowledge, ability and resources of both to develop solutions to issues that are claimed to be successful, sustainable and cost-effective, changing the balance of power from the professional towards the service user.”⁵² Co-production has been used extensively to shape decision making in the healthcare sector, with NHS England stating that “co-production is for the whole of the NHS”⁵³.

CASE STUDY: Northumbrian Water Innovation Festival

Northumbrian Water ran a series of co-design workshops and focus groups with its customers in 2015 to help shape its customer experience strategy and business plan.

It also used this approach on a larger scale in 2017 through its Innovation Festival, which brought together a range of businesses, universities, schools, other stakeholders and customers to explore social and environmental challenges. As well as music and food stalls, activities at the Festival included a “design sprint”, where customers got involved in designing and testing ideas around flood prevention.

Ideas were generated by the 400 people who attended the Festival, which were then used to produce 34 key projects that were taken forward for further development. Some of the ideas included: using data science to pinpoint leakage, creating moss trees to combat pollution, and developing digital work assistants to increase productivity.

The Festival now runs annually, and since it started has attracted from more than 3,000 people and 650 businesses and organisations.

Deliberative engagement

The desk research identified several examples of deliberative community engagement methods. A meta-analysis⁵⁴ carried out by Involve and Ipsos MORI for CAS described deliberative engagement as being distinct from traditional consumer engagement tools, such as opinion polls or consumer surveys, as it “offers policy and decisionmakers much richer data on public attitudes and values, by exploring more fully why people feel the way they do and giving time to develop ideas, options and preferences with the public.” The meta-analysis described and assessed in detail a wide range of deliberative methods that have been used in the regulated industries in the UK and beyond to engage consumers in decision making. Rather than replicating that analysis in full here, we have instead focussed on two deliberative methods that were most commonly identified in the desk research: citizens juries and deliberative workshops.

A **citizens jury** brings a small representative group of citizens together to hear evidence, deliberate among themselves and reach a conclusion. Experts (or ‘witnesses’) are invited to present ‘evidence’ to the jury and answer questions, allowing

⁵² <http://www.coproductionscotland.org.uk/about/what-is-co-production/>

⁵³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/david-mcnally/>

⁵⁴ Involve and Ipsos MORI (2018) *Meta-Analysis and Scoping Exercise into Public Participation in the Regulated Industries* https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/meta-analysis_and_scoping_exercise_into_public_participation_in_the_regulated_industries_ipsos_mori_involve_-_2017-10-12_0.pdf

jurors to learn about the issue at hand and, in doing so, move into the role of being informed decision-makers. The approach was used by Ipsos MORI and Involve for CAS⁵⁵ in the aforementioned research on home energy efficiency behaviour. It was used again in Ipsos MORI's research with the University of Edinburgh to explore views on use of newborn blood spot tests for research purposes⁵⁶, which has led the Scottish Government to initiate steps towards wider public consultation on the topic. A citizens jury was also the core component of the community engagement programme delivered by Yarra Valley Water to support its price submission for its regulator (one of the four community engagement programmes explored in more detail in chapter 3).

Deliberative workshops are organised group discussions that provide participants with the opportunity to consider an issue in depth, challenge each other's opinions, develop views/arguments through a process of public reasoning and reach an informed position. Examples of such workshops being used with consumers include the research carried out by Ipsos MORI and Involve for CAS, which used deliberative research (including workshops) to explore consumers' views on water and the environment. Elsewhere, in 2014, Ipsos MORI carried out deliberative workshops to explore public views of the key issues for Scotland's environment (on behalf of the The SEWeb LIFE+ Partnership), while in 2018 Yorkshire Water used workshops with community members and schools to explore how small actions could contribute towards the avoidance of flooding, and to develop plans to introduce sustainable drainage systems into their grounds⁵⁷.

CASE STUDY: Environment Agency deliberative workshops

The Environment Agency ran a series of workshops across five areas in England at risk of, or affected by, flooding to examine different approaches to informing the public about flood risk.

The project began with the establishment of an oversight group which undertook a literature review and a mapping of current flood risk communications and hosted a design and development workshop for key stakeholders to identify areas of focus and discussion before any engagement with the public took place.

Following this, a series of public workshops were held in Oxford and York, where people had experience of flooding in their homes; and in Leicester, Newtown and Skegness, areas where there were high risks of flooding. Participants were recruited to be broadly representative of the populations in these areas. The workshops in each location began with a mid-week evening introductory event, followed by a full-day workshop the following Saturday. A reconvened workshop was then carried out with 28 participants from the original workshops, plus representatives from Public Health England, the Red Cross, the National Flood Forum and the Environment Agency, to produce more concrete recommendations.

Community engagement with children and young people

In addition to the methods described above, some organisations have used different, very tailored methods to engage with children and young people specifically.

⁵⁵ Citizens Advice Scotland (2017) *Warming Scotland up to Energy Efficiency: Putting Consumers First* <https://www.cas.org.uk/publications/warming-scotland-energy-efficiency-putting-consumers-first>

⁵⁶ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/centre-genomic-medicine/news-events/news-2017/citizens-jury-debate-newborn-blood-spot-research>

⁵⁷ <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/soakitup>

As part of the *Birmingham Resilience Project*⁵⁸, a £300 million project which will deliver an alternative water supply for Birmingham, Severn Trent commissioned a children's book⁵⁹ to help children, as the future generation of water users, understand why the project was taking place, and to learn about the changes that were being made. They also arranged school site visits and gave children the opportunity to name some of the larger pieces of machinery being used in the project. This in turn helped to generate positive media coverage of the project. In addition to engagement with children and young people, the project also involved activities with the wider community, including letter-drops to households in the areas, consultation with landowners, and visits to community groups.

Elsewhere, Southern Water's *Sporting Chance*⁶⁰ programme aims to provide a fun way of encouraging children to be active while learning about the importance of drinking water, saving water and keeping drains clear. The programme is delivered with the help of community coaches from sports clubs across the region and uses a combination of games and sports skills to deliver information about water efficiency, healthy hydration and keeping sewers clear.

As part of its piloting of the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestaness⁶¹, East Dunbartonshire Council, Keep Scotland Beautiful and NHS Health Scotland engaged with children and young people by working through schools and community groups including those supporting LGBT youth and young adults with additional support needs (this programme is explored in detail in chapter 3).

Advantages and disadvantages of community/public engagement examples cited.

The range of methods outlined above offer a number of advantages and disadvantages as techniques for engaging with communities. These are summarised in table 2.3:

⁵⁸ <https://www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/planned-improvements/birminghamresilienceproject/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/planned-improvements/about-the-project/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/sporting-chance>

⁶¹ file:///O:/EDI2_Data/Jobs/18-093466-01%20CAS%20Community%20Engagement/Desk%20research/Reports%20to%20read/Ciaran/ksb-place-standard-report-final-31-05-17.pdf

Table 3.1: Advantages of disadvantages of community engagement methods

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Awareness raising (including: media campaigns, letters, emails, leaflets, drop-in events and public meetings).	Can raise awareness of key issues of importance, and of previously unknown projects, services or initiatives	Limited scope to actually engage with community members – information flow is “top down” and “one way”
Consultation		
Surveys	<p>Provides quantifiable findings</p> <p>Can be representative of a wider population</p> <p>Can reach a large number of people, allowing views of different groups to be compared</p> <p>Allows for repeated measurement and analysis of trends over time</p>	<p>In isolation, does not allow for in-depth exploration of attitudes, perceptions and ideas</p> <p>Limited scope for community members to engage with and learn from each other</p> <p>Limited scope for community members to offer feedback or contribute new ideas outside of pre-defined survey questions</p>
Online and digital engagement	<p>Ability to reach wide range of people – including people in remote and rural areas</p> <p>Offers flexibility for participants, where there is no set date/time for involvement</p> <p>Can be more cost effective than engaging through face-to-face techniques</p>	Restricted to those with access to internet/smart devices
Focus groups	<p>Allows in-depth exploration of issues to understand reasons behind views</p> <p>High level of involvement and interaction due to relatively small number of participants</p> <p>Can target recruitment of particular demographic groups to ensure they are represented</p>	<p>Responses are not quantifiable, so not used as a means of gauging opinion of wider population</p> <p>Typically a small group of people who are not necessarily representative of wider community</p> <p>Dependent on skilled facilitation</p> <p>Can be dominated by one or two confident individuals</p>

	Allows participants to engage with and learn from each other	
Public meetings	<p>If attendance is high, can reach large number of people</p> <p>Having “open invite” approach, can demonstrate openness and transparency,</p> <p>Can help garner publicity for a project</p> <p>Can help community members to build networks</p>	<p>Difficult to ensure high level of attendance/participation</p> <p>Without targeted recruitment, can risk lack of representation from different types of groups who may have different viewpoints</p> <p>Can risk excluding participants it not held in an accessible location and at a convenient time</p>
Road shows and mobile engagement	Has potential to reach a wider range of people as it removes the onus on them to proactively attend an event	Nature of engagement is likely to consist of short, one-to-one discussions, and may therefore lack the depth and detail offered by other methods
Empowerment		
Co-production	<p>Ensures that those who will be at the receiving end of a project, or service have an opportunity to influence its development</p> <p>Enables community members and professionals to work together as equals and learn from each other</p> <p>Builds skills and confidence among participants</p>	<p>Can be resource intensive, involving significant time commitment from both participants and organisers</p> <p>Typically a small group of people who are not necessarily representative wider community</p>
Panels	<p>Allow views to be tracked over time</p> <p>Regular nature of engagement can build momentum and enthusiasm</p> <p>Can target recruitment of particular demographic groups to ensure they are represented</p>	<p>Can be resource intensive, involving significant and long term time commitment</p> <p>Typically a small group of people who are not necessarily representative of wider community, and can involve the “usual suspects” who participate in consultations</p> <p>Can be dominated by small number of people</p>

Citizens juries	<p>Allow direct community input into decision making</p> <p>Community input reflects informed decisions based on evidence from experts</p> <p>Can target recruitment of particular demographic groups to ensure they are represented</p> <p>Allows for very focussed deliberation</p>	<p>Potential for participants to be led to a certain decision, depending on who sets the agenda and who the experts are</p> <p>Dependent on skilled facilitation</p> <p>Can be resource intensive, involving a significant time commitment</p>
Charettes	<p>Allows community members to be directly involved in design of solutions for their area</p> <p>Encourage collaboration between different groups of stakeholders and community – which in turn can build positive relationships between them</p>	<p>Can raise unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved when the process finishes</p> <p>Can be dominated by experts/professionals rather than community members</p>

Summary

The literature makes clear the importance of public engagement as a central aspect of policy decision making, at a UK, Scotland and local level. The legislative drivers for public engagement, including the UK Government's National Planning Framework and Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, are increasingly reflected in a number of frameworks and models that guide and promote good practice in public and community engagement and that have clear application in the regulated industries. These good practice principles are perhaps most clearly defined by the National Standards for Community Engagement and their accompanying indicators of progress. Further, the Sciencewise principles for best practice in public dialogue provide some useful additional dimensions, particularly in relation to the practical delivery and evaluation of engagement activities.

What is clear from research into previous examples of community engagement, both within the regulated industries and beyond, is that it can take many different forms, reflecting the range of different purposes it is designed to serve. The desk research has shown three broad types, or "layers" of engagement – awareness raising, consultation and empowerment – and a range of associated engagement methods. Having reviewed best practice examples of each type of engagement, and highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each of the main methods, it is clear that no single approach emerges as the "best". Indeed, the desk research includes examples of mixed-method approaches to community engagement, for example combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The most appropriate engagement method will depend on a number of factors, including: the overall aims and objectives of the engagement, the characteristics of the community in question, the types of information or decisions that are sought from the community, and the resource and timescale available.

With these considerations in mind, the following chapter takes a closer look at community engagement in practice, exploring in more detail the components that make community engagement successful.

3 Learnings from recent community engagement programmes

This chapter presents the findings from the review of four community engagement programmes. It first summarises each of the programmes, before presenting the best practice learning from the review.

The four programmes

The four community engagement programmes reviewed in the research are summarised below. The remainder of the chapter looks at best practice learning from across the programmes, from the perspective of lead organisations, their partners and members of the community who took part.

Scottish Canals, Glasgow Canals Project

Scottish Canals, Glasgow City Council and Bigg Regeneration (collectively operating as the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership) led a project that sought to regenerate the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill communities through which the Glasgow branch of the Forth and Clyde Canal passes. These communities were targeted for regeneration by the Partnership as they were among the most deprived areas in Scotland, had consistently low levels of health, and had large areas of vacant and derelict land. The regeneration project also tied in with Glasgow City Council's masterplan to regenerate the North of the city, as well as Scottish Government policies of reducing inequality and improving mental and physical health through capitalising on greenspace.

As part of the regeneration project, the Partnership embarked on a community engagement programme, titled *"What Floats your Boat?"*, to help establish a vision and corresponding masterplan for the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill areas. The programme consisted of a design charrette, which brought together a wide range of interested stakeholders and local community members to explore design ideas for the local area.

The charrette took place over four days in February 2015. During the charrette participants explored and identified the key issues in the area currently, and then discussed different future scenarios for the area, which in turn led to the production of a draft development framework and masterplan that was presented to participants on the final day. Over a period of four days, the charrette engaged with over 300 stakeholders and members of the local community.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), Solent Achieving Value from Efficiency (SAVE)

The SAVE project aimed to assess the use of energy efficiency measures to encourage behaviour change in relation to energy use, and in turn reduce demand on the energy network. The project was led by SSEN, in partnership with the University of Southampton, Future Solent (a low carbon economy initiative), DNV GL (risk management specialists), and Neighbourhood Economics (community engagement specialists). Between June 2014 and January 2018, the project tested the effectiveness of four methods of intervention: using media campaigns linked to the electrical consumption of individual households; adding a financial incentive to these campaigns; deploying free LED lighting to households; and using a community engagement approach.

The community engagement approach used was referred to as Community Coaching, which involved embedding a coach within target communities and working closely with community members to provide insights into why customers respond to energy efficiency in specific ways, and how local residents could act together to reduce their energy demand. The programme also examined the key drivers of behaviour change in relation to energy consumption, exploring the extent to which the community was influenced by considerations such as “saving money”, “saving the planet” and “being part of a caring community”.

The programme was delivered in two communities, Kings Worthy in Winchester and Shirley Warren in Southampton. A range of local stakeholders in these areas were brought in to help develop and deliver the programme, including utilities (Southern Water, South Gas Networks), local authorities (Southampton, Winchester and Eastleigh), and two local host organisations to help deliver the programme (The Environment Centre and Winchester Action on Climate Change). There were four key programme phases:

1. Set up phase, involved a review of community engagement good practice, selection of the two communities, recruitment of the local host organisations, and recruitment of a stakeholder group.
2. Initial engagement with the two communities, establishing working groups in each community to help design elements of the programme, and branding of the programme in each community. Discussion with the community was initially based around their general priorities for the community, including any improvements they wanted to see. Over time, once community members were already engaged in the programme, the topic of energy efficiency was then gradually introduced.
3. Broader range of engagement methods, including: door-to-door and in-street discussions, leaflets and letters, group discussions, classes on money saving and energy efficient cooking, and “Big Switch Off” events where communities were encouraged to reduce energy use on specific days.
4. Conclusion of the programme, with findings shared at a dissemination workshop with residents from both communities and preparation of a final programme report.

Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestanes

East Dunbartonshire Council, Keep Scotland Beautiful and NHS Health Scotland agreed in June 2016 to jointly develop and implement a pilot project that would involve using the Place Standard to engage with the communities of Hillhead and Harestanes in Kirkintilloch. The Place Standard tool was jointly developed by NHS Health Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland and the Scottish Government with advisory input from Glasgow City Council and was launched in December 2015. The tool identifies 14 themes around which structured consultation can be developed (e.g. "housing and community", "work and local economy", "play and recreation", and so on).

The overarching aim of the community engagement programme was to provide a robust basis for future dialogue with public agencies and other stakeholders about how the area could be improved and help inform the development of a Locality Plan, as required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Additionally, it was anticipated the project would:

- enable East Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership to pilot the use of the Place Standard and consider how it could be used effectively to support future locality planning.
- enable Keep Scotland Beautiful to enhance the range of advice, services and support it provides to communities seeking to take action on local environmental quality.
- support NHS Health Scotland's evaluation of the Place Standard, develop a case study to understand implementation of the tool, and identify valuable learning.

The pilot project was launched in June 2016 and ran until February 2017. A range of methods were used to facilitate engagement including: focus groups among particular segments of the community (parents, school children, young adults, people with literacy difficulties or for whom English was a second language, the LGBT community, and care home residents, among others); an online survey; and public meetings.

Yarra Valley Water, Citizens Jury

In 2017, Australia's Yarra Valley Water delivered a customer engagement programme to help formulate its five-yearly price submission for its regulator, the Essential Services Commission. The customer engagement programme built on Yarra Valley Water's decade-long programme of customer research, which tracked satisfaction, confidence and trust in the organisation.

For the final stage of the customer engagement journey, Yarra Valley Water convened a citizens jury to understand customers' willingness to trade-off between water pricing and service standards. Specifically, the citizens jury sought to answer the question: *"We need to find a balance between price and service which is fair for everyone. How should we do this?"*

Yarra Valley Water commissioned external facilitators, New Democracy Foundation and Mosaic Lab, to work together to deliver the jury. In total, 30 Yarra Valley Water customers took part, selected to be representative of the overall customer base.

The citizens jury deliberated for five and a half days, within a three-month period (April to June 2017). Jurors were provided with an online discussion forum to use between sessions, which was also made available to the wider community of Yarra Valley Water customers, to enable them to engage with the jurors and contribute their own views. After the final session, the jury submitted a report of ten key recommendations to Yarra Valley Water.

Previous engagement with the communities

Each of the programmes represented the first time the lead organisation had engaged with the specific community members that had participated, though in some cases it built upon previous approaches to engagement with communities in other areas or with the organisation's wider consumer base.

The Place Standard pilot in Hillhead and Harestaness was the first time that particular approach had been used in the area, and there was no indication of other engagement activities having been carried out with this community. The programme was also the first time the partnership of Keep Scotland Beautiful, NHS Health Scotland and East Dunbartonshire Council had worked together on a community engagement programme.

For the SAVE programme, the lead organisation's previous engagement with the Kings Worthy or Shirley Warren communities had primarily been through the types of communication that might be expected between network operators and consumers, such as providing information about service or supply interruptions. It had not engaged in a structured, face-to-face way with residents of the two communities before the SAVE programme.

Prior to the citizens jury, Yarra Valley Water had carried out a programme of customer engagement lasting a decade, and estimated that it had generated feedback from approximately 24,000 customers over that period. The citizens jury therefore represented another stage of that process of engagement, but was the first time this particular method had been used by the organisation and the first time the specific community members involved in the jury had directly engaged with the organisation.

Scottish Canals had used a range of methods to engage with communities in the past, including charrettes with the Bowling Harbour (West Dunbartonshire) and Muirtown and Kessock (Inverness) communities; an approach they also

subsequently used with residents in the Crinan Corridor (Argyll and Bute) area. While the charrette method had therefore been used by Scottish Canals in the past, the programme represented the first significant engagement with the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill communities.

Best practice learning from across the four programmes are considered below. The analysis is structured around the main thematic categories of the National Standards for Community Engagement: planning, working together, methods, inclusion, communication, impact and evaluation.

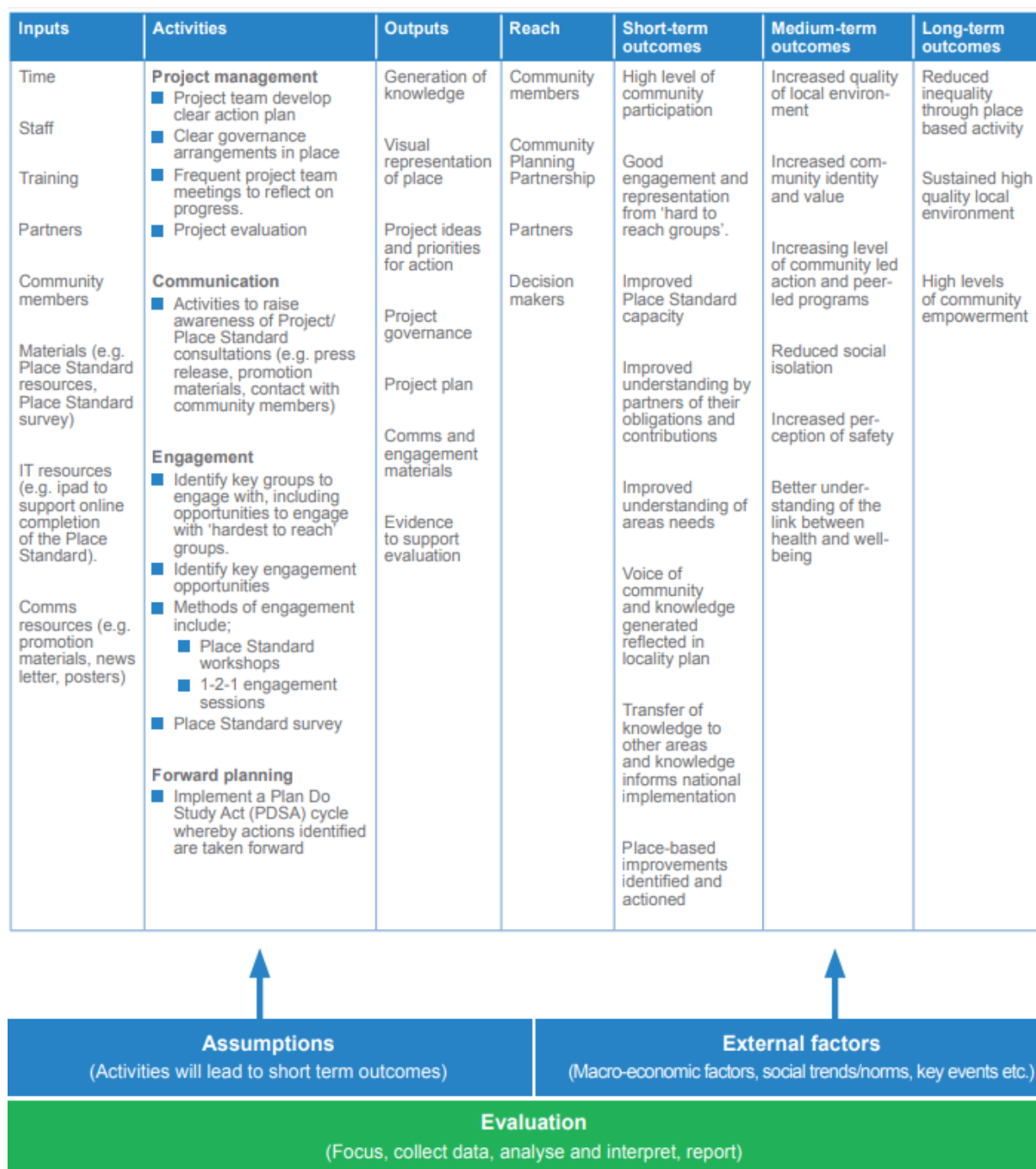
Planning

The National Standards for Community Engagement state that there should be a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions. They go on to state that partners should be involved at the start of the process in identifying the focus of the engagement, and what the outcomes should be; that a clear and agreed plan should be in place; and that appropriate timescales and resources should be available to support an effective engagement process.

Developing formal programme plans

Each community engagement programme examined in this research had clear aims and objectives, articulated within a formal written plan. As part of their planning process, two of the programmes (the Place Standard pilot and SAVE) had developed logic models (see Figure 3.1) or outcomes chains, and lead organisations felt these were particularly beneficial in helping to identify any important gaps or missing steps in the process.

Figure 3.1: Logic model used by the Place Standard pilot



As is reflected in the logic model above, each programme plan had its own desired outcomes and measures for success, which had been developed by the lead and partner organisations as part of the planning process. Table 3.1 summarises the key target outcomes for each of the programmes:

Table 3.1: Target outcomes from community engagement programmes

Programme	Target outcomes / measures of success (summary)
Scottish Canals, Glasgow Canals Project	<p>Develop a shared vision for the area with partner stakeholders and local communities and then determine a Planning Permission in Principle to take the suggested development forward</p> <p>Increase in the number of people using the canal network in the area, particularly the nature reserve and greenspace being regenerated as part of the project</p> <p>Improve the physical connections between Glasgow North and Hamiltonhill</p> <p>In the long term, improve the health and wellbeing of the local community</p>
SSEN, SAVE	<p>Identify communities where patterns of energy demand place stress on the network, and agree targets for energy demand reduction</p> <p>Resource the community to articulate its priorities and strategic needs</p> <p>Put in place a behaviour change programme to reduce demand for electricity</p> <p>Empower communities to deliver the programme through a local third sector host organisation</p> <p>Actively engage community members in energy efficiency and local stakeholders in supporting the delivery of the programme</p> <p>Embed demand reduction behaviour within the community, leading to significant, predictable peak reduction</p> <p>Help stakeholders to accrue benefits as a consequence of multi-agency initiatives</p> <p>Communities continue to be empowered to manage positive change impacts including local energy consumption</p>
Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestanes	<p>Encourage participation from the community including representation from hard to reach groups</p> <p>Improve partners' understanding of the community needs, as well as their own obligations and contributions</p> <p>Develop a locality plan that reflects the needs of the community</p> <p>Identify place-based improvements and actions that can help achieve these</p> <p>Support transfer of knowledge from the programme to other areas to inform wider implementation of the Place Standard</p> <p>In the long term improve the quality of local environment, increase community identity, reduce social isolation, increase perception of safety and reduce inequality</p>

Yarra Valley Water, Citizens Jury	<p>Deliver a robust and transparent engagement programme, that empowers customers to make decisions and formulate recommendations</p> <p>Deliver an engagement programme that stands up to external scrutiny from the regulator</p> <p>Recruit a cross section of the customer base and keep the jury members engaged throughout the process</p> <p>Reach an agreed set of actionable recommendations from the citizens jury</p>
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Lead and partner organisations regarded having a plan in place as key to the success of the programmes, as it helped promote a shared understanding of the programme aims and objectives, and their own roles and responsibilities in achieving these. Lead organisations for some of the programmes further noted that the development of a formal engagement plan had been vital in enabling them to secure finance for the programmes – a plan was a prerequisite to applying for some forms of external funding.

While formal planning was seen as important, lead and partner organisations also stressed the need for flexibility, such that programmes could adapt to the emerging needs of the communities and incorporate any new ideas generated through engagement with community members themselves. For example, while the SAVE programme plan outlined the overall approach to engagement in the communities in question, many of the specific engagement activities that went on to be pursued were decided upon at a later stage, in response to suggestions made by community members.

"I think [the plan] was absolutely necessary, as you need something to strive towards in those early days. But things change when you're engaging with communities, so the need for flexibility was quite a key learning for us."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

Each programme plan was based around an existing community engagement framework or a model that had been used previously: the Place Standard pilot and the Glasgow Canals project drew on the National Standards for Community Engagement (See Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of the National Standards); SAVE drew on a model called Community Coaching; and Yarra Valley Water drew on both the Essential Services Commission's pricing framework and a set of deliberative democracy principles developed by the agency commissioned to deliver the programme.

The use of such existing frameworks and models was seen by lead and partner organisations as having strengthened the programmes. For example, organisations involved in the Place Standard pilot described how the National Standards for Community Engagement, particularly the recommendations around inclusion, helped shape their focus on encouraging participation from community members that might normally find it difficult to engage. For their part, SAVE and Yarra Valley Water organisations felt that the existing models on which they drew gave them confidence that their programme was based on sound principles that had been tried and tested in similar contexts.

Involving partner organisations in planning

For each programme, lead organisations worked alongside a range of partners in the planning and design stages. The types of partners involved varied by programme and included: local authorities and other public sector bodies; utility companies; universities; and organisations or individuals specialising in relevant topics including community development, and facilitation. The specific partners involved in each programme are outlined within the programme descriptions at the beginning of this chapter.

Partners were involved from an early stage in the process, including the development of target outcomes and key measures of success outlined in Table 3.1. This early involvement was seen as having been crucial in reaching agreement on desired outcomes, the respective roles and responsibilities of different partners, and the sharing and allocation of tasks. Partner involvement was seen as having worked best where the individuals involved already had some familiarity with, and appreciation of, the benefits of community engagement, meaning they came committed to the process and willing to share their learning from any previous projects in which they had been involved.

"[Partners] came from different sectors where they were familiar with engagement and were in the position to take an early step on it because they understood engagement...so there was a real willingness to share learning."

(Lead/partner organisation, Yarra Valley Water)

Typically, the planning process took the form of extended meetings or workshops attended by all relevant organisations. This was seen as an effective, time-efficient way of sharing ideas and reaching agreement between organisations. On two of the programmes, SAVE and Yarra Valley Water, the meetings and workshops were facilitated by independent community engagement specialists, commissioned by the lead organisation to also deliver the wider engagement programme on their behalf. These specialists were commissioned because they would provide a level of independence and objectivity to the process, and because they provided practical experience in working on multi-agency projects, skills that the lead organisations felt the programmes would benefit from. Lead and partner organisations felt the involvement of specialists had been invaluable in enabling them to reach agreement on key planning issues. More specifically, the lead and partner organisations commented that the independent specialists brought an objective perspective to the process, so were not seen as pushing any one organisation's agenda, and were adept at ensuring each organisation had equal opportunity to contribute ideas.

Involving community members in planning

The development of the community engagement plans was mainly driven by the lead organisations for the programmes, in collaboration with partners as described above. On some of the programmes, however, community members were also able to play a role in the planning process, albeit it at later stages. For example, both lead/partner organisations and community members for the SAVE programme described how the process had been "bottom up" rather than "top down", with time taken during the preliminary stages to meet with community members and identify the types of improvements they wanted to see in their communities and the topics that were of most salience to them (e.g. cleanliness of the area, or saving money), around which the topic of energy efficiency would then gradually be introduced using appropriate engagement methods. This approach reflected one of the main characteristics of the community coaching model used by the SAVE programme, which involved spending time at the early stages to get to know community members, developing an understanding of their needs and aspirations, and then gradually "earning the right" to engage with them about the topic interest (in this case energy). Both lead/partner organisations and community members for the programme described how the planning had been an iterative process, with community members given opportunities to suggest ideas on an ongoing basis and help plan specific activities around their own needs. Community members spoke in very positive terms about such opportunities.

"One of our criticisms of many community engagement [projects] is that they are top down....but unless you start from the bottom up, and actually try and understand where the community is at, what is going on for them, and the things that challenge their lives, then you don't know the best conditions to ensure [your] messages are received."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"[The delivery organisation] didn't suggest anything but asked us how we wanted to see the community. They helped us to think it through, but the ideas came from the group and from the community."

(Community member, SAVE)

Timescales and resources

While each programme was delivered within the agreed timescales, lead and partner organisations highlighted the importance of building in sufficient time for each stage of the process, including engagement with stakeholders, the recruitment of participants, the design of discussion guides and other materials, and the analysis of the data generated.

The importance of having adequate resources in place – including funding, staff time, volunteer time, IT equipment, websites and social media, and promotional/other printed materials – was also highlighted. Lead and partner organisations generally reported that the resources that were available for their programmes had been sufficient. At the same time, they commented repeatedly that the programmes were very resource-intensive due to being very "rigorous" "detailed" and "thorough". This was particularly the case in relation to time spent by the organisations involved, for example carrying out engagement activities and attending events at weekends, much of which was provided on a "good will" basis rather than being costed for within the programme budgets. Partner organisations for the Place Standard pilot noted that certain aspects of their programme (for example, data management and analysis) required more time and resource than had been anticipated (albeit they also highlighted that the programme was by definition "experimental" so such issues were not unexpected). They noted, in retrospect that more detailed scoping out of planned activities, how these would be delivered, and associated time and resource implications may have proven beneficial.

Nonetheless, lead and partner organisations across the programmes generally felt that the time and resources devoted to the programmes had been worthwhile, as it contributed to better quality decisions, and avoided the need to potentially reverse decisions that proved unpalatable to the community because it had not been adequately consulted.

Planning – key learnings:

- ☑ Have a written programme plan in place, so that all partners and stakeholders are clear on the aims and objectives, and on their own roles and responsibilities in helping to achieve these.
- ☑ Build a degree of flexibility into the programme plan so that it can adapt to any unanticipated issues or new ideas or suggestions made by community members.
- ☑ Consider drawing on existing community engagement frameworks or models that have been used successfully in similar contexts.
- ☑ Involve partners and stakeholders in programme planning from the outset. Use meetings or workshops to help reach agreement on desired outcomes and respective roles and responsibilities.
- ☑ Where appropriate, use independent facilitators to help partners and stakeholders to work together and reach agreement.
- ☑ Involve community members in developing the programme plan, or in shaping specific aspects of it, to encourage a sense of ownership.
- ☑ Ensure the plan includes realistic timescales and resource requirements, based on careful scoping of activities.

Working together

The National Standards for Community Engagement highlight the importance of effective working relationships, for example between lead and partner organisations and between community members, in achieving the aims of engagement programmes. Specific, key measures of success listed in the Standards are that:

- the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved are clear and understood;
- decision-making processes and procedures are agreed and followed; and
- the engagement process is based on mutual trust and respect.

Relationships between lead and partner organisations

Lead and partner organisations for each of the four programmes described having had positive working relationships with each other, which they felt had been facilitated by a number of factors.

Firstly, they commented that the right “mix” of organisations had been approached and agreed to become involved, specifically individuals with a vested interest in the programme, and a corresponding enthusiasm and willingness to contribute time and effort. Further they described how the organisations involved had had complementary, rather than competing, priorities, which made it easier for them to work together towards common goals. Participants also commented that having a good mix of organisations had meant that each brought different knowledge and understanding of the local community, which in turn was helpful in identifying the best ways to engage with community members.

“We didn't want to grow [the stakeholder group] too large, otherwise you get too many interests round the table and it could have been a little bit more difficult. Actually, there was very similar interest around the table so we didn't have too much conflict which made for an aligned strategy.”

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

Secondly, lead and partner organisations felt that effective working relationships were facilitated by roles and responsibilities having been clearly defined and agreed from the outset, during the early planning stages. They noted that on the rare occasion where there was any confusion or perceived lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, open and honest communication between partners had allowed such issues to be quickly addressed. Equally some described how formalising roles and responsibilities in writing, for example within the programme plan or a separate Terms of Reference document, was helpful.

Thirdly, and related to the above, lead and partner organisations emphasised the importance of ensuring an appropriate, equitable balance of tasks among them, to avoid undue burden being placed on any one organisation, and to maintain positive, productive working relationships.

"Every time we left [meetings] work was quite fairly distributed. I think that made a big difference. Quite often in partnerships one person leaves with absolutely everything to do, or one person speaks and everybody else just agrees. [But] there was a lot of debate and discussion and compromise...and a fair distribution of work."

(Lead/partner organisation, Place Standard pilot)

Finally, and as highlighted above, regular and ongoing meetings between organisations was considered vital. Lead and partner organisations stressed that having a clear purpose and objective for each meeting helped ensure progress was made. They also commented that meetings provided the most efficient means of reviewing overall programme progress and making sure any concerns, for example in relation to the effectiveness of specific engagement activities, were addressed.

Working relationships between community members

Community members who took part in the programmes reported positive working relationships between each other. While there were no examples of negative relationships having previously existed in the communities, in some cases community members noted that there had been a lack of communication between residents and a sense of division between different groups. Those that participated in the programme typically described their fellow participants as "nice people" and said they "got on well" with them.

While these sentiments may be a reflection of individual personalities and therefore somewhat outwith the control of those delivering the programmes, community members identified a number of factors they felt had helped them to work together as a group. One such factor was the relevance of the subject matter; for example, on the Glasgow Canals, Place Standard and SAVE programmes, one of the long term aims of the engagement was to improve the local area, and this was seen as having provided a common goal and shared sense of purpose that community members could work towards together. Indeed, one of the communities involved in the SAVE programme created the brand "Shirley Warren Working Together" as an expression of their ambition of uniting formerly disparate groups in the community under the programme.

"The people who were gathered from across the community, it was almost like we were of one accord. Everyone wanted the same, even though I hadn't seen sight nor sound of them [before], we all had that [same] voice."

(Community member, SAVE)

Community members noted other important drivers of collaborative working, including: having a mix of different types of people from the community involved; having the roles and responsibility of community members clearly explained from the outset; and skilled facilitation. These drivers are explored in more detail in the Methods section below.

Working together – key learnings:

- ☑ Ensure the roles and responsibilities of lead organisations and partners are clearly defined from the outset. These should ideally be agreed through meetings and formalised in writing.
- ☑ Ensure an appropriate and equitable balance of tasks among lead organisations and partners.
- ☑ Have regular and ongoing meetings between lead organisations and partners to review progress.
- ☑ Encourage community members to work together by engaging them on a topic that is of direct relevance to them/their community and clearly defining their roles and responsibilities in the process.

Methods

The National Standards for Community Engagement state that methods of engagement must be appropriate for the purpose of the engagement and acceptable to participants, and that a variety of methods should be used as appropriate to ensure a wide range of voices is heard. Further, the Standards advocate the use of creative methods to encourage maximum participation and effective dialogue, and recommend that methods be evaluated and adapted, if necessary, in response to feedback from participants and partners.

Choosing methods of engagement

As is evident in the description of the four programmes set out above, each used a mix of different methods of community engagement, ranging from quantitative methods (an online survey in the case of the Place Standard pilot and door-to-door surveys in the SAVE project) to qualitative approaches (focus groups and workshops in the two aforementioned projects, and a citizens jury in the Yarrow Valley project), as well as a range of more traditional consultative approaches, from charrettes to public meetings and door-to-door visits. In addition some of the programmes made use of innovative, alternative methods. For example, the SAVE programme included classes and events to inform customers how they could save money on their energy bills; energy efficiency cooking classes; and “switch off” events where residents were encouraged to use as little energy as possible for one hour on a specific date. These events linked to the overall aim of encouraging and supporting behaviour change in relation to energy consumption. On the Glasgow Canals programme an arts-based programme was used alongside the charrette, in which people were invited to interpret the canal through art as a “historical place, a changing place and a future place” (See Figure 3.2). Guided walks were also conducted through the area as part of the charrettes. The programme as a whole culminated in a show by the canal following the final presentation.

Figure 3.2: Young people engaging in art-based activity as part of the Glasgow Canals charrette



In reflecting on the rationale for their selection of methods, lead and partner organisations for some of the programmes described how their starting point had been to identify *who* they needed to engage and which methods and approaches would be most suitable for those groups. They felt this helped to ensure the methods were fit for purpose, acceptable to the groups concerned and, ultimately, accessible to a cross-section of the community. This can be effectively illustrated with reference to the community engagement that took place as part of the Place Standard Pilot in Hillhead and Harestaness. Much of this engagement took the form of small group discussions conducted among specific sections of the community – there were groups among parents, school children, young adults, people with literacy difficulties or for whom English was a second language, the LGBT community, and care home residents, among others. In each case, facilitators travelled to venues and spaces where the groups already met. This approach was deliberately chosen to ensure that all sections of the community had a voice in the pilot, including groups and individuals often excluded from engagement exercises, and that barriers to participation were minimised (see the ‘Inclusion’ section below for a fuller discussion of this theme).

“People living chaotic lives or struggling with welfare reforms are no[t] going to come through the doors. We need to go where they will be.”

(Lead/partner organisation, Place Standard pilot⁶²)

At the same time, the focus groups were supplemented with an online survey as this was seen as a cost-effective way of reaching a larger number of people in the community and one that would offer a less time-consuming and more anonymous way of engaging in the pilot for those who did not wish to attend a discussion group.

Lead and partner organisations for some of the other programmes said their choice of engagement methods had (also) been based on the type of information they wanted to elicit and/or the nature of the topic. For example, and as highlighted in the ‘Planning’ section above, stakeholders for the SAVE project described how they chose to go out and speak informally with members of the community as they went about their daily lives (for example, in the street, in the

⁶² As cited in Keep Scotland Beautiful (2017), Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestaness (final report 2017): <https://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/media/1560091/ksb-place-standard-report-final-31-05-17.pdf>

local pub etc) to ensure a “bottom up” approach – in other words, to elicit a true reflection of community members’ aspirations for their local area and how best they could be encouraged to work together to realise these. As noted earlier, this approach reflected the overall ethos of the Community Coaching model, which was about gradually getting to know the needs and interests of the community before introducing the topic of energy efficiency.

Similarly, in the Yarra Valley programme, a citizens jury approach was selected on the basis that partners felt it would enable them to “go the extra mile” and take a truly “customer-centric” approach – they had undertaken deliberative workshops with customers in the past that had focused on a pre-defined set of issues, but this time they wanted customers to have a role in defining the issues and the scope of the discussions and to have an extended amount of time to understand and discuss these issues. They also wanted to ensure the involvement of a representative cross-section of the community and the provision of very balanced information that would enable participants to arrive at a ‘verdict’ – and one that Yarra Valley Water could have confidence accurately reflected the customer viewpoint. The lead organisation felt the citizens jury approach offered the best means of achieving these objectives.

“... Costing of utilities is actually really complex... So, I think a deep dive...it's the only way to go, because otherwise you are really getting just a knee jerk, uninformed response from people: 'Oh, yes, prices, they should go down', you know, which doesn't really take into context the whole piece that sits underneath it.”

(Lead/partner organisation, Yarra Valley Water)

The relative efficacy of different engagement methods

The methods used in the four community engagement programmes were discussed in generally positive terms by the various groups involved – lead organisations, their partners and the community members alike. Nonetheless, some engagement methods were seen to have proven relatively more or less effective than others. To some extent, the perceived relative efficacy of different methods was inextricably linked with the extent to which they had enabled specific programme objectives to be met – in other words, there were programme-specific considerations at play. Nonetheless, some cross-cutting themes emerged that have wider application.

Firstly, smaller-scale fora and events among pre-identified and carefully targeted audiences – including the focus groups conducted for the Place Standard pilot and the SAVE programme, and the Yarra Valley citizens jury – were generally seen as having been among the most effective methods used. In explaining this, participants commented that community members tend to be more comfortable taking part in smaller-scale events and also have more opportunity to air their views. In relation to the latter point, partners and community members from the Yarra Valley programme described how the jury, which comprised c.30 participants, was divided into even smaller groups for key parts of the process to ensure each member had sufficient opportunity to interact with expert witnesses and debate the issues.

“Generally, meetings were kind of a smaller format and I think that worked quite nicely...when you did have bigger numbers in the room, everyone wanting to speak at once and actually being able to get everyone's voices heard, it becomes a little bit tricky.”

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"We had speed dating, where we went through different experts from within Yarra Valley Water. So, we had ten minutes or so with each expert and I think there was about ten experts or so there...and we were broken into small groups, so it was kind of like we had ten minutes with each expert. We then moved on to the next expert and asked them questions...we could grill them about issues that we had identified."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

As noted previously, on the Place Standard pilot and the SAVE programme, small group discussions were held in venues and spaces where community members already met. Several of the lead and partner organisations, as well as some community members, commented spontaneously that they felt this approach had further helped to put people at ease – which in turn meant they had been more forthcoming with their views and preferences – quite apart from helping ensure a good rate of participation.

"To give them a chance whereby they could just sit around a table on their kind of home turf if you like, rather than having to come to one of our offices, which is like a kind of corporate jungle a little bit, was probably quite nice and worked quite well. Made them feel quite comfortable to talk things through with us."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"We had [the community café] down on the front green, in a gazebo marquee....because we recognised that people don't actually like walking up a driveway into a building. And we didn't think people would come, but they did."

(Community member, SAVE)

Other methods of engagement that participants felt had been particularly effective, beyond small-group fora, were some of the more innovative or "alternative" approaches (e.g. cooker classes, arts-based activities, group walks) employed alongside mainstream approaches. There was a view that these had been especially effective in engaging people for whom fora such as focus groups or workshops were less appropriate – or simply less appealing. Partners on the Glasgow Canals project described how the arts-based programme that sat alongside, and fed into, the charrettes had helped engage a wider range of people including children, creating a simple, fun and informal means by which they could express themselves. Similarly, partners on the SAVE project described how their food and cookery-based sessions had proven very accessible to, and popular among, a cross-section of the community, enabling people to quite literally see different approaches to energy efficiency.

"The interventions I think that were best were around cooking...We had a slow cooker library and we also ran some competitions to give some away...We produced some information looking at simple bar graphs basically, looking at the usage, energy use or electricity use of a slow cooker versus an oven, and attached a cost saving to that as well."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

The community members who took part in the SAVE and Glasgow Canals programmes themselves spoke in positive terms about such alternative methods, particularly in terms of the extent to which these had equipped them with information and ideas that had real practical application in their day-to-day lives.

"They were educating us about things like specific shower heads, repairing bits of kit. There was advice, there was information...after they educated us, these quizzes came up at different events that we were doing, so that we could remember... you know the fact that if we didn't put ovens on then it's not going to cost too much money."

(Community member, SAVE)

Methods of engagement that participants from across the four programmes generally felt had been *less* successful were larger-scale and/or "open invitation" methods – in particular, surveys, online forums and public meetings.

Partners on the Place Standard pilot reported low levels of participation in their online survey. They suggested this may in part have reflected weaknesses in communication around the purpose of the survey and how the information would be used, as well as the fact that the Place Standard tool did not lend itself well to the "short sharp consultation" format of a survey. One participant further surmised that people who *were* motivated to take part in the survey may have been those with a particular "axe to grind." In contrast she felt that the feedback provided in the focus groups reflected a "mellowing" of views brought about through deliberation and discussion.

Participants representing the Yarra Valley programme described not dissimilar experiences in relation to an online forum that was established to sit alongside the citizens jury and that was open to both jury members and the wider public. Take up of the forum was low even among jury members – albeit those who did take part said they had valued being able to read comments posted by the wider community as these enabled them to develop an awareness of different perspectives on the issues.

"I think there were two reasons that would discourage people from using [the forum]. Firstly, the time commitment, and secondly, I guess it's a technology based thing rather than a face to face based thing. So, I guess it depends on how comfortable people are using chat rooms and things like that."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

In terms of (open-invitation) public meetings, take up of these was similarly reported to be low. For example, on the SAVE programme, the first meeting in one community, held in the local pub, was attended by only a few people. In light of this experience the partners opted to pursue a more targeted means of engaging community members, working through local churches and other community groups; an approach which helped the programme gain momentum.

"We still held public meetings as these were viewed as being important, but these were really unsuccessful despite our efforts to promote these."

(Lead/partner organisation, Place Standard pilot⁶³)

Promoting effective dialogue

Participants described various ways in which effective and respectful dialogue had been achieved among the community members who took part in the four programmes. These predominantly related to strong facilitation; the quality of information and materials used to stimulate discussion; and the extent to which community members had been empowered to discuss and deliberate on the issues effectively.

⁶³ As cited in Keep Scotland Beautiful (2017), Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestaness (final report 2017): <https://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/media/1560091/ksb-place-standard-report-final-31-05-17.pdf>

Facilitation

Strong facilitation was seen as having been particularly important in fostering effective dialogue on the programmes – in terms of both ensuring that community members felt sufficiently at ease to contribute and that particularly vociferous or opinionated individuals did not dominate or skew the discussions.

"[Over time the facilitators] got to know everyone in the room very much by name, and they knew different personalities and different characteristics, they knew that some people were a lot louder than others, and they were quite good at making sure that those who were quieter got their chance to speak and got their views across...So, whilst that takes time, I think it meant that there was a more meaningful discussion and people felt quite comfortable to talk."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"I think it was largely the job that the facilitators did, they were excellent...I don't understand how they did it, but ... they just did a really good job of allowing everybody to have a say and feel part of the process."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

On both the Yarra Valley and the SAVE programme, facilitation was undertaken by independent researchers, commissioned by the lead organisations. As the above quotations illustrates, there was a clear sense in which the professionalism and experience of these facilitators had shown in the quality of the discussions. SAVE programme community participants reported that the independence of the facilitators also helped them to feel like the engagement was being carried out for the community's benefit rather than simply for the benefit of the energy companies.

On the Place Standard pilot, facilitation was predominantly undertaken by staff from the partner organisations. This too was seen to have worked well. The staff generally had experience of facilitating group discussions and they were familiar with the area and the community groups targeted in the engagement, which they felt made for effective, open and honest discussion. The staff were given a day of training on conducting the sessions and administering the Place Standard tool, prior to fieldwork commencing.

Information and materials

Information provision was a common feature of the four community engagement programmes – in each case community members were invited to consider and discuss information with their fellow participants, before arriving at some form of response to, or conclusion on, it. The type and level of information provided varied in line with the programme objectives and the different engagement methods used. Nonetheless, some common good practice was evident across the piece.

Firstly, on some of the programmes community members had opportunities to hear directly from and question lead organisations/partners/other stakeholders (as opposed to information being delivered by a third party). As well as facilitating effective dialogue this helped to give the process credibility from the perspective of the community members, whilst simultaneously providing lead organisations/partners with first-hand insight on the views expressed. Community members for the Yarra Valley project emphasised the importance of lead and partner organisations adopting as neutral as possible a stance when present at discussions such that they did not unduly influence participants.

"Yarra Valley Water people were in the room every meeting and I think a couple of times they spoke to us, but they were really not in any way to persuade the jury. That worked really well also. They showed enormous interest, they were willing to provide information to us but they really stayed away from anything from an influence perspective. We had a number of opportunities for Q and A session with a bunch of folks from Yarra Valley Water. But, again it was we asked the questions, and you answer to the best of your ability, and then we can interpret if what you're saying is wrong, right or otherwise."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

Secondly, and notwithstanding the previous point, it was clear that community members welcomed information in a range of formats, not just oral presentations, and, indeed, that their preferences varied in this regard. As noted previously, the cookery demonstrations on the SAVE project proved an effective means of conveying information about energy efficiency as food was seen as a topic to which all members of the community could relate.

Thirdly, participants representing the Yarra Valley programme described how the jury members had been able to have a say in the type of information they received from Yarra Valley Water – and to request additional information where they felt this was necessary. This was seen as having been important, not only in facilitating understanding of the issues among the jury but in ensuring they were not "led" towards a particular verdict by information selected by the lead organisation and its partners.

"...a number of times we sort of said we would like more information from Yarra Valley Water about this. Right, you know, Yarra Valley Water they were just on the ball, they just came back with written material."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

Empowering community members to discuss and deliberate on issues

The empowerment of community members to discuss and deliberate effectively was a particularly notable feature of the Yarra Valley programme. This in part reflects the engagement method used for the programme – it is standard practice with a citizens jury approach for members to receive a degree of *a priori* instruction on the process and for time to be devoted to their getting to know, and feel comfortable with, one another – much as is the case with a court jury. Some specific aspects of the Yarra Valley process design worth highlighting in this regard are:

- Prior to the jury convening, the facilitators ran a two hour long 'meet and greet' for the jurors, during which they took the jurors through critical thinking skills, including how to critically analyse their own bias, and exercises designed to enable them to develop discussion and deliberation skills.
- At the outset of the first sitting of the jury, members were invited to develop a code of conduct to which they would adhere throughout the process. It included such stipulations as *"Everyone also has a right to debate anybody's opinions"*.
- The jury met on multiple occasions, with two-week gaps between sittings. Lead and partner organisations described how this created scope for jurors to continue their thinking and their assimilation of the concepts and perspectives they were exposed to at earlier sittings, and/or discuss the ideas raised with others, thus further helping to ensure the quality of the deliberations.

"We try to get at least two weeks between each Saturday and they are important down time, people decompress...It just helps people kind of get their head around and think this thing through, because fresh eyes do make different decisions than those when really under pressure. So, the breaks are just as important."

(Lead/partner organisation, Yarra Valley Water)

Thought more typically associated with citizens juries, the empowerment techniques listed above could form part of any community engagement process, where time and resources allow.

Adapting to participants feedback

On two of the programmes (SAVE and Yarra Valley) feedback on the process was collected on an ongoing basis from community members and used to adapt the process design accordingly. On the SAVE programme, time was devoted at the beginning of each session to reflection on how previous activities had gone and what more needed to be done. The facilitators took note of this feedback and if it had implications for the way activities were delivered, they adapted the approach to the next activity with that feedback in mind. Similarly, at the Yarra Valley citizens jury, jurors were given the opportunity at each sitting to write on boards things they felt were working well and should be continued, and things that should be changed or stopped. Community members reported that such feedback activities had contributed to their feeling genuinely involved in the process and thus to maintaining their engagement throughout.

Methods – key learnings:

- ☑ Use research-based engagement methods rather than more traditional open-invitation approaches, such as public meetings.
- ☑ When selecting methods, consider the target groups for the engagement and the nature of the feedback sought. Wherever possible use robust tried-and-tested methods (such as focus groups, citizens juries and other deliberative approaches) to ensure the credibility of the work. However, for sections of the community who do not traditionally engage or who might find mainstream methods difficult or unappealing, consider alternative, innovative approaches such as those described in the foregoing section.
- ☑ When using group-based methods, keep groups small in size to help ensure participants feel at ease expressing their views and have maximum opportunity to contribute.
- ☑ Enlist the services of independent, professional facilitators where budget allows. In cases where this is not possible/desirable, use individuals with at least some experience of facilitation.
- ☑ Have lead organisations/their partners/other experts present at engagement activities to deliver information and answer questions, in order to give the process credibility among participants and help ensure informed discussions.
- ☑ Provide information in a range of formats to accommodate different preferences in this regard and help to maintain participants' engagement.
- ☑ Where possible, provide participants with opportunities to have a say in the nature of the information with which they are presented, and to request further information as they see fit.
- ☑ Where the issues under discussion are many or complex, consider reconvened engagement sessions to avoid trying to cover too much in one session and to give participants an opportunity for "down time" and reflection.
- ☑ Seek participant feedback at every engagement session/activity and build this feedback into subsequent sessions and activities as appropriate.

Inclusion and support

Ensuring an inclusive approach to community engagement means identifying and involving (at the earliest opportunity) the people and organisations affected by the focus of the engagement, including, as appropriate, groups with protected characteristics and other harder to reach audiences. This in turn means identifying and addressing potential barriers to engagement.

Equally, inclusivity is about ensuring that, during engagement activities, a wide range of opinions – including minority and opposing views – are heard, and that participants are given any necessary support to engage effectively.

Identifying and recruiting the appropriate range of groups

Differing approaches were taken to the identification and recruitment of community members on the four programmes; in part reflecting the differing foci of the programmes and the specific engagement methods adopted in each case.

For the Glasgow Canals programme, the charrettes and associated activities (e.g. the arts-based programme) were publicised predominantly through social media campaigns and informational stalls along the canal-side. Partners had taken a view that this approach would likely prove more accessible to prospective participants than, for example, printed information disseminated via a leaflet campaign. Lead and partner organisations described how they deliberately avoided using the term charrettes when publicising the programme as they were concerned it would be unfamiliar or appear too technical to some prospective participants, and thus potentially serve as a barrier to participation. Instead, they decided to describe the process as an informal discussion, entitled, *'What Floats Your Boat?'* They further noted that they deliberately held charrettes and associated events on different days of the week and at different times, so that people had maximum opportunity to fit engagement around other commitments.

"We hold (sessions) in the evenings, in the afternoons, we hold Saturday sessions. So, we give people a range of opportunities to come in."

(Lead/partner organisation, Glasgow Canals)

For the Place Standard pilot and the SAVE programme, lead and partner organisations predominantly worked with community groups to identify and recruit prospective participants, focused as they were on ensuring the engagement of groups who might not normally get involved in such activities. For the former programme, and as discussed in the 'Methods' section above, a list of known community groups – including schools and youth groups, church groups, literacy and employability support groups, groups working with older people, and addiction services – was identified and approached to facilitate engagement, with the engagement sessions taking place in venues and spaces where these groups already met and often during existing meeting slots. Alongside this very targeted recruitment, the opportunity to participate in the Place Standard exercise through attendance at public meetings or web-based consultation, was heavily promoted to the local communities through the council website, social media and the local press. Flyers and posters were also distributed around the Hillhead and Harestanee areas. The use of multiple engagement methods was, in and of itself, seen by lead and partner organisations as an important way of ensuring that a maximum number of people were willing and able to participate in the programme.

The approach on the SAVE programme was similar: partners undertook community mapping work, before reaching out to as many community leaders, organisations, opinion formers and interest groups as they could find to ensure as wide a range of interests as possible within the community were represented. Ultimately this enabled the team to bring together a core group of 8-10 residents in each of the two areas who helped develop ideas for the engagement activities that

would work best in their communities. As with the Glasgow Canals programme, the SAVE organisations took a very considered approach to the way they labelled engagement activities in their communications, in the interests of accessibility. Thus, instead of labelling focus groups as such, they referred to them as discussions over cheese and wine.

"In Shirley Warren the idea of a focus group was like tumbleweed because people didn't know what it was and it was too formal and scary. So, it was like...why don't you get cheese and wine. That was the thing that they were happy to come along for. We were expecting about ten, and on the first one we got nearly 20. "

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

For the Yarra Valley programme, and as is typical with a citizens jury methodology, a more classic random sampling approach to identifying and recruiting participants was pursued. An electronic invitation was sent to a sample of around a third of the full Yarra Valley Water customer base for whom email addresses were available (some 240,000 customers). This was supplemented with a mail-out to a random sample of 5,000 customer addresses (to compensate for the potential digital access skew of the sample generated through the electronic invitation). Combined, these approaches generated a large pool of willing prospective participants from which jurors could be sampled. In terms of the sampling process, quotas were set on key demographic variables; namely, age, gender, household type (owner occupiers, landlords and tenants) and geographic locality to achieve a descriptively representative sample. There was also a business-residents variable to ensure representation of commercial and industrial water users. Further the recruitment process took into account customer 'personas' that Yarra Valley had developed following previous qualitative research (Figure 3.3) – a minimum quota was set for each persona to deliver "discursive representation of the different ways various individuals relate to their community."⁶⁴ Finally, a financial incentive was employed to avoid excluding participants who may have found participation difficult due to hardship. This amounted to a total of \$500 per participants, with meals also provided.

Figure 3.3: Yarra Valley Water customer personas



⁶⁴ Yarra Valley Water Customer led price submission, available at <https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2018-water-price-review-yarra-valley-water-price-submission-20170929.pdf>

Across the programmes, lead and partner organisations sought to ensure that their communications about engagement activities and how to take part were accessible to those for whom English was a second language. Typically, this involved ensuring printed materials and/or online information was available in multiple languages, though on the Glasgow Canals programme, stakeholders successfully enlisted the support of a Chinese community worker to encourage Chinese members of the community to get involved.

"[The Chinese worker] used WeChat which is like the Chinese equivalent of What's App. [The Chinese community] is a significant minority group...but, because of the approach that we have got, we can get them involved, so they have absolutely been involved in the Connecting Woodside projects, the consultation over new build, looking at plans for that area."

(Lead/partner organisation, Glasgow Canals)

The final numbers of community members that took part in each of the four programmes varied, from an estimated 500 in the case of the Place Standard pilot (taking into account the number of online surveys completed and the number of individuals who participated in focus group-style sessions), to 30 in the case of the Yarra Valley citizens jury. For all four programmes, the numbers met or exceeded the expectations of the organisations involved.

Further for all four programmes lead/partner organisations and community members generally felt that approaches taken to identifying and recruiting target audiences had been successful in promoting inclusion. For example, partners on the Place Standard pilot described how engaging with community members in spaces and locations where they already met had resulted in a much better level of engagement from a broader cross-section of the communities in Hillhead and Harestaness than they had hitherto managed to achieve.

"The results of this inclusive approach far outstrip the resourcing costs... the amount of groups we have met through this process was worth it."

(Lead/partner organisation, Place Standard pilot⁶⁵)

At the same time, organisations involved in all of the programmes did describe specific challenges they had encountered in achieving inclusivity, and how they had addressed these. Some also offered reflections on how the challenges might have avoided in the first place.

Firstly, partners on both the Place Standard pilot and the SAVE programme described how some of the communities that has been targeting had proven difficult to penetrate initially. Specifically, those representing the Place Standard pilot had experienced greater difficulty engaging community members in Harestaness than in Hillhead, reflecting the very different social infrastructure in the two communities - in Hillhead there was a new community centre and it was easy to liaise with community groups and workers through the centre, whereas in Harestaness the community centre was being closed down, so there was less of an obvious "entry point." The issues experienced on the SAVE project were similar – in one of the target communities; an urban area with high levels of deprivation, there was very little in the way of community groups or obvious community meeting points to provide a starting point for recruitment.

⁶⁵ As cited in Keep Scotland Beautiful (2017), Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestaness (final report 2017): <https://www.keeptoscotlandbeautiful.org/media/1560091/ksb-place-standard-report-final-31-05-17.pdf>

"In Shirley Warren it was near impossible especially initially, because that was a kind of an urban deprived community. I think that the community coach in that area had a huge job cut out for them, and huge credit to them for engaging that community. It took probably a good 18 months until we started to get interaction."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

In terms of how they addressed such challenges, the Place Standard partners described having had to make ongoing intensive efforts to penetrate the Harestanes community. One reflected in retrospect that this could perhaps have been avoided to an extent had the team carried out greater scoping of local community groups in Harestanes prior to attempting engagement. The SAVE partners meanwhile described how they opted to undertake "feet on the street" activities, as discussed in the previous section, visiting local venues and amenities such as pubs, shops and schools in an effort to make contact with a cross-section of the local population.

"There are people who you want to come through the door without then putting a barrier in their way. Sometimes just having a signing in sheet is a barrier to people getting involved. So, you do have try and think, right, what is the best way of doing it?"

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

A second type of challenge organisations reported having encountered in relation to inclusivity was ensuring the representation of particular sub-groups of the community. Specifically, partners on the SAVE project said that they had engaged fewer young people aged 20-35 than they had ideally hoped to, which they felt may have been because this age group typically had more competing pressures on their time than older groups, in the form of work and childcare commitments. A partner on the Glasgow Canals programme similarly reported that it has been difficult to engage young mothers, despite specific targeted attempts to do so. Lead and partner organisations for the Yarra Valley jury, meanwhile, reported that they had encountered some difficulties engaging people for whom English was a second language – due to the nature of the citizens jury method and the complexity of some of the information jurors were being asked to review, prospective participants were required to have a high level of English proficiency. One Yarra Valley partner added that they would specifically have liked to see slightly greater representation of the Chinese community on the jury, as they represented a significant proportion of its customers, but that this group was notoriously difficult to recruit for research and consultation purposes and there was therefore a limit to what the programme could do to involve them.

Organisations involved in a couple of the programmes commented that the challenges they had faced recruiting specific sub-groups of the population could perhaps have been addressed to an extent by undertaking door-to-door and in-street recruitment – in other words by going out to see people where they were, rather than expecting them to proactively opt in.

For their part, community members reported few barriers to getting involved in the programmes. The main exception was in the case of the Yarra Valley jury. Jurors noted the considerable time commitment involved (five full Saturdays plus an evening session and associated travel time) and challenges they had faced rearranging their schedules to accommodate this. Some of them contended that, although they had ultimately been able to attend all of the sessions, the time commitment may have been off-putting for other prospective jurors, particularly those with children.

"It's a pretty daunting commitment...it was every second Saturday over that course of about three months, and if you have young family, that would be pretty hard. My children are all grown up, and I think we're all pretty mobile by that stage...so it was easy enough for me."

(Community member, Yarra Valley)

"We've got two kids, my husband works shift work, you know, there was lots of organising to do...You could be really interested, but it's really not convenient to do five [sessions]. There were a couple of evening sessions as well during the week. [and] it was probably 30 or 40 minutes in the other direction from where I live."

(Community member, Yarra Valley)

Ensuring inclusive discussions

As discussed in the Methods section (above) strong facilitation was seen to have been very important in promoting effective, inclusive discussions among community members on the four programmes, helping to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to air their views and that particularly vociferous individuals did not dominate.

Beyond facilitation, the nature of questions put to community member on the programmes, as well as the exercises/activities and information with which they were asked to engage, had also had an important bearing on the inclusivity of the discussions. As described elsewhere, on the SAVE and Yarra Valley programmes, the initial line of questioning was very open ended and community members could influence the agenda to an extent, meaning that it reflected their own reality and priorities rather than the preconceived ideas of the lead organisations. In contrast, a partner on the Place Standard pilot commented that, because the pilot discussions were very much structured around the 14 Place Standard categories, community members had limited opportunity to discuss issues that fell outwith those categories but that nonetheless were of salience to them.

In terms of exercises/activities and information, lead and partner organisations described the care they had taken to ensure that these were accessible to *a general public and lay audience*. For example, a Yarra Valley partner described how very technical information on the water system and pricing had to be "condensed and transformed into something a customer could consume". They reflected that this process had proven "long and arduous". SAVE programme partners made similar points and also described how they had consciously tried to use engagement exercises that were fun and gamified the issues to an extent, as another means of increasing the accessibility of the process. For example, they ran quizzes based around energy efficiency topics they had covered in earlier sessions. They also set a "light bulb challenge" for which a large picture of a light bulb was pinned to a wall and community members were asked to stick on to it their own ideas for engagement activities.

On some of the projects the lead and partner organisations employed communication specialists to help ensure that their exercises/activities and information were accessible to a lay audience. For example, on the SAVE programme, the independent facilitator Neighbourhood Economics worked as a translator between network operators and the community while, on the Glasgow Canals Project partner drew on the assistance of the communications team from the local housing association. It was felt this approach had worked well and meant the organisations avoided including technical terms or jargon that, though taken for granted within their own organisations, may have meant very little to many community members.

"[New Democracy Foundation] are not water experts, so were able to look at the information provided by Yarra Valley Water with fresh eyes and distinguish what the obvious questions or areas that weren't clear."

(Lead/partner organisation, Yarra Valley Water)

As noted above, lead and partner organisations on some of the programmes also described having taken steps to develop adapted exercises/activities and information *for specific sub-sections of the community*, to ensure these groups were able to engage with the issues under discussion. The Glasgow Canals art-based programme for children provides a useful case in point. A similar example comes from the SAVE programme and consists of a photography competition for school-children, in which the children were invited to explore their area and take photos of different routes via which they could walk to school and other community facilities. The information generated resulted in the reinstatement of a school "walking bus" and, ultimately, in an increased number of children arriving at school on foot, as well as playing in the school fields before class.

At the same time, other participants cited examples of where they felt exercises and information provided to community members could have been *better* adapted for particular sub-sections of the community – there was specific mention of people with learning difficulties and those for whom English was a second language. One participant suggested that involving organisations representing such groups at the design stage might be one way of avoiding, or identifying ways around, such challenges and ensuring engagement programmes are fully inclusive.

Inclusion – key learnings:

- ☑ Consider how engagement activities should be labelled and described to avoid these appearing intimidating. Use informal language rather than research/consultation speak or develop some form of eponymous branding for the programme, such as the Glasgow Canals 'What Floats Your Boat?' branding.
- ☑ Provide communications about programmes in multiple formats and languages (reflecting the profile of the local population).
- ☑ Consider door-to-door and or/in street recruitment to ensure a representative sample.
- ☑ Enlist the support of community groups when attempting to recruit disengaged or otherwise harder to reach audiences. Scope-out relevant community groups at the earliest opportunity.
- ☑ Offer prospective participants a financial incentive where the programme budget allows, particularly where participation requires travel, childcare, or time off work.
- ☑ During engagement activities, provide participants with an opportunity to identify and define issues in their own terms to ensure the agenda reflects the issues that truly matter to them.
- ☑ Ensure any exercises/activities and information are accessible to a lay audience – consider commissioning a third party organisation to assist with this.
- ☑ Consider adapting exercises/activities and information for specific sub-groups of the population, such as children or people with learning disabilities, and seek the support of relevant representative bodies in doing so.

Communication

The National Standards for Community Engagement state that community engagement programmes should communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement to support the process. They additionally advocate that information about both the engagement process and the steps taken subsequently should be made accessible in appropriate formats. Below communication is considered in relation to three different stages of communication programmes: pre-engagement, during engagement and post-engagement.

Advance communications about community engagement programmes

The timing of communications about community engagement programmes was spontaneously and consistently identified by participants as key to ensuring the success of such programmes. Lead and partner organisations described how they had sought to ensure that information about engagement activities was disseminated to community members with plenty of notice in an effort to ensure good rates of participation. For example, a partner on the Glasgow Canals programme described having arranged and publicised the date of events at least a couple of weeks in advance and expressed a view that this has been a major factor in the high levels of attendance at the charrettes.

Some of the organisations also felt that advance communications had helped enhance the *quality* of community engagement. This was because it gave participants time to reflect on relevant issues and information before becoming actively involved in the discussions. For the Yarra Valley citizens jury, jurors were provided with an information pack two weeks prior to attending, which they commented gave them ample time to familiarise themselves with the information before the sessions. Of course, advance information provision will not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example, on some programmes it may be desirable to have community members attend engagement events “cold” so that it is possible to assess their level of knowledge and/or spontaneous associations with the subject matter to be discussed.

For all four of the programmes, lead and partner organisations had used multiple channels of communication. They felt this too had been important in engaging a large and diverse cross section of the communities of interest. For all four programmes, information was disseminated both on- and off-line, and using a combination of websites; social media; flyers and posters in public places and community access points such as health centres, libraries and community centres; through the local press and through community groups. On the Yarra Valley Water programme, the online engagement portal was also promoted in customer bills.

Organisations representing the SAVE and Glasgow Canals programmes felt that using a range of channels not only enabled them to reach a wide constituency but also helped to elevate the importance of the programmes in the minds of community members, in turn underscoring the potential value of taking part.

“People were receiving the message in three or four different ways. If they missed it in one way they might have got it in another, and if something wasn't something for them, they got it in a different way and another way and another way. So, they saw it, they saw the message once, twice and three times.”

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

While using a plurality of communication channels was seen as having been important, some channels had clearly proven more effective than others. In particular, face-to-face and word-of-mouth communication was seen to have been

especially fruitful, both by lead and partner organisations and the community members themselves. Three main points were made in this regard.

Firstly, and as described in the Inclusion section, initiating “on the ground” contact with community members – whether on the street or in schools, churches, group meetings, via community councils and clubs – enabled organisations to identify and capitalise on relevant established networks. By attending a meeting or other form of group session in person where members of a particular sub-section of the community were, it was possible to make multiple connections simultaneously.

A second perceived advantage of face-to-face communication was that it introduced a personal aspect to the process, and thereby helped foster a sense of connection to the programmes among community members. This in turn meant community members were more open to engaging with other forms of information about the programmes and, in some cases, to proactively seek out such information, rather than disregarding it as irrelevant to them.

“Once the relationships had been built up...People started to recognise us people started to hear about the event and actually look at the kind of posters.”

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

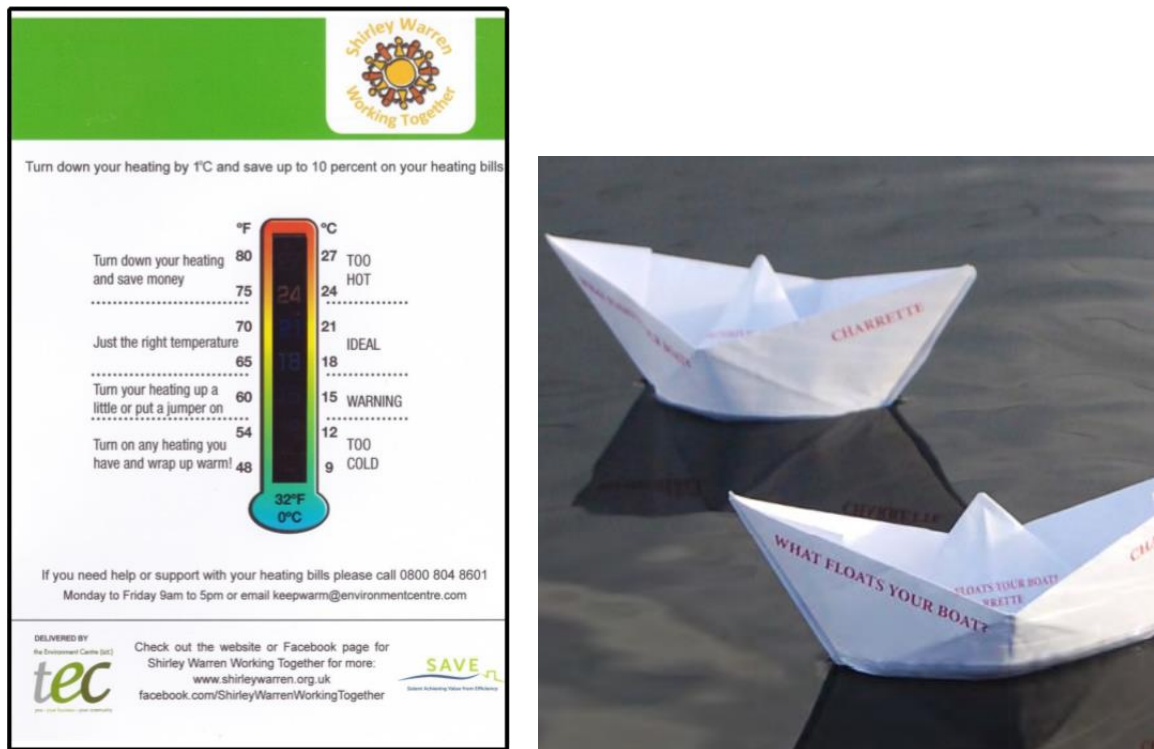
Thirdly, lead and partner organisation for several of the programmes commented that once they had made one or two connections face-to-face, the number of people the programme reached quickly multiplied exponentially, as word about it spread.

“Once you've got those one or two individuals, then trying to get word of mouth communication through the community as much as possible, trying to get that to multiply.”

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

As discussed in an earlier section, participants described the importance of using simple, jargon free language in advance communications about programmes to ensure these were accessible to a maximum number of people. Beyond this, the use of imagery and visual tools was also seen as important and was something that was evident on several of the programmes. For example, on the SAVE Programme, images of utilities such as dishwashers or fridges as well as colourful graphs using thermometers (Figure 3.4), and motorways to represent networks, were used to capture community members’ attention and emphasise the programme’s relevance to their daily lives. On the Glasgow Canals programme, images of paper boats floating on the canal were used to publicise the charrettes (Figure 3.4). Partner felt these helped to grab community members’ attention and bring to life a subject that might otherwise have been seen as dry or abstract.

Figure 3.4: Communication materials used in the SAVE and Glasgow Canals programmes



Communication during the engagement process

During the engagement process, presentations, meetings and videos were repeatedly identified as the most effective ways of sharing relevant information with community members, echoing the findings relating to methods of engagement. On the Yarra Valley Programme, in addition to YouTube videos produced at each session, executive members and subject matter experts attended sessions, answering questions, which enabled participants to access information in an informal and direct way. This helped community members feel that they were kept “in the loop”.

On the Glasgow Canals programme, presentations were similarly delivered by lead and partner organisation prior to the charette activities. These were accompanied by guided walks around the area. Lead/partner organisations and community members described how the walks ensured that the discussions were informed by first-hand exposure to the development site, enabling people to more easily visualise how the plans might take shape. Community members commented on how the walks helped them to understand the status and potential future uses of land and buildings in the area.

On the SAVE programme, the delivery organisation spent time talking to and getting to know community members personally at engagement events, which was seen by the community members as having been key to promoting their understanding of the engagement process. Community participants felt that by cultivating strong relationships with community members, the delivery organisation were able to gauge the most effective ways of conveying information to their audience, and tailor their approach accordingly, promoting greater understanding among community members.

"Some of it was by meetings, you know, and being actually active face to face...the response from the community was that it was good, they were very positive about it."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"Spending time with people, talking to them, building up a relationship with them [meant it] was easier to get across [information about the process]."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

Post-engagement communications

Participants representing some of programmes commented that, in the period following the engagement activities, providing regular progress updates to community members had been important in continuing to ensure that participants felt their involvement had been worthwhile and in giving them a sense of ownership over their community and the decision-making process.

Progress updates had taken a variety of forms, from meetings, to social media posts, YouTube videos, leaflets, posters and newsletters. As in the case of pre-engagement communications, the use of multiple channels was seen as important to ensure maximum reach and avoid excluding particular groups and individuals. That said, face-to-face communication again emerged as the perceived most effective, on account of the fact it provided community members with opportunities to ask questions or for clarifications and to raise any concerns they may have. Such face-to-face communication took a range of forms. Indeed, an example that was highlighted as having been particularly effective was a community BBQ held by the Glasgow Canals programme, while a Glasgow Canals community participant also emphasised the value of meetings in different parts of the community.

"At a community BBQ, the woman from the health centre walked around and spoke to absolutely everyone and made sure everyone knew what was going on and what was happening."

(Community member, Glasgow Canals)

Communication – key learnings:

- ☑ Provide information about the programme well in advance, to provide community members with as much opportunity to participate as possible.
- ☑ Provide communication materials in a range of formats – including both on- and off-line – to encourage participation from a diverse range of community members.
- ☑ Avoid jargon and overly-technical language when communication information about the programme to the community.
- ☑ Use interactive and visually engaging forms of communication during the programme, such as presentations, meetings and videos.
- ☑ Continue to provide information to participants after the engagement, to help them maintain a sense of ownership over the outcomes.

Impact

Impacts of the four community engagement programmes were discussed on three inter-related levels: the extent to which the programmes met the original aims and objectives set for them; impacts on the lead organisation(s)/their partners; and impacts on the community members who took part.

Meeting programme aims and objectives

Lead/partner organisation and community members broadly agreed that key aims and objectives of their programmes had been met. For example, the Yarra Valley partners and community participants described how the jurors arrived at a set of recommendations for the water price submission which were largely accepted by Yarra Valley Water. Similarly, SAVE partners and community participants described how their programme met the dual aims of increasing awareness of messages around energy use and, more broadly, reducing peak energy demand. The Place Standard pilot and Glasgow Canals partners meanwhile described how their programmes had resulted ultimately in the development of local area plans that reflected the ideas and priorities of relevant sections of the community; a view by echoed by Glasgow Canals community participants themselves who noted, for example, how physical improvements made to their area reflected community members' preferences for more accessible pathways.

At the same time, for some of the programmes, target longer term impacts were as yet unclear. For example, the Glasgow Canals programme had anticipated long-term outcomes around improved physical and mental health as a result of increased use of walking and cycling paths, but partners acknowledged it was too soon to say whether this would be realised.

Impacts on lead organisations and partners

Lead and partner organisations for each of the four programmes described a range of ways in which the work had impacted on their organisation, over and above the achievement of core programme aims and objectives.

First, they noted that the programmes had given them opportunities to engage directly with community members, including new groups with which they had not engaged before, and in the process had deepened their understanding of the community's needs. This direct engagement had also helped the organisations to develop an understanding of which engagement methods worked best for different sections of the community. These are lessons they had subsequently applied, or intended to apply on other engagement work. For example, participants in the SAVE programme described how they had learned techniques for engaging with consumers in vulnerable situations that they felt they could use to encourage sign up to the Priority Service Register⁶⁶; these predominantly involved taking time to get to know individuals and groups within the community and engaging with them in a face-to-face manner to understand their needs. Partners representing the Place Standard pilot described how the exercise had enabled them to develop their overall approach to Place Standard work, as well as a learning resource (incorporating for example, template and signposting to useful information sources) for community and third sector organisation who might wish to use the Place Standard tool.

Secondly, lead and partner organisations noted that the programmes had helped them to forge new, or improved, relationships with partner organisations. While some had worked together with the organisations in the past, for others the community engagement programme was their first opportunity to collaborate on a specific project, and they were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. Specific improvements to working relationships highlighted included

⁶⁶ The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service provided by suppliers and network operators to consumers in need of additional support.

having a better understanding of each other's priorities and areas of shared interest, and, relatedly, the identification of other ways of working together in the future. Indeed, a partner on the Place Standard pilot noted that the programme had even brought together different departments from within the same organisation and encouraging a more joined up approach between them.

"The legacies coming out of the project are not necessarily based on the direct learning from the project itself, but based on the relationships that were formed. There is opportunity for the local authorities and third sector organisations like us to get really involved with the utility companies. And I think they are increasingly keen to do so as well."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"It brought together land planning and social planning colleagues in a way that reflected the policy direction that is still ongoing around joining up social and economic factors together to improve an area. So, that was quite beneficial for the organisation."

(Lead/partner organisation, Place Standard pilot)

Thirdly, partners felt that, in showing the positive contribution that community engagement could make towards their organisations' broader aims and objectives, the programmes had reinforced the need for them to be more consumer-focussed and to involve the community in decision making where possible. Yarra Valley Water partners further noted that they felt the programme had had reputational benefits, providing a clear demonstration of their commitment to a customer-centric approach. This perspective was shared by the Yarra Valley jurors themselves, as discussed in the next section.

"It showed that we are committed to delivering outcomes that are based on customers' needs and wants, and to improving our relationship with customers. And it reinforced the reputation that we are customer-focussed."

(Lead/partner organisation, Yarra Valley Water)

Lead and partner organisations for some of the programme also described impacts on wider organisational strategies, beyond the programme-specific aims and objectives. This was particularly apparent in respect of the Glasgow Canals programme, with partners noting that the contributions made by community members, which fed into the development plan for the area, had ultimately helped contribute to the National Planning Policy Framework's priorities for repurposing of derelict land, as well as Glasgow City Council's objectives for the redevelopment of the north of the city.

Impact of engagement on community members

Community members' reasons for participating in the programme varied depending on the individual. However, some common motivations included:

- wanting to connect with other people, get to know one and another, and make new friends;
- wanting to "give back" to the community, by contributing their time and ideas to something that would ultimately make the community better;

- a desire to build a sense of community and sense of belonging, particularly in cases where the communities had lost resources that had previously helped to bring people together;
- wanting to understand more about an issue, such as their water bills or ways of becoming more energy efficient;
- and a desire to change their own or other people's behaviour, for example by changing the way they used energy.

"We wanted to rebuild the community. We have lost so much because of lack of funding...so we wanted to generate that sense of place again."

(Community member, SAVE)

"I wanted a better understanding of what I pay for in my [water] bill, but also to try to do something good for the community."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

Community members reported that taking part in the programmes had had significant impacts on them personally and, indeed, on their wider community. In terms of personal impacts, these very much reflected community members' original motivations for participating in the programmes, which community members largely felt had been achieved. They reported that they had:

- made new friends, including people they would not normally meet in the course of their day-to-day lives;
- developed a better appreciation of others' life circumstances and associated viewpoints;
- become more "educated" on the topics under discussion;
- grown more confident in expressing their views and generally developed improved interpersonal skills – for example, "questioning skills" and "influencing skills";
- felt empowered to affect change in their communities – both through changing their behaviour (for example, using less energy in the case of the SAVE project) and through contributing to local discussion and debates. This in turn had left them more willing to get involved in engagement activities in the future;
- and generally felt more engaged in their community.

Yarra Valley community members commented, in addition, that participating in the citizens jury had led them to view Yarra Valley in a more positive light and indeed to *trust* the organisation more to act in the customer interest. While their views of the organisation had not been particularly negative in the past, community members felt they did not know much about the company and in some cases felt they were a somewhat distant and anonymous organisation. Lead organisations for some of the other programmes similarly reported increased trust as having been an important by-product of their engagement programmes, albeit one they had not necessarily expected.

"I've got a very high regard for [Yarra Valley Water] now as a result of them taking us through the process...beforehand they were faceless, you know, a mega organisation. I feel like as a PR exercise for Yarra Valley Water it was an absolute winner."

(Community member, Yarra Valley)

"I certainly walked away as an advocate for Yarra Valley Water...sort of thinking, these guys actually are addressing these issues and I'm now confident that on top of what they were already doing, they have got a significant community report to continue that path...I'm willing to pay extra if I've got trust in them actually spending that money wisely."

(Community member, Yarra Valley)

"This approach has been pleasantly surprising about how by building on that trust and working with the community effectively that you can actually make quite a difference."

(Lead/partner organisation/, SAVE)

In terms of wider community impacts, lead/partner organisations and community members for most of the programmes reported that the engagement had helped to promote greater integration among different sections of the community, and in some cases to break down "old divisions". They reflected that the simple act of bringing together different groups for sustained periods was helpful in facilitating the development of mutual understanding and trust among them, and, more generally, in encouraging them to become more engaged in their area.

"It's allowed that diversity to integrate, not necessarily completely integrate, but bring it together...it's about identifying and allowing all of those aspects of the community to be part of a whole...It's broken down those old divisions and brought new connections".

(Community member, SAVE)

"Some people are more willing to actually talk to other people in the playground when instead of just being stood there on their own, they're quite happy to say, 'oh hiya', because they met them at one of the community events. So, they will talk to that person and that person introduces them to the next person ...not to make the person feel left out."

(Community member, SAVE)

"[There have been] residents from the Chinese community organising visits to the green space, and they have [traditionally] been very difficult to engage, so we are over the moon."

(Lead/partner organisation, Glasgow Canals)

In contrast, a partner on the Place Standard pilot noted that a potential downside of the programme having comprised mainly homogenous focus groups among different sub-sections of the community was that it did not create opportunities for increased "cross-group awareness and understanding" as may have occurred with more mixed fora (albeit it the approach had proven very effective in terms of ensuring the engagement of a cross-section of the community).

Participants representing the SAVE programme reported other types of community-wide impacts. In particular, they noted that the engagement channels established in the process of the programme endured in the longer term – and, indeed, that the community members in Southampton had ultimately formed and constituted an ongoing community group – thus leaving an important legacy for the programme and making future engagement both easier and more likely.

"The biggest transformation from when we started to the end was in Shirley Warren, where previously there was nothing, there was no community activity to speak of. Then towards the end we had a very thriving organisation that was self-motivated and delivering all sorts of change within the area."

(Lead/partner organisation, SAVE)

"I think that's what the project has done, it has made it easier to engage, it's almost like created tracks into the wider community. So, even like the litter pick, it has given us a way to go out into the community in a way that perhaps we wouldn't have felt confident to actually go and make a difference publicly, if that makes sense....it has made it possible to step out, taking it beyond the community and spreading the word."

(Community member, SAVE)

Communicating impact

The outcomes of community engagement programmes had been communicated to community members in a range of ways, and both the organisations involved and community participants highlighted the value of this aspect of the programmes.

At the end of the SAVE programme, a dissemination workshop was arranged and facilitated by the independent organisation delivering the programme. In the workshop, stakeholders and community members from each of the two communities shared accounts of the impacts the programme on them (for example, in terms of increased awareness of energy efficiency and forging lasting relationships between members of the community). In advance of the workshop, community members and stakeholders were interviewed about their experiences, and videos of their feedback were shown to those attending. Community participants described the workshop in very positive terms, saying it helped them to learn about the range of impacts the programme had had on other people involved in the programme, which in turn made them feel "valued" and "appreciated".

Following the citizens jury, Yarra Valley Water contacted jurors to let them know that it had accepted most of their recommendations. This created a sense of pride and achievement among the jurors. To share the findings with its customer base more widely, it used social media to post case studies describing the jury process (for example, YouTube videos of the jury sessions) and the decisions reached, and also included information about the outcomes in customers' water bills.

For lead/partner organisations and community members alike, the sharing of outcomes and actions from the community engagement programme helped address any perceptions of the engagement as merely “tick box” exercises. The Place Standard pilot self-evaluation report put it thus: “in the past, consultations were perceived as tokenistic and people’s views don’t matter... identifying short-term actions and delivering on these will help to break down this perception.”⁶⁷

Impacts – key learnings:

☑ Engagement can:

- lead to the forging of new relationships with previously ‘untapped’ sections of the community, which in turn can help deepen understanding of the community’s needs.
- help lead organisations to forge new or improved relationships with partner organisations, promoting mutual understanding and opportunities for future joint working.
- have reputational benefits, creating increased trust amongst customers and demonstrating a customer-centric approach
- promote integration between different, formally disparate, sections of the community.

☑ Additional impacts can be achieved by communicating the outcomes to the community. Ways of doing this include: workshops/events, social media, websites and videos.

Evaluation

A common feature of most public engagement best practice frameworks is an emphasis on review and evaluation. These elements are considered important both as means of assessing the quality of the project concerned, and to identify learnings that can inform *future* public engagement processes.

As set out in chapter 2, the Sciencewise principles for best practice in public dialogue, state that evaluation should:

- draw on a clear, relevant evaluation framework;
- commence as early as possible in the project, and continue throughout the process;
- consider both impacts and processes;
- address the objectives and expectations of all participants in the process; and
- be undertaken by independent parties.

All four of the programmes incorporated at least some element of evaluation, to assess the whether and how they had achieved the target outcomes (as outlined in Table 3.1). Lead organisations had regarded this as important in providing a check on the quality of the engagement and associated outcomes, and in identifying key learnings for their own future engagement work.

⁶⁷ Keep Scotland Beautiful (2017), Piloting the Place Standard in Hillhead and Harestanes (final report 2017): <https://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/media/1560091/ksb-place-standard-report-final-31-05-17.pdf>

Two of the programmes (the SAVE programme and Yarra Valley citizens jury) incorporated *formative evaluation*, whereby feedback was collected from stakeholders and community members *during the course of the engagement work*, with findings used to shape subsequent sessions/activities or stages. Both lead organisations and community members for these programmes emphasised the value of such open and continuous feedback throughout. As noted in the Methods section above, community members reported that it had contributed to their feeling genuinely involved in the process and thus to maintaining their engagement throughout.

"Each week...we would say what to do, what to keep doing and what not to do anymore. So even down to, you know, give us hot chocolate, to much more significant things."

(Community member, Yarra Valley Water)

All four programmes incorporated some form of *summative evaluation* at the close of the engagement work, though there was considerable variation in the specific approaches taken in each case. On the Place Standard pilot, qualitative interviews were carried out with members of the project team. On the SAVE and Glasgow Canals programmes, workshops or sessions were held in the community, where community members' feedback on the engagement was sought, including strengths of the process and areas for improvement. The delivery partner (Neighbourhood Economics) also carried out interviews with stakeholders and community members to capture their views on what elements of the programme had worked well, any areas that worked less well, and what outcomes they felt had been achieved. Feedback from these interviews was incorporated into the final programme report.

The summative evaluation carried out for the Yarra Valley Water citizens jury, comprised several aspects. Firstly, a debrief session was held with community members, in which they were invited to reflect on their experience of, and views on, the programme including how it had impacted on them personally. Community members were then asked to consider what advice they would provide to future facilitators and sponsors of deliberative processes on what they should do differently, and what aspects of the engagement they should repeat, and why. Finally, there was an external audit of the evaluation findings under the PREMO (Performance, Risk, Engagement, Management, Outcomes) pricing framework guidelines (the framework for water pricing provided by the Essential Services Commission –Victoria State's economic regulator).

As alluded to above, two of the programmes encompassed elements of evaluation by independent third parties, which stakeholders felt added rigour and credibility to the work. The Glasgow Canals programme was in part independently reviewed by the Green Infrastructure Fund, which had contributed to the funding of the community engagement. Similarly, under the PREMO pricing framework, Yarra Valley Water's internal review and self-rating of their engagement process was externally audited.

Lead and partner organisations across the programmes reported having found the evaluation process very useful, both in terms of identifying learnings which could be directly applied to similar upcoming programmes, and in advancing stakeholders' understanding of community engagement processes. Partners representing the Place Standard Pilot reported that learnings collected in the evaluation had been applied in the development of locality plans elsewhere in the local authority, and helped to ensure the smooth running of the process in those areas. There was a perception among community participants in the SAVE programme that the feedback from the evaluation would potentially inform future similar programmes not just locally, but more widely across other parts of the UK. Partners on the Yarra Valley Water programme noted that their evaluation provided valuable learnings not only for imminent future programmes, and upcoming price submissions, but also contributed to a wider bank of evidence that they were building on the relative strengths and weaknesses of different deliberative processes.

At the same time, stakeholder and community members reported that feedback sessions were often poorly attended. This could be seen as providing an added case for conducting formative, rather than just summative, evaluation of programmes.

Evaluation – key learnings:

- ☑ Build into community engagement programmes an evaluation element to provide a check on the quality of engagement and the achievement of outcomes.
- ☑ Use evaluation to inform future engagement programmes, including in relation to engagement methods and processes.
- ☑ Use independent, third party, evaluators to add rigour and credibility to the findings, and act as a check against the programme's own self-assessment.
- ☑ Use a range of evaluation techniques, including formative evaluation throughout the programme, to help community members feel genuinely involved in the process and therefore help to maintain their engagement.

For more information

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