Community involvement opportunities for the reformed planning system: frontloading and deliberative democracy

Final report[1]
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Content

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[1] This is the fourth and final project output following on from three internal briefing papers prepared for MHCLG between December 2020-April 2021.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

DM – Development Management (function of shaping and determining planning applications)

LPA – Local Planning Authority

MHCLG – Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

NP – Neighbourhood Planning/Plans

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

NPPG – National planning guidance (online)

PWP – Planning White Paper '*Planning for the Future*' (2020)

SCI – Statement of Community Involvement

UoR – University of Reading

Executive Summary

A. The key points

The August 2020 Planning White Paper '*Planning for the Future'* (MHCLG, 2020) sets out a series of key parameters for the reformed planning system (i.e. Speed, Certainty, Design, Digital, Engagement) and to which we add 'cost'. This work is informed by all of these parameters or aims and focusses on the challenge of meaningfully frontloading engagement in the system whilst remaining aware of these overarching or structuring parameters for system reform. The report also applies key ideas drawn from a wider participation literature to assess live examples.

As a result the work sets out an overview of key issues and elements relating to how current community involvement operates and how changes could be approached with frontloading and deliberation in mind. A literature review, consideration of the existing planning system, analysis of participation through PWP principles and in-depth cases studies inform the report. We also examine some typical claims about participation to move the reform discussions onwards.

We found that policymakers will need to consider quite a range of factors, in short that:
- **purpose** and the **incentives** for participation need to be made clear.
- **oversight** for those orchestrating participation strategies are advisable.
- clear **principles are required** to shape expectations and practices, and **sanctions for non-complianc**e may be necessary.
- different **stages of the system** and **timing** will lend themselves to different types of participation and whole system consideration of participation is needed.
- **flexibility of input** in terms of tools and spaces for engagement is needed.
- combinations of **mixed methods** is usually more likely to achieve quality involvement and enhance trust. Digital platforms can make these more inclusive, but digital does not supplant the need for physical and other forms of traditional participation or improve quality on its own.
- the issues of **power and resource imbalances** is a perennial one that requires concerted and targeted support to engage what may be termed hard to reach or 'difficult to talk to' groups.
- providing an environment for appropriate **skills and resources** to flow, is necessary for all of the above – and through a combination of user groups and partners, including of course LPAs.

B. Recommendations in brief

As a result of the work undertaken, we advocate the following:

1) Clear upfront 'principles' for engagement be applied (e.g. through national policy and revamped SCIs[2] to provide a clear regulatory framework) – and see annex 5;

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[2] SCI – Statement of Community Involvement. These were introduced in 2004 and there is a requirement on all Local Planning Authorities to produce and update a SCI. A separate report on this topic has been prepared by the team in parallel to this work with the link found in footnote 5.

2) Improve communication and capacity building as the foundations of local engagement;

3) Secure and cultivate spaces for multi-party deliberation and not just one-way consultation;

4) Focus on 'Place-making' rather than 'Planning' – a wider scope and label that is more intuitive to lay people and which can then be applied into planning;

5) Recognise that episodic 'frontloading' of engagement has potential gains and pitfalls i.e. a whole system approach is needed to improve community engagement overall; and

6) that to achieve these other goals a broader culture change that enables a participatory approach to embed and flourish is required.

7) that more detailed research is commissioned across a number of elements of engagement practice - from tools to leadership (see section 7).

Overall, whilst we acknowledge there are a number of principles and intended goals driving the reforms (speed, certainty, design and digital), we argue that community involvement should not fall foul or secondary to these other agendas if they are to be accepted and successful at the local level. Instead, rather than as competing aims, we assert that good quality community engagement can be the foundation to improving speed, certainty, design and digitalisation in the new planning system, as well as other benefits such as trust, oversight and accountability.

1. <u>Introduction</u>

This work has been produced in co-operation with MHCLG as part of a Research England funded collaborative project with the University of Reading. The views expressed are however those of the research team alone. The purpose of this 'rapid research' is to provide succinct and timely information to policymakers and others on key areas of policy development relating to community involvement in planning. More specifically here we address the issues and options for the frontloading of participation thrown into relief by the 2020 Planning White Paper (PWP) '*Planning for the Future'* (MHCLG, 2020).

Therefore this project was informed by the scope and intent of the PWP 2020, which has set the scene for a legislative change in the form of a new Planning Bill, slated for Autumn 2021. The specific focus of this work is on *community engagement,* which appears as one of the five core system principles espoused in PWP 2020, along with: promoting greater *speed, certainty, design* and *digital technology* in the new system.

The PWP promises that '*Our reforms will democratise the planning process by putting a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage*' and will '*create great communities through world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making*' (2020: p20-21). The broader context is also one of a renewed societal interest in deliberative democracy and engagement; partly as an antidote to growing mistrust in public institutions, not least the relationship between local planning authorities (LPAs) and their communities (Raynsford, 2018; Grosvenor, 2019)[3]. This project therefore seeks to advise on the potential for the reform agenda to maintain and improve community engagement within the planning system through highlighting some of the potential challenges and good practices in the current system.

Given the government emphasis on more timely local plan-making found in the PWP, renewed attention on 'frontloading' community engagement to the early stages of the new planning system is live. We stress caution, however, because whilst frontloading can appear deceptively simple and intuitive on the one hand, it is necessary to recognise on the other that it is unlikely to meet the expectations stated on its own. The original government emphasis on frontloading derives in large measure from the 2004 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act – and whilst many of the core claims made at that time resonate with the current debate, national and international contexts, technology and practice has changed considerably since that time.

The outputs for the Project have taken the form of individual but related 'briefing papers'. These have been deliberately concise and focussed to the needs expressed by teams within MHCLG in discussions throughout December 2020 – May 2021. The main body of this fourth consolidated output brings together some of the key findings of the first three briefing papers and our empirical research looking at examples of mainstream innovation (understood here as going beyond statutory requirements to engage local publics). Some of the main claims and counter-claims to improved community engagement are presented and our overall recommendations for engagement in the reformed system are outlined. This is intended to inform opportunities and provoke discussion at a timely stage in the policy process as ministers and civil servants seek to operationalise the post-PWP 2020 reforms.

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[3] Laurian, L., 2009. Trust in planning: Theoretical and practical considerations for participatory and deliberative planning. *Planning theory & practice, 10*(3), pp.369-391.

2. **Scope of the report**

The purpose of this final briefing report is fourfold: firstly to present an overview of the main findings from across the previous three briefing papers (participation literature review, frontloading and proposed streamlined plan-making stages, and a desk-based study of existing examples of innovative engagement practices across the UK). Secondly to consider the claims and debates being made for community engagement in the new system - that form the wider context to this project. Thirdly to outline the recommendations that have emerged from this project specifically for the reforms that will shape community engagement in the new system. Fourthly to highlight some of the remaining questions and evident need for further research.

Given the above this final report provides a focussed snapshot of the key empirical findings from primary interview research on the 'best practice' case studies (see Annex 1). As well as emphasising five engagement 'principles' (see Annex 2) and the Nolan principles (see Annex 3). A short bibliography of key texts is also presented (see Annex 6). There are some omissions here as we have not sought to replicate or repeat information found in some of our recent parallel research on neighbourhood planning[4] or Statements of Community involvement[5].

To restate the aim, this work has been produced in collaboration with policy-makers within MHCLG (across a number of departmental teams) in order to ensure that it is a useful resource. As explained in the introduction the work is informed by the aspirations expressed in the 2020 Planning White Paper (PWP), particularly:

'*Our reforms will democratise the planning process by putting a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage*' and '…*create great communities through world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making*' ('*Planning for the Future'* MHCLG, 2020: p20-21).

Here *community engagement* is one of the five core system principles along with promoting greater *speed*, *certainty*, *design* and *digital* technology in the new system - with our addition of cost considerations.

The following section begins by explaining the current state of knowledge and existing practice that can usefully be drawn upon when considering the objectives of the PWP. In light of where we are now - awaiting a new Planning Bill in Autumn 2021 - many of the observations here will be of considerable relevance to the public debate as well as governmental deliberations.

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[4] See Parker, G., Wargent, M., Salter, K. Dobson, M., Lynn, T. and Yuille, A. (2020) *Impacts of Neighbourhood Planning in England*. University of Reading. MHCLG, London. Online at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929422/Impacts_of_Neighbourhood_Planning_in_England.pdf
[5] Statements of Community involvement research interim report, June 2021:
https://assets.henley.ac.uk/v3/fileUploads/UoR-_Civic-Voice-Interim-SCI-Report_June-2021.pdf?mtime=20210604140352&focal=none&_ga=2.37464484.586186256.1623497071-1981873830.1623497071

3. <u>Overview of General Findings (desk-based stages #1-3)</u>

Participation in planning has been seen as somewhat of a 'wicked' problem with no perfect fix and many permutations related to the purpose, topic, and type of participant - amongst other variables. This is particularly problematic given the sustained government claims to advance public engagement in planning over the past few decades and which was reaffirmed again in the PWP 2020. Many observers will have by now become somewhat jaded by claims about empowerment and meaningful engagement in planning. An extensive literature on this topic has amassed and waves of practice experience too (not mutually exclusive of course) but mainstream practices have not widely reflected findings and experiences in theory and practice. Alongside this public trust in planning has been low. One key therefore will be to create a system where feedback and iteration of practice is built-in and such mechanisms, and the associated supportive culture, is maintained in partnership.

3.1 Key themes from the literature

The first briefing paper presented a concise annotated literature review[6] on key selected works on community engagement from the academic literature and practice reports over the last two decades. This highlighted that participation cannot be taken for granted and requires careful attention to the design and quality of opportunities for engagement. The **purpose** and the **incentives** for participation need to be made clear and **sanctions** and **oversight** for those orchestrating participation strategies too require thought. Flexibility of input in terms of tools and spaces, including using online and digital platforms, can make participation more inclusive, but digital does not automatically supplant the need for physical and other forms of traditional participation, or improve quality on its own. Different **stages of the system** will lend themselves to different types of participation too.

The issue of **power and resource** imbalances is a perennial one that requires concerted and targeted support to engage 'hard to reach' / 'hard to talk to' groups[7]. This could also extend to providing the **skills and resources** necessary to engage. Careful oversight of the process is also needed to manage different inputs and mediate interests. There needs to be some mechanism to highlight how inputs have been used by decision-makers, with greater collaboration between parties acting to build trust. These could be through citizen juries or other public scrutiny tools e.g. a watchdog body and mechanisms to iterate local participation practices as mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Thus, the Planning White Paper reforms present an opportunity to embed more firmly some of the fundamentals of effective participation into the planning system by considering:

- **Principles** - there are some common principles that appear across the literature on participation. Therefore, it is important to develop what tests should be applicable and then what metrics might be used to ensure that each LPA acts in good faith and understands what is expected. This will also provide accountability to the public (noting of course wider societal expectations of public service (see annex 3 – Nolan principles).

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[6] We have decided not to extensively reference in this report but see annex 6 for a selection of items.
[7] This loose labelling obscures a wide range of groups with different inertias, interest and motives.

- **Form and function of participation** in the system - succinctly 'the right tools for the job' - plenty of practice experience out there and ideas derived from the literature.
- **Stages and aims at each stage** - as above by stage of the process. What measures are to be achieved or 'closed down' step by step?
- **Diversity of tools and techniques** – and matching these to the stage or intended function of the engagement/consultation offer.
- **Legal requirements for 'consultation'** - what aspects need legislative backing or otherwise can be applied through regulations or possibly guidance that is applied e.g. by PINS.
- **Inclusivity** - lack of resources / skills in the public sector comes through consistently – noting that skills tend to develop where there is NEED. As such system (re)design will have to grapple with requirements and how these can positively shape supportive culture and practice in planning.

The current government policy thinking on the future of planning participation is largely shaped by the operational principles in the PWP (engagement, speed, certainty, design and digital + cost) rather than being based on cornerstone ideas found in the literature (e.g. the application of models such as deliberative democracy forms such as mini-publics and citizen juries). The principle of 'engagement' espoused in the PWP could usefully draw on the lessons from such studies and existing innovative practices as presented in this report. This would assist with evidenced-based policy that draws more clearly on established knowledge.

What is clear is that there needs to be some set principles (or 'rules of the game') for engagement practices across England – whilst localism and a tailored approach (i.e. tools) is important to a representative democracy, there needs to be some overarching guidance on how to set up and maintain the parameters. We argue that without such principles and testable metrics (e.g. SMART goals), LPAs may attempt to game the process - as more open and deliberative practice tends to go against mainstream planning culture and skills to deliver beyond (numerous) statutory duties (e.g. by noting that resources need to be deployed elsewhere as per 'Claim 1' presented in Section 5 below).

3.2 Further points from the literature - five considerations

Five further ideas that relate to conditions for successful deliberative democracy are also explained in annex 2. These are evident in the literature and these, in precis, posit **clear principles and rules** as the first critical element (and links to principles / parameters, accountability); as well as second - discourses that combines **making sense / understanding** the issues (cognition) and its **meaningfulness** (culture / social fit). The clearest aspect is that of visioning and discussion that integrates different knowledges and understandings of current and future states and links to strand of planning theory around visioning and persuasive storytelling (e.g. see the work of Throgmorton, Mandelbaum, and more recently Cowie).

The third is **leadership and culture** – which can assist in shifting towards a deliberative track. Public opinion is largely a product of cues from leaders and prime citizens to adopt a more deliberative posture. The potential downside is that some leaders may manipulate cues or process for a number of reasons (e.g. political gain).

Fourthly **stakes / benefits** – why do it? Individuals are more likely to sustain deliberative reasoning when outcomes matter to them. Forester (1999) argues the same principle - individuals who are included in a policy-making process from the beginning become more invested in the process than individuals brought in at the end to choose among a range of pre-determined options. Put simply, deliberation works best when individuals are invested in the outcome. There is a linkage here to rational choice (e.g. Parker, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones and Mace, 2018) and community motivations for **impact or how involvement affects outcomes**. Here deliberative forms are also suited to the 'cold' deliberation which would usually feature in 'frontloaded' participation (i.e. at the more abstract planning level before any concrete proposals) – while recognised a ned for some facilitation and information so matters are sufficiently 'warm' to ensure quality discussion. Typically it is where deliberators, who were not previously involved in the issue to any great extent, feel free from pressure and are able to engage in cold, dispassionate discussion and this typically sits in (sometimes poorly executed) 'visioning' stages. This is opposed to 'hot' deliberation where local feelings on a proposal or development may already be heightened and so the likelihood of conflict is greater as the stakes are more developed (it is worth noting that some Neighbourhood Plans in England started out in a 'hot' context and foundered). Although conversely information and facilitation to ensure quality of engagement are seen as necessary – with the theme of support and facilitation appearing often in the literature.

The fifth element hinges on **knowledge / facilitation and training (aka 'apprenticeship')** - people tend to prefer non-deliberative forms of reasoning and lay people have little experience with deliberation (and presumably little upfront skill) which prompts calls for renewed civic education. Basic knowledge is necessary, but it is not a sufficient spur to deliberation - deliberation is a way of doing politics and deliberation is shaped by culture and society. We can imagine education as a form of 'apprenticeship learning' (e.g. guided activity of deliberating in real contexts and by establishing deliberative mechanisms, providing effective leaders, and guiding ordinary people through the process). Lastly a sixth factor relates to **compliance or monitoring** – how to effectively ensure that lead actors are diligent and operationalise public participatory processes in good faith and to good effect (see annex 3 – Nolan Principles).

3.3 Reflection and application

We can conceive of a set of useful tools deployed in parallel with other substantive planning tasks (with the different types and tools complementing each other at relevant stages). However this really must involve early engagement and a recognition that a mixed economy of direct, participatory and representative models of democracy may be needed in the system.

The above still begs the question of what the 'the job' actually is though: what aims and objectives do we wish participation to address (information gathering, legitimising existing options, co-production) and concomitantly: What tests and requirements will be applied into the new system e.g. what will be involved in any 'test of soundness' or similar tests of plans in the future system? This remains critical to moving forward in shaping participation strategy.

What is clear is that opportunities for participation need to be built into the **system as a whole** (what we refer to here as a 'whole system approach') and this requires consideration of the participation tools and spaces that feature in planning practice already – here we focus on

NPs, Pre-apps, SCIs, Consultations, Visioning and Citizen Juries, etc – and how they could perform against PWP objectives (not forgetting how this will impact on delivery and growth). The key point is that **different stages of the system will lend themselves to different forms of participation and there is scope for novel ways of combining tools at different stages**.

There is a need for a simultaneously **participatory system** where each formal part of the planning system has an appropriate array of tools and spaces - for example to create a 'participatory local plan' you would need to consider what tools and spaces would need to appear across all the different stages of plan-making. So the start point is what currently exists before then focusing on deliberations about changing the local plan process. If the process indeed alters then refreshed thought about participation mix is needed; and that thinking would necessarily need to bear in mind how to maintain and exceed current participatory credentials. Clearly there are **fruitful options pivoting around adding or removing tools or making qualitative improvements to tools and spaces at different stages of the process**.

It is conceivable that some early-stage engagement could be undertaken before the formal 30-month plan-making clock begins e.g. a 'preliminary' stage. There are also some 'fuzzy' plan-making stages not specified in legislation where there is potentially more scope to be innovative. The matrix below (see also annex 4) highlights green, yellow and red 'stages' of the planning process where community engagement should be focussed if a frontloading strategy is adopted to plan-making and participation. However, there remains an issue about the need for a 'safety net' of participation in a situation where a local plan is not in place, and this could mean that in the DM stages of planning there may be greater need for deliberation where a Plan is absent. Even with a plan in place, there will still need to be some form of engagement in the latter stages after 'front-loading' (e.g. growth areas, area action plan, etc). Overall, the tools shown in the grid (see annex 4) are placed to demonstrate the possible means by which participation principles and PWP principles may be commensurate against plan production and DM as a whole. This highlights the need for a whole system approach.

3.4 Planning system stages and participation
We highlight **three** key stages in the (new) system below (and see annex four for more details):

- **Pre-planning and LP Stages 1 & 2 ('Frontload' / Democratic stages):**

These stages are the most important for community engagement that provides deliberative spaces on key strategic issues and priorities. In the 'preliminary' stage we envisage a high-level SCI setting out the overall approach and principles for community engagement across the whole local authority area (i.e. beyond only planning). This sets up the basic framework for engagement in plan-making and decision-making during the latter stages. This is based on the need to develop agreed principles and visioning at the start of the process by which progress/outcomes can be measured at the end. The literature and our case examples (annex 1) highlight that it is difficult to build a critical mass for meaningful engagement at this stage (as typically communities become involved when they see things happening much further along in the planning process). This stage therefore needs to focus on important issues to the local community (urban design, public health, climate change, etc.) to understand the importance and facilitate a sense of 'skin in the game' to influence their area. This might require presenting the context and different stakeholder views as a starting point (way in) to issues. In the early Local Plan process stages one and two, we see the most potential for community engagement at the key 'frontloading' zones. It is at these stages that more time should be spent to

address key strategic and local issues to develop a place-making vision and foster community ownership of the plan from the start. This would add to time upfront but save time and provide more certainty in the latter stages three-five. If this is not done meaningfully at the early stages then it can create the conditions for hostility and mistrust at key stages of the process e.g. consultation, examination and adoption. It is useful to think of this stage as building the foundations for both the engagement and planning strategy; and if co-created well, expectations can be set and managed.

- **Local Plan Stages 3 – 5 (Technical / Implementation stages):**

In the latter stages of plan-making, the frontloaded work should be done and other forms can then start (e.g. NPs could have a trigger point to start/review their plan as the key principles/objectives of the Local Plan have been set and the two plan-making tiers can start to run in parallel). The council and membership will have more confidence of community buy-in and representations should be fewer as the community already feel they have had their say at the start. These stages can then become more technical and focused on implementation. This is therefore less about finding out what the community want but making it happen aligned to national policy and the local planning context.

- **Post Plan-making and DM Stage (Outcome/Practice / Oversight stages):**

In this stage the plan-making process is complete and the focus turns to decision-making on development. The role of community engagement here is one of oversight to make sure that the agreed principles and strategies are being followed – or if they can't why this is the case (e.g. to conform with national law or policy or for financial/commercial reasons) to foster a healthy local democracy. This scrutiny can be shared by the council and local community through e.g. multi-party pre-app discussions that bring all three user groups to the table (LPA, developer and community) or through local planning network groups (such as those found in the Bristol NPN – see annex 1).

3.5 Stick or twist? LPA characterisation

Based on this thinking, we have developed pen portraits of how our work could manifest itself in English LPAs by creating two indicative 'scenarios' that could emerge in the new system:

- *Local Authority A - 'the progressive'* has embarked on a policy of open government and refreshed its SCI to incorporate the overall principles for community engagement in the local area. It has instigated a series of citizen panels across the authority based on portfolios. One of these is the panel providing input and oversight to local plan progression. The panel was selected on the basis of a 'mini-public' approach with representation by age groups and other key characteristics. Each panel consists of 24 members. The panel went through online training on panel operation and on local planning process. It convenes through alternating face to face and online meetings. This has provided the tools, spaces and training for effective frontloading of engagement during the first two stages of the Local Plan where agreed principles and ownership are critical. This meant that LPA A received fewer representations during the latter stages of consultation and examination period and could adopt its local plan with community support; along with subsequent tools and spaces to provide oversight in the key outcome / oversight decision-making stages where development schemes are amended and approved. Where there were dissenting voices a clearer explanation of why difficult decisions were taken could be communicated after public deliberation to close the feed-back loop with the community.

- ***Local Authority B*** - '***the defensive council***' in contrast has decided to focus on meeting the basic requirements for engagement at each stage of the new plan-making process, which do not include principles or measurables for this feature of planning. It does not set out a wider engagement strategy or principles through refreshing its SCI at the preliminary stage and does not provide a range of tools/spaces for engagement at the critical frontloading stage when the plan is germinating. This means that by the time local communities hear about the new emerging plan, and are asked for input through the stage three consultation period, much has already been decided by the council. This leads to political opposition and objections during the crucial implementation stages of examination and adoption. At this point, LPA B can either abandon their draft plan and start again in order to regain public input and trust, at a cost, or push it through despite local concerns, both of which are problematic. This becomes worse at the decision-making and oversight stage, where the planning committee becomes a hostile arena, local politicians become more partisan and dissenting voices are louder as they feel ignored.

Whilst somewhat caricatures, these indicative portraits highlight an optimistic and more pessimistic case scenarios for engagement in the new system. These are intended to bring some of the foregoing material to life. Further, structural and legislative reforms may not be enough to compel LPAs into more meaningful practices of community engagement; and as such we suggest that **national government lead on the expectations (principles) of community engagement as a whole in the planning system**. These would set the national framework and expectations for community engagement (e.g. *purpose, quality, extent, inclusivity and oversight*) that local plan-making and decision-making would have to demonstrate. This would be low cost and would only require updates to the NPPF/NPPG which are already happening, as well as politically sending the message that engagement is a top priority for the government. This could see a 'community engagement' section in the revised NPPF to lead on the high level expectations and standards (what we term principles) of both traditional and digital forms of engagement to provide the framework. However, they should not explicitly specify the specific tools or approaches that communities use to meet these substantive ends at the local level given the significant diversity of contexts and practices. This is the national leadership – local autonomy balance to the planning system.

3.6 Section conclusion

It seems to us that the planning reform agenda hinges in some considerable measure on how (deliberative) participatory forms could be deployed in the early stages of local (and neighbourhood) plan-making i.e. 'frontloading', but also how some tools could be used to assist around particular topics such as design (e.g. charettes) as well as providing wider representation or oversight (e.g. citizen panels) - some of which may be aided by digital tech and tools but not exclusively. Also that some focussed involvement could be usefully retained in relation to larger emerging developments[8].

We have set out below a snapshot of empirical examples of what can loosely be described as 'deliberative' forms currently being used in the planning system (and some in local governance

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[8] In essence to look at bolstering pre-application discussions. See Dobson, M., Lynn, T. and Parker, G. (2020) Pre-application advice practices in the English planning system. *Town and Country Planning*, 89 (6-7): 196-201.

application). These provide a selection of activity for how local authorities (and developers) have started to make use of more 'innovative' forms of engagement which include: citizen panels and assemblies, charettes, and visioning exercises - some of which lever-in digital tools. We take the view that many of the existing attempts at engagement would benefit from clearer framing and could be operationalised in parallel with other tasks required at early-stage plan-making (e.g. commissioning evidence studies, professional planning brainstorming, liaison with other partners). It is clear that with good local plan project planning, the use of more deliberative forms need not add additional time or costs to the new system and can provide a number of positive add-ons such as quality and trust (i.e. a good cost-benefit ratio).

This means recognising that community engagement can be useful and sustained at all stages in the process - but is more effective where it links to plan-making or decision-making activity rather than as an end in and of itself. If the planning process is to be streamlined in line with the PWP principles, and community engagement remains a political priority, then the stages and spaces that this happens in are critical; so that neither are undermined by the other reform goals.

We recognise that poor quality and superficial engagement serves no-one well in the process, but neither does a pro-longed timeline for important planning activity, and so frontloading is a way to bring these together to have quality tools/approaches at the right stage so as not to unnecessarily disrupt the development process. Thus, in the context of the review so far, it is a promising approach to enable frontloading which draws on a more open process and on deliberative fora (ostensibly the gold standard community engagement of citizen juries and people's panels) which can add to the quality of local knowledge and debate and resolve issues early on, that would otherwise impact on speed and certainty further down the line (i.e. later planning stages) and help in meeting a wider range of reform goals.

4. **Empirical findings (stage #4)**

4.1 Methods

The final stage of the research involved examining a set of case studies and this entailed primary data collection as well as desk-based research. A mixed methodological approach was used to compile the evidence for this element of the research project as briefly outlined below:

- A rapid desk-based review of 28 examples of community engagement practices from across the UK were derived from literature and online material. These examples were then divided into three main groups based on the stages they were operational at in the planning system.
- From this sample eight live practice case studies were selected for further study and primary research. A total of 17 semi-structured interviews were carried out with heads of services, planning officers, community representatives and community engagement consultants to triangulate experiences across key user groups. The questions were tailored for each respondent type to investigate the different WP principles.
- The criteria applied in selecting the case studies were:
  - o Geographical spread, including two cases from Scotland and Wales.
  - o Relevance to literature and in relation to PWP key principles/parameters.
  - o Exhibited some form or element of deliberative practice.
  - o All cases selected were selected on the basis of the engagement presented as constituting 'best of' current practice.
  - o The cases highlighted a range of stage points in the planning system: from pre-planning stages to Local Plan stages 1&2 (i.e. 'frontload' / 'democratic stage') of engagement and some on the latter implementation and oversight stages.

Whilst not an exhaustive list of existing good practice in the UK, these examples of innovative community engagement are indicative of the potential for improvements - given that these had already demonstrated or claimed some degree of advance or success. We have operated on the basis that these can already form part of the basis for others to adopt and adapt, as well as informing the wider planning reform process.

4.2 Case study findings

From the live practice case studies of existing deliberative engagement (see annex 1), the key findings are set out below and aligned to consider the PWP principles to provide applied lessons. What is clear from these cases is that whilst they represent noble attempts to go beyond statutory requirements and use innovative tools and approaches to engage communities, there are still a number of challenges that remain in place.

Crucially, the analysis also *rests on the wider literature on participation in planning*, and if the new system aims to improve the quality of community engagement within the aspirations of the PWP aims, then *the examples and lessons derived from these cases only provide a starting point for reflection when shaping the reforms* (see also annex 1: a-h for portraits of each case derived from the primary and secondary data).

Each of the subsections below distil lessons from the cases across the six parameters of: A. 'Engagement'; B. 'Digital'; C. Design; D. 'Speed'; E. 'Certainty' and F. 'Cost'. The eight case study descriptions a-h are set out in Annex 1, these are:

a) *Bristol*
b) *Camden, London*
c) *Brecon Beacons (Wales)*
d) *East Ayrshire (Scotland)*
e) *Dudley*
f) *Liverpool*
g) *Cornwall*
h) *East Hampshire*

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A. <u>Engagement in and with planning</u>

In terms of first principles, community engagement (and that offered) needs to be recognised as a legitimate and necessary activity, not just by the planning department but particularly by the wider management and leadership and throughout the local authority. Engagement principles and tools need to be both supported and incorporated formally by LPAs to be effective and to develop reciprocal trust, with the majority of the cases explicitly distinguishing their approach from more limited processes of 'consultation' (linked to the need for culture change later on).

The Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network (NPN) (case a) is recognised by Bristol City Council as a primary point of contact for community involvement in their SCI, in the Planning Applications Validation Process and in via Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs). This lends community engagement greater legitimacy and profile within key planning decision spaces. One issue here is that the process operates downstream and is a form of bargaining as opposed to purer frontloaded engagement. For such measures, as highlighted in Bristol, to be effective in the terms covered in this report, they should be partnered by effective frontloading at the visioning, scoping and policy development stages. Despite this limitation it still provides a beneficial forum to bring the LPA, community groups and developers together to deliberate over local developments. This type of 'multi-party' engagement can also be seen in the East Hampshire case (h) where the three key user groups participate in a 'developer consultation forum' (DCF) on proposed major development at the pre-application stage. Whilst this is a positive step to involving communities as key stakeholders, currently the forum is more operated as a community observation model for local scrutiny, rather than a space for open dialogue. Indeed the Cornwall (case g) 'Pre-Application Community Engagement' (PACE) forums recognised that the capacity of local people often needs to be improved to enable them to engage with developer's plans and in the planning system in general. Mainstreaming of such multi-party negotiations could be expanded both up or downstream.

Early stage activity (frontloading) is espoused by the PWP and has been an aim of policymakers for some time. Whilst the majority of cases studied acknowledged the importance of frontloaded engagement, there are still issues around how such inputs are then used, even where they are operated through innovative tools. The Brecon Beacons (c) case highlighted that despite the council's relatively successful attempts to engage communities and scope their

preferences, this was 'delegitimised' as an evidence source during the local plan examination process, which has resulted in some disillusionment and reduced levels of subsequent local involvement. This highlights the key issue that those that participate need to see there has been some impact of their engagement, with bad experiences likely to undermine local authority good intentions for community inputs.

Community engagement also needs to be better at reaching those traditionally marginalised from local decision making. Both the Bristol NPN and Liverpool Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) (cases a+f) explicitly aim to engage with areas and communities where there had been little or no involvement in planning decisions, particularly in areas of greater social deprivation and with under-represented groups. This issue was also a feature encountered in Dudley (e) where those engaging in standard consultations are perceived to give their 'gut reaction' to policy proposals and are usually 'male and pale'. Here the citizen's assembly allowed a cross-section of the local community to come together in the same room and hear each other's views rather than just express their own perspective. Such deliberative forums can be important for mutual learning and appreciation of different local needs. At their best they can lead to improved understanding and acceptance over planning issues. The use of third-party involvement to carry out the engagement also overcame concerns some participants had about 'the council doing it to us' e.g. the use of PLACED and social enterprise actors were key in the Liverpool case (f).

B. Digital participation

All the cases presented a similar cautious optimism towards the potential for enhanced digital engagement[9], highlighting its possibilities but also expressing concerns that it could/should not replace physical or face to face engagement with communities.

The Camden case (b) suggested a 'complementary' role of digital to support traditional and existing methods of engagement. The community concern here was that digital tools and the organisations deploying them can be used in a 'superficial' and 'manipulative' way, where putting a pin on a map and stating a local concern is viewed as the best way to inform a robust plan in the same way as, for example, getting a focus groups of people together to talk about what is important to them and be able to exchange with others. It may be however that the digital techniques can be an aid to discussion. The sentiments expressed however speak to the public distrust of much of the existing involvement applied and how inputs may be used (or not) by those seeking them. As such, the use of digital will need to consider the way it is used, how the inputs are used and how the process is likely to impact on community trust.

The East Hampshire (h) DCF highlights the important role digital can play in publicity acting alongside deliberative forums. Here pre-application information is not available on the LPA's public access system, but there is a dedicated webpage for the DCFs on which developer's proposals are uploaded, including their presentations, with awareness raised through the

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[9] Note that we have not explored the myriad tools and particular elements that could form part of a digital format approach or be a supplement. However there are some tools that can clearly act as information providers for all parties and to ensure discussions are based on known facts and patterns (e.g. online mapping, open access documents).

council's communications team and social media pages. The LPA officers identify interested parties, including residents' associations, disability and design groups, and invite them either to speak or to provide written comments, with residents living adjacent to the application site and those on connecting streets or in the wider area often invited to attend. This demonstrates the potential to develop better communication strategy between local authorities and communities using digital. Our reflection on this case and some similar elsewhere is that openness of process is key - a balance that appears to be struck well in the Bristol NPN case.

The Cornwall (g) case showed that people tend to be vocal on social media, but not so much on planning applications, meaning more could be done by planning departments to utilise social media to engage with people. Although the Liverpool SDS (f) raised concerns about the digital disconnect and digital poverty experienced within communities, and East Ayrshire (d) also recognised that you cannot go fully digital as you exclude a large part of the population; however, it was noted that there are advantages to delivering workshops online for a particular audience (e.g. young and working adults).

The Dudley (e) case also highlighted concerns about 'digital inequality' for engaging a wider local demographic and considered that using digital systems for delivering this type of engagement was not appropriate; particularly that the practicalities of delivering a citizen's assembly online would lead to lower quality engagement. Therefore digital engagement needs to be more carefully considered in more deprived communities that may require the additional support. The 'high fees' and 'inflexibility' of digital tools was raised in the Liverpool (f) case.

The cases suggest that a hybrid physical and digital approach is likely to be the most appropriate for both representation and quality of engagement.

C. Design and participation

The Camden (b) case highlights that the framing of discussions can have a marked impact on enthusiasm. Design and more widely place-making has the power to do this, as opposed to 'planning' or plan-making as a start point. This draws on the body of work discussing motivations to participate and building on interest in the topic (there are likely to be other topics that motivate people and particular groups e.g. climate change). 'Place-making' can be most clearly articulated to communities through design, with the Cornwall (g) case highlighting that the best forums are those where the developer presents a sketched design for the community to comment on and voice any concerns; however, where a scheme is presented with as a fully worked-up scheme then members of the public think it is already a 'done deal'. This underscores that timing of the engagement is important for the perception of the impact of participation. Indeed the academic literature warns of the danger of presenting a scheme and then retrospectively seeking 'manufactured consent' rather than seeking upfront inputs. Further design can be the key focus for specific planning projects, such as town centre regeneration. In Dudley (e) the citizen's assembly was organised around the complex problem of how to improve the high street and resulted in a focus on creating better public spaces, public realm, and improving safety to make the high street more attractive, rather than on the specific retail provision. In the Bristol (a) case local input on sites helped to create good design (such as flooding location, wildlife, history of the site, etc) and architectural and design skills

that can offer local knowledge, combined with technical expertise and highlighting how communities can assist in shaping local character.

The introduction of national model design code[10], the likely shift to local codes and a renewed focus on place-making in the NPPF is a positive step forward, and can usefully support community engagement in these instances, but there is a need to recognise that there is more to providing effective community engagement than good design only (in other words the two should not be conflated).

D. Speed and participation

Whilst the principle of frontloading was widely accepted, it was also acknowledged that going through earlier planning stages too quickly or superficially can cause delays further down the line as public understanding and ownership of those decisions had not been established. Across the cases, speed was not considered to be as important as the *quality* of local decision-making - although it must be said the interviews did not include the development industry. This highlights that if concerned with delay a whole system measure of speed/delay would be required – and whole system solutions to timeliness be applied (rather than simply dismissing such participation on time taken on it own). The Liverpool SDS (f) exemplified the rationale that providing 'better engagement' beyond the minimum regulatory requirements would save the LPA time later at examination. Here they built in an additional 'preferred options' third stage consultation, based on the calculation that it could save 'months' later in the process. The Camden case (b) highlighted the importance of 'dialogue' because consultation can be a 'waste of time' and 'ineffective' unless part of a wider commitment to community engagement. Here it was stressed that the actual time to carry out the (local plan) consultation process is only part of the picture, the analysis and write-up of the data is where most of the time is spent, and therefore the quality of the views collected is key to make this exercise worthwhile and justify the time spent on the Local Plan in this way. The East Ayrshire case (d) highlights that where local communities are already warmed-up to local issues and interaction then, when it the time comes around to engage communities on specific policies, the time taken to connect is 'minimal' as communication and interaction has been established. Similarly the Brecon Beacons (case c) views highlighted that frontloading 'got a lot of the big issues out at the beginning' and led to few objections to the plan once these issues had been discussed with people. This was achieved through a three-stage programme of capacity building workshops for the 'community councils' to support this approach.

The East Hampshire (case h) DCFs (Developer Consultation Forum) show that decision 'timescales are taken seriously' when the service is paid for by the developer. The Council are well versed in organising the DCFs (having held more than 50 meetings over a period of eight years) and identify a suitable date for councillors, officers and the developer before giving at least 3 weeks' notice of when a DCF is to be held. The Cornwall case (h) also highlighted that

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[10] National Model Design Code produced in 2021:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957205/National_Model_Design_Code.pdf

bringing developments into the public domain earlier through PACE forums enables the council to 'add value' and help shape the proposal into a better scheme.

These cases all espouse a core principle that sustains frontloading - that additional time spent upfront to work with communities saves time later in the process (i.e. from objections, examination stage and legal challenge) – and has the additional benefits of helping to ensure outcome quality. So while some cases involve early engagement over specific proposals such fora give further credence to similar deliberative spaces at early plan-making or indeed development code creation stages.

E. Certainty for stakeholders

Certainty is important for developers in order to plan the costs (and time frames) of development effectively across the process (and to some degree this consideration is an important one for communities too in terms of certainty in terms of type and quality of outcomes). A large part of this for developers is having confidence that their scheme is likely to gain planning permission. Hence having access to the views of the LPA and other key local stakeholders such as the community at the early and critical stages of a scheme proposal or in plan development is part of this solution in the current system. There are other mechanisms to introduce certainty to some planning system users but this is not pursued fully here[11].

The Bristol NPN (a) provides a direct link for the developer (or their agent) to engage with the relevant local community group in the area in which their proposed development is situated. It was recognised that it is often hard to identify the best local people to engage with to achieve a level of representation, and that this helps 'smooth the planning process' so that any issues can be addressed at the 'pre-app stage rather than going to planning committee'. Again this follows the principle of frontloading for promoting proactive rather than reactive planning by dealing with issues upstream where possible. The NPN helps mutual understanding and there is greater certainty for all involved through a raised awareness of development interest to local representatives, the developer is clearer about the specific local knowledge and concerns, and whether there is likely to be objection at planning committee (i.e. openness around schemes).

This is also seen in the Cornwall (g) PACE forums that increase developer certainty and confidence about the scheme in mind, particularly when attended by members of the planning committee in addition to community members. Here it was viewed as being a 'cheaper and less risky process' to go through as opposed to submitting an application and being rejected over a matter that could have been resolved during the Cornwall process. For the community this also reduced the 'fear of the unknown' over what developments may come forward in their

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[11] See for example; Gallent, N., de Magalhaes, C., Freire Trigo, S., Scanlon, K. and Whitehead, C. (2019) 'Can 'permission in principle' for new housing in England increase certainty, reduce 'planning risk', and accelerate housing supply?', *Planning Theory & Practice*, *20*(5): 673-688 and Gunn, S. and Hillier, J. (2014) 'When uncertainty is interpreted as risk: An analysis of tensions relating to spatial planning reform in England'. *Planning Practice and Research*, *29*(1): 56-74.

area by having such events in the public domain (and which reduces potential for development schemes to shock or surprise).

In the Dudley (e) case, the citizen's panel provided certainty of local views for the council and developers looking to regenerate the high street. This type of engagement was considered more effective because planning and development are 'complex problems' and lead to 'complex questions' that cannot always be aired well in standard consultation responses. In 2020 the full report of the People's Panel was presented to Councillors and an additional report on 'The Future of Town Centres' went to Dudley Council's Place Scrutiny Committee. Senior members of the council have since been requesting further responses from the participants of the Panel and there have been discussions about creating a 'representative' panel of people to provide scrutiny on an 'ongoing basis'. Such citizen panels have the potential to remove 'political risk' for developers in the planning process too (a key concern that can increase costs).

Although the Camden (b) case highlights that people often don't have the skills to engage so early on in the process, and communities often need time, training and knowledge (capacity) to make a meaningful contribution. This challenges the assumption that communities can contribute effectively straight away and at the more abstract level, but equally that the planning application stage is usually 'complaining about the scheme' and by this stage it is too late to engage with communities effectively. This highlighted the need to upskill people and provide training and educational resources as well as developing a more conversational approach embedded within the way of working at councils to become more effective.

In all of the cases it was acknowledged that if developers are going to take locally expressed considerations into account, then it is better done at an early stage than if their scheme were further advanced (when the costs to make changes are higher, potential for conflict is greater and the stakes higher). Moreover that engagement should not be limited to only the early stages, given that communities will need time to understand and discuss the issues if they are going to provide quality inputs that can inform development and provide certainty for all parties.

F. Cost implications

The cost of community engagement is often cited as a key reason for not undertaking more than the statutory requirements for consultation, particularly for tightly-resourced and service obligated LPAs. The cases demonstrated however that potentially significant improvements in community engagement can be achieved for modest additional cost in the scheme of overall council and developer budgets. Indeed some LPAs had made a careful judgment about the costs/benefits.

Similar to the frontloading rationale for taking more time upfront to save time later down the line, the Bristol NPN (a) shows that initial costs to set up the community network and employ administrators saves the council money over the long term, through reduced workload for planning policy and DM officers. The cost to Bristol council is offset by the build-up of local contacts and capacity building within communities with the NPN then taking on a life of its own beyond the LPA. Here the annual overhead of £18,200 for the NPN administrators (organisers) provides value to the LPA, community and developers by providing a clear forum to support

deliberation on local developments. The same cost efficiencies point was raised in the Liverpool SDS (f), that the c£30,000 cost to employ a range of social enterprises and engagement experts PLACED was not that much to spend in the overall scheme of the plan budget and saved considerable costs elsewhere such as making printed copies available in every Library (which only a few people may access). The East Ayrshire case (d) also stated that funding community engagement across the board resulted in a reduction in complaints and has reduced costs.

Whilst the cost of good quality community engagement may not be much in the scheme of the cost of the Local Plan production and wider council budget it may be beyond the budget of (particularly small) planning services. The Camden (b) case raises the concern that the planning budget alone could not have funded the level of community engagement undertaken for the Camden 2025 project. Here council leadership and culture is crucial to value and resource such activities, recognising that they go beyond planning and form the very core of local government democratic accountability.

The Liverpool case (f) also highlighted that engagement with communities and developers can save high 'legal costs' where local developments become contentious and challenged in court. In the Dudley (e) case better quality community engagement led to increased positive outcomes and a reduction in costs and time spent on engagement across the local authority; such efficiencies were achieved for £60,000 funding to organise and deliver the citizen's assembly - this included multiple internal and external speakers and observers and the costs of analysing the data from the assembly sessions. This also led to the council being awarded capacity funding from The Towns Fund. Overall these indicate how some novel engagement can be cost effective and deliver wider benefits.

It is also clear that funding for some engagement can come from developers where the interaction provides a mutual benefit. The cost of the East Hampshire (h) DCFs and Cornwall (g) PACE forums are covered by the developer via pre-app planning fees (PACE offers different service level costs with Level 1 fee at £1,800 and Level 2 = £1,250). Therefore the developer cost of funding these forums is justified by the increased certainty and confidence about their scheme gaining permission and delivering a better aligned product. This could also be achieved by upgrading current LPA pre-application practices that typically only feature discussion between the LPA and the applicant.

4.3 Reflections / Lessons drawn

The case selection process highlighted that examples of innovative community engagement practices that go beyond statutory consultation requirements are few and far between within the existing system; but that is not to ignore that some councils are going above and beyond to do more than their legal obligations. Our contention is that if the requirements regarding engagement are raised then there is a desire to upgrade engagement[12]. The range of criteria

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[12] This has been a finding from recent research into Statements of Community Involvement led by University of Reading, see footnote 5.

that need to be actively considered focusses attention on the principles, culture, tools and compliance found in existing practice.

The PWP parameters (as detailed in the list A-F above) also concentrate minds about how to shape participation that does not unduly delay planning processes and decisions, that is not too costly and that provides opportunities and certainty for a range of stakeholders. What we see from the example cases is that advances are already possible but are not mainstream and are rarely absorbed in a 'whole system' approach. That is to say *throughout* the planning system.

It is clear from these cases that an embracing culture is necessary to value community engagement as an end in itself and that this needs to be driven from the council leadership and appropriate regulatory framing. In Camden (b) and East Hampshire (h) it was stressed that there needs to be a 'political will' and 'culture change' to be more open and inclusive as an organisation, with colleagues and members who are 'enthusiastic about engagement'. This was echoed in East Ayrshire (d) with the CEO placing the local community at 'the heart of everything we do as a Council'. However, the Brecon Beacons (c) case highlights the challenges of raising community expectations through a culture that is open to community-led approaches to vision and plan-making. Here the point was raised that if you do lots at the start but nothing further down the line or without some outcome then expectations have been raised that can over-promise and under-deliver the stated benefits, especially where decisions are taken forward regardless of local inputs. This needs to be considered when implementing the proposed 'consenting routes' and 'design codes' in the early stages of plan-making where communities can be excluded (i.e. where some PWP principles can then undermine others).

Despite this, the Bristol (a) case shows that the NPN has provided local network groups with the 'vocabulary' to enter discussions with the LPA and allows the members to hold the Council (and developers) to account and play an important scrutiny role; but that this role needs to be invited and supported by the council, leading back to the importance of culture. This could be an opportunity for MHCLG to seed fund LPAs to set-up and train independent 'local planning networks'. These could also be the main community agents for drawing on citizen assemblies and panels (cases b+e) and multi-party pre-app discussions such as the DCF (h) and PACE (g) forums at the front and back end of plan and decision-making. Such local planning networks could also help organise consultation inputs on the Local Plan. It is worth noting that if neighbourhood planning groups are to be a statutory consultees on the Local plan, and on master plans or design codes, networks such as these could reduce the direct engagement between LPAs and NP groups - and so thought would need to give to how to accommodate or to alternatives where formal neighbourhood plan groups are not active. This could increase speed and decrease costs for the local council, provide greater certainty for developers and raise local capacity and scrutiny among local communities producing a positive multiplier effect. In the Camden (b) case planning officers had 'piggybacked' on to existing networks of people, such as forums, active community groups, and have used social media marketing, posters, local papers going beyond standard statutory notices – highlighting the potential to create formalised local networks that make use of both physical and digital tools.

Despite this, all of the cases recognised there was still a lot that they could do to improve their community engagement in the future, highlighting that it is a learning process and councils need to be open to 'not getting it quite right' (f). This requires a genuine organisational

commitment and growth-mindset. The East Ayrshire (d) case highlights the benefits of collaboration across Council departments via a dedicated 'Vibrant Communities' team and bringing all employees of the Council through 'FACE' training, which aims to empowers employees to be Flexible, Approachable, Caring and Empowered, as part of a wider 'transformational' approach to collaborate with the community in a cross-departmental way. It was recognised that for some council departments, such as estates and legal teams, the idea of community engagement is 'quite alien', but that subsequently buy-in to the whole organisational role. In Camden (b) it was clear that more could be done to join up engagement carried out by different departments to mutually support one another and share information. Here the communication team was raised as an example of a department with a bigger budget and team than planning that could help with publicity, but which were difficult to get support from because planning was not a priority. The Brecon Beacons (c) case also recognised that there are 'limited opportunities' for giving significant weight for community engagement if the council leadership and culture does not align with these aims (and in the wider national policy).

Having provided an overview of the case findings in relation to the PWP, the next section discusses some of the typical claims made in relation to participation and reflects on key debates surrounding community engagement in the light of the preceding sections. This acts as a provocation for positive change and argues that better practices can be achieved and mainstreamed in the (new) system.

5. <u>Claims and Debates around Community Engagement and Reform</u>

The previous sections are drawn from the primary research directly or the wider literature on participation in planning. It is worth highlighting that over time the debates regarding how to meaningfully engage communities have been framed or rebutted through a number of claims. These claims (or narratives) pervade discussions around the role and dynamics of community engagement in the planning system. Here we focus on the **three main claims** and counter-arguments that we consider to be most important when weighing-up such matters from the LPA perspective. These are labelled: ***resources, time and responsibility***.

5.1 Claim 1 – Resources

 'Local authorities do not have enough resources to do effective community engagement and would need more funding to achieve better outcomes'

This argument centres on the resourcing of planning and the requirements of the system. This issue became particularly acute in the wake of the austerity drive 2010-2015 that significantly reduced national government funding for local councils. Whilst local authority funding has become tight, we disagree that this means that resources cannot be deployed to this end or that community engagement should not be seen as a council-wide priority (given they are the representative democratic body for the local area). More can be done with less in some cases where community engagement is prioritised and supported from the top-down by council members and the Local Authority leadership. We argue that money can always be found for priorities (and statutory requirements). The challenge of resource allocation should not serve to immediately close down the debate over the scope for enhanced community engagement by the local authority.

Planning departments alone may not have an abundance of resources and should be supported by other parts of the council, particularly when sustaining direct communication and documents for local communities. As a statutory obligation community engagement can become a priority, but this also requires a wider culture change to acknowledge that good community engagement is not an optional extra.

5.2 Claim 2 – Delay

'Any additional requirements for community engagement beyond the current level of existing consultation will add more time and delay into the planning process and any new system'

The case examples presented in annex one, and the distillation of the findings in section 4 above, highlight that good quality engagement does not necessarily require any significant net extra time input but it can deliver a payoff for local relations and outcomes, particularly when outreach and deliberation feature. In this sense, speed is important but can be the enemy of quality, innovation and democratic debate. Furthermore, the principle of 'frontloading' is explicitly about considering and dealing with potential issues at the earliest stages to ensure that time is saved down the line in the form of reduced conflict and opposition. Community

engagement here is thought about in terms of community 'buy-in' to the future direction and development of the local area. This is best co-produced to develop consensus and carry legitimacy. Speed suits development interests but often at the expense of bypassing such local debate in favour of 'getting things done'. Recent examples of extended Permitted Development Rights, that increase the speed of development by bypassing planning requirements, have largely produced poor quality developments without any community input and highlight that speed alone is a poor qualitative measure for successful planning outcomes.

5.3 Claim 3 - Local determination or responsibility

'It is the responsibility of local authorities to determine a strategy for community engagement and drive innovate rather than relying on national government'

Whilst the local authority should have a clear local framework for how they approach community engagement (currently the SCI) which needs to be both accessible and accountable to their communities - councils are often risk adverse and resort to the 'default position' of minimum requirements set by government. This means that there is a clear leadership role needed from national government to set the expectations of local community engagement practices out in a way that is not vague.

Clear and measurable objectives as the minimum thresholds are needed. Localism is important for communities to decide their priorities, but the government needs to set up an institutional, legal and policy framework in which such practices will develop. Such national guidance can be seen in the Design Code work recently, national leadership can be taken forwards to promote a more systematic approach to community engagement. This would make it clear that genuine community engagement is not a stage-event to be passed through, but to take the opportunity to reorient planning towards a more co-productive culture.

5.4 Reflection

The counter-points to such recurring claims highlight that community engagement can be improved in the new system without necessarily increasing net time and costs. The merits of developing a tighter regulatory frame and deploying innovative tools needs serious consideration, rather than participation being seen as a bolt-on or a 'nice to have' in the planning system. The following section now moves on to present our overall recommendations for improving community engagement in the new system.

6. <u>Recommendations for the New System</u>

The key focus of this research has been to inform MHCLG and others on what 'good community engagement' could look like within the current system, to draw on existing literature and to consider how these practices could be translated into the new system under the Planning White Paper (PWP) principles of *speed*, *certainty*, *design*, *digital* and *engagement* (plus *cost*). Particularly with regards to the three main user groups and any new timeline / stages in future local plan-making – and decision-making.

We have categorized our findings into the following key areas that are simple to convey and guide implementation. These form our key recommendations:

6.1 *Clear upfront 'principles' for engagement*

This may achieved through revamped SCIs acting to provide a clear regulatory framework:

> Given the push for frontloading community engagement in local plan-making there needs to be clear principles established in the 'pre-planning' stage before the 30-month process is started. These need to go beyond 'land-use' planning to the broader strategy and approach of the local authority to community engagement. Critically they will need to be concise, accessible, well-communicated, measurable, transparent and with performance reviewed periodically to ensure local effectiveness. These principles can set the scene and filter down into all other community engagement activities (see also annex 5).

6.2 *Improve communication and capacity-building*

This acts as a foundation for local engagement:

> The communication of engagement opportunities and activities within local places is critical to generate interest and capture a broad range of the population. This requires having a clear communication strategy and multiple channels to reach diverse audiences. This needs to go beyond advertising for singular events to the broader way in which local councils disseminate information to their communities over the long-term. Capacity also needs to be developed locally so that communities do not come to events 'cold' and without any wider experience or support. This can be a problem where frontloaded engagement in the new system requires much from communities at the very early stages of plan and decision-making. In order that community voices are taken seriously, the community require assistance in how to contribute constructively to Local Plan making and development proposals. Capacity building tools to aid communities in understanding the planning system and enabling opportunities to influence should feature in approaches that are endorsed.

6.3 *Secure and cultivate spaces for multi-party deliberation*

This underscores that engagement is iterative, two-way (at least) and cannot be truly effective through one-way consultation:

In many areas current forms of consultation are inadequate for meaningful participation and discussion of important issues. Community engagement needs to be collaborative between the three user groups to build trust and add value – this requires moving beyond only statutory consulting and opening-up deliberative conversations. Whilst relatively innovative and experimental within the current system, the cases show that democratic forums that provide space for deliberation between stakeholders can be an effective tool to address issues in an open format. Citizen juries, people's panels and other 'mini-publics' tools form the general model but the specific design of these needs careful consideration for the local context.

6.4 Focus on 'Place-making' rather than 'Planning'

This aspect should help render engagement more intuitive to lay people:

An emphasis on 'place-making' is already proposed in the changes to the NPPF and is a key aspect for the new design codes. This, along with invitations to grapple with challenges of 'climate change' and 'sustainable development' can be more appealing and intuitive to lay people and can also improve planning education locally (and have indeed formed the focal point for some recent citizen assemblies and jury exercises).

6.5 Recognise that 'frontloading' engagement has potential gains and pitfalls:

It is difficult to engage communities effectively during the early stages of plan making when issues are more abstract and topics are 'cold' (see 6.3 and 6.4 here). Frontloading has benefits but cannot be a substitute for 'whole system' engagement. The takeaway is that frontloading (if facilitated well) can assist greatly but is unlikely to remove benefits of later stage engagement such as via pre-apps which are a form of frontloading prior to a formal planning application being submitted.

6.6 Culture change that enables approaches to embed and flourish is required:

The weighting of community engagement in Local Plan production and development proposals varies depending upon the culture and acceptance of community voices in planning and development. Regulatory change is one way to set in train softer culture change following the idea that form follows function – if LPAs have to sustain enhanced participatory practices then the skills and associated culture will follow. To ensure this approach is embedded and followed in good faith then a scrutiny role may need to be set-up either nationally or locally[13].

6.7 Final concluding points

Taken as a whole, these recommendations inform and can align with the PWP agenda and can assist in delivering the broader 'culture change' (see Annex 2 - element #3 'leadership / culture change'). They seem helpful too when considering the parameters that the nationally accepted Nolan principles outline (Annex 3) and national consultation principles (annex 5) may loosely shape the terms of local approaches to community engagement. Such principles can

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[13] See Parker, G. and Street, E. (2018) *Enabling participatory planning* (Policy press), for an outline of a national participation agency.

at least help ensure that planning delivers on its public interest aim against established basic ethical foundations. We perceive that if acted upon they can improve public trust, knowledge and inputs into the new system and support higher levels of local development. Furthermore, many of our recommendations do not require changes to primary legislation; they can be implemented through changes to planning guidance (some of which are already emerging). They also will not necessarily reduce speed and/or increase costs within the planning process relative to the potential improved outcomes.

A final recommendation which is cautionary in tone is that government, in making key decisions on the details of the reforms and the Planning Bill, should be alive to is the danger of designing-in frontloaded participation, as an instrumental means to impose more development on local communities, without maintaining or improving existing community engagement throughout the system. If reforms are pursued in that instrumental way it will most likely *lead to more political scrutiny, objections and questioning of the democratic legitimacy of the new system*. It is therefore critical that genuine political commitment to recommendations such as these are made in order to demonstrate that government mean they are credibly committed to enhancing community engagement.

7   Remaining Questions and Future Research

7.1 Remaining questions

The June 2021 House of Commons MHCLG Scrutiny Committee report on the PWP, *The future of the planning system in England[14]*, raises a number of similar issues as this report in terms of the need for greater thought and clarity over the shape and details of the proposed reforms before they are brought forward in legislation. In relation to this frontload report on community engagement, we also highlight the importance of opportunities, tools and timing of process (along with more on resourcing and skills once the type of reformed system is known).

Whilst recognising that the Committee considered the Government's PWP proposed reforms to the planning system as a whole, we have focused on where issues are raised around public involvement in planning and in relation to frontloading. The 'whole system' approach advocated here is reflected in the committee recommendation that '***All individuals must still be able to comment and influence upon all individual planning proposals***' (p.5: original emphasis); highlighting the potential democratic deficit of transferring engagement to the upfront Local Plan-making stages, particularly where details for these stages have not been made clear as to how such involvement will be structured and improved:

> '*The Government proposes to shift public engagement from individual planning applications to the Local Plan stage. We found that far **more people engage with individual planning proposals and fear that the proposed change will reduce public involvement in the planning process**…[A]chieving public acceptance of any increased importance for Local Plans requires them have credibility as an accurate reflection of public views in an area. The **Government should clarify how it will promote greater involvement by the public in Local Plans**…[and] should also be very cautious about watering down the 'right to be heard"* (p.5-6, 27: our emphasis).

Furthermore the Committee also highlights the potential of digital and other innovative methods (such as presented here) to improve public engagement where they bolster traditional ones: '*we welcome the Government's plan to **expand the role of digital technology**…This needs to **sit alongside exploring new methods of interaction such as citizens assemblies**…and through **retaining more traditional methods of notification about planning proposals**'* (p.5-6: our emphasis).

It is clear that a number of these issues are still live and important discussions and decisions will have to be made in the coming months on the details of implementation and cost/benefits of the reform proposals. With this in mind, we lastly highlight some avenues for future research.

7.2 Future research

This research project has sought to apply knowledge and examples of community engagement and has done so in a way that relates to the PWP objectives for the new planning system. As part of the government commitment to 'best in class' engagement, this report has drawn on a number of best practice case studies that are using innovative tools and deliberative practices and which could usefully become mainstreamed in the new system (presented in Annex 1).

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[14] https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/6180/documents/68915/default/

These have been used as the basis of the section (5) on claims and debates over community engagement and to develop our overall recommendations (section 6).

This research has highlighted the need for more detailed study. The UoR team are aware of the need for future research to focus on:

- **Barriers to enhanced engagement**: The stated barriers, constraints and inertia that local authorities typically put forward regarding why improved community engagement (as seen in the case cases examples here) are not being either pursued or effective currently. This would likely require focus groups and follow-up interviews with a range of LPAs to understand the perceived challenges and how they relate to the issues faced in best practice cases (as well as more visibly).
- **Leadership and culture**: secondly to explore the impact of leadership and influence on the weighting of community engagement as a priority activity.
- **Tool applicability**: there is an ongoing need to better understand the nuances of the styles of engagement and their influence on Local Plan making found across England (and beyond). This also embraces questions of how different tools suit engagement with different demographics and at various stages.
- **Engagement Principles via SCIs**: the UoR team are currently producing national and local level research on SCIs, examining how they can be a catalyst to bridge between the reluctant and the proactive LPAs on community engagement.
- **Combining digital tools with traditional** and more deliberative approaches - to examine how to combine tools and forms of engagement effectively.

These may be research areas that groups within MHCLG could usefully joint fund when the requirements of the emerging Planning Bill have been determined by Ministers to build on the work and recommendations presented here (and co-developed within a live policy context).

Particularly because whilst we acknowledge that there are a number of principles and intended goals driving the reforms (speed, certainty, design and digital), we argue that community involvement should not fall foul or secondary to these other agendas if the reforms are to be accepted and successful at the local level. Indeed as we have attempted to show throughout the report, rather than acting as a competing aims, we assert that good quality community engagement can be the foundation to improving speed, certainty, design and digitalisation in the new planning system, as well as other benefits such as trust, oversight and accountability.

Annex 1: Case Study portraits

A number of apparently 'best practice' case studies were shortlisted for further investigation by the research team following a desk-based overview of community engagement approaches. The examples of *Bristol, Camden, Brecon Beacons, East Ayrshire and Dudley* were outlined in Briefing Paper #3. *Liverpool* was added to this list based on MHCLG feedback, as well as *Cornwall* and *East Hampshire* as areas the team had already been reviewing in parallel research.

We do not restate the contextual material provided previously and instead focus on some of the main research findings from those involved in each of the cases.

Each case portrait provides a different example of good practice community engagement and the latter part of the paper focusses on the lessons to be drawn from current practices for the reforms. The selection criteria deployed were that the approach identified went beyond statutory requirements within the current system. Secondly that each could sensibly form part of system reform and be aligned to PWP objectives.

Note that a significant amount of primary data has been collected from stakeholders involved in these places (via semi-structured interviews), and therefore we have necessarily had to be selective in what we can present here, but more tailored information could be provided on request.

We have also mapped the cases to highlight where any of the following five key factors have featured*: i. rules and principles, ii. stories and visions, iii. leadership and culture, iv. stakes and benefits,* and *v. prior learning.* This builds from wider literature review work.

To recap, the cases researched and presented below are:

a) *Bristol*
b) *Camden, London*
c) *Brecon Beacons (Wales)*
d) *East Ayrshire (Scotland)*
e) *Dudley*
f) *Liverpool*
g) *Cornwall*
h) *East Hampshire and Havant*

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a) Bristol – Neighbourhood Planning Network (NPN)

Introduction and overview

The Bristol NPN is an independent, voluntary network of around 45 planning groups established across Bristol and cover areas defined by themselves. They are identified in the Bristol Statement of Community Involvement as the community groups who will be notified of pre-application submissions. The groups are established and trained to ensure that they are open to development and aided with terminology that helps with defining development that is appropriate for the current and future community. The network is administrated by two local volunteers who help developer and planning officers identify groups to engage with the pre-app consultation, before taking consultation out to the wider public. In 2006, Bristol City Council, after a rejection of the initial submission of the SCI (back when it was inspected), the council worked with the community groups and was the trigger in the setting up of the network; "it was the

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opportunity to have a real influence in shaping development… the SCI dealt with improvements in the pre app community involvement process as well as drawing up new policy" (Community Respondent).

The network has been operating for over 12 years and acts as the first point of contact for developers in pre-planning application consultation and community involvement and identified network groups who should be contacted. The role of the LPA is to alert the network administrators of the submission of a pre-app planning application and utilises the feedback from the planning groups to inform their response to the developer. They also offer guidance and training to planning groups on a variety of planning and development matters and host quarterly meetings with representatives from the groups.

Website: http://www.bristolnpn.net/

What can we learn from this case?

Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature the case performs as follows. The section following then assesses it against key Planning White Paper parameters.

Rules and principles

There are some basic rules in place -the first is of autonomy: each group speaks independently, and the network does not coordinate a 'network view.' The network is recognised by the Local Planning Authority, Bristol City Council, as a primary point of contact for community involvement in the SCI, the Planning Applications Validation Process and in Planning Performance Agreements. The second rule is of confidentiality - the understanding is that those who are part of a planning group do not share details of the pre-app proposals discussed amongst the wider community to keep the discussions as productive as possible at the very initial stage. The key principle operated here is of confidentiality of the discussions and fostering a level of trust. If people want to find out about the information, they are required to join the planning group, which is open to everyone.

Stories and visions

The network works to ensure that the stories told around planning and development are productive and framed in a way that is constructive via the planning process. Several volunteers, paid and unpaid, went out to communities to help them understand how to be an effective voice in development in their area, by being part of a planning group. The feedback that groups present in response to pre-planning applications, with headline thoughts on what they do and do not want, is passed on to the planning officer working on the application and uses this in their response to the developer. This process means that developers are made aware of any major issues of contention before they have gone too far with finalising a design. The LA respondent reflected that "the benefit of it is seen as independent … Whatever they ask for – training support, we provide it- the value is that it isn't a council body."

Leadership and culture

There is strong leadership from the administrators of the network. Leadership is also encouraged from within the planning groups, because it is recognised that if a group is facilitated by a paid employee (which has happened where the Local Council has identified a need) and then if the money is no longer available, the group can fall apart. This has been a less resilient model. In addition to providing the details of the pre-apps, the local planning authority hosts quarterly meetings with the cabinet member for planning, which opens-up spaces for open communication and training between the community and council. From the LAs perspective, they have identified the value of gathering information through these meetings on things like permitted development, the White Paper and to gather views of different people; "as a vehicle to engage in the debate about the planning process and system." Likewise, the groups can put forward requests to learn more on certain planning topics, such as discussing HMOs, and advertising rules. The LPA respondent stated that the "key to success is the personalities you are dealing with" and is linked with the need for people involved to see the 'bigger picture' and be able to represent different views. Furthermore, it is considered that politics and planning should be kept separate, and they try to keep the network out of politics, and therefore do not actively encourage councillors to engage.

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

The NPN has set out to help groups set up where there had been little or no involvement in planning decisions, particularly in areas of greater social deprivation. The aim is to increase community engagement at the earliest stages of development plans to contribute local knowledge and be more accepting of future developments. From the developer's perspective the local knowledge has in some cases led to the reduction of time and expense, examples mentioned from interviewees include understanding local flooding issues and highlighting the location hidden bunkers that aren't on any plans. From the LPA perspective, the NPN has increased community engagement in pre-app discussions, as well as policy, with reduced administrative pressure on the LPA, thus saving time and resource maintaining databases of contacts. Furthermore, it was considered that the community engagement was of better quality because it is being managed independently. The interviewees argued that trust is established and leads to greater input for local plan engagements.

Prior learning

The drafting of the Bristol Local Plan (then LDF) coincided with the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces strategy. There were already several parks' groups in the city across the whole community who were part of the umbrella group Bristol Parks Forum. Running consultation on the two at the same time had the effect of getting people to see how they could make a positive input in drawing up policy. That helped in some areas where people were interested in parks but had not yet become engaged with planning policy. Capacity building is a significant element that drives the network; ensuring that people can engage in planning and development. An example illustrated by the community respondent states that the NPN worked with a community who wanted a supermarket in their area, to identify that what they also needed to do was to accept more residential development in that area. After 6 months this led to them considering where they could locate more houses. The respondent stated the importance here is that things are not "being done to you, they are getting something out of it" and this is achieved through greater understanding and interrelations of issues. Furthermore, the LA respondent recognised that the planning groups, due to training and a developed understanding of context, they are looking at more details, less as a neighbour and instead take an area-based planning view, rather than an individual view.

How is this engagement carried out?

When alerted of a pre-application discussion the NPN administrator(s) contacts the relevant planning group for comments. This group will then meet to discuss and provide a response to the administrator. If there is not a planning group established, the administrator rapidly forms a group.

Mapped against key PWP parameters this case performs:

SPEED – the engagement via the NPN on pre-applications is incorporated within the existing timelines of the planning system so that there is no further delay.

COST – the volunteer administrators currently spend on average 6 hours a week each to manage the network. If applying a £125 day rate for the administrators, that equals an overhead of £18,200 per year. The actual cost to the planning authority is nothing because it is administered voluntarily. It is worth noting the concerns for sustainability. The LPA respondent stated that "without the network, it would be more work for us. We would have to keep a better register for who has the right contact for which amenity group. The great thing now the network – portal to an access to know which groups operate in an area. We used to have area-based planners, DM officers ploughing through this stuff." In essence the net effect in cost terms is to save expenditure.

CERTAINTY – NPN helps mutual understanding and there is greater certainty for all involved. Through a raised awareness of development interest to local representatives, the developer is clearer about the local knowledge and concerns, and whether there is likely to be objection at planning committee. The developer agent stated that local knowledge is really useful for the developer in creating a good design, such as flooding location, wildlife, history of the site. They also added that it "helps smooth the planning process and that if there are issues (there always are) that they have got the ability to address those as they go through the pre-app planning process rather than going to planning committee."

DESIGN quality – Design is often improved through engagement with planning groups, some have architectural and design skills within to be able to offer local knowledge combined with technical expertise. Often the community can comment on aspects that are based on local knowledge and improve design quality.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – the use of digital technologies is used to disseminate information to the planning groups however discussion is largely held face to face. The community respondent was concerned that digital systems might replace their face to face meetings, but it was felt that they "cannot replace the face to face, the drawings the discussions, the sending stuff out in local newsletters, for example. Communities have lots of ways to communicate with each other. It is important to find the way that community communicates… every community has its own way of finding out what is happening in their area. Cannot expect them to stop using their own and imposing other ways." The developer agent also felt that a lot of discussions are being held in 'closed' online environments meaning that it is hard to tap into for feedback on future plans. The developer saw that "increasing understanding, it reduces their concern about future development."

ENGAGEMENT – The community respondent stated that "it is all about early involvement but if you get involved at planning application stage then you miss the opportunity to shape the development… If you get involved at an earlier stage, then LA and Developer – to create a scenario that everyone wins." If a developer failed to take account of the community feedback or did not explain why they couldn't respond to a certain concern, then the network will state that the community engagement was poor. In this way, the network acts as an audit over the quality of community engagement in pre-planning applications, in an attempt to ensure that the developer does not regard this as a 'tick box exercise'. The LA respondent also recognised this; "if just tick box exercise, it will be exposed through the network and the planning system and it won't get them to where they want it to be." The interviewed developer agent, who works on community consultations, stated that the NPN is really helpful in scenarios when it is hard to identify the best people to engage with to achieve a level of representation.

Reflection
The network is highly regarded by the LPA and is seen to make it easier to reach more people for effective developer consultations, to gather local knowledge and concerns to feed into further and wider community consultation once a planning application is formally submitted. The network also provides access and certainty for developers over local views on developments in specific areas across the city. A main strength is that it is an independent body from the Council, and therefore is considered by the LPA to facilitate increased dialogue due to the planning groups trusting the process more as an independent body, rather, than can often be perceived as 'being in the pockets of developers.' Although pre-application engagement is its core aim, it is a key stakeholder that facilitates/supports local planning groups to take part in other consultations. The approach provides local people with the 'vocabulary' to enter discussions with the NPN and LPA. This allows the NPN members to hold the Council (and developers) to account and play an important scrutiny role. The community respondent felt that the NPN model could be made national. The developer agent respondent also stated that funding more groups like NPN and investing more time to train people would be beneficial across the country. The community respondent stated that critically "we couldn't have done this without the local authority being as receptive and wholeheartedly embracing the process… if we were fighting them, then this would have never got off the ground." Therefore, a receptive or compelled LPA seems necessary. The LA respondent stated that "the developers got to see the value of engagement and recognise that it will lead to better development and have a smoother ride, hard to legislature for that but they need to do more to raise awareness and change the culture…".

b) Camden 2025 & Citizens Assembly

Introduction and overview

'Camden 2025' Plan (the Plan) is focused on what the Council wants to achieve as an organisation, which has recently influenced the Site Allocations Plan and its previous iteration informed the Local Plan vision statement. The 2025 Plan was based upon extensive engagement with citizens assemblies and other engagement strategies. The issues focused upon were homes and housing; strong growth and access to jobs; safe, strong and open communities; clean, vibrant and sustainable places; and healthy, independent lives.

Website: https://www3.camden.gov.uk/2025/our-camden-plan/

What can we learn from this case?

Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:

Rules and principles

The SCI influences the way consultation is carried out in planning matters. There are two officers within planning department that are trained and focus on community engagement (on top of their planning officer role). The planning department attempt different methods of consultation, with a key aim to reach beyond those who usually engage in planning matters. They do this by reaching those who are interested in how the community will change after a particular development, as opposed to interest in the development itself. The principles of the blend of engagement techniques were based on engaging with as many different people as possible, including online engagement, a newly formed citizens' assembly, public events, in libraries and resident surveys.

Stories and visions

The Plan is considered as being "at the heart of everything" the planning department do. It is seen as a mission statement. The five 'ambitions' identified through the engagement are: Homes and housing; Strong growth and access to jobs; Safe, strong and open communities; Clean, vibrant and sustainable places; and Healthy independent lives. The planning policy team have been working on Site allocations and the Plan is a key consideration. The community respondent felt it was about being creative in collecting people's stories, the "old fashioned ways are the best in terms of getting out there and meeting people" and to make engagements fun through being innovative, such as afternoon tea with cakes, evening meetings with wine and cheese festivals.

Leadership and culture

The leadership and culture of Camden was considered as being strong and open to community input in plan making; a respondent stated that "it helps if you have got colleagues and members who are enthusiastic about engagement. We have got a portfolio holder that are supportive and go above and beyond in community engagement." The council have responded and acted upon the engagement and development of the Plan to focus on addressing the core issues and reducing inequality, taking this as being their "core purpose" and aim to harness their efforts and resources to focus on the prevention of the issues identified.

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

Demonstrating what the impact views from communities will have on future decision making at the council was regarded as important. This was particularly highlighted by a LPA respondent, who felt that "communities engage best if they think something is going to happen... and know they can steer it. The planning application stage is usually complaining about the scheme" and is too later stage to engage with communities effectively. Relating people to places as opposed to plan making is considered to be a key factor in engaging people. The community respondent reflected that "everyone can relate to the things they want... we all want a nice place to live. If what you are saying this Local Plan will produce a better neighbourhood for you and to raise your child, then planning is important to people. It is about the place where you live... they would like to relate to place."

Prior learning

The front-loading of engagement needs to occur alongside the front-loading of capacity building. This was recognised by an LPA respondent who stated that "it is ok frontload engagement, but people haven't got the skills to engage with it so early on." Otherwise, the LA respondents felt that it is hard to get the same level interest and engagement at the early stage because planning policy is abstract, whereas it is the physical manifestation of the policy, the developments, the mock-up on the scheme as to what that looks like that people can relate to. Through capacity building, early engagement in planning can be successful. The LPA have engaged with neighbourhood groups in the third sector to work with people to build up the knowledge of planning matters and have been training young people in community to be community researchers to feed back to the Council.

How is this engagement carried out?
Mapped against key parameters this case performs:
SPEED – A dialogical approach is considered to be preferable, one which is embedded in the culture of the LPA as opposed to one-offs at times of plan production. An LPA respondent emphasised that effective "consultation is more like a conversation… [there is] difficulty in these set stages … because people have forgotten what they said before and becomes repetitive and a waste of time. Instead, we need to find a way to create a dialogue with communities." When considering the time input into the community engagement, it was considered that there should be roles within the planning team that focus purely on community engagement rather than be on top of everything else.
COST –The planning budget would not have funded such levels of engagement as the Camden 2025 and the LPA respondents stated that they would like the resource to carry out engagement of this quality. They find that there are high costs involved with good place-based communications. For example, the respondents refer to The Mayor of London office, who get messages out to community. However, for a planning department there is little budget to do so and "there are high costs involved with some of these things, e.g. £1200 for a newspaper."
CERTAINTY – The levels of engagement achieved via this engagement has informed a wider understanding of the wants and needs of the community for future development in the area, this has led to a greater amount of certainty over the demands for future land use in the future.
DESIGN quality – As this has been a relatively wider engagement on the future of Camden, specific design considerations were not influenced.
DIGITAL SYSTEMS – This engagement approach was a blend of face to face and online engagement. Officers involved have piggybacked on to existing networks of people, such as forums, active community groups, and have used social media marketing, posters, local papers going beyond standard statutory notices. The 'CommonPlace' online tool is used by the planning department which has helped to reach some of the more underrepresented younger and working age groups. The tool also demonstrated how their comments were related to where they lived and helped to identify gaps in local demographics areas. However, the use of such tools can lead to more reactionary comments in comparison to conversations held during face-to-face consultations and was not considered as a tool to create good quality engagement with communities. In face-to-face consultations, people can ask for more information and their viewpoint can potentially change as they become more informed throughout. The respondents highlighted that "digital tools should be seen as complementary rather than in replace of traditional means."
ENGAGEMENT – The levels of engagement for the Plan was considered as not being possible to be replicated by the planning department because it was a programme of citizen assemblies that required funding. However, they recognise the value of Citizen's assemblies and the work done to ensure that they are representative.

Reflection
The engagement that fed into the Camden 2025 Plan has been considered by many as an effective strategy of mixed approaches. However, there is a recognition that greater work could be done to join up engagement carried out by different departments to mutually support one another – one of the

respondents stated that other departments are capturing information that would be useful in planning but is not accessible by the planning officers. Furthermore, such practices are considered as leading to consultation fatigue, where communities are being asked similar questions from different departments. Additionally, it was identified that there are bigger budgets and larger teams that could help with planning and engagement. For example, the communications team could help with publicity. Often, it can be a real challenge to get support from such teams because "planning is not really seen as sexy – they get involved with more exciting projects." A key aspect to this case study was highlighting the need to upskill people and provide training and educational resources and develop a conversational approach embedded within the way of working at councils. The LA respondent felt that continuing to fund orgs like PAS that can aid with this is important. Furthermore, a wider issue was considered on engagement with younger people and finding ways to get into schools through the national curriculum on planning. It was felt that there are ways that the government can increase knowledge of planning matters and education curriculum. Encouraging a network of planning officers who can share experiences of community engagement and the tools that are out there was considered as beneficial and help with creativity as plan makers. In terms of talking to people part of Neighbourhood Forums about the White Paper, the LA respondents reported that by reducing community members ability to influence development is going to put people off engaging; "the less people can influence the less people will want to engage." This case study highlights how closer collaboration and wider engagement and the collation of budgets for engagement can lead to more effective responses at the front loading / visioning stages.

c) Brecon Beacons Local Development Plan

Introduction and overview

Planning Aid Wales were commissioned by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, which helped engage around fifty community and town councils in the early stages of preparing their Local Development Plan (LDP) in 2008. The authority offered support and resources for participating councils and recognised the need for creativity and innovation. Reflecting on such a comprehensive engagement approach from 2008 has merit now, given the lessons learnt on the need for a culture that is open to community-led approaches to vision and plan making.

Website: https://www.bevanfoundation.org/commentary/community-engagement-in-the-brecon-beacons/

What can we learn from this case?

Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:

Rules and principles

The programme in 2008 was considered as 'cutting edge' and 'radical' as it handed power over to the communities. This was based on empowering each council to work with their communities to collage detailed information about their localities, as well as define local preferences for growth and the location of possible development sites. Working as an independent training provider and facilitator, Planning Aid Wales devised a structured engagement programme with three main aims: building local capacity; improve communication between stakeholders, and; to reduce conflict at later stages of plan preparation, particularly around settlement development limits and site allocations. The approach was to avoid having a housing figure and identify what the capacity of the area might be, however this was considered as "going down like a lead balloon" because it wasn't seen as a legitimate way to hand over this power to local communities.

Stories and visions

The community respondent recognised that planning could influence many things, such as environmental concerns, in a variety of ways. For example, influencing agriculture and levels of pollution and the way farming is carried out. They also stated that "the debate on planning seems to come to housing, but there

are so many important issues and lessons to be learnt that the other issues aren't lost on people getting wound up about new housing estate." Furthermore, they stated that "you can always draw out from local trivial responses, there is always something planning behind it." The LPA respondent felt that community members should not be labelled as NIMBYs and that they are capable of understanding the wider context with support.

Leadership and culture

During the examination process, the community engagement was delegitimised as an evidence source. This has changed the way the authority approach engagement since. There is the recognition from staff members in the LPA that there are limited opportunities for giving significant weight for community engagement if the leadership and culture does not align. However, with determination, they identify mechanisms outside of that to feed in, including place making, citizens assemblies etc. Furthermore, it was recognised that there is work to be done on connecting development management officers with community aspirations, and it was felt that they should also be involved in the community engagement programmes of LPAs. When considering if any improvements can be made, the LA respondent felt the change needs to be "attitudinal as opposed to any policy" changes. The need for education and "not just paying lip service to this stuff... Everywhere it says you have to do consultation and pre-app engagement work and front loading, but what happens to the results to that stuff?".

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

Due to the delegitimisation of the engagement as an evidence source, people were empowered and expectations were raised but, as a community representative stated they were "disappointed" upon reviewing the engagement. The community representative's Community Council had dedicated a lot of time and enthusiasm to the engagement only to find over years later, much of the aspirations remain unfulfilled. Furthermore, after the LPA engaged with the local community on specific sites, decisions were overruled, leading to locations being developed that were not deemed as appropriate sites by the community and therefore "damaged relationships." Highlighting to people "what they contribute has an impact... Instead of feeling that they are going through it and not making a difference."

Prior learning

A core component of the process, facilitated by Planning Aid Wales, was the delivery of a three-stage programme of capacity building workshops for the community councils, which included an overview of the planning process and what their role could be in the production of the LDP. This was bolstered by access to an information pack and ongoing support on how they could play a part in the LDP process. Furthermore, by sharing a community participation toolkit with the councils and offering tools and techniques to engage their local communities, it was considered that a genuinely representative response was collated on planning issues. The community respondent considered this training as "excellent" and highlighted that there "needs to be a process of awareness raising and education at the beginning, not just for local councillors, but also anyone, including businesses... The better informed they are the better quality the response will be from the local community." It was felt that planning should be taught in schools so as they grow, they can understand what planning is about and how to get involved in the process.

How is this engagement carried out?

Mapped against key parameters this case performs:

SPEED – Planning Aid Wales started the process with 'early-stage engagement' across the year of 2008, with another commissioned project in 2010 to help maintain the engagement with the community and town council's during the later stages of the LDP production. Therefore, the whole process was carried out over two years.

COST – The respondent from the National Park Authority noted a point on costs, that "if you are going to get Local Authorities to spend £1,000s on engagement, you have to give it a valid place in part of evidence base, otherwise, it raises expectations and wastes resources, causes more trouble."

CERTAINTY – Through the process of engaging around fifty town and community councils, with high response rates to the consultations carried out by those councils, there was a greater deal of certainty

over what the wants and needs of those communities were. The LPA felt that "it certainly got a lot of the big issues out at the beginning" and the relationships with communities improved, despite the challenges, and that there were not many significant objectors to schemes that followed. It was clear the areas that did not engage in the programme delivered by Planning Aid Wales due to there being more objections to development in those areas.

DESIGN quality – An element of the consultations carried out by the town and community councils was on design.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – Because the area is mostly rural, with an aging population, it was felt that a reliance on digital techniques would exclude many. For example, they have found the time during the pandemic challenging as they have been "unable to talk with the majority of the people" because they are not available online.

ENGAGEMENT – Overall, the LPA respondent felt that "community engagement is easier when there is nothing certain. This is chance to start again. It gets trickier when lines get drawn and into something planned. That is when need to talk to them more to explain why you have gone from this to that. When they say they don't want that we are able to explain why we have to. If you do lots at the start and nothing further down the line – you would have raised expectations and then not continue." The early engagement facilitated by Planning Aid Wales was considered as successful due to its capacity building and raising awareness of how people could engage with the planning system and what community council's roles were in that process.

Reflection

This case study highlights the need to build the capacity of local actors, including local councils (parish, town, community), to productively engage in planning policy making, and in turn develop an open dialogue between communities and local planning authorities. By understanding the capacities of their local areas for future development and the implications on the infrastructure of their localities and the wider policy context, people were more receptive to the potential of future development in their areas. This case demonstrates that a 'radical' approach to community engagement is possible, but that there is a need for a wider culture change in accepting community input in plan making to make it worthwhile.

d) East Ayrshire – Community Action / Place Plans
Introduction and overview
This example started as a 'Vibrant Communities' programme established to transform the relationship between the local community and local authority and the production of 'place plans.' A broad range of skills within the council were brought into one place and started a process to develop community development action plans owned and led by the community for the community (via rural funding to test priorities in rural communities to influence European funding) and a wider culture development programme across the departments in the Council.
Website:
https://www.eastayrshirecommunityplan.org/resources/files/Engaging-Our-Communities.pdf
https://www.eastayrshirecommunityplan.org/Home.aspx

What can we learn from this case?
Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:
Rules and principles
Communities lead on their place plans, not the Local Authority, and at the neighbourhood level, engagement involves door to door surveys (over 40% response rate), stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community profiles, etc to determine key local priorities and what they want to see in a 5-year plan. The information is analysed and grouped in themes by the LA and then information stalls are set up as part of a

voting event to test the ideas that are to be taken forward into the final published action plan. A steering group takes this forward which allows them to access funding to undertake the actions. The priorities extracted from the place plans fed into the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2017). This approach has been embedded and rolled-out across 24 communities to create the second set of 5-year plans, which inform future local planning policies. Now, there is a forum for representatives of each community plan group to meet quarterly to share practises and work together along with representatives attending a community planning partnership.

Stories and visions

Community planning across Scotland had been seen as too top down and East Ayrshire have sought to re-orient to a more bottom-up or co-produced process. This was required to promote a culture change in the organisation and embed an approach to serve communities better. Their motive is; "we want to make sure that services meet the needs of the communities… we are here to serve, not to just do".

Leadership and culture

The community engagement approach at East Ayrshire is considered to be based upon "the personality and the leadership of the Council," particularly the CEO, who is considered as being an influential leader. The LA respondent stated that "if you have someone driving it, then it does help to change the culture and mindset." Taking an Asset Based Community Development / solution focused approach, the East Ayrshire Council consider their role as being "there to serve, not to do things to communities." Several employees of the Local Authority had been seconded to form a transformation team that had the remit to change cultures within the Council. Part of this work involved a look at the service level agreements made with employees of the council and to 'transform' into a trust of the employees to be informed by the local communities and their priorities. Throughout various training programmes for all employees of the Council, they also embedded a coaching culture and coaching leadership. For example, they do not have the title of housing officers now, they are called "neighbourhood coaches." Recognising they have some way to go, a LA respondent recognised that for some departments, such as estates and legal teams, "true community engagement can be quite alien." However, after a series of sessions with the transformation team, there are "employees from Estates who used to say that the community are involved at the end of the process, who now completely champion community engagement."

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

At East Ayrshire, there was a recognised need to celebrate community and get back to a neighbourly approach, giving a reason for the communities to get involved and state clearly what difference their contribution will that make. Basing communication on agreement and trust, through forming relationships and partnerships and "actually really listening and what hearing and implementing." It was felt that there is no point undertaking community engagement just to tick a box, as many do, which "make a fool of the LA and the community… if you are going to do it, do it right."

Prior learning

The prior learning in this case has been focused on the employees of the Local Authority through training and a focus on culture change. East Ayrshire community engagement framework sets out how community engagement should be carried out to put communities at the heart of what the council do and embed that mindset across services. This is claimed as wider 'transformational' approach which has influenced planning, particularly the work on bringing all employees of the Council through 'FACE' training, which aims to empowers employees to be Flexible, Approachable, Caring and Empowered – in doing so each cohort takes part in workshops to respond to current issues in the community in a collaborative, cross-departmental fashion.

How is this engagement carried out?

Mapped against key parameters this case performs:

SPEED – In this case, community engagement is embedded in the culture of the local authority and therefore when it comes around to engage communities on specific policies the time taken to connect is minimal. However, it was highlighted that local authorities "can't do engagement to community, you need to bring them with you and there needs to be recognition and resource to do that."

COST – Costs for the community engagement at East Ayrshire have been ongoing and embedded across the wider culture of the Council. The LA respondent highlighted that the increase in engagement has led to a reduction in complaints and has reduced costs. Efficiencies can be made when engaging with the community and identifying with them, what reasonable expectations are, what the minimum standards the community looking for and working with them to identify cost saving ways of working. Overall, it was regarded that communication, relationships and partnerships leads to lower costs.

CERTAINTY – Through high levels of engagement across the communities of East Ayrshire via the place plans, developers improve levels of certainty about the wants and needs of communities and therefore their support for a scheme.

DESIGN quality – Design is an aspect that is actively considered within the place plans.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – Digital engagement was a part of the transformation work carried out by the seconded team. In doing so, they recognised that you cannot go fully digital as you exclude a large part of the population. However, there are advantages to delivering workshops etc. online for a particular audience.

ENGAGEMENT – the culture of the council is seen as important here; engagement is a way of working as opposed to any period of discrete time spent on it. The entire service delivery is centred upon responding to the needs and wants of their communities.

Reflection

This case study demonstrates the significant impact that changing a culture within Councils can transform the relationships with the community. By adjusting mindsets to the Council exist because of the community they serve and having a consistently open dialogue with the community means that engagement is not a time restrictive process, but a part of the Council's services. By working with the community in identifying priorities, as partners, with communities doing the work, it enables a perspective from the community that is not about the council 'doing things to them.' The motto – communities at the heart of everything we do – is embedded within the culture of the Council. This case demonstrates that through collaboration across Council departments, via a dedicated Vibrant Communities team, cost and time efficiencies are made, as well as better quality outcomes.

e) Dudley People's Panel

Introduction and overview

The Dudley People's Panel, a citizens' assembly that brought together 50 randomly selected people from the locality, was part of Dudley Councils' 'Forging a Future for All' vision. The two key questions that were used to prompt thought, discussion and recommendations from the citizens were:

What can communities and the council do together to make Dudley and Brierley Hill town centres places that are vibrant, welcoming, and somewhere we are proud of?

How will we know we are making a difference in: 12 months; 3 years; by 2030?

The panel was held across two weekends. The participants were provided information relating to regeneration plans, local services, organisations and community groups, and accounts from local people. The panel formed recommendations on how best the Council can make these areas more vibrant and welcoming. Further questions were explored to encourage discussion i.e. What is the role of town centres now that shopping habits have changed? How people use town centres now and how can we make sure that they survive and thrive in the future? What will encourage residents to go into and enjoy town centres? The recommendations from the citizens' assembly were published in early December 2019. Website: https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/peoples-panel/

https://www.involve.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/practice/what-should-future-dudley-and-brierley-hill-look

What can we learn from this case?
Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature the case performs as follows:
Rules and principles
Questionnaires were completed by prospective participants and through analysis there was careful consideration about selecting the right participants to ensure that there was a balance in views with not disruptive or dominant / usual voices in the room. The LPA identified that a third-party involvement to carry out the engagement overcame the concerns that participants had about "the council doing it to us." Therefore, external speakers were chosen but officers from the council were always present. A crucial aspect of the citizen's assembly was to inform people of the context and wider planning and development context and create a workshop environment that is more conversational. Careful consideration was had over what information to give at what time and to ensure that the language used was not a barrier in itself.
Stories and visions
A planning expert was hired to discuss with those participating about the context of the problems on the high street and wider planning challenges. An important consideration for the LPA respondent was that the focus was on "people, places and spaces… to think about people first."
The involvement of the communications team at the council was a bonus to increase engagement in the beginning, they bolstered the citizen's panel with other engagement strategies including online Q&As, QR codes on street furniture and lamp posts, coffee mornings etc. to capture an even greater and wider demographic.
Leadership and culture
Initially the drive to carry out a Citizen's Assembly stemmed from the local Public Health department who, after a great deal of consultation around the Borough had identified that the high street was at the core of many issues, so therefore they chose the broad question of "How do you improve the high street in Dudley?" But it had significant interest and involvement from planning officers, including the head of planning who attended the citizens assembly and accessed the feedback from it. It has also had a wider impact on "changes of dialogue in the Council," particularly senior leadership and members. It was considered that communication between the people of Dudley and the council have improved and has spurred a more creative approach to engagement on other matters.
Stakes and benefits (why do it?)
Dudley People's Panel was considered as a "vital role in informing decision-makers about residents' opinions on the challenges and solutions" The Panel was regarded as a way for residents to have a real impact on how the Council develops its policies towards the high street in the future. The full report of the People's Panel was presented to Councillors in early 2020. And an additional report on 'The Future of Town Centres' went to Dudley Council's Place Scrutiny Committee in January 2020. Councillors have used these recommendations to help them decide what to do in the short, medium and long-term to make the borough's town centres vibrant and welcoming places to be and local organisations have responded to the recommendations through the application of funding and delivery of projects. Senior members of the council have since been requesting further responses from the participants of the Panel, because of this, the LPA respondent highlighted a clear advantage of having a 'representative' panel of people to ask questions on an ongoing basis, as opposed to a set period, however this is not what was set up in Dudley. Although this is the case, the LPA respondent highlighted how important they feel it is to continue the dialogue with the participants and are working on a video and other literature to inform the participants as to how their engagement has impacted change.
Prior learning

A core component of the citizen's assembly is increasing the understanding of the participants in the wider context and challenges of the problem they are considering. It was felt by the LPA respondent that the process has led to "an informed response and informed ideas" to feed into the recommendations.

How is this engagement carried out?
Mapped against key parameters this case performs:
SPEED – The citizen's panel itself was held over four days, however it took some considerable planning, involved multiple internal and external speakers and observers, as well as time spent on analysing the data that came out of the workshops.
COST – The Dudley Citizens' Assembly formed part of the Innovation in Democracy Programme (IiDP) which was jointly delivered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Each local authority participating in IiDP received support from the Democracy Support Contractor Consortium made up of Involve, The Democratic Society, mySociety and the RSA. Alongside this, up to £60,000 was made available to cover the costs of implementing the Panel and online engagement. The cost of engagement is one factor to consider, however the cost of the response to the problems considered is also another. As the LPA respondents highlighted, "Dudley does not have a lot of money and rely a lot on external funding," and therefore the recommendations from the panel were extremely useful to present to local community groups who applied for funding to improve connectivity and the public realm of the high street. They have now been awarded capacity funding from The Towns Fund.
CERTAINTY – Through the quality and level of engagement via the panel, an increased level of certainty has been had by not only those looking to regenerate the high street, but also organisations and funders involved in responding to the local concerns.
DESIGN quality – The participants took the complex problem of how to improve the high street and wider challenges and concluded that the focus was to create better public spaces, public realm, and improve the safety and thus encouraging an attraction to the places along the high street and not necessarily the shops first.
DIGITAL SYSTEMS – There are concerns about digital inequality in engaging a wider demographic in Dudley, therefore in the name of inclusivity and equality it is considered that digital systems for delivering this type of engagement was not appropriate. It was also considered that the practicalities of delivering a citizen's assembly online would lead to lower quality engagement.
ENGAGEMENT – Citizen's Assemblies are considered as an ideal way of consulting on a complex question as opposed to a binary thing, and for local plans and SPDs was considered by the LPA respondents as an ideal way of engaging communities on local planning issues, as usually those engaging in standard consultations give their "gut reaction" and are usually "male and pale." The citizen's assembly allowed for a cross section of not only demographics, but also different income brackets and walks of life, to come together in the same room, some who initially opposed any changes or redevelopment but found through the process that there was a complete change in understanding and acceptance to change.

Reflection
Being instigated from the local public health department at Dudley, this case highlights the overlap of planning and development concerns with other departmental challenges. Through collaborating on engagement plans and sharing the outputs across departments of local authority, there leads to not only better-quality engagement and increased positive outcomes, but also a reduction in costs and time spent on engagement across the local authority. Citizen's assemblies are regarded as more representative than most other approaches to consultation. This case study highlighted the need for a focus initially on people's challenges within their local environment and placemaking before relating it to plan-making and development and the importance of informing those who participate of the contextual factors that may influence their recommendations. Overall, it was felt by the LPA respondents that because planning and development are 'complex' problems and lead to complex questions, citizen's assemblies are perceived to

be ideal to go beyond the standard responses to planning consultations to much more informed responses, as witnessed once the respondents were deeper into the process of the citizen's assembly. Sharing best practice was considered as being a move the government can make to demonstrate the successes and opportunities of different engagement practices. Furthermore, it was considered that a more permanent people's panel would be beneficial but considered that some won't come back because they are not paying them.

f) Liverpool – City Region Spatial Strategy

Introduction and overview

This case study focuses upon the community engagement programme held to inform the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). The initial (front loaded) phase was in 2019 and building upon this first stage a second round was completed Feb 2021, which was focused upon the proposed vision and set of objectives. The myriad consultations feeding into the SDS included a summer school for 13–17-year-olds (40 participants); pop-up shops in areas of deprivation (use of visual interactive tools); and targeted reach through special interest groups. A range of social enterprises were involved, including Women's Health and Info service, older persons parliament, and SEFTON CVS; and engagement experts, PLACED.

Website: https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/lcr-our-places/

What can we learn from this case?

Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:

Rules and principles

It was important for the LA respondent to clarify that they "carry out engagement… not consultation." A conversational and transparent approach is deemed as important, as well as enabling people to contribute to other peoples' comments too. A key factor in the success of the engagement programme is the range of 'engagement consultants,' who often weren't all professional consultants, but social enterprises who already have a reach of people who do not usually engage in planning and development. A total of 10 different bodies have contributed to the engagement, each writing reports and sharing these online for all to see and comment on. Rather than creating engagement meetings solely focused upon the engagement for the SDS, they participate in other people's regular meetings, and be part of a wider agenda, as it is found to reach the most people. Furthermore, social media engagement is focused on key themes that people can relate to as opposed to the 'SDS' which is less likely to engage people. A core focus was climate change as that is what most people wanted to respond to.

Stories and visions

The stories and visions of young people, disability, and elderly groups, BAME, and those in areas of significant deprivation were an important focus in the engagement programme. Given the SDS is a 20-year plan, the team at the LA were focused upon engaging those who the plan will impact. Throughout the engagement, under core themes, people were asked 'What is important to you?' and 'What should be done?,' exploring the challenges and opportunities under each theme.

Out of those who engaged, 42.1% were young people and 50.8% of respondents were from the bottom 10% IMDs. They ran a specific summer school for 13-17-year-olds focused on the SDS, collating their stories and visions. Of the 40 participants, 54% were female and 40% were from ethnic minorities. Alongside this, PLACED ran pop-up shops in areas of deprivation. Visual, playful and interactive tools (as opposed to conventional written surveys) encouraged engagement.

It was clear that by far climate change (38.7%) was the most important local issue followed by public health. It was felt that there is a need to move beyond housing as the driving factor in government thinking on planning, as this is not the key motivator to engage for most people. One respondent stated,

"if you want to shape the country for the people who are going to be next electorate, then you need take on the issues with the climate."

Leadership and culture

The general mindset, leadership, and culture of the planning department, is that the SDS and other planning policies are that "it is their document." Overall, the community engagement drive comes from the direction of the Metro Mayor with the support of the six leaders of the constituent councils in the city-region. The SDS was seen as an opportunity to carry out the manifesto pledges of 'no neighbourhood left behind' and to engage the marginalised. The Mayor stated that: "I want you to deliberately engage with those who don't usually engage." The focus was to engage on those who want to shape their futures, their communities, as opposed to driving hard for engagement around housing and development. One of the issues considered about engagement with those who don't usually engage, is the stereotype of the planner being in the pocket of the developer. Furthermore, the LA respondent felt that "social infrastructure and social economy are important too, but they don't have all the representation and technical knowledge that developers do to engage with planning, but we have role to debunk planning so they can engage."

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

The key point was that the people who engaged felt that they had ownership of the process and know how they influence things, due to open dialogue rather than a one-way consultation. Good progress claimed so far but 'the key to good engagement is being bluntly open to 'not getting it quite right and reaching out for support' when needed as there is likely to be a community group that can assist.

Prior learning

Prior to the engagement programme taking place, the LA held awareness sessions on what they were engaging on with a variety of groups and organisations (including the House Building Federation to environmental groups) and they engaged on some policy areas that are considered unusual, such as social value and social economy, natural capital, spatial distribution. The social enterprises and engagement experts had each delivered their element of engagement in a way that suited the target groups, ensuring that they had the appropriate prior learning before participating in the engagement.

How is this engagement carried out?

Mapped against key parameters this case performs:

SPEED – The first and second engagements for 13 weeks. A third one is planned that is going to be much like a preferred options consultation. It was noted by the LA respondent that "the statutory obligations with the SDS are that we only have to consult under regulations at the end (like REG 19) – those who just consult often find they spend 6 months in the IP in the end." There were 2 officers who spent 37 hours a week for 13 weeks (each round) working on the engagement.

COST – They were one of first LAs to apply for funding from MHCLG to carry out the SDS strategy, and the combined authority contributed too (both financially and their own engagement team. The cost for using engagement experts and social enterprises was c£30,000 (not including the LA time and printing costs). It was considered by the LA respondent that "£30,000 on engagement isn't actually that much money to have to spend" and to look at efficiencies, such as not putting printed publications in each library as there are large costs associated with this for perhaps very few, if any, accessing them. Suggestions on raising income in planning departments included creating a planning fee that pays for the policy service and increasing planning fees for larger housing scheme. A further suggestion was that fees for online engagement platforms should be capped.

CERTAINTY – The LA had some engagement with a local housebuilder who, according to the LA respondent "really like us and our approach." The housebuilder wrote to all the LAs but he said that no one came back to him, which was considered a shame as they were keen to make sure that conversations are open in order to reduce rows and challenges further on in the housebuilding process. It was felt that "LAs should

have these conversations, as without engagement, there are too many legal challenges that put people off."

DESIGN quality – People from all demographics were able to engage in the ways they would like future developments and regeneration to make their communities look and feel, therefore improving the design according to the wants and needs of local communities.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – It was recognised that people are experiencing digital fatigue due to people spending a lot of time online. An example was provided where many people in their 30s signed up to attend an online workshop, but only 6 actually logged on, when asked why they didn't attend, they replied with comments like "that they spend all day on Teams meetings – the last thing want to do is do another meeting online at the end of the day." Furthermore, concerns were raised about the digital disconnect and digital poverty experienced within communities. Overall, the LA respondent considered the challenge of "how am I going to engage with disenfranchised community via digital means?" Therefore, it was felt that a blend of online and offline engagement strategies are important to get quality and quantity. Apprehensions were raised about the use of online tools and organisations because of the high fees and the inflexibility of the approach. This led to utilising their own website to gain more control of the messages put across, such as local imagery and focus on themes to engage people, such as environment and local economy.

ENGAGEMENT – The LA respondent stated that they front loaded engagement "more than what the government are talking about in the White Paper." Upfront engagement is useful but needs to be part of a wider conversation that builds in additional opportunities to go back to communities. Seems to underscore discussions about not relying entirely on frontloaded activity. There are young people really motivated. They should have right to influence what we do. At least while they are active, we should be using that to inform planning. What is the point of the plan if just focused on facilitating development? The phrasing of questions is considered as crucial to engaging people to ensure that they can relate to the question being asked. For example, rather than a broad question of; "how would you tackle climate change?" instead focusing more locally with; "how would you tackle climate change in your neighbourhood?"

Reflection

This case study highlights an example of strong leadership and inclusive mindset with an approach of thorough front-loaded engagement to be representative of the local demographic and raise interest from those who don't usually engage. Furthermore, 'conversational' follow up engagements and collaboration with social enterprises are key factors in producing a high-quality engagement programme can be delivered in realistic timescales and within cost effective budgets. Considering the wider context, the LPA respondent felt that a wider awareness and upskilling of future generations of planners whilst studying at University, as well as current professional planners and local authority leaders in planning, would benefit from education and sharing of best practice on community engagement in planning.

g) Cornwall Council and PACE forums

Introduction and overview

Cornwall Council offers three levels of pre-application community engagement (PACE). As part of this approach, it created PACE forums as public meetings at which development proposals are presented to elected members, council officers, and local residents. PACE forums are encouraged at an early stage in the production of the development proposal and is designed to discuss issues, reduce delay, and inform development proposals using local knowledge. Additional fees are paid by the developer to cover the costs of hosting or facilitating the forums. The three levels involve:

● strategic major schemes that are considered by the Strategic Planning Committee;

● items that would likely be considered by an Area Planning Committee or contentious smaller schemes; and

● community engagement facilitated by the council where the case officer recommends this approach, and the developer requests the council to facilitate an event.
Website: https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-advice-and-guidance/upcoming-pre-application-community-engagement-pace-forums/

What can we learn from this case?
Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:
Rules and principles
The council has produced various guidance, available on its website, to assist groups and Parish/Town Councils in engaging with PACE forums. It also provides training to parish councillors on how to engage with developers so that they are able to give feedback on their schemes. It is expected that any PACE meeting must meet the expectations of a convenient and accessible venue, timely publicity, timing of the meeting to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend, and that there is genuine open-mindedness and willingness to adapt plans in response to community feedback.
In terms of raising awareness of the forums, the Council pursue a variety of means both online and offline.
Stories and visions
The way in which the members of the public can share their stories and visions for the development is via the PACE forums and communication with the LPA. It was agreed that the Forum Chair should allow questions to agents at any point if appropriate, to ensure best discussion of points is achieved. A standard running order is followed to ensure large events can be managed, starting with a planning case officer who provides a background to the proposal, followed by an optional slot for a local Neighbourhood Plan group to present the local policy situation. The developer will then explain the proposal which is followed by an opportunity for attendees to speak, ask questions and raise any issues, observations and comments. The developer then has an opportunity to respond to what has been said by attendees and the Planning case officer summarises the main points raised during the Forum.
However, the weighting given to community engagement in determining the outcome of a planning application is down to whether the points made are a material consideration. Although information is provided to the local community as to what a material consideration is, often the points made are not material. An observation in this case is that people tend to be vocal on social media, but not so much on planning applications, the LA respondent felt more could be done by planning departments to utilise social media to engage with people.
Leadership and culture
The instigation of the PACE forums was by a keen member of staff, who led on the creation and development of the PACE forums over the years, with a key focus on increasing transparency in the process and encouraging greater understanding of future developments. Even since they have pursued a role elsewhere, the Council has continued to evolve the PACE forums and embed within the culture of planning across Cornwall.
Stakes and benefits (why do it?)
For the Council, the PACE forums bring the developments into the public domain earlier and enables the council to add value and make it a better scheme. It also speeds up the process through providing detailed, sometimes technical advice, as well as advising on the registration process. The PACE forums are regarded as an opportunity for the LA to aid developers in engaging with local communities and potentially help communities contribute to the shaping of a scheme.
Prior learning
It was felt by the LA respondent that assistance is needed with the general public to translate their concerns into material planning considerations, as well as understanding that their local parish councils engage within planning matters and to consult with them if they would like to learn more or contribute to further discussions. The council have provided training to parish councillors on engaging developers.
How is this engagement carried out?
Mapped against key parameters this case performs:

SPEED – The process is considered as being efficient and as it is a paid service by the developer, timescales are taken seriously by the LPA. Pre-app engagement is considered to be a mechanism that speeds up the process of achieving planning permission.

COST – The cost is covered by the developer via pre app planning fees (PACE Level 1 is £1800 and PACE Level 2 is £1250).

CERTAINTY – For developers, engaging in PACE forums increase certainty, confidence about the scheme, and deliver a better product. It is also considered as being cheaper and less risky process to go through PACE forums as opposed to submitting and being rejected on something that could have been resolved during pre-app process. The PACE forums being in the public domain is considered as encouraging positive engagement as opposed to fear of the unknown. This has been demonstrated during the lockdowns associated with COVID-19, where PACE forums are considered the planning department has seen an increase in objections on planning applications, as well as many raising the issue of not having a PACE forum so feel their voice is not heard. If the planning committee engage with the PACE forums, this provides even more certainty to the developers, but often it is a struggle to get them there (possibly due to the time they are held), however there is usually a good turn out from the community. It is also recognised by representatives from the Council that a core purpose of the Local Plan is bring about certainty for all.

DESIGN quality – The most effective PACE forums are felt to be, by a LA respondent, those where the developer presents a sketched design for the community to comment on and potentially voice any concerns, which is then responded to, perhaps with a change in design by the developer before submitting a full planning application. Furthermore, the pre-app process in general is considered as assisting developers in forming the best development possible.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – The Council has considered a virtual PACE Forum however concerns have been raised on how to control who speaks if meetings are held via Microsoft Teams. Currently with our committee meetings, if a member of the public wishes to speak, they ask them to dial in via telephone rather than be part of the Microsoft Teams meeting. This way the Council have the option to control the call if necessary. They are also considering an alternative solution using the Let's Talk Cornwall website. Developers could provide a presentation video of their development and residents could comment. Currently however they do not have a suitable platform for PACE Forms on this site.

ENGAGEMENT – When front-loading community engagement for plan making, an LPA respondent felt that it is a challenge to consider the best scenario as to how much information should be presented. If everything is designed, members of the public think it is a done deal. They considered that the best PACE forums are when there is a well-designed scheme but an open-minded developer who will adapt the scheme according to feedback from the community.

Reflection

PACE forums in Cornwall are an example of the three stakeholders – the LPA, the developer, members and local councillors, and the local community – can 'sit' within the same room and discuss the opportunities and challenges of future development. The most effective forums are those where the developer is open-minded to adapt the design etc. according to the feedback of the local community. It was felt that going further to engage communities beyond the PACE forums is where improvements can be made, to ensure that the capacity of local people is good enough to enable them to engage with the developers plans and the planning system in general.

h) Havant and East Hampshire Developer Consultation Forums (DCFs)
Introduction and overview

East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) hosts 'development consultation forums' (DCFs) for significant applications and for major or contentious sites to improve councillor, stakeholder and public involvement in the pre-application process. The DCFs have been held for approximately eight years, involving around 50 meetings in total.
Website: https://www.havant.gov.uk/development-consultation-forums

What can we learn from this case?
Drawing on key interrogatory elements drawn from the literature, the case performs as follows:
Rules and principles
Forums enable the developer to explain development proposals directly to Councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage and identify any issues that may be considered in any formal application. PACE forums are used to inform officers' pre-application discussions with the developer, and they enable the developer to shape an application to address community issues. In October 2006 it adopted a formal statement of intention called the 'Havant Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) which focussed on consultation arrangements for development plan documents and significant and major applications at both pre and submission stages of a planning application.
The aim is to enable the developer to shape an application to address community issues. This is to present an opportunity for the developer to explain development proposals directly to councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage and identify any issues that may be considered in any formal application. It is also used to inform councillors and the public of a development proposal at an early stage in the pre application process and inform officers' pre application discussions with the developer. The order of events will normally follow a similar process to Cornwall's PACE forums detailed above. The amount of time speakers will have to address the forum will be dependent upon the nature and complexity of the case. Invited speakers will normally be allowed up to 5 minutes. Only the members of the Forum will be allowed to ask questions of invited speakers in order to clarify issues or matters of fact. The main points raised by the Forum will be recorded and clarified as the meeting progresses. At the end of the meeting the Planning Officer will summarise the main issues. This will help the developer decide how he wishes to proceed with the proposal.
Stories and visions
The forum purpose is not considered to be an opportunity to negotiate a proposal with a developer, but rather is considered to be an opportunity for participants to raise issues that they consider need to be addressed by the developer prior to submitting a planning application. Although the DCF meeting is held in public, only those who are invited to speak on behalf of stakeholder groups can raise issues. However, the chair may hold a question-and-answer session at his or her discretion if time allows. All borough councillors are invited, with over half usually attending. Public comments are collated and fed back to the developer – with no names or addresses given. The public can write to the council, leave a comment on the night or email, but usually the opportunity to comment is open only for a week. A representative from the council said that 'developers are encouraging and positive about the process and think it is worth doing at the pre-app stage.' As future development proposals can trigger a variety of emotions for people, it is considered as important to understand and capture any genuine objections someone may have to proposals. An invited speaker who has made their points and becomes disruptive will only damage the process for others and will be instructed to leave.
Leadership and culture
The developer forums were set up after demand from local councillors and people who were keen for greater community engagement in planning. Over the years it has been developed, well received by the councillors, developers who participate and in recent years has got considerable backing from portfolio holder and management team. It was suggested that "if there was no political will to carry on with it, I doubt we would do so… It does need a bit of a culture change to be more open and inclusive… can only see this being carried on" through the leadership drive to increasing community engagement.

Stakes and benefits (why do it?)

From the community /councillor side, there is a benefit from being informed at early stage and take part in the early discussions. From the LPA perspective, going on the journey with the developer with the aim of supporting them in creating the best scheme for our community that has considered the design and any other constraints.

Prior learning

The LA respondent felt that if developers are going to take local considerations into account, then it is better done at an early stage than if their plans were further advanced. Further education and training for local Councillors and communities is considered as beneficial to help with understanding the wider planning process, context and what their role is within it.

How is this engagement carried out?

Mapped against key parameters this case performs:

SPEED – The Council are well rehearsed in organising the DCFs and upon knowing there is going to be a forum they will identify a suitable date with the local Councillors, the Chair of the Council and case officers. There will be at least 3 weeks' notice of when a DCF is going to be held.

COST – The costs are recovered from the pre-app fees charged to the developer.

CERTAINTY – Helps to create a better development through engaging with communities through the contribution of their local knowledge, as well as increase certainty over gaining support for the scheme.

DESIGN quality – A lot of the time the developers would have already received some levels of pre-app engagement and are on their way to thinking about submitting the full application, therefore there is often little influence on the future design. However, in cases where the developer presents a sketch outline and seeks feedback, there is scope for the design to be improved via local knowledge.

DIGITAL SYSTEMS – Could reach more people through having the forums online, however, will not be in the room with the developer and the demographic who are not so good with technology will be unlikely to attend.

ENGAGEMENT – In terms of publicity, the pre-application information is not available on the local planning authority's public access system, but there is a dedicated webpage for DCFs on which developer's proposals are uploaded, including their presentations. Awareness is raised through the council's communications team and social media pages. In the office, council officers identify interested parties, including residents' associations, disability and design groups, and invite them either to speak or to provide written comments. Residents living adjacent to the application site and those on connecting streets or in the wider area are often invited to attend. If proposals are sensitive to the wider community, they do not have to be subject to the Forum process. Whilst developers will be encouraged to use this opportunity when appropriate it is not mandatory and it will depend upon their co-operation and willingness to take part.

Reflection

This is an example of the three key stakeholders participating in a forum on a proposed development, at pre-application stage. Most developers are encouraging and positive about the process and think it is worth doing at the pre-app stage. However, in terms of community engagement, more is considered necessary to improve the dialogue between the stakeholders as this is more of a community 'observation' model as opposed to 'engagement'.

Annex 2: Table highlighting five key factors for deliberation

Deliberation Factors	Implications for Community Engagement
1) Rules (and principles)	*Deliberative exchange takes place in planning over uncomfortable topics. This requires formal or informal rules of engagement - explicit rules must prop-up deliberative initiatives. Infuse a context with the right procedures and organize it to conform to the right norms then deliberation can take place. Rules of equality, civility, and inclusivity may prompt deliberation and may institutionalize deliberation as a routine process. These link to the importance of clear principles (or at least parameters) for engagement that can be used to hold all stakeholders honest and accountable to their role in the process.*
2) Stories (and visions)	*If individuals do not feel accountable for outcomes - successful deliberation seems to require a form of talk that combines the act of making sense (cognition) with the act of making meaning (culture). Storytelling / Stories can anchor reality by organizing experience and function as a medium for framing discussions (links to strand of planning theory around visioning and persuasive storytelling). These might make it easier for laypeople to become involved by telling the story of their area.*
3) Leadership (and culture)	*Leadership can initiate or keep a shift towards a deliberative track. Public opinion is largely a product of elite cues and leaders who engage in more thoughtful rhetoric may prime citizens to adopt a more deliberative posture. Can steer toward non-deliberative conversations by insisting on the salience of particular cues. But leaders often manipulate cues / process to achieve personal political goals.*
4) Stakes (and benefits)	*This relates to questions of 'Why do it?' and what the consequences are of participating or not. Individuals are more likely to sustain deliberative reasoning when outcomes matter to them. Forester (1999) argues the same principle - individuals who are included in a policy-making process from the beginning become more invested in the process than individuals brought in at the end to choose among a range of predetermined options. Put simply, deliberation works best when individuals are invested in the outcome.*
5) Prior knowledge	*People tend to prefer non-deliberative forms of reasoning and lay people have little experience with deliberation (and presumably little skill). Prompts calls for renewed civic education. Basic knowledge is necessary, but it is not a sufficient spur to deliberation - deliberation is a way of doing politics and deliberation is shaped by culture and society. Might imagine education as a form of 'apprenticeship learning' - guided activity of deliberating in real contexts and by establishing deliberative mechanisms, providing effective leaders, and guiding ordinary people through the process. This links to facilitation of skills and capacity.*

Annex 3: Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) were established in 1995 and apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and **all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government**, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

The 7 principles are:

1. **Selflessness -** *Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.*

2. **Integrity -** *Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.*

3. **Objectivity -** *Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.*

4. **Accountability -** *Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.*

5. **Openness -** *Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.*

6. **Honesty –** *Holders of public office should be truthful.*

7. **Leadership -** *Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

*For the purposes of this work, the principles of **accountability, openness** and **objectivity** seem particularly germane to fostering effective community engagement and deliberation in planning. Those would need to be part of any platform for participatory activity that involved the public sector.

Annex 4: White Paper Principles and Community Engagement Matrices

Nb. For description and utility of tools (T1-11) see second matrix Table B.

Matrix A: Stages / PWP aims

Planning Stage in System	WP1: Speed	WP2: Certainty	WP3: Design Quality (+ see annex 1)	WP4: Digital System	WP5: Engagement
Overarching 'Preliminary' Stage (T1)	*Preliminary stage can begin key work before plan-making clock starts.*	*Preliminary stage can provide a level of certainty for LP process* *E.g. SCI could provide clarity on responsibilities, expectations and overall aims of participation (i.e. benchmark).*	*Very early 'blue-sky' thinking and discussions on this before formal start.*	*Very early 'blue-sky' thinking and discussions on this before formal start i.e. needs, capacity, etc.*	*Overarching principles can be set at this stage to inform plan-making* *E.g. SCI provides framework statement for engagement.*
Stage 1 (6 months) (T2, T4, T6, T7, T8, T11) *1) Develop a project plan 2) Creation of a vision 3) Member/senior management briefings 4) Call for Sites exercise*	*Critical time for frontloaded engagement – this will add more time at the start to save time in the latter stages.* *E.g. Preliminary citizen panel to help decide initial local priorities and visioning to highlight overall aims/issues upfront.*	*Critical to develop early community ownership of plan and provide certainty over key issues.* *E.g. Pre-apps to determine key priorities in absence of up-to-date local plan.*	*Review of current local design policies and inputs.* *E.g. Community design statements / plans reviewed.*	*Review of current local digital practices.* *E.g. Open process with visioning via online public meetings – need to consider inclusivity and representation in visioning process.*	*Review of existing approach to public involvement.* *E.g. Preliminary citizen panel to help decide initial local priorities and visioning with mini-public to provide transparency, oversight and trust.*
Stage 2 (12 months) (T6, T8, T9) *1) Evidence gathering*	*Critical time for frontloaded engagement – this will add more time at the start to save*	*Critical to develop 'buy-in' before the technical implantation stage where*	*Forum to determine key design issues.*	*Forum to determine key digital issues.*	*Forum to determine key public issues.*

2) Duty to Co-operate discussions *3) GIS mapping and data management* *4) Consultation on Call for Sites & analysis of responses* *5) Site assess process/development strategy formulation* *6) Identification of any DM standards* *7) Further evidence gathering/refine* *8) PINS Advisory Visit* *9) Prep for consultation*	*time in the latter stages.* *E.g. Increased public and elected member input here to agree strategic priorities and key sites for allocation will add to time to stage two but save time in stages 3-5.*	*changes are more difficult.* *E.g. key political / contentious issues are aired now and trade-offs openly discussed to provide agreed middle ground.*	*E.g. Design charette and NPs to discuss local character areas and add additional detail for emerging design code.*	*E.g. LPA outputs and feedback to be disseminated through physical and virtual community events.*	*E.g. Oversight panel (form of citizen panel) to ensure that public input remains on the plan agenda.* *Call for sites could more actively involve NP groups here.*
Stage 3 **(6 weeks)** **(T9)** *1) 6-week consultation* *2) Submission for Examination including agreement from Members*	*The key prioritise should have been addressed in the front loading stage meaning fewer representations expected at consultation leading to a smoother process.*	*The key prioritise should have been addressed in the front loading stage meaning fewer representations expected at consultation leading to greater certainty.*	*LPA determine the local plan approach to design based on front-loaded community inputs to consolidate design codes.*	*LPA determine the local plan approach to design based on front-loaded community inputs to consolidate design codes.*	*Maintains visibility and trust in plan process.*
Stage 4 **(9 months)** **(T9)** *1) Examination process*	*The key prioritise should have been addressed in the front loading stage meaning fewer reps expected at examination leading to a smoother process.*	*Greater certainty already levered in by frontloading.*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Better online access to docs between LPA & examiner.*
Stage 5 **(6 weeks)**	*Community support*	*Community support*	*N/A*	*N/A*	*Clear communicati*

(T9) *1)Adoption Process*	*adoption without delay.*	*adoption of plan.*			*on of plan adoption.*
Post-Local Plan Adoption Stage **(T3, T4)** **Council Monitoring / Review Stage**	*Oversight & Review.* *Development and Neighbourhood Plans provide clear zones and rules for development that will be granted outline permission upfront.*	*Oversight & Review.* *Development and Neighbourhood Plans provide clear zones and rules for development that will be granted outline permission for appropriate schemes.*	*Oversight & Review.* *Development and Neighbourhood Plans provide design codes to be met by development.*	*Oversight & Review.* *E.g. Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to address whether digital strategy being met by the council.*	*Oversight & Review.* *E.g. Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to address whether SCI principles are being met by the council.*
Post-Planning Stage: Application Submission (T4, T10, T5/11) **BUT Substantive DM Frontloading Stage**	*Community engagement plays an oversight role on specified proposals where necessary.* *E.g. Pre-apps on larger schemes only.*	*Community engagement plays a legitimising role on specified proposals where necessary to provide certainty.*	*Community engagement plays an oversight role on specified design proposals where necessary.*	*Community engagement plays an oversight role on digital communicati on where necessary.* *E.g. Online planning committee meetings that are open to all local residents to attend and post comments.*	*Combined role.* *E.g. Pre-app between all three user groups to ensure that local policies feed into new development .* *Specific role in planning committee.*

Matrix B: description of each of the tools (T1-11) and utility

Matrix Key	Basic Descriptor and benefit/issue	Indicative refs (full references below)	Impact on WP objectives:
T1 = SCI **(Preliminary stage)**	Statement of Community Involvement setting out how and on what basis the LPA will approach community engagement. Scope to upgrade this statement to espouse key principles (SMART tested). Sets the framework and allows for locally tailored approach.	Webler et al, 2001	**WP1: Speed WP2: Certainty WP5: Engagement Does not impact 30 month LP time; Provides certainty for rest of process; Sets principles and positions LPA as more accountable.**
T2 = Visioning **(Frontload Stage)**	Exercises to think about desired futures. Require facilitation and careful design but can generate interest.	DeGroot et al, 2014; Damruch et al 2014; Shipley, 2002; Shipley et al, 2004	**WP2: Certainty WP5: Engagement Adds time to frontload stage but provides greater ownership of the aims of the Plan and certainty for rest of plan-making process.**
T3 = AMR **(Technical / Implementation stage – e.g. compliance tool)**	Annual monitoring report. Not a participation tool but potentially useful to ensure that participation under SCI is being carried out appropriately	Chu et al, 2016	**WP3: Design Qual WP4: Digital WP5: Engagement Provide review of design, digital and engagement targets vs outcomes.**
T4 = NP **(All STAGES)**	Neighbourhood planning. A space where community volunteers can form a group to enact a statutory policy document for their	Wargent & Parker, 2018	**WP1: Speed WP2: Certainty WP3: Design Qual**

	neighbourhood. Lessons can be drawn from the literature on this policy innovation space.		**WP4: Digital WP5: Engagement *Can improve on all objectives at scale***
T5 = Pre-application style discussions (and see T11) **(Frontloading stage)**	Space to discuss emerging ideas and visions as well as basis for design codes. Would involve communities LPAs and developers - co-production model. Needed at start for oversight in absence of Local Plan.	Parker, Dobson, Lynn, 2020; Parker & Arita 2019	**WP1: Speed WP2: Certainty WP3: Design Qual WP5: Engagement Can provide greater speed and certainty (particularly when there is no plan and for larger sites).**
T6 = Citizen Panels / Juries Panels **(Frontloading stage)**	Many forms and separate piece of work on these is being carried out. Overall these may give both quality engagement and representativeness if used in 'mini-public' style and in key group style. Could be used to assist with oversight of SCI principles in application throughout planning process.	Crosby et al 1986; Davies et al, 2012	**WP2: Certainty WP3: Design Qual WP4: Digital WP5: Engagement Can add some time to frontload stage but provides greater certainty for rest of plan-making process. Could be run intensively to minimise any time issue.**
T7 = Community Statement / Plan (Preliminary stage)	A non-statutory plan for a local area that sets out the preferences of the local community on a range of issues (some beyond land-use planning – but often development and design feature). A short document before the plan-making stage would assist LPAs / reduce need to consult.	Gallent & Robinson, 2013.	**WP2: Certainty WP3: Design Qual WP4: Digital WP5: Engagement Provides insight into key community issues and concerns in the early stages.**
T8= Charette **(Frontload stage)**	Focussed events to consider specific local issues - have typically been used in design and could be	Lindsey et al, 2003; Roggema, 2013	**WP2: Certainty WP3: Design Qual WP4: Digital**

	an important part of local design code development.		**WP5: Engagement** **Adds time to frontload stage but provides greater certainty on key issues e.g. design.**
T9 = Consultation (online / face to face) **(Frontload & Implementation stages)**	Can be useful to garner large number of views - particularly in terms of factual material. Can be manipulated and have become widely mistrusted in public eyes. Lack of feedback regarding use of data is one key issue.	Mather & Robinson, 2016; Shipley & Utz, 2012.	**WP1: Speed** **WP2: Certainty** **WP3: Design Qual** **WP4: Digital** **WP5: Engagement** **Ideally key issues dealt with at the frontload stage to save time during formal consultation.**
T10 = Planning Committee **(Outcome / Oversight stage)**	Decision making forum. Online committees provide greater transparency and at the outcomes stage.	--	**WP3: Design Qual** **WP4: Digital** **WP5: Engagement** **Can ensure democratic process and oversight of decision-making.**
T11 = (Tripartite) Pre-apps – larger sites (and see T5)	Multi-party pre-apps could be made mandatory for larger developments. Similar to Welsh approach. May be useful for NP groups to be eligible. Locks in NP actors to outcome and oversight stage.	Parker, Dobson & Lynn - forthcoming	**WP2: Certainty** **WP3: Design Qual** **WP5: Engagement** **Can ensure good design and community oversight / buy-in to major schemes.**

Annex 5: National Consultation Principles (2018)

Note: Derived from 'Consultation Principles 2018' (issued by UK government) see
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691383/Consultation_Principles__1_.pdf

These are to be applied when government undertakes consultation – we think that as a minimum such model principles should be refined and applied to local government. Ultimately to provide consistency and legibility for local government more widely.

Consultation principles

A. **Consultations should be clear and concise**. Use plain English and avoid acronyms. Be clear what questions you are asking and limit the number of questions to those that are necessary. Make them easy to understand and easy to answer. Avoid lengthy documents when possible and consider merging those on related topics. CLARITY

B. **Consultations should have a purpose**. Do not consult for the sake of it. Ask departmental lawyers whether you have a legal duty to consult. Take consultation responses into account when taking policy forward. Consult about policies or implementation plans when the development of the policies or plans is at a formative stage. Do not ask questions about issues on which you already have a final view. PURPOSIVE

C. **Consultations should be informative**. Give enough information to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses. Include validated impact assessments of the costs and benefits of the options being considered when possible; this might be required where proposals have an impact on business or the voluntary sector. INFORMED

D. **Consultations are only part of a process of engagement**. Consider whether informal iterative consultation is appropriate, using new digital tools and open, collaborative approaches. Consultation is not just about formal documents and responses. It is an on-going process. TOOLS / APPROACH

E. **Consultations should last for a proportionate amount of time**. Judge the length of the consultation on the basis of legal advice and taking into account the nature and impact of the proposal. Consulting for too long will unnecessarily delay policy development. Consulting too quickly will not give enough time for consideration and will reduce the quality of responses. TIME

F. **Consultations should be targeted**. Consider the full range of people, business and voluntary bodies affected by the policy, and whether representative groups exist. Consider targeting specific groups if appropriate. Ensure they are aware of the consultation and can

access it. Consider how to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups, such as older people, younger people or people with disabilities that may not respond to traditional consultation methods. DIVERSITY

G. **Consultations should take account of the groups being consulted**. Consult stakeholders in a way that suits them. Charities may need more time to respond than businesses, for example. When the consultation spans all or part of a holiday period, consider how this may affect consultation and take appropriate mitigating action, such as prior discussion with key interested parties or extension of the consultation deadline beyond the holiday period. GROUPS

H. **Consultations should be agreed before publication.** Seek collective agreement before publishing a written consultation, particularly when consulting on new policy proposals. Consultations should be published on gov.uk. AGREED

I. **Consultation should facilitate scrutiny**. Publish any response on the same page on gov.uk as the original consultation, and ensure it is clear when the government has responded to the consultation. Explain the responses that have been received from consultees and how these have informed the policy. State how many responses have been received. TRANSPARENCY

J. **Government responses to consultations should be published in a timely fashion**. Publish responses within 12 weeks of the consultation or provide an explanation why this is not possible. Where consultation concerns a statutory instrument publish responses before or at the same time as the instrument is laid, except in very exceptional circumstances (and even then publish responses as soon as possible). Allow appropriate time between closing the consultation and implementing policy or legislation. FEEDBACK

K**. Consultation exercises should not generally be launched during local or national election periods**. If exceptional circumstances make a consultation absolutely essential (for example, for safeguarding public health), departments should seek advice from the Propriety and Ethics team in the Cabinet Office. This document does not have legal force and is subject to statutory and other legal requirements. TIMING

Annex 6: Select Bibliography

Limited to 30 items:

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Additionally, an extensive crowd-sourced online bibliography that includes items specifically on participation in planning (section 3) is found here: https://goo.gl/vkUzNC