Planning Your Place:
Getting Involved

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**Report of the Planning Engagement Partnership
March 2022**

Ministerial Foreword:

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I am delighted to publish the Report of the Planning Engagement Partnership, 'Planning Your Place: Getting Involved' which sets out recommendations on how to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in planning and place shaping, and to help improve the planning system experience for users.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have become all too aware of how we use our places and spaces, and the networks of shops, streets, health services, education facilities, parks and transport networks that form the places where we live, work and play.

We have had a chance to reflect on our neighbourhoods, the facilities around us, and how we interact with our environment. Planning decisions are at the heart of every local community, and therefore have an effect on everyday life within that community. It is important that the views of the community inform the decision-making process.

However, planning decisions are often not straightforward, and achieving effective and meaningful community engagement in the planning system is challenging. Diverging interests, large volumes of information, specialist knowledge, and sometimes lengthy and legalistic processes are all part and parcel of a functioning planning system. It can mean it is not always easy to navigate the complexities of the system, and it can quite simply be off-putting to becoming involved. This has to change and it is important that we strive for improvement.

Over the past year the Partnership has been sharing their knowledge and insights on the community engagement aspects of the planning system. They have also held events which brought together practitioners who are regular users of the planning system, and the wider community, to gather information and inform their work. And I am delighted to see that the recommendations brought forward by the Partnership are very much practically focused.

There needs to be a collective and ongoing commitment by the planning and place shaping community to work collaboratively to implement the recommendations of the Partnership. And I encourage everyone to take an interest in the planning system and become involved in the decisions that impact on your local area, here in our shared place.

Nichola Mallon

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Main Report and Recommendations

1.0   Executive Summary

1.1   This Report has been produced by the Planning Engagement Partnership ("the Partnership") and the key focus has been on setting out practical recommendations that, when implemented, will enhance the quality and depth of community engagement at regional and local planning authority levels, and will help to improve the planning system experience for users.

1.2   A desk-based research study was undertaken on the main community engagement aspects of the planning processes operating in the UK and Republic of Ireland jurisdictions. This, coupled with information gathering techniques (a good practice template, an issues log, workshops and a public event) to gather views and information from practitioners of the planning system and the wider community, formed the basis of the recommendations.

1.3   When examining the information gathered, six key themes were identified:

- Implementation of Development Management and Forward Planning Processes;
- Achieving Inclusive Engagement;
- Access to Planning Information and the Planning Process;
- Communicating Effectively About Planning;
- Learning and Reflection on Community Engagement and Planning; and
- Delivering Improved and Effective Community Engagement.

1.4   The eight recommendations flow from the above key findings and seek to address how community engagement in planning and place shaping processes can be more effectively implemented in Northern Ireland, assist with improving standards in relation to community engagement practice, and improve access to the planning system for the general public. To summarise, the recommendations comprise:

1. Improving Place Shaping Processes
   a. Better Integration of Community Engagement Activity
   b. Planning Communications
   c. Learning about Planning
2. Early Information on Planning Proposals
   a. Neighbour Notification
   b. Site Notices
   c. Low Cost Digital Application
   d. Advertising Requirements
3. Improving Pre-Application Community Engagement
   a. Use of Pre-Application Discussion
   b. Pre-Application Community Consultation
   c. Proportionate Early Community Engagement
   d. Social Housing Development
   e. Guidance on Community Engagement on Planning Applications
4. Access for the Community to Planning Advice and Information
   a. Community Places Planning Advice Service
   b. Planning Advice Volunteers
   c. Information Contained on Planning Websites
5. Third Party Engagement
   a. Collecting Information on Third Party Challenges

      b.   The New Relationship between Communities and Elected Representatives

      c.   Research Other Jurisdictions

6. Raise the Profile of Community Engagement in Planning and Place Shaping
    a. Engage with Senior Officers and Leaders
    b. A Community Engagement Awareness Campaign
    c. Good Practice Standards
    d. Young Professionals as Advocates
7. Develop Capacity and Skills
    a. Community Engagement Online Resource
    b. Training and Development
8. Key Issues for the Future of Community Engagement
    a. Learning and Investing in Digital Innovation
    b. Engagement with Children and Young People
    c. Engaging on Climate Change

1.5   Over the longer term these recommendations seek to assist with how planning is viewed and understood, improve the understanding of why it is important for people to become involved, and further develop the skills and knowledge needed to achieve effective community engagement which will contribute to better outcomes. A structure or group to oversee implementation and delivery of the recommendations will be established.

Community Consultation/Engagement – Key Information

1.6   The Department has a range of guidance to assist those involved in community engagement and consultation processes. Please visit the link below for more information.

- Planning Practice Notes - https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-practice-notes

1.7   The legislation that sets out how the community is involved in the planning process can be found by visiting the link below.

- Planning Legislation - https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/current-planning-legislation

1.8   Community Places are funded by the Department for Infrastructure to provide a planning advice service. If you would like to find out more about this service, please visit the link below.

- Community Places - https://www.communityplaces.info/

2.0   Introduction and Background

2.1   Background

2.1.1   From 1st April 2015, a key aspect of the new planning system is to ensure that the community have opportunities to be involved at the early stages of decision making. Minister Nichola Mallon convened the Planning Engagement Partnership on 21st October 2020 to look at how to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in planning decisions taken local by councils, and regionally by the Department for Infrastructure ("the Department"), and to help improve the planning system experience for users.

2.1.2   The Partnership has brought together a cross-section of key planning stakeholders from across Northern Ireland (see **Annex A**). It has concentrated on looking at improvements that can be made to the current system which are set out in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the subordinate legislation. The key output of the Partnership's work is a Report, with recommendations, that seeks to improve community engagement in planning and place shaping processes in Northern Ireland.

2.2   Scope of the Project

2.2.1   The key tasks as set out in the Terms of Reference (see **Annex B**) comprise:

   a.   To establish a Planning Engagement Partnership to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in the planning process at both the regional and planning authority levels.
   b.   To explore and identify actions that will improve community engagement in planning and place shaping processes, to assist with delivering upon the planning reforms introduced in April 2015 and dealing with the impacts of Covid-19.
   c.   To agree a report/implementation plan with the Chief Planner to deliver upon the identified actions.

2.2.2   Community Places has assisted the Department for Infrastructure with the setting up and implementation of this project. Community Places are funded by the Department to provide planning advice and support for disadvantaged individuals and community groups to become involved in the planning system.

2.2.3   The Partnership members have a wide range of experience, and it became apparent at the first meeting that their collective understanding of what planning and place shaping processes encapsulate is very broad and links to a wide range of activities. The group membership was widened after the first meeting to ensure that the various aspects of planning and place shaping were represented as fully as possible.

2.2.4   The original intention was that the Partnership would produce a Report with recommendations/an implementation plan, with actions to be delivered upon, and that the project would run for six to nine months. However, the timeframe has extended beyond this for a number of reasons.

2.2.5   As stated above, the Partnership's collective understanding of what planning and place shaping processes encapsulates is very broad and links to a wide range of activities. This, along with the raised profile following the Minister's announcement, influenced the Partnership's decision to seek a wider range of views to inform the Report and recommendations through three events which took time to organise and deliver. However,

the inclusive approach to meeting the project objectives means that the recommendations will provide for improved inclusivity in planning.

2.2.6   Following this publication, a structure or group will be established to oversee implementation and delivery of the recommendations.

3.0 Community Engagement in Planning: Context

3.1 Defining Engagement

3.1.1 Community engagement has been a recurring subject of debate within planning since the 1960s (Brownill and Parker, 2010). The terminology associated with community engagement in planning can appear straightforward, but it is often complex and contested. Terms like 'engagement' and 'participation' can be used interchangeably, with research over recent decades revealing a distinct shift occurring across governments, and in policy language, from 'public participation' to 'community engagement' (Ross, et al., 2016).

3.1.2 Based on contemporary literature, 'engagement' is often viewed as the collective noun for a range of participatory mechanisms creating opportunities for communities to interact with planning processes, at various stages of development management and local development planning, consisting of the following:

- o *Inform*: is an important process, but a low level of meaningful engagement activity, to provide the public with information to assist them in understanding development proposals and ways the public can get involved in planning decision-making processes. Examples include: websites; Statement of Community Involvement (SCI); advertising of planning applications; neighbour notification; and public information campaigns.
- o *Consult*: is arguably the most widely adopted engagement process in planning that aims to obtain public feedback on planning applications and the suite of policies that form local development plans (LDPs). Consultation itself occupies a point that indicates a relatively low level of two-way engagement, focused more on gathering inputs into decision-making processes, offering a limited degree of influence on the final decision and outcome. Examples include: consultation response forms; draft planning documents; public comment mechanisms; and surveys.
- o *Involve*: is a process that tends to work directly with the public through meaningful cooperative engagement to ensure issues and concerns are considered and shared outcomes are achieved. It consists of a higher level of intensity between community stakeholders and planners, with ongoing information flows between actors, with a deeper degree of engagement so that the community is, and feels, part of the overall decision-making process. Examples include: workshops; formal public participatory networks; and deliberate polling.

3.1.3 However, other engagement models, for example the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)[1], provide a spectrum of community engagement that indicates a range of participation levels seeking to better inform the selection of appropriate and meaningful methods that defines the public's role in any engagement process. In addition to 'inform', 'consult' and 'involve', the IAP2 model also promotes 'collaborate' and 'empower' as participatory mechanisms that imply working together to share power in decision-making processes with steps towards tailoring engagement to people's needs and building better relationships between stakeholders. Examples of such engagements tend to operate outside of contemporary planning practice, for example, more aligned to community planning processes and through emerging practices of participatory budgeting.

3.1.4 In contrast to other place shaping processes where collaboration and co-design can achieve consensus on shared objectives, planning is a much more regulatory and contested process involving balancing and negotiating many diverse and competing interests. Communities can

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[1] Further information available at: https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars

be consulted, participate and even be involved in planning processes, but this does not necessarily mean that they are meaningfully engaged. Also, the diverging interests, large volumes of information, specialist knowledge, and sometimes lengthy and legalistic processes can mean it is not always easy to navigate the complexities of the system and can be off-putting for the community to become involved.

3.1.5 Therefore, arguably, further consideration is required on ways to generate more inclusive community engagement that provides people with opportunities to participate through constructive, meaningful and supportive methods that reduce barriers so that members of the community feel that they are not prevented from taking part in decision-making processes. Barriers can be wide-ranging, such as, age, language, confidence, location, timing, physical and intellectual disability, mental health issues, culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, digital access/exclusion, transportation, caring responsibilities, incentives, appeal, power dynamics, etc. Considering the conditions for inclusive engagement are crucial for proactively including a range of public voices, and for the adoption of multiple methods that stimulate meaningful engagement, some of which engender joint decision-making, to ensure planning is delivering in the public interest.

3.2   Engagement in Context in the Planning Process

3.2.1 A desk-top research exercise is contained in the **Information Supplement** which details the main community engagement aspects of planning processes in Northern Ireland and the other UK and Republic of Ireland jurisdictions. It provides a comprehensive overview of community involvement in development management procedures and Local Development Plan processes. It also sets out the temporary measures for community involvement in planning adopted in response to the Covid-19 crisis, other community engagement related activity and support available for communities in the planning process. The information below draws out some key aspects from the findings of the research.

Planning Applications (Development Management)

3.2.2 All jurisdictions (UK and Republic of Ireland) use a combination of methods to inform the community at an early stage about proposals for which a planning application has been submitted. Planning authorities use a combination of one or more of the following methods: advertisement in a local paper, neighbour notification, publicity on their website and site notices. In Northern Ireland, advertising in a local newspaper, neighbour notification and publication on the relevant planning authority website is used. Neighbour notification is used in all four UK jurisdictions. Advertising of applications is a requirement in Northern Ireland, Wales and Republic of Ireland, and in Scotland it is required where there are no premises on neighbouring land. As is the case in Northern Ireland, publication of applications is required on planning authority websites in England. Site notices are not required in Northern Ireland but are used in England, Wales and Republic of Ireland.

Publicity requirements and the making of representations and comments on planning applications are subject to statutory timeframes which vary between the jurisdictions. Unlike the UK jurisdictions, third party rights of appeal are part of the Republic of Ireland planning system. This means that a person who has made a representation on an application has the right to appeal the decision within a certain timeframe from the issuing of the decision notice.

Jurisdiction	Advert in Local Paper	Neighbour Notification	Publicity on Website	Site Notice	Notify Community/ town Council	Third Party Rights of Appeal
Northern Ireland	X	X	X			
England		X	X	X		
Wales	X	X		X	X	
Scotland	X (where no premises on neighbouring land)	X				
Republic of Ireland	X			X		X

Table 1 - Methods of informing the community about a planning application

Consultation on Applications for Major Development

3.2.3   In all jurisdictions (UK and Republic of Ireland), pre-application community consultation is required before the submission of applications for major development. In the UK jurisdictions this is known as Pre-application Community Consultation (PACC). Northern Ireland and Scotland are the only jurisdictions that require at least one consultation event to be held. In all of the UK jurisdictions submission of a report, which contains information on the community consultation undertaken, is required along with the planning application. However, this is not required in the Republic of Ireland. It should be noted that the various jurisdictions define major development differently, and in the Republic of Ireland they are referred to as strategic developments. The definitions for major development and strategic development are set out in the legislation.

3.2.4   Pre-application discussion provides an opportunity for the applicant to discuss their proposals including their planned community consultation with the planning authority. Pre-application discussions are optional in Northern Ireland and England, however they are a requirement in the Republic of Ireland. These discussions also provide an opportunity for applicants to consider and understand key issues, consultation arrangements and validation requirements, and identify key stakeholders upfront.

3.2.5   In Northern Ireland and Scotland, applicants must notify the planning authority of their intention to submit an application for major development. This is known as a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN). In England, an applicant will provide details of the proposed application to the planning authority so that it can be publicised on their website and representations on the proposal are invited. In Northern Ireland, the PAN will contain information on the PACC arrangements. Timeframes for these procedures vary between the jurisdictions and are set out in legislation.

3.2.6   The efficient processing of major applications can be improved with the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) which are a feature of the English planning system. Also, in Scotland a processing agreement can be used with national, major and substantial/complex local developments to assist with project management.

Jurisdiction	Notify planning authority prior to submission	Pre application Discussion	Pre application community consultation	At least one consultation event required	Submission of consultation report as part of application
Northern Ireland	X	X (optional)	X	X	X
England	X	X (optional)	X		X
Wales			X		X
Scotland	X		X	X	X
Republic of Ireland		X (required)	X		

Table 2 - Consultation Procedures on Applications for Major Development

Local Development Plan

3.2.7 In all of the UK jurisdictions, a document is prepared which sets out the intended community engagement to be carried out during the plan preparation process. In Northern Ireland and England this is called a Statement of Community Involvement, in Wales it is a Community Involvement Scheme and in Scotland it is a Participation Statement. Each of the jurisdictions also provide for early community engagement before the development plan document is prepared. A consultation document is prepared and consulted upon for a specified period of time which varies depending upon the jurisdiction. In Northern Ireland the public consultation document is called a Preferred Options Paper, in England it is an Issues and Options document, in Wales it is a Preferred Strategy, and in Scotland it is a Main Issues Report. Any representations made by the community at this early stage of consultation helps to inform the preparation of the plan itself.

3.2.8 In Northern Ireland, England and Wales public consultation is carried out on development plan documents and each jurisdiction sets specific time periods for the public consultation. These documents then go through an Independent Examination that assesses them against a series of soundness tests which includes how the public have been involved in the process. In recent years, the Independent Examination process has been redesigned to be more accessible to the public. In Scotland, when the plan is being submitted to Scottish Ministers for Independent Examination, it is accompanied by a Report of Conformity with the Participation Statement. Therefore, although the Scottish process is slightly different, the importance of community engagement in the process is the same. Scotland does not use soundness tests as the basis for Independent Examination.

3.2.9 In recent years, community involvement in plan preparation has been further enhanced through the introduction of neighbourhood planning in England and piloting of Place Plans in Wales. In England, Neighbourhood Plans form part of the statutory development plan for the area, however in Wales the intention is that Place Plans will not form part of the statutory development plan. In Scotland, upcoming changes include the introduction of Local Place Plans and a formal role for the participation of children and young people in development plan preparation. Also, in England, the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020) has an objective of streamlining community engagement and increasing the use of digital technology. Pilot projects are being set up to look at innovative solutions to support plan making and community involvement.

3.2.10 In the Republic of Ireland, there is a focus on community engagement and the role of members in the development plan preparation process. The Local Community Development

Committee has a role in promoting meaningful citizen and community engagement and is involved in plan preparation. There is an initial public consultation period which invites views in oral or written form, after which a report of submissions received is prepared and considered by the planning authority members. The Chief Executive receives directions of a strategic nature from the members to inform the plan preparation. Once the draft plan is prepared, members consider it and amend it if necessary. There is a public consultation on the draft plan after which a report is prepared on the submissions and observations received. The draft plan, and the report of the submissions received on it, are considered by the members who decide to adopt it or make further amendments. Where further amendments are proposed the public are invited to comment. There is no Independent Examination of the plan.

3.2.11   For all jurisdictions, there are publicity and advertisement requirements in relation to the various stages of plan preparation, the public consultation documents and where they can be inspected, how to make representations/submissions and the adoption of the plan documents, that the council must adhere to.

Temporary Measures in Response to Covid-19

3.2.12   Northern Ireland and Scotland suspended their requirement for holding a public event as part of pre-application community consultation on major proposals. Also, in England temporary changes allowed greater flexibility in relation to how planning applications are publicised, and in Scotland requirements were amended to include electronic means for publicity. In Wales, temporary measures addressed publicity and inspection arrangements in relation to pre-application consultation on major proposals and, whilst site notices remained mandatory, developers and agents were expected to expand the use of social media and other online services to widen public engagement.

3.2.13   In England, planning authorities were also encouraged to review their Statement of Community Involvement so that plan making could continue. In the Republic of Ireland, Covid-19 impacted upon meeting the statutory timeframes for preparing a development plan. Legislation was introduced to allow for a further period of up to, but not exceeding, one year in order to prepare or revise a development plan.

Support for Communities Engaging in the Planning Process

3.2.14   Planning advice/planning aid services are provided in all of the UK jurisdictions. There is no equivalent in the Republic of Ireland and such advice is provided in alternative forms, for example through the Citizens Information Board. However, in Dublin, a community technical aid service was available from 1996 to 2017.

3.2.15   In Northern Ireland, Community Places is funded by the Department for Infrastructure to provide this service. Those providing the advice are professional planners who are employed by Community Places. The advice service entails responding to emails and telephone queries, developing easy-read fact sheets and guides to planning, and undertaking a number of outreach advice clinics each year. Where groups seek advice on a development issue which may have a wider impact on the community or create a precedent, Community Places advises those groups throughout the whole planning application process as appropriate. Community Places also undertakes community engagement activities and training to support communities to get involved and have a voice in planning and place shaping processes.

3.2.16   Planning Aid Wales and Scotland both receive some Government funding whilst Planning Aid England and London do not. All of the services offer general advice and guidance to the public through a range of measures, such as email and telephone advice, and web-based

planning advice and guidance. They also provide additional support to disadvantaged communities, but do not provide an advocacy role. Wales, England and London planning aid services utilise volunteers with expert knowledge on various aspects of the planning system to assist with their operation. Scotland, Wales and London planning aid services provide training and capacity building in relation to community engagement, and in Scotland this includes an educational programme for people. In Wales, the planning aid service facilitates community engagement for emerging Local Development Plans and their reviews. Planning Aid England provides a consulting service for bespoke training and community engagement which generates an income stream.

4.0 Methodology and Information Gathering

4.1 Approach

4.1.1 From the beginning, the Partnership has implemented a collaborative approach to its work. The members have shared views honestly and there has been openness and transparency in decision making. This has been demonstrated through collaboration on the planning and delivery of events, as well as the open and lively discussions at the Partnership meetings. The Partnership has provided an opportunity for members to learn from each other and make new connections. It has assisted in developing good working relationships between those in the Partnership, and fostering an understanding and better appreciation of each other's viewpoints and challenges within their individual work contexts.

4.1.2 To inform the recommendations, information was gathered through the following sources:

a. A Good Practice Template;
b. An Issues Log;
c. Two Workshops for planning practitioners; and
d. A Public Event, comprising four sessions.

4.2 Good Practice Template

4.2.1 Through the information gathering it was clear that there was a wealth of good practice and examples of effective community engagement that would be useful to collate and from which there were opportunities to learn.

4.2.2 Partnership members identified useful resources and tools which led to the development of a Good Practice Template (see **Information Supplement**). The template draws together and signposts to examples of guidance, tools, techniques and toolkits which support effective community engagement practice.

4.2.3 The Good Practice Template inspired the Partnership to use some of the examples in the design of the three events which are discussed further below.

4.3 Issues Log

4.3.1 As a result of the media interest in the Partnership, the Department received some information from the public on a range of issues relating to community engagement in planning. Therefore, an issues log captured this information and was used to inform the work. A pro-forma was made available on the Department's website for people to submit their views. An analysis of the information received during the course of this project is set out in the **Information Supplement**.

4.4 Workshops and Public Event

4.4.1 The Partnership decided to hold workshops or seminars as a way of looking at particular aspects of community engagement in the planning process. How other practitioners and the public would be involved in such organised events, what format the events should take to meet the needs of the various sectors involved, and how to achieve some focused feedback within a reasonable timescale was considered. Two focused workshops for practitioners who are regular users of the planning process and one public event, comprising four sessions open for everyone to attend, were organised:

- Workshop One – Community Engagement in Development Management on 25th March;
- Workshop Two – Community Engagement in Forward Planning on 30th March; and

- Public Event – Planning Your Place: Getting Involved on 25th May.

4.4.2   During the two workshops, it was recognised that the planning process can be complex and challenging to implement. The importance of community engagement in place shaping was highlighted and the workshops provided a platform for discussing good practice and use of new and innovative techniques.

4.4.3   The findings from the two workshops helped to shape the public event that was held a few weeks later which looked at more creative and innovative approaches to community engagement.

4.4.4   The two workshops and each session of the public event began with the presentation of case studies. These demonstrated best practice in relation to community engagement in planning and place shaping, with time afterwards for questions and answers. This was followed by small facilitated discussion groups to gather information on what is working well, areas for improvement, and to explore practical steps or actions to enhance community engagement.

4.4.5   The views expressed in the discussion groups were recorded anonymously to encourage people to speak openly about their experiences of community engagement in planning and place shaping. Detailed information on the workshops and public event and the information gathered can be found in the **Information Supplement.**

5.0   Key Findings

5.1   The following information was gathered through the two workshops held in March 2021 and the public event comprising four sessions held in May 2021, the Issues Log and the Good Practice Template, and the discussions at the Partnership meetings. The key findings are also informed by research into community engagement practices in the UK and Republic of Ireland jurisdictions. These key findings have informed the recommendations.

5.2   Theme 1 – Implementation of Development Management and Forward Planning Processes.

5.2.1   In relation to development management, the planning process begins at the inception of a proposal or scheme and continues through to its delivery and beyond. In relation to forward planning, the planning process begins with gathering evidence and information at the inception stage of a plan or scheme. Ongoing community engagement with the local community throughout the planning process is considered as important as meeting the minimum statutory requirements, and should be balanced with the required statutory consultations at points in the process. A clearer explanation of how the information gathered through community engagement informs the decision making process would improve transparency of the process and build trust. In relation to the delivery of planning proposals and schemes, continuing community engagement during the development phase would also be beneficial and assist in demonstrating how comments received during the planning decision making process have been considered and addressed.

5.2.2   More effective use of the existing suite of legislation and guidance could assist in improving community engagement. Further consideration should be given to the use of the pre-application discussion (PAD), pre-application notice (PAN) and pre-application community consultation (PACC) processes and how they could improve the quality of community engagement delivered and assist in improving the quality of planning applications submitted. Also, there is some duplication of community consultation measures in relation to proposed social housing developments which needs to be addressed. The Department for Communities require an applicant to consult the local community in advance of commencing the planning process. Therefore, in the case of a major development, a separate PACC is required by the planning system which results in duplication.

5.2.3   Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK which has a statutory link between the spatial plan and the Community Plan, as the Planning Act 2011 requires that the Local Development Plan must take account of the council's current Community Plan. This should be explored further to develop a better understanding of how the Local Development Plan can benefit from and fully address the spatial needs identified through engagement in the community planning process.

5.2.4   The scale and nature of community engagement undertaken should be proportionate to the scale, nature and potential effects of the proposed development, scheme or plan. Even though some proposed schemes may fall below the PACC threshold, they may have greater and wider impacts due to the nature of the proposed development. A more proportionate and bespoke approach to the application of PACC and community engagement could be considered.

5.2.5   Advertising and publicity requirements should be modernised to include modern digital methods. However, there is a need to ensure that a combination of digital and traditional approaches are considered to maximise inclusion and not inadvertently exclude particular sectors of the community. It was suggested that there should be some flexibility for councils

to decide how to advertise and publicise planning applications they receive. Use of site notices and extended or tailored neighbour notification could be considered.

5.2.6 Outside of the mainstream planning processes there are other parts of the planning system, such as Certificates of Lawful Use Development (CLUDs) and enforcement, where the community is not formally part of the process. There may be merit in considering how these processes could be improved for a better outcome.

5.2.7 With regard to the framework for community engagement, it is established practice to look at other jurisdictions, mainly the UK and Republic of Ireland. There may be other alternatives to the current approach and these should be considered. Alternative approaches in Republic of Ireland and Scotland were mentioned. An impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the increased access digitally to other planning jurisdictions across the globe, not just the UK and Republic of Ireland, and this has opened up opportunities to learn from others. This could lead to considering a wider range of alternatives and approaches.

5.3 Theme 2 - Achieving Inclusive Engagement.

5.3.1 The key question is how do we know or find out if we are reaching those we need to and as many people as possible, and if we are reaching those who will be impacted through community engagement? It is important to engage with all of those impacted by a proposal or development or scheme, as well as those potentially negatively impacted, in order to ensure that there is a balanced perspective. It is also important to note that the impact can take many forms and is not necessarily confined to proximity. A standard approach will not achieve optimum engagement and cognisance should be given to the characteristics of the local community. Flexibility is required around methods used and reaching out to sectors that do not traditionally engage with planning.

5.3.2 The intention of introducing the soundness tests and the less adversarial, evidence based approach to the independent examination of a Local Development Plan, was to assist in part with providing more accessibility to the process. At the round table discussions everyone is an equal party to the discussion. Early indications of the new style independent examination are that it is focused on evidence based decision making and not on the ability to present a case. However, the terminology and understanding of the concept of 'soundness' is still perceived as a barrier to becoming involved.

5.3.3 The case studies identified throughout the course of this project have provided a wealth of information on the range of methods that can be employed to reach different sectors. Youth and young people were identified at both workshops and all four sessions of the public event as an important sector to engage with. Opportunities to reach out to this particular sector could include engaging with younger people in relation to certain categories of development such as schools, public and civic spaces and buildings, engagement through existing youth forums or panels, and through schools and further education.

5.3.4 It takes a number of years to prepare a Local Development Plan and it can be challenging to keep people engaged over such a long period of time. Also, there are likely to be extended periods of time between public consultations and community engagement events. Other place shaping processes can be used to include people as they can be more innovative and accessible in scale and format. These include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), regeneration schemes, research and partnership initiatives such as active travel, health and wellbeing projects etc., participatory budgeting, community asset transfer, tactical urbanism, meanwhile uses/pop-ups etc.

5.3.5 A hybrid approach to community consultation, using traditional and modern methods together, could assist with achieving more inclusive engagement. Increased digital

engagement during the Covid-19 crisis has altered the profile of those getting involved in planning to a younger demographic.

5.4   Theme 3 - Access to Planning Information and the Planning Process.

5.4.1   Consideration should be given to the first point at which people have an opportunity to find out about proposals or schemes that may impact them, as this would help to realise the benefits of early community engagement. Site notices, more effective and wide-ranging neighbour notification, and use of digital and mobile technology to flag up potential and proposed developments or schemes at an early stage (by linking in with information logged onto the Planning Portal or council/developer websites, for example), are some of the additional approaches that may improve accessibility. Improving this could help to minimise a protracted development management process which could lead to rising costs, potential complaints and legal challenges, and a lack of trust in the planning process. In relation to Local Development Plans, clear information should be provided on how the community can become involved and how this can influence the process.

5.4.2   Access to information and decision makers is important for transparency and trust in the decision making process. Information on the Planning Portal, council websites, and websites of consultants and other organisations with a role in planning should aim to be intuitive, easily accessible and prominent. Furthermore, having some degree of consistency in how information is presented would assist the community.

5.4.3   Inability to converse directly with the decision makers was raised as a frustration generally, and more particularly when people and communities considered they had missed opportunities to become involved in the early stages of the planning application process. It was stated that, by the time a proposal reaches planning committee stage, it is late in the process to raise issues. In addition, there is no opportunity for third parties to appeal decisions. This can result in more adversarial actions such as judicial reviews, complaints to the decision makers and referrals to the Ombudsman. The whole system approach to third party engagement in the planning application process needs to be given further consideration.

5.4.4   Information needed in order to make planning decisions is often complex, legalistic and requires specialist knowledge. Therefore, access to professional support or opportunities for upskilling and learning about planning processes, would assist in empowering people and communities to become involved. Also, further information on how people engage with their community representatives would assist with understanding how the system is currently working.

5.5   Theme 4 - Communicating Effectively About Planning.

5.5.1   It is a challenge to present the large volumes of often complex and legalistic information in a more user-friendly and jargon free format. However, in order to value community engagement as part of the decision making process, it is important to present planning policy, legislation and technical information in innovative ways that encourages and supports people to become involved. The opportunities that digital engagement provides to augment traditional methods include virtual reality and digital mapping, presenting information in 'bitesize chunks' and use of video to help visualise how a change in planning policy might look. Also, more user friendly versions of documents such as non-technical summaries, and 'easy read' and 'youth friendly' versions can be utilised to reach out more widely.

5.5.2   It is important that the purpose of a particular community engagement process and the nature of the information being sought is clear, as a lack of clarity can lead to unrealistic

expectations about the outcomes. A community engagement process is also an opportunity to improve awareness of what planning is, why it is relevant to the person/community, why it is important for them to become involved, and what difference their involvement can make.

5.6 Theme 5 - Learning and Reflection on Community Engagement and Planning.

5.6.1 The wealth of case studies identified throughout the course of this project and presented at the events, demonstrates that there is a lot of activity already ongoing and readily available from which to learn. This information is spread across a wide range of sectors and organisations, and would provide a great resource for training and upskilling if co-ordinated and brought together. Indeed, a number of attendees at the events held by the Partnership stated that they had learned a lot, and enjoyed the chance to hear from others involved in implementing the planning process.

5.6.2 The community's perception of what planning is, can be different to that of practitioners. Various ideas for people and stakeholders to learn about planning were raised. Community engagement processes provide an opportunity to improve people's understanding of planning. Piloting or testing out new ideas and methods of engagement and evaluating these would provide learning points. Exploring place shaping and talking about planning with children and young people reaches their families, education and wider networks. Media campaigns could be employed for separate projects or consultations, and for raising awareness and improving understanding of planning in general.

5.7 Theme 6 - Delivering Improved and Effective Community Engagement.

5.7.1 In order to improve community engagement there should be a collective, ongoing commitment by all sectors involved in delivering planning and place shaping processes, and assisting with empowering and motivating the community to become involved in decisions that impact them and their locality. The benefits of effective community engagement need to be understood and valued in order for delivery of community engagement above and beyond the legislative requirements.

5.7.2 The perception that effective community engagement will slow down the planning process should be challenged. Frontloading the planning process with early stakeholder engagement, introduced through the reforms in April 2015, was to assist with meeting the objective of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

5.7.3 Investment in early stakeholder engagement may take some time at the forefront of the planning process, but in the long run it will assist with delivering a better quality of development, more transparent decision making, whilst potentially reducing time spent dealing with complaints and challenges that can delay delivery of development for years. Some of the case studies presented during the course of the Partnership's work illustrated these aspects. Therefore, how to secure the commitment of those responsible for investing resources and budgets should be considered.

5.7.4 Integration of planning with the other responsibilities that councils deliver, in order to more fully realise the power of planning at the local level, is ongoing and long term. Integrating community engagement processes, for example with community planning, local economic development and health and wellbeing, can help to open up opportunities for more innovative approaches, reduce consultation fatigue, improve cost benefits and ultimately deliver better outcomes. It can also help to improve the understanding of what planning is about, and how it can impact positively on people's wellbeing and environment.

5.7.5   Case studies also demonstrated that to achieve effective community engagement it requires a particular knowledge and skill set. It was stated that additional time and resources should be invested in community engagement and valued alongside performance processing targets. There is also a lack of awareness of, and at times a lack of time to find out about, existing toolkits and guidance that could assist with carrying out an effective engagement process. Upskilling planning professionals or those expected to carry out community engagement, and access to assistance from those with the relevant skills and knowledge, would be beneficial.

5.8   Conclusion

5.8.1   The key findings reflect those at a point in time. However, the demands of society, the environment and the economy continue to evolve. Improvements will be taken forward in the context of the climate and nature crises, impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, continuous digital improvements and innovations, and changes to legislation to meet political and policy changes. Other influences will potentially include the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office review of planning in Northern Ireland.

6.0   Recommendations

6.1   The recommendations flow from the key findings. They seek to address how community engagement can be more effectively implemented, assist with improving standards, and improve access to the planning system for the general public. Over the longer term the recommendations seek to assist with improving how planning is viewed and understood, increase understanding of why it is important for people to become involved, and further develop the skills and knowledge needed to achieve effective community engagement which will contribute to better outcomes.

6.2   The recommendations below concentrate on the main planning and place shaping processes of development management and forward planning. Community engagement in other parts of the planning system, such as the CLUD and enforcement processes, were raised but have not been addressed in the following recommendations. Legislation does not require community consultation as part of these processes, and the processing and management of such cases is a matter for the relevant council. Points raised in relation to these issues of planning control will be considered through work associated with the review of the implementation of the Planning Act 2011.

Forward Planning

1.   **Improving Place Shaping Processes**: It has been identified that the Local Development Plan process is very long and it can be difficult to keep the community engaged throughout. Also, the language can be very technical and not easily understood by those who are not regular users of the planning system. However, councils have been engaging with the community on a range of place shaping activities, such as community planning, local economic development, regeneration and environmental enhancement, active travel (walking and cycling), open streets, community and health hubs, tackling anti-social behaviour through re-purposing underused spaces etc. The following measures seek to improve the community's understanding and input to planning and place shaping processes:

    a.   **Better Integration of Community Engagement Activity:** Councils, Departments and existing Partnerships should identify place shaping consultations and engagement activity that could be carried out together to reduce duplication. Test projects should involve bringing together existing community engagement and communication expertise from the organisations involved. Learning from test projects and good practice is to be evaluated and shared with other organisations.
    b.   **Planning Communications**: Alternative versions of planning consultation documents, such as Easy Read or Plain English, that use less technical jargon should be provided as a matter of course.
    c.   **Learning about Planning**: Use community engagement on an alternative place shaping initiative to encourage participation in and raise awareness about the Local Development Plan. Set up test projects and share learning with the organisations involved.

    Reason: To assist with improving accessibility to the Local Development Plan process and other place shaping processes. To improve people's understanding of planning and place shaping, and encourage their involvement in these processes which will contribute to better meeting the needs of the local community. To utilise already existing networks and community engagement expertise within the organisations involved.

    Link to Key Findings: Themes 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6

Development Management

2. **Early Information on Planning Proposals**: It was identified that the community does not always receive early information on proposals that may impact on their amenity and how they use their local area. In order to have an opportunity to comment on a proposal or application and become involved in the planning process, the following measures seek to assist with maximising community outreach and utilising advances in digital technology:

   a. **Neighbour Notification:** Neighbour notification should not be limited to the minimum requirements in legislation, but its extent tailored to the nature and scale of the proposal. The planning authority should notify all neighbours who may be impacted positively or negatively by a proposed development, in order that they have an opportunity to consider the scheme and comment upon it.

   b. **Site Notices**: Site notices should be trialled on a test group of applications in order to assess their impact on improving awareness of proposed developments in a local area. The trial can apply to a restricted area and relate to particular application types, so that impact can be measured. The site notice should contain key information about the proposal and signpost people to the online application.

   c. **Low Cost Digital Application**: A low cost digital application should be trialled that can alert the community to a development proposal or scheme in their area, the purpose of which is to enhance awareness of the community in relation to nearby proposals. The impact of the digital application should be monitored, and the benefits and investment quantified.

   d. **Advertising Requirements**: Revise the legislation to allow more flexibility by planning authorities and applicants to use a combination of traditional and modern IT methods to advertise planning applications and proposals. Advertising should be considered along with use of site notices, neighbour notification, and advances in digital technology to maximise the number and range of people getting early information on proposals and consultations.

   Reason: To improve accessibility to community engagement at the outset of the planning application process. To assist with frontloading the planning process with early stakeholder engagement and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system. To make use of advances in digital technology, and enable more flexibility for publicising planning applications and consultations.

   Link to Key Findings: Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. **Improving Pre-Application Community Engagement**: It was identified that pre-application community consultation is not always meaningful or effective and it is not always clear how the community's comments have been taken into consideration in the planning process. In order to ensure that the community receive early information on proposals that impact upon them, and so that they can respond appropriately and engage in the planning process, the following measures seek to ensure that pre-application community consultation is more meaningful:

   a. **Use of Pre-Application Discussion**: For major developments planning authorities should provide the applicant with a list of key community stakeholders and interest groups who should be targeted as part of PACC, and encourage applicants to tailor engagement to the specific proposal.

   b. **Pre-Application Community Consultation**: The PACC Report should contain feedback on how the issues raised by the community have either influenced the proposed development or why they have not. Also, case officer reports should detail the key issues set out in the PACC Report and describe how these have been

addressed in the decision-making process. A checklist will be developed and trialled to ensure these aspects are addressed.

c. **Proportionate Early Community Engagement:** Where a proposal is not a major planning application, further consideration will be given to how to introduce effective community engagement that is proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal and which may have a notable impact on the surrounding area and community.

d. **Social Housing Development:** Revise the pre-application community consultation arrangements for social housing proposals by Housing Associations, and required by Department for Communities, to avoid duplication of processes and consultation fatigue.

e. **Guidance on Community Engagement on Planning Applications:** Future proof the guidance so that it remains applicable where public consultation events cannot be held due to unforeseen circumstances, such as national emergencies like Covid-19.

Reason: To improve the quality of community engagement at the pre-application stage for major and regionally significant developments. To improve consultation and engagement methods for all types of planning proposals and applications. To assist with frontloading the planning process with early stakeholder engagement and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system.

Link to Key Findings: Themes 1 and 3

Access to the Planning Process

4. **Access for the Community to Planning Advice and Information**: It has been identified that there is a lack of awareness among the community about the planning advice service that is provided by Community Places. It has also been identified that it is difficult to find clear planning information online upon which decisions are made and that there is a lack of co-ordination between planning websites. The following measures seek to ensure easier and more widespread access to the planning advice service, and to address the difficulties with finding clear planning information online:

a. **Community Places Planning Advice Service**: The service should be advertised in planning authority offices, on their websites and relevant publications. Information should also be publicised through forums and networking events, such as conferences and training events that deal with planning and place shaping issues. Other additional opportunities should be identified in order to maximise outreach.

b. **Planning Advice Volunteers**: Promote volunteering opportunities through advertising on forums, at conferences and through professional networks, such as the RTPI, for planning and built environment professionals across Northern Ireland. Appropriate criteria and protocols should be developed and put in place to ensure that those providing advice are qualified and provided with professional indemnity cover.

c. **Information Contained on Planning Websites**: Planning information on the main planning websites, which are owned by the Department for Infrastructure, the 11 Councils and Community Places, should be co-ordinated and aligned to ensure that the information is easily understood and user-friendly. Lists of planning applications received, community engagement opportunities within the Local Development Plan preparation process and the authority's Statement of Community Involvement should be prominently displayed.

Reason: To provide the community's awareness of the support available to assist them in becoming involved in planning and place shaping processes. To make use of the untapped resource and broaden the expertise and availability of the planning advice service in Northern Ireland. To improve the quality of planning information online.

Link to Key Findings: Theme 3

5. **Third Party Engagement**: It has been identified that third parties may not fully understand the points at which they can become involved in the planning process and the new relationship that they have with their elected representatives since local planning powers were transferred in April 2015. Currently, without third party rights of appeal in Northern Ireland, the community can challenge decisions through complaints, Ombudsman referrals and judicial reviews. This can sometimes significantly delay development being built on the ground and it also diverts resources away from the main planning processes. The following measures are to develop a better understanding of how third parties engage with the planning system and investigate other options for third party engagement undertaken in other jurisdictions:

   a. **Collecting Information on Third Party Challenges**: Identify and collate information in a confidential manner on the nature of complaints, Ombudsman referrals and judicial reviews, and evaluate the impact on the planning process in Northern Ireland.

   b. **The New Relationship between Communities and Elected Representatives:** Gather information on the difference that the elected representative role at the local level has made to empowering and engaging the community in the planning process in Northern Ireland.

   c. **Research Other Jurisdictions**: Research and evaluate the opportunities for third parties to engage across the whole planning system, including appeals processes and procedures, in other jurisdictions to assist with identifying improvements that could be introduced.

Reason: To better understand how third parties engage in the planning process. To learn more about possible alternatives or improvements that can be made to enhance third party engagement in Northern Ireland.

Link to Key Findings: Themes 1 and 3

Investing in Community Engagement

6. **Raise the Profile of Community Engagement in Planning and Place Shaping:** It has been identified that investment of time, energy and resources across the planning and place shaping community is required in order to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement. Raising awareness generally about the importance of community engagement as part of the planning process, and continuing to develop understanding of what planning and place shaping is, is also required through the following measures:

   a. **Engage with Senior Officers and Leaders:** Use forums and conferences to engage with senior management teams of councils and Departments, as well as leaders in other sectors of planning and place shaping, in order to raise the profile and importance of improving community engagement and encourage investment in it.

   b. **A Community Engagement Awareness Campaign:** Develop a campaign that will seek to raise awareness with the general public and other stakeholders about what planning and place shaping is about, why it is important for them to become involved and the difference it will make, how they can become involved, and what resources and information are available to them.

      c. **Good Practice Standards**: Develop Good Practice Standards to assist with achieving quality community engagement and consistency of practice across the planning and place shaping community.

      d. **Young Professionals as Advocates:** Use the networks of young planners and other such networks of built and natural environment professionals to champion community engagement in planning and place shaping.

Reason: To gain the commitment of senior officials to improve community engagement in planning and place shaping. To encourage people to become more involved in how their area/place is being planned and developed. To raise standards of community engagement practice. To improve the profile of planning and place shaping in public life.

Link to Key Findings: Themes 2, 5 and 6

7. **Develop Capacity and Skills**: It has been identified that there is no co-ordinated resource or training programme specifically for people responsible for and undertaking community engagement in planning and place shaping. However, there is a wealth of knowledge, tools, expertise and learning available across a number of sectors that can be tapped into and utilised to assist with building capacity and supporting those involved in community engagement:

      a. **Community Engagement Online Resource**: Create a comprehensive online resource of information and tools to support effective community engagement for use by all those involved in planning and place shaping processes, including planners, key stakeholders and participants in community engagement. The variety of methods of engagement should address issues such as social and digital exclusion.

      b. **Training and Development:** Co-ordinate existing training and capacity building to support councillors, planners and other built and natural environment professionals involved in engaging with the community on planning and place shaping issues. Training and development should cover a number of different aspects:

          i. Identify training opportunities already available across the different sectors of the planning and place shaping community and co-ordinate awareness raising of these opportunities. Identify gaps and develop additional opportunities to address these. Ensure that training and development addresses how community engagement is carried out, as well as the analysis and reporting of engagement.

         ii. Promote the community engagement online resource, update attendees on any revised Departmental guidance and, where appropriate, any changes to legislation.

       iii. Provide a forum for planning and place shaping practitioners to share good practice, skills and knowledge on development management, forward planning processes and other place shaping processes including community planning to explore synergies between planning and other place shaping initiatives. Use existing communications outlets and publications for disseminating learning material.

       iv. Bring together practitioners and civic society to explore people's understanding of planning and place shaping and how effective community engagement contributes.

Reason: To assist with improving the knowledge and skill set of those involved in facilitating or participating in community engagement in planning and place shaping. To demonstrate the value and impacts of community engagement in planning and place shaping processes. To continue to develop the understanding of how planning inter-relates with other place shaping initiatives.

Link to Key Findings: Themes 2, 3, 5 and 6.

8. **Key issues for the Future of Community Engagement**: It has been identified that there is increasing use of digital technology to support community engagement and that young people are growing up without a good understanding of their ability to shape their physical community. In addition, a central challenge for the planning system over the next decade is how we engage people in climate change. The following measures seek to address these challenges:

   a. **Learning and Investing in Digital Innovation**: Learn how innovations in digital technology have supported and improved community engagement in planning and place shaping across Northern Ireland and the other UK and Republic of Ireland jurisdictions. In particular, monitor how digital engagement is being explored in England, as part of delivering on the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020). Research the benefits realisation of using digital technology, and share this information across the planning and place shaping community.

   b. **Engagement with Children and Young People**: Implement a test project on a plan or scheme aimed at introducing and engaging younger people in planning and place shaping processes. The impact is to be monitored, benefits and investment quantified, and learning evaluated and shared across the planning and place shaping community.

   c. **Engaging on Climate Change:** Identify projects or initiatives to educate communities and practitioners on actions that make a positive impact on climate change (projects could include active travel, reducing reliance on the car, sustainable drainage and renewable energy etc.). These projects should raise the profile of climate change locally and they should be evaluated so that learning can be shared with other organisations.

Reason: To gain knowledge of digital community engagement in planning and place shaping processes. To educate children and young people about how they can engage in planning and place shaping processes. To raise the profile of climate change and assist people to become involved in this issue.

Link to Key Findings: Themes 1, 2 and 5.

7.0 Implementation

7.1 The transfer of local planning powers to councils on 1st April 2015 created what is known as the two-tier planning system, to be operated by 12 planning authorities, which are the 11 councils and the Department for Infrastructure (formerly the Department of the Environment). The Department carries out a regional planning role by formulating and co-ordinating the policy and legislation for the planning system, processing applications for regionally significant development, and providing oversight and guidance for councils and others operating the planning system. The 12 planning authorities have a lead role in planning and place shaping, but it involves many other organisations and stakeholders to make sure the planning system functions effectively.

7.2 In Northern Ireland the regional planning policy document, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), states that the planning system operates in the public interest of local communities and the region as a whole. Placemaking is advocated by the SPPS; it is described as a people-centred approach to the planning, design and stewardship of new developments and public spaces that seeks to enhance the unique qualities of a place. Collaboration between all sectors involved is required and this includes communities, individuals, and everyone else affected by the development process.

7.3 Implementation of the SPPS involves engaging communities as an essential part of good spatial planning and for an effective and inclusive planning system overall, and it is also an important element of an open, participatory local democracy. Those responsible for carrying out community engagement in the planning process should ensure that the process is clear and transparent so that people understand when and how they can have a say in planning decisions which affect them. They should adopt an inclusive approach to engagement to ensure that the different groups within a community are given the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged by the process.

7.4 This is not straightforward as planning and place shaping can be complex and can involve diverging interests, large volumes of information, specialist knowledge, and sometimes lengthy and legalistic processes. Also, the two-tier planning system is relatively new in Northern Ireland and is continuing to evolve, whilst in the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland it is an established system. There is much to learn from the other planning jurisdictions about how the community interacts with the planning system, the relationship the community has with their local councils, and how councillors lead on shaping places for the communities which they serve.

7.5 The recommendations of the Planning Engagement Partnership are designed to improve upon how people take part in decisions which affect their place, and how they influence the way their local area is planned and developed. They aim to support planning authorities, key stakeholders in the planning community, and the communities themselves in their respective roles in ensuring effective community engagement in the planning system.

7.6 The Planning Engagement Partnership has met its Terms of Reference upon production of this Report. The Partnership has reached consensus on the majority of the aspects of the Report. Not all members agree with all aspects of the recommendations, as some may pose challenges for delivery within their organisations. However, the implementation of the recommendations will provide the opportunity to discuss these challenges more fully.

7.7 These recommendations sit within the context of ongoing oversight of the planning system and the current set of challenges it faces, future changes to legislation and policy which impact upon the planning system, global agendas such as climate change, and unexpected events such as the Covid-19 pandemic. In implementing these recommendations it is

important to keep abreast of ongoing changes and challenges, and to be flexible and amend the approach where necessary. It is also essential not to lose the momentum and enthusiasm around this important issue and ensure that implementation delivers. Therefore, the implementation of the recommendations of this Report should be monitored and evaluated against the changing context to ensure any actions stay relevant and effective.

7.8　　A structure or group will be established to oversee implementation and delivery of the recommendations. This structure or group may consider preparing an action plan and deciding which recommendations will be implemented over the short, medium and long term. It may also consider setting up Task and Finish Groups, nominating people and organisations to lead on various projects, and inviting other organisations and persons to become involved and contribute their expertise. Wherever possible, the focus will be on utilising existing networks, forums and working groups to deliver on the recommendations, and not create duplication of effort.

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Glossary of Terms

Active travel - This is transport which is primarily focused on cycling and walking in Northern Ireland.

Advocate - A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.

Amenity - A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them.[2]

Benefits realisation - The purpose of this is to identify what has to be done to realise benefits and how this will be achieved. Benefits realisation planning is concerned with ensuring that the necessary plans, structures, governance arrangements and processes are in place to successfully realise the core benefits of the programme or project.[3]

Business Improvement District - It is an area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax or levy in order to fund projects. The business led partnership which is created directly involves local businesses in local activities and allows the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.[4]

Capacity building - The process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive.[5] It is the improvement in an individual's or organisation's capability.

Case officer - A case officer in the planning authority deals with planning applications. They carry out site inspections and can meet the applicant/agent and other interested parties to resolve any problems. The case officer prepares a report which includes issues relevant to the planning application and any consultations.[6]

Case study - A case study is a real example of best practice from which lessons are learned.

Certificate of Lawful Use Development (CLUD) - The CLUD process is used when applicants are seeking a written determination that an existing or proposed use of land, operational development or activity is lawful.

Citizens Information Board - This is the national agency in the Republic of Ireland responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services, and for the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service.[7]

Climate and nature crises - This refers to the long term threat to nature and people that the global community is facing. There is evidence of more extreme weather, destruction of habitats, and species moving further north as temperatures change.[8]

Community asset transfer - It is a change in management and/or ownership of land or buildings, from public bodies to communities.

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[2] https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/101/amenity
[3] https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-programme-and-project-benefits-realisation
[4] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts
[5] https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/capacity-building
[6] https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/making-planning-decision
[7] https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/en/#
[8] https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/policy-insight/england-westminster/Nature-and-climate-emergency/

Community Involvement Scheme - In Wales, the Community Involvement Scheme is a statement of a council's policy on how they will involve the community in the preparation of their local development plan.

Community Plan - A Community Plan identifies long term priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of districts and the people who live there.

Community planning - Community Planning aims to improve the connection between all the tiers of Government and wider society work, through partnership working to jointly deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Consultation - This is a process of seeking the views of the wider public and is usually carried out within a specified time period.

Consultation document - This is a document that is drawn up and used as the basis for public consultation. It sets out information, key issues and questions to stimulate response from the public.

Consultation fatigue - This is a term used to describe when a saturation point is reached through a lot of engagement, consultation and participation activities being carried out which may not appear to make much impact.

Cost benefits - An analysis of cost benefits is used to determine if an investment is sound and if the benefits outweigh the costs.

Decision notice - The council's decision to either grant or refuse a planning application is set out in a decision notice. If the application is approved, the decision notice may contain conditions that the applicant must comply with and, if refused, the decision notice states the full reasons for refusal.

Develop capacity - Developing capacity refers to improving a person's or organisation's ability over a period of time to carry out community engagement activities.

Development management - This is a term that is used to describe how proposed development is managed through the planning application process, the enforcement of planning control and other consent regimes such as Conservation Area consent. The concept refers to handling applications with a greater emphasis on facilitating and shaping development and away from mainly controlling it.

Development Plan/Local Development Plan - Each council creates a plan which sets out how their council area should develop over a longer period of time, usually 10-15 years. They decide the type and scale of development they want to encourage and where to put new buildings or other development.[9]

Digital application - A broad term which refers to any application software that can be used by a computer, mobile device, or tablet to perform useful tasks.[10]

Digital exclusion - Digital exclusion is where a section of the population have continuing unequal access and capacity to use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) that are essential to fully participate in society. Digital inclusion is about working with communities to address issues of

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[9] [The planning system and development management | nidirect](#)
[10] https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/edmodo-in-an-institute-of-teacher-education/42508

opportunity, access, knowledge and skill in relation to using technology, and in particular, the internet.[11]

Digital innovation - Digital innovation refers to using new ideas to improve business performance.

Digital technology - Digital technology refers to hardware (e.g. laptops, mobile devices etc.), systems and processes that use digital data or signals to achieve a particular set of results.[12]

Enforcement - Enforcement deals with the regularisation of a breach of planning control where a person undertakes works without planning permission (commonly referred to as 'unauthorised development') or fails to keep to the permission they have been granted. It is a council's responsibility, where they determine that there has been a breach of planning control, to take enforcement action having regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations, if it is expedient to do so.

Environmental enhancement - This involves activities that are intended to improve the outdoor environment, either urban or rural.[13]

Forward planning - This deals with the process of making plans that take into account what will be needed in the future. This includes local development plans, regeneration schemes, environmental enhancement, etc.

Future-proof - If you future-proof something, you design or change it so that it will continue to be useful or successful in the future if the situation changes.

GDPR - The Data Protection Act 2018 controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government. The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'.[14]

Information Supplement - Added to a Report in order to complete or enhance it.

Issues and Options Document - In England, this document is prepared to encourage consultation and representations from a wide range of individuals and organisations during a formal consultation period.

Judicial review - This is a particular type of court action where an individual challenges the decisions or actions of a body performing a public function.[15]

Local Community Development Committee - There is a committee in each local authority area in Republic of Ireland which draws on the expertise and experience of public and private people and organisations in the area. They aim to improve community development and give local government a more central role in local and community development.[16]

Local democracy - Democratic government of local areas i.e. council areas.

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[11] iriss_esss_outline_digital_inclusion_09042020_0.pdf
[12] https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Digital_technology
[13] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4561424/
[14] https://www.gov.uk/data-protection
[15] https://www.pilsni.org/sites/default/files/JRhandbook.pdf
[16] https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/f4022e-local-community-development-committees-lcdcs/

Local economic development - The purpose of local economic development is to build the capacity of a defined area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for inhabitants.[17]

Main Issues Report - In Scotland, the Main Issues Report is the first stage in preparing a development plan. It is a planning consultation document and provides an opportunity for people to give their views on how an area should develop over the long term.

Major/strategic development - There are certain types of development that are categorised as major developments and these types of developments have to meet certain thresholds which are defined in planning legislation. For example, in the case of housing development which comprises 50 units or more, or the area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares, this is a major development in Northern Ireland. The thresholds vary between the different planning jurisdictions. In the Republic of Ireland these are known strategic developments.

Meanwhile use/pop-ups - The short-term use of temporarily empty buildings such as shops until they can be brought back into more permanent use.

Neighbour notification - When an application for planning permission is made to a planning authority, neighbours are notified of the application. In Northern Ireland, neighbours are defined as the occupier of premises within a 90 metre radius of the boundary of the application site. Neighbouring land means land which directly adjoins the application site or which would adjoin it but for an entry or road less than 20 metres in width.

Neighbourhood Plan – In England, this is a document that sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area and is written by the local community who know the area. It is a powerful tool to ensure that the community gets the right types of development, in the right place.[18]

Non-technical summary - It is a concise document that provides technical information in a way that is easy to read and easy to understand by the general public.

Ombudsman - The Ombudsman's role is to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are served by a fair and efficient public administration that is committed to accountability, openness, and quality service. They investigate complaints about possible maladministration in the delivery of public services.[19]

Open streets - Open Streets are programs that temporarily open streets to people by closing them to cars.[20]

Participation statement - In Scotland, this contains information on consultation and engagement that the council will carry out as part of preparing their development plan.

Participatory budgeting - This is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.[21]

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[17] https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/local-development.htm

[18] https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/neighbourhood-planning/

[19] nipso.org.uk/

[20] openstreetsproject.org/

[21] https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/#:~:text=Participatory%20budgeting%20%28PB%29%20is%20a%20democratic%20process%20in,that%20helped%20reduce%20child%20mortality%20by%20nearly%2020%25.

Performance processing targets - These are targets that are set to assess what has been achieved by a person or organisation over a set period of time.

Place Plan – In Wales, this is a document that sets out local level planning guidance on the use and development of land and it links to planning policies set out by the local planning authority. It is written by local people who know the area well and can add more detail to the work done by the planners, and can link to other local/Community Plans on a wide range of issues.[22]

Place shaping - Successful place shaping is about identifying the assets of a particular place as well as developing a vision for its future potential. It involves a collaborative approach that values co-operating and communicating with the people that use a place. It requires collaborative working between architects, town planners, transport planners, urban designers, landscape architects, transportation and roads engineers, developers, public services providers, communities, individuals and everyone else affected by the development process.

Plan adoption - When a local development plan has gone through the full preparation process, including being ratified by the council, it is said to be adopted.

Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 - This is the main piece of legislation that provides the framework for the planning system in Northern Ireland.

Planning aid/advice service - This provides independent, free, confidential and impartial planning advice to disadvantaged people and communities. Only people and community groups who meet certain criteria for disadvantage are eligible for free advice. People with sufficient resources to pay for professional advice from an agent are not eligible.

Planning appeal - A planning appeal is an appeal against a planning decision made by the planning authority. In Northern Ireland, appeals may only be made by, or on behalf of, the person who made the planning application. There are time limits within which appeals may be made.[23]

Planning application - Planning applications are categorised into major developments and local developments. Councils make most decisions about planning proposals to build on land or change the use of buildings or land. When deciding an application for planning permission, the council refers to planning policy documents and planning guidance.[24]

Planning application notice - This is used to notify the council or Department that an application for major development will be submitted to them. In Northern Ireland, applicants must give at least 12 weeks' notice of any such application.

Planning authority - The planning department of the district or borough council who carries out specific planning functions for a particular area.

Planning committee - A local planning authority establishes a planning committee to determine planning applications. Advice is given to the committee by planning officers who provide a recommendation. The remit of the committee can vary from council to council as minor applications can be delegated for decision by officers. Decisions on local development plans also vary from council to council as some decisions may be taken by the planning committee and some by the full council.

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[22] http://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/
[23] https://www.pacni.gov.uk/appeals-guide
[24] The planning system and development management | nidirect

Planning control - Planning control is the process of managing the development of land and buildings, and the protection of built heritage and environmental assets, through planning applications and consents and the enforcement of planning control.

Planning decision - Local councils are responsible for most planning decisions (approving or refusing a planning application). Each council has a planning committee and planning officers to make decisions about local and major applications. The Department for Infrastructure makes decisions about planning applications that are regionally important and could affect many people.[25]

Planning Engagement Partnership - Minister Nichola Mallon convened the Planning Engagement Partnership on 21st October 2020 to look at how to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in planning decisions taken locally by councils, and regionally by the Department for Infrastructure, and to help improve the planning system experience for users. The Partnership comprises a cross-section of key planning stakeholders from across Northern Ireland.

Planning for the Future: White Paper - This was published in August 2020 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in England and proposes a fundamental review of the existing English planning system, requiring changes to primary and secondary legislation.

Planning jurisdiction - The area or country within which certain planning legislation applies. In the UK Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England all operate within their own planning legislation framework. In the Republic of Ireland, they also have their own planning legislation framework.

Planning Portal - The Planning Portal is a website that provides all of the information regarding planning applications in Northern Ireland. Other planning jurisdictions also use a Planning Portal, and the different Portals vary in terms of the service they provide.

Practitioner - A person who works in a skilled job or activity.

Pre-application community consultation - Pre-application consultation provides for local communities to be better informed about development proposals and have an opportunity to contribute their views before a formal planning application is submitted to the planning authority.

Pre-application discussion - This provides the council and the applicant with the opportunity to discuss proposals before an application is formally submitted. This can inform the planning and scope of any public consultation activity that may be required and can be an early opportunity to address any concerns about the proposed development. It is also an opportunity for the applicant to discuss the information/supporting documents that will be required by the council in order to process the application.

Preferred Options Paper (POP) - In Northern Ireland, this is the document that is used for early consultation with the public and stakeholders on how the council area should be developed in the future. The POP is prepared and consulted upon before the plan documents are prepared.

Preferred Strategy - In Wales, this document sets out the overall direction proposed for a local development plan. Normally it would set out the plan's vision, issues and objectives, preferred level of growth and strategic policies for overall growth in the area.

Publicity requirements - Requirements are set out in legislation about providing notice publicly regarding a planning application, such as an advertisement in a newspaper or site notice.

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[25] https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/planning-decisions

Regeneration scheme - It is a scheme which sets out a vision, objectives and the actions required to support the physical regeneration of a particular town or city centre, or a specific opportunity site for development.

Regionally significant development - This refers to developments which are significant to all or most of Northern Ireland.[26]

Representations/Submissions/Observations - The public can submit comments, normally during a set consultation period, on a planning application or in relation to the preparation of a local development plan. These can be supportive or object to the proposal or have a neutral stance.

Site notice - It is displayed clearly at the site of the application for planning permission. It informs the public that an application has been made and contains information on where and when the application is available for the public to inspect.

Social exclusion - The failure of society to provide certain individuals and groups with those rights and benefits normally available to its members, such as employment, adequate housing, health care, education and training, etc. Work on social inclusion focuses on identifying and addressing the issues, barriers and disadvantages that undermine equality of opportunity in the community.[27]

Social housing - This is housing provided for people on low incomes or with particular needs by government agencies or non-profit organisations.

Soundness tests - Soundness involves testing the principles, content and preparation process of the development plan document against a list of key criteria.

Spatial plan - A spatial plan provides a long term framework for major development and infrastructure[28] and should create conditions to improve quality of life. It maps out all the assets contained within a given area, including towns, cities, houses, schools, universities, roads, rails, airports, offices, factories, hospitals, energy sources and leisure activities etc. The plan decides how best to arrange and develop them to achieve stated goals.[29]

Stakeholders - Persons who have an interest or concern in a particular subject or area and are regarded as having an interest in its success.

Statement of Community Involvement - This is a statement of an organisation's policy on how they will involve the community in the planning process in their area.

Statutory consultation - This consultation is a legal requirement and there is usually a set time period for such a consultation.

Statutory requirements - These are legal requirements that come from laws passed by the Government.

Submission of application - Once the planning application form has been completed and all supporting technical documents have been collated, the application is ready for submission to the planning authority. The process for submitting a planning application varies between jurisdictions,

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[26] https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/planning-system-and-development-management
[27] https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/social-inclusion-strategies
[28] https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/the-uk-requires-a-spatial-plan
[29] https://www.thersa.org/blog/2019/06/england-plans

for example applications in England can be submitted online via the Planning Portal, whereas in Northern Ireland, hard copies of the application submission pack are given directly to the relevant planning authority.

Tactical urbanism - This includes low cost, temporary changes to the built environment, usually in cities, intended to improve local neighbourhoods and city gathering places.

Terms of Reference – These set out the scope and limitations of an activity or area of knowledge, for example for the Planning Engagement Partnership the terms of reference set out the remit of their work.

The planning system - This is the system by which planning and development is regulated. In Northern Ireland, the new two-tier planning system was created on 1st April 2015 and involves 11 local planning authorities (councils) and one regional planning authority (the Department) applying legislation, policy and guidance to make planning decisions. The planning system operates in the public interest of local communities and the region as a whole.

Third party appeal - A person appealing the decision of a planning authority on a proposed development other than the person who made the original planning application.[30] Third party appeals are a feature of the planning system in the Republic of Ireland, but not in the UK.

Validation - The process of validation is to ensure that essential information has been provided with the planning application submission in order to ensure that it can be processed and a decision made. Most councils have a validation checklist.

Young planners - Professional planners in the first 10 years of post-qualification experience.[31]

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[30] https://www.pleanala.ie/getmedia/c48973a7-c3cc-4348-94ed-02532921439b/Making-a-planning-appeal-EN.pdf

[31] https://www.rtpi.org.uk/find-your-rtpi/networks/rtpi-young-planners/

Annex A – the Partnership Members

Angus Kerr (Chair)	Department for Infrastructure, Planning Group
Catherine Mc Kinney	Department for Infrastructure, Planning Group
Dr Louise O'Kane	Community Places
Fiona Conroy	Community Places
Joanna Drennan	RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute
David Fry	CEF – Construction Employers Federation
Sinead Boyle	Ards and North Down Borough Council
Ursula Caddell	Belfast City Council
Craig McGuicken	NIEL – Northern Ireland Environment Link
Ciarán Fox	RSUA - Royal Society of Ulster Architects
Dr Neil Galway	Queen's University
Sara Lewis	Belfast City Council
Dr Gavan Rafferty	Ulster University
Emma Kelly	Turley, Belfast
Michael Wilson	Causeway Coast and Glens Council
John Davison	Turley, Belfast
Karen Smyth	NILGA – Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Ben Collins	NIFHA – Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations
Michelle Bamford	Department for Infrastructure, Planning Group
Claire Pollock	Sustrans NI
Roisin Wilmott	RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute

Annex B – Terms of Reference

Planning Engagement Partnership

Terms of Reference for a Partnership Working Group

Furthering community engagement in planning

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

    A review into the support available for people and communities to engage in spatial planning in Northern Ireland was undertaken for the Department for Infrastructure in 2018. Following completion of the report the Department has decided that it would be helpful to establish a partnership working group to further community engagement in spatial planning.

2. **OBJECTIVE**

    The objective is to take forward and further develop community engagement in the two-tier planning system. The overall purpose of the project is to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in the planning process at both the regional and planning authority levels.

3. **KEY TASKS**

    a. To establish a Planning Engagement Partnership to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in the planning process at both the regional and planning authority levels.
    b. To explore and identify actions that will improve community engagement in planning and place shaping processes, to assist with delivering upon the planning reforms introduced in April 2015 and dealing with the impacts of Covid-19.
    c. To agree a report/an implementation plan with the Chief Planner to deliver upon the identified actions.

4. **OUTPUTS**

    The Partnership is intended as a 'Task and Finish' group which will produce a report/an implementation plan with recommendations and actions, and attribute responsibility for delivery.

5. **LOGISTICS**

    The first meeting of the working-group will be held on 21 October 2020. The frequency of meetings will be agreed by the working-group thereafter. The meetings of the group will be chaired by DfI. Meetings of the group will be held in Clarence Court or the offices of Community Places or virtually/online. Secretariat functions will be provided on a rotational basis by DfI and Community Places.

6. **MEMBERSHIP**

    Membership will include representatives from the Department's Planning Group, Community Places, Local Planning Authorities, RTPI, IPI, NILGA, Universities and RSUA. Representatives of other organisations may be invited to attend meetings or liaised with as necessary during the project.

7. TIMELINE

It is anticipated that this project will run for 6 – 9 months, managed through bi-monthly / quarterly meetings of the Planning Engagement Partnership and the project manager.

Dates of the next meeting will be agreed at the end of each meeting.

Annex C – Bibliography

Brownill, S. and Parker, G. (2010) Why Bother with Good Works? The Relevance of Public Participation(s) in Planning in a Post-collaborative Era, *Planning Practice & Research*, 25 (3), pp. 275-282. https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2010.503407

Ross, H., Baldwin, C. and Carter, R.W. (2016) Subtle implications: public participation versus community engagement in environmental decision-making, *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management,* 23 (2), pp. 123-129.

Planning Engagement Partnership

WORKSHOP 1 Thursday 25th March 2021 / 10am to 12.30pm
Community Engagement in Development Management
Furthering community engagement in planning

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You are being invited to contribute to the work of the Planning Engagement Partnership through attending a Workshop on Community Engagement in Development Management.

The Planning Engagement Partnership was established by Nichola Mallon, Minister for Infrastructure, on 21st October last year to look at how to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in the planning process at both the regional and local planning levels, and help to improve the planning system experience for users.

The Partnership would like to bring together a cross-section of key planning stakeholders involved in planning in Northern Ireland to reflect on a key aspect of the reforms to the planning system introduced in April 2015, improving community engagement in the planning process. Using case studies to illustrate 'reflections on practice', workshop participants will hear about and discuss good practice as well as learning points.

Agenda

10.00	Welcome and Introductions
10.20	**Reflections on Practice** Presentation of Case Studies Questions and Answers
11.10	**Discussion Groups** Break-out Rooms
11.55	Feedback from Discussions
12.05	**Practical Steps to Enhance Community Engagement in Development Management** Facilitated Open Discussion
12.30	Closing Remarks

Objectives

- To share experience of community engagement in development management practice.
- To identify what is working well and areas for improvement.
- To explore practical steps or actions to enhance community engagement in development management practice.

The workshop will take place **online** - joining instructions and further details will be forwarded beforehand.

Please reply to this email address if you would like to participate: Richard.hopkin@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

The Department and Community Places are co-hosting this event. This is the first of 2 workshops, the second workshop on Tuesday 30th March will focus on community engagement in forward planning.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the Planning Engagement Partnership, please visit the Department's website at: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-engagement-partnership-pep

Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Community Places

Planning Engagement Partnership

WORKSHOP 2 Tuesday 30th March 2021 / 10am to 12.30pm
Community Engagement in Forward Planning
Furthering community engagement in planning

You are invited to contribute to the work of the Planning Engagement Partnership through attending a Workshop on Community Engagement in Forward Planning.

The Planning Engagement Partnership was established by Nichola Mallon, Minister for Infrastructure, on 21st October last year to look at how to enhance the quality and depth of community engagement in the planning process at both the regional and local planning levels, and help to improve the planning system experience for users.

The Partnership would like to bring together a cross-section of key planning stakeholders involved in planning in Northern Ireland to reflect on a key aspect of the reforms to the planning system introduced in April 2015, improving community engagement in the planning process. Using case studies to illustrate 'reflections on practice', workshop participants will hear about and discuss good practice as well as learning points.

Agenda

10.00	**Welcome and Introductions**
10.20	**Reflections on Practice** Presentation of Case Studies Questions and Answers
11.10	**Discussion Groups** Break-out Rooms
11.55	**Feedback from Discussions**
12.05	**Practical Steps to Enhance Community Engagement in Forward Planning** Facilitated Open Discussion
12.30	**Closing Remarks**

Objectives

- To share experience of community engagement in forward planning practice.
- To identify what is working well and areas for improvement.
- To explore practical steps or actions to enhance community engagement in forward planning practice.

The workshop will take place **online** - joining instructions and further details will be forwarded beforehand.

Please reply to this email address if you would like to participate: Richard.hopkin@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

The Department and Community Places are co-hosting this event. This is the second of 2 workshops, the first workshop on Thursday 25th March will focus on community engagement in development management.

If you would like to find out more about the work of the Planning Engagement Partnership, please visit the Department's website at: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-engagement-partnership-pep

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Community
Places

Planning Your Place:
Getting Involved

Are you interested in becoming more involved in how your area/place is being planned and developed, and how you can have a better say? Then please join one of the on-line engagement sessions on Tuesday 25th May.

This is a chance for you to hear from speakers from across Northern Ireland, the UK and Europe about engaging better with people and communities, those who are often most impacted by planning decisions. There will be opportunities for you to discuss and ask questions and to share your views on how we can improve community engagement in planning and place shaping. Your comments and ideas will help shape recommendations to enhance community engagement which will be presented to *Nichola Mallon*, Minister for Infrastructure.

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Community
Places

Information Supplement to the Main Report

A – Community Engagement in Planning: Context

A.1   Engagement in Context in the Planning Process

A.1.1   Community engagement in the planning process is embedded in the planning systems in all jurisdictions of the UK and Republic of Ireland. In Northern Ireland, along with the transfer of the majority of planning functions to the 11 newly constituted councils on 1st April 2015, early stakeholder engagement in the planning process was enshrined in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and supported through extensive subordinate legislation.

A.1.2   In Wales, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 amends and modernises the existing legislative framework to include improvements relating to community and citizen engagement in the planning system. The framework for planning is set out in the 2015 Act, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990), the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004), the Planning Act 2008, and the associated subordinate legislation.

A.1.3   In England, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 set out the planning framework, and the aim of the Localism Act 2011 was to better enable local councils, communities and individuals to act on local priorities by giving them greater powers.

A.1.4   The framework for planning in Scotland is provided for by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, and further legislation under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provide for improved community involvement in planning processes.

A.1.5   In the Republic of Ireland, the Planning and Development Act 2000 consolidates all previous planning acts and provides the framework for planning in Ireland. It has been amended several times over the years, such as through the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 which gave statutory recognition to the National Planning Framework. The Local Government Reform Act 2014 re-organised how regional planning is undertaken by regional assemblies, and also created new Local Economic and Community Plans which are prepared by the local authority in association with the relevant Local Community Development Committee.

A.1.6   In Northern Ireland and England, planning authorities are required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the community can expect to be involved in exercising their development planning and development management functions. In Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure is also required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the community will be involved in its planning control functions as set out in Part 3 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. In the other jurisdictions there are requirements for how the community is involved in development planning functions and these are set out in the relevant sections below.

A.2   Development Management

All applications

A.2.1   In all jurisdictions (UK and Republic of Ireland) there are publicity and advertising requirements placed upon planning authorities for all applications for planning permission and certain consents, some with statutory timeframes within which representations by the public and any interested parties can be made on an application. There are various measures in place to provide the opportunity for people to learn about and comment upon an application.

Northern Ireland

A.2.2   In Northern Ireland, when advertising applications for planning permission and certain types of consents in local newspapers, there is a period of usually[32] 14 days within which people may submit a comment. Re-advertisement may also be undertaken in certain circumstances where an application has been amended and this is at the discretion of the council, however guidance is provided to assist with making that judgement. Advertisement of applications is supplemented by neighbour notification, the minimum requirement being that the planning authority must serve notice on any identified occupier of neighbouring land as defined in planning legislation. Planning authorities can go over and above the minimum requirement if they wish, and where re-advertisement is being carried out then further neighbour notification should also be carried out. Publication on the planning authority's website is also required for most application types.

England

A.2.3   In England, after a planning authority has received a planning application, it is required to undertake a period of consultation, usually 21 days, where views on the proposed development can be expressed. Although there is some discretion for how a planning authority informs and consults the public, the additional minimum statutory requirements include utilising site notices, neighbour notification and publicity on websites.

Wales

A.2.4   In Wales, when a planning application has been submitted to the planning authority, it will notify the public and neighbours about the application by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper, using neighbour notification, putting up a site notice, and notifying the community or town council. There is a time period of usually 21 days within which people may submit a comment.

Scotland

A.2.5   In Scotland, as soon as possible after validation of a planning application, the planning authority must carry out neighbour notification by notifying the owner, lessee or occupier of the premises, and where there are no premises on the neighbouring land then they must place a notice in a local newspaper. The published notice, in addition to describing the proposed development, must also provide information on how representations may be made. Neighbour consultation should be for a minimum period of 21 days.

Republic of Ireland

A.2.6   In the Republic of Ireland, the applicant is responsible for publishing a notice in an approved newspaper and erecting a site notice stating its intention to make a planning application. Once the planning application has been made, there is a period of five weeks within which submissions and observations can be made on the application, subject to a fee being paid. A list of planning applications received should be made available for inspection for not less than eight weeks at a number of locations specified in the legislation, and copies made available at the planning authority's offices. Anyone who has made a submission or observation is notified of the decision by the planning authority within three working days.

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[32] This is the standard time period, however the time period varies for certain specified types of applications and consents, and this is set out in legislation. For example, under the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, where an application is for EIA development there is provision for a period of 4 weeks to allow comments to be submitted.

A.2.7   Unique to the Republic of Ireland, if a person made a submission to a planning authority on a proposed development, they have the right to appeal the decision. This is known as third party rights of appeal. A person needs to have acknowledgement from the planning authority of when they made their submission, and they must make their appeal within four weeks beginning on the date on which the planning authority makes its decision. An Bord Pleanála is the national independent statutory body which determines appeals on planning applications and other cases.

Major applications

A.2.8   There are additional requirements relating to community engagement for, and management of, larger scale applications within the planning processes of all jurisdictions.

Northern Ireland

A.2.9   In Northern Ireland, prior to the submission of an application for major development proposals (which includes regionally significant development proposals), a prospective applicant is required by the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to give prior notice, known as a 'proposal of application notice' (PAN) to the relevant planning authority. The PAN should contain a description of the proposed development and its location, what consultation the prospective applicant proposes to undertake, when it will occur and with whom, thereby setting out the Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) arrangements. In relation to PACC, the minimum requirements are that the prospective applicant must hold at least one public event in the locality of the proposed development and advertise the date, time and place of the event in a local newspaper. The prospective applicant must prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation Report to accompany the planning application being submitted. Guidance provides further information over and above the minimum requirements of the legislation, and states that the level and extent of pre-application engagement should be proportionate to the scale and the complexity of the proposed development. Information on a wide range of engagement measures are set out. The guidance also suggests that, although PACC is only required for major development proposals, applicants should also consider discussing smaller scale proposals with neighbours who may be affected by it. Pre-Application Discussions (PADs) are a confidential process designed to assist with the handling of an application, however a PAD is not required by legislation. The PAD process provides an opportunity for the planning authority and applicant to consider and understand key issues, identify key stakeholders upfront and any consultation arrangements.

England

A.2.10   In England, prior to submitting a major planning application, the proposal must be publicised on a website maintained by the planning authority. Details must include the site location, description of development, and where and when the application may be inspected. There is a period of 14 days within which representations must be made. The applicant can decide whether to display a site notice or notify adjoining owners and occupiers, as well as advertising in a local newspaper. Applicants can discuss the proposed application with the planning authority, including consultation and validation requirements and the merits of the proposal. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are a project management tool and can be useful in providing an opportunity for identifying the preferred approach to community engagement. In support of major planning applications, applicants usually submit a statement which details the community engagement that has occurred during the design process. It should also set out issues that the community identified and how these either affected the way that the design was finalised or provide an explanation as to why the design could not be changed.

Wales

A.2.11 Similar to Northern Ireland, in Wales developers must undertake pre-application consultation before submitting an application for major development. Prior to submitting such an application, the developer must publicise a draft of the application, consult the community, and write a report about the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken. Developers should display site notices on or near the site and they should send letters to the owner or occupier of land adjoining the site. The site notice and letters must identify a location in the vicinity of the site where all information will be made available. Developers are also required to undertake pre-application consultation, including with the community. There is a minimum of 28 days before submitting the application for representations to be made, and the developer must submit a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report as part of the planning application pack. This must include details of the publicity of the proposed development and a summary of all issues raised in response to this.

Scotland

A.2.12 For national and major developments in Scotland, applicants must carry out pre-application consultation (PAC) with local communities prior to finalising their proposed plans. This gives communities early notice of proposals and provides an opportunity for them to comment on the prospective application at an early stage in its development. The planning application must be accompanied by a PAC report of the consultation. The community can also comment on the planning application once it has been formally submitted to the planning authority. Where the PAC process is required, the applicant must notify the council by sending a 'proposal of application notice' (PAN) at least 12 weeks before submitting the application. The planning authority must respond within 21 days of receipt of the notice if it wishes for any additional notification and consultation to be carried out over and above the statutory minimum. The PAN must include details of the development, which should include consultation that the prospective applicant proposes to undertake, when this will occur and with whom. At least one public event should take place and be advertised at least seven days beforehand in a local newspaper. The applicant must also consult with every community council whose area is within or adjoins the site. Additionally, a processing agreement can be used with national, major and substantial/complex local developments to assist with project management.

Republic of Ireland

A.2.13 Before an applicant submits an application for certain types of development[33] they shall hold at least one meeting with the planning authority. There are certain applications such as strategic infrastructure projects, strategic housing developments and local authority infrastructure projects that are dealt with by An Bord Pleanála and an applicant must enter into consultations with the Board before making an application. Pre-application consultation must be held on major applications and the approach to community engagement can be discussed with the planning authority beforehand. After mandatory pre-application consultation, which should be completed within approximately nine weeks and involves the local planning authority, strategic housing applications are required to be determined within 16 weeks of receipt of the application.

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[33] Types of development include either or both residential development of more than 10 housing units or non-residential development of more than 1,000sqm (gross) and such other development as may be prescribed.

Design and Access Statement

A.2.14 Design and Access Statements are used in Northern Ireland for certain types of applications, for example major development or where part of the development is in a designated area such as a conservation area. These are also a feature of the planning systems in Scotland, England and Wales, however thresholds for use of such statements varies between the planning jurisdictions. These statements consider how issues relating to accessing a proposed development have been dealt with, and explain any specific issues which might affect access for disabled people. It must state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation.

Pre-determination Hearing

A.2.15 In Northern Ireland, council planning committees are currently required to hold pre-determination hearings for applications returned to the council for determination where the Department has decided not to call in an application which was subject to a Departmental direction restricting its determination. A council may also hold pre-determination hearings for other applications it receives. This provides an opportunity for applicants and those who have made representations to the proposed development to present their views to the council. This type of hearing facilitates a full exploration of the proposal by committee members, allows the views of interested parties and statutory consultees to be heard, and for committee members to seek clarification.

A.2.16 This is similar to Scotland, where pre-determination hearings must be held for national developments and major developments that are significantly contrary to the development plan. These hearings allow the views of applicants and those who have made representations to be heard before a planning decision is taken.

A.3   Local Development Plan

A.3.1 All jurisdictions operate plan-led systems under the two-tier planning system structure. The two-tier planning system and the plan-led approach was commenced in Northern Ireland through the introduction of the Planning Act on 1st April 2015.

Northern Ireland

A.3.2 The reformed Local Development Plan process in Northern Ireland introduced a two document approach to plan preparation, whereby a plan strategy is prepared first followed by a local policies plan which contains more detail. The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the community will be involved in the Local Development Plan process, including the timing of and method by which participation will occur at each stage of the plan preparation, and how the planning authority will use the responses at each stage in developing the content of its plan.

A.3.3 Before the plan documents are prepared, early and more meaningful community involvement is carried out through the preparation of, and public consultation on, a preferred options paper. The Preferred Options Paper is effectively a consultation paper which sets out options and preferred options for the long term development and growth of the council area. Legislation requires a public consultation of between eight and 12 weeks on this document, and all councils have used this opportunity to hold public events to stimulate interest in the plan and encourage people and organisations in their area to make representations and become involved.

A.3.4 After this early community engagement, the Plan Strategy is prepared and adopted, followed by the Local Policies Plan. A draft Plan Strategy is published for public consultation

for eight weeks, and where there are representations made on site specific proposals, these representations are made available for inspection for eight weeks (known as the counter-representations procedure). After the council has considered all of the representations, the draft plan document is submitted for independent examination, which is undertaken by the Planning Appeals Commission or a person appointed by the Department. The new style independent examination assesses the plan document against a series of soundness tests, one of which relates to the preparation of the plan document in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement. The format of the examination is a round table discussion led by the examiner and this new approach to independent examination of plan documents is designed to introduce more transparency to the process, make it less adversarial and therefore more accessible for the public to participate. It is also a shorter independent examination process. The examiner will produce a report with recommendations and after the Plan Strategy is adopted, with or without modifications, the Local Policies Plan will undergo the same process, until it is adopted.

A.3.5   The publication of the draft plan documents, the statutory consultation periods, arrangements for inspecting plan documents, how to make representations, the independent examination arrangements, and the adoption of the plan documents, are all subject to publicity and advertising requirements set out in legislation that the council must adhere to.

England

A.3.6   In England, planning authorities set out in their Statement of Community Involvement how they will consult and involve the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents, which form the Local Development Plan. The preparation process for the plan documents has two key consultation stages.

A.3.7   At the very outset of plan preparation, planning authorities must notify voluntary bodies and bodies that represent the interests of various sectors of the local community, and residents and people in the area, and invite them to make representations on a published Issues and Options document. Consultation on this document informs the draft plan going forward, and in practice this consultation period is usually for six weeks. Following this, the next public consultation takes place on the development plan document and runs for a period of six weeks. Representations made must address legal compliance and soundness of the plan document. This stage occurs before the plan is submitted for examination and the planning authority is provided with a further opportunity to make changes to the draft document. Once representations have been considered, an updated draft development plan document is then submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Documents are tested at independent examination against a series of soundness tests which include the preparation of the document in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement. The independent examiner prepares a report with recommendations on the development plan document and may recommend that it is modified. Once the planning authority makes any necessary changes it will adopt the development plan document.

A.3.8   The publication of the Issues and Options document, the draft development plan document, the statutory consultation periods, arrangements for inspecting documents, how to make representations, the independent examination arrangements, and the adoption of the development plan documents, are all subject to publicity and advertising requirements set out in legislation that the council must adhere to. There does not appear to be a statutory requirement in England to advertise these matters in a newspaper.

A.3.9   Neighbourhood planning was introduced in England in 2011, and this enables communities to play a stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting

new development proposals. Through neighbourhood forums and parish councils, communities can produce Neighbourhood Plans which, when brought into force, become part of the statutory development plan for the area that they cover. Neighbourhood planning essentially provides local communities with the opportunity to set a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15 or 20 years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development they want to see.

A.3.10 The Planning for the Future White Paper was published in August 2020 setting out fundamental reforms to the English planning system. In relation to Local Development Plans, the objective is to streamline community engagement and increase the use of digital technology making the system more accessible, accountable, digital and transparent. A series of pilots are being set up to work with planning authorities and tech companies to develop innovative solutions to support plan making and community involvement, and make it easier for people to understand proposals and how they will affect them.

Wales

A.3.11 A similar approach to preparing a Local Development Plan in Northern Ireland is carried out in Wales, except that there is one plan document referred to as the Local Development Plan which is prepared. Prior to starting work on the plan, the planning authority needs to agree a Delivery Agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government. This has two parts, one part is a timetable for producing the plan, and the other part is a Community Involvement Scheme which explains how and when the planning authority will engage and consult with stakeholders and the local community in the plan-making process. Therefore, the plan encourages greater public involvement in plan-making than was previously the case with the Unitary Development Plans. The Welsh Government does not prescribe how or what methods to use when involving the community and stakeholders. This is a matter for each planning authority to consider, reflecting on their local knowledge.

A.3.12 When preparing the Local Development Plan, the call for sites is the first stage of plan preparation. This allows anyone to submit potential sites to the planning authority for inclusion in the plan. Following this, the council prepares a Preferred Strategy for its area and public consultation on this document is undertaken for a period of six weeks. The planning authority considers the representations made and prepares a Deposit Plan, and public consultation must be undertaken on this document for six weeks. After the council has considered all of the representations, the Deposit Plan is submitted for independent examination. The independent examination assesses the plan against a series of soundness tests which includes the preparation of the plan document in accordance with the Community Involvement Scheme. The format of the examination is a round table discussion led by the Inspector. The Inspector will produce a report with recommendations and the council will adopt the plan, with or without modifications.

A.3.13 Similar to Northern Ireland, the publication of the Preferred Strategy and Deposit Plan, the statutory consultation periods, arrangements for inspecting the plan, how to make representations, the independent examination arrangements, and the adoption of the plan, are all subject to publicity and advertising requirements set out in legislation that the council must adhere to.

A.3.14 The Welsh Government is piloting the production of Place Plans which will involve Community and Town Councils working together with their local planning authority to identify and take forward supplementary planning guidance for their communities, and translating and developing policies and allocations in Local Development Plans for local

implementation. These Place Plans will not form part of the adopted Local Development Plan.

Scotland

A.3.15 In Scotland, in terms of public engagement in the preparation of Local development Plans, the planning authority must produce a Development Plan Scheme on an annual basis. This must include a Participation Statement which should state how, and with whom, consultation on the plan will occur. It should also state how the planning authority intends to involve the public and stakeholders in the preparation of the plan.

A.3.16 The first stage of the plan process is the preparation of a Main Issues Report. This sets out general proposals and options for development of the area and representations are invited from the public. In practice, this consultation runs for a period of 12 weeks, and representations made assist in the preparation of the proposed Local Development Plan. The draft Local Development Plan is then subject to public consultation, for a period of not less than six weeks, during which people may make representations. The planning authority makes modifications to the plan if required and then submits the proposed Local Development Plan to the Scottish Ministers requesting its independent examination. Planning authorities must include a Report of Conformity with their Participation Statement when submitting their plan to Scottish Ministers for examination, stating how they have undertaken their community engagement. The independent examination includes looking at the extent to which the planning authority has had regard to consultation and the involvement of the public in the preparation of the plan. The planning authority makes modifications to the plan in accordance with the recommendations of the examiner and publicises these along with its intention to adopt the plan. At this stage, they must also notify each person who made representations of where they can inspect the modified plan. Unless the independent examiner seeks further modifications, the planning authority can adopt the plan after a period of 28 days from its notice of intention.

A.3.17 The publication of the draft plan documents, the statutory consultation periods, arrangements for inspecting plan documents, the process of making representations, the independent examination arrangements, and the adoption of the plan documents, are all subject to publicity and advertising requirements set out in legislation that the council must adhere to. At various stages of plan preparation community councils are alerted and occupiers and neighbours of some specific proposal sites are notified.

A.3.18 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is introducing a new right for communities to produce Local Place Plans, with scope for these plans, or parts of them, to become part of the Local Development Plan for the area. These may be prepared by a community body and they aim to significantly enhance engagement, effectively empowering communities to play a proactive role in defining the future of their places through developing proposals for the use and development of land. Before preparing a Local Development Plan, planning authorities will invite local communities in their area to prepare Local Place Plans and provide them with information on assistance that will be available to them to do so. The 2019 Act also provides for the participation of children and young people in the preparation of the Local Development Plan. Another key change that the 2019 Act will introduce is that the initial stage of plan preparation, the Main Issues Report, will be replaced by an Evidence Report. The evidence, amongst other issues, must include how the planning authority sought the views of the community through consultation and engagement, and how they assisted communities to prepare Local Place Plans. The Evidence Report must be approved by Scottish Ministers before the planning authority prepares its Local Development Plan. The change from using a Main Issues Report for early public consultation, to the preparation and

approval of an Evidence Report as the first stage in plan preparation, will be confirmed in transitional arrangements which are due in the near future.

Republic of Ireland

A.3.19 In the Republic of Ireland, the community have a number of opportunities to provide comments during plan preparation. Also, the Local Community Development Committee, which has a role in promoting meaningful citizen and community engagement in the planning and evaluation of development programmes, are involved in plan preparation.

A.3.20 At the initial stage, when the planning authority publishes its intention to review the Development Plan, comments are invited from the public within a specified time of not less than eight weeks. This is a formal early consultation opportunity for members of the public to make oral or written submissions to the local planning authority. The planning authority can always, if they wish, hold a public face-to-face or online meeting. Not later than 16 weeks after publishing its intention to review the Development Plan, the planning authority must prepare a report of any submissions received and matters arising out of any consultations. This report is considered by the members of the planning authority, and no later than 10 weeks after they receive the report they may issue directions, of a strategic nature, to the Chief Executive in relation to the preparation of the draft Development Plan. The draft plan is then prepared within 12 weeks and submitted to the members for their consideration. This is deemed to be the draft Development Plan unless the members decide to amend it. The draft Development Plan is available for public consultation for a period of at least 10 weeks. It is also sent to the Minister, the Office of the Planning Regulator, the Board, the relevant regional assembly, statutory consultees and any Local Community Development Committee in the area. A report of the submissions and observations is prepared which contains a summary is published on the authority's website. The members consider the draft plan and the report of the submissions within 12 weeks of receipt and decide whether to adopt the plan or make further amendments. Where applicable, the public can be invited to comment on an amended draft plan which is made available for inspection for a period of at least four weeks. After consideration of submissions received the plan can be finalised and adopted. Time periods for plan preparation are very precise and set out in the legislation. Overall a Development Plan must be prepared within two years unless a material amendment requires further consideration and the undertaking of a Strategic Environmental Assessment. There is no independent examination of the Development Plan, as it is ratified through the planning authority's own committee procedures. The role of the members is clearly set out in the legislation.

A.3.21 The intention to prepare a Development Plan, the early public consultation, the publication of the draft Development Plan, the statutory consultation periods, arrangements for inspecting plan documents, how to make representations, and the adoption of the Development Plan, are all subject to publicity and advertising requirements set out in legislation that the council must adhere to.

A.4 Temporary Measures in Response to Covid-19

A.4.1 In Northern Ireland, the requirement to carry out at least one public event, as part of the requirements relating to pre-application community consultation on major proposals, has been temporarily suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the remaining requirements still apply. Additional guidance has been provided by the Department and Community Places on alternatives to holding a public event. At present, the temporary suspension is in place until 31 March 2022.

A.4.2   In England, temporary changes were introduced to provide local planning authorities (and in the case of certain applications for EIA development, applicants) greater flexibility in relation to the way they publicise planning applications. These changes applied where they were not able to comply with a particular requirement because it was not reasonably practicable to do so for reasons connected to the effects of Covid-19, including restrictions on movement. Temporary changes related to requirements to provide a physical address where planning documents could be inspected or copies obtained. These remained in force until 31 December 2021. In terms of Statements of Community Involvement, where any of the policies cannot be complied with due to Covid-19, planning authorities are encouraged to undertake an immediate review and update the policies where necessary so that plan-making can continue.

A.4.3   In Wales, temporary measures were put in place regarding publicity and making documents available for inspection in relation to pre-application consultation on major proposals. The requirement to make information about applications available for inspection was temporarily replaced. Instead, developers made all information available on a website and sent hard copies of documents to any person who requested them. These revised arrangements ceased to have effect on 18 September 2020. The requirement for putting up site notices remained mandatory, but in addition developers and agents were also expected to expand the use of social media and other online services to widen public engagement.

A.4.4   Similar to Northern Ireland, Scotland suspended their requirement for holding a public event as part of pre-application community consultation on major proposals. Publicity requirements were also temporarily amended to include electronic means in addition to use of newspaper notices. These temporary arrangements are in place until 31 March 2022.

A.4.5   In the Republic of Ireland, Covid-19 impacted upon meeting the statutory timeframes for preparing a development plan. Legislation was introduced to allow for a further period of up to, but not exceeding, one year in order to prepare or revise a development plan.

A.5   Other Community Engagement Related Activity

A.5.1   In Northern Ireland, community planning was a new power provided to councils on 1st April 2015, along with the transfer of planning and other functions. Councils must lead on the implementation of community planning in their area and produce a Community Plan. The Community Plan involves engagement with the community and provides a framework within which councils, departments, statutory partners and other relevant organisations work together to develop and implement a shared vision for the area. The Local Development Plan is required to take account of the council's Community Plan.

A.5.2   In Wales, councils also have a duty to undertake the community planning process for their area. This seeks to strengthen the role of the Community Strategy as the overarching plan for a local authority area. Planning authorities, in the preparation of their Local Development Plans should, where possible, link with the aims of the local Community Strategy. A Communities First Programme provides people in the most disadvantaged areas of Wales with opportunities to play an active role in shaping the future of their community. There is at least one Communities First area in every local authority area.

A.5.3   In Scotland, through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, communities have been provided with more of a say in decisions that affect them, and public authorities which take part in community planning have additional duties. Community Planning Partnerships must prepare and publish a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) which sets out the outcomes that will be prioritised. Partnerships must support community bodies to

participate in all parts of the process of preparing a Community Plan and reporting on progress.

A.5.4   In the Republic of Ireland, the Local Government Reform Act 2014 created new Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs). Similar to community planning, these help facilitate better integration of public bodies, social and community partners to work collaboratively on improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of communities. The plan is prepared by the local authority in association with the Local Community Development Committee (whose establishment was provided for under the Local Government Reform Act 2014). The LECP must be consistent with the core strategy and objectives of the Development Plan and any Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that applies to the area. A working group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government was set up in September 2013 and recommended more extensive and diverse input by citizens into local government decision making. It was recommended that a Public Participation Network (PPN) should be established in each local authority. These Networks allow local authorities to connect with community groups around the country and are the 'go to' for authorities who wish to benefit from community and voluntary expertise. PPNs give citizens a greater say in local government decisions and allow diverse views and interests to be considered as part of the decision making process.

A.6   Support for Communities Engaging in the Planning Process

A.6.1   Community Places is a non-statutory, not-for-profit voluntary organisation, which has been providing advice for the voluntary sector since 1984 and for disadvantaged individuals and community groups since 2004. Those providing the advice are professional planners who are employed by Community Places. DfI provide funding for the delivery of this planning advice service. In addition to providing this service, Community Places specialises in providing support for community planning and undertakes community engagement activities and training, including developing innovative engagement techniques, for example, My Place, Participatory Card Game and Planning Snakes and Ladders, to support communities to get involved and have a voice in planning and place shaping processes.

A.6.2   The planning advice service provided by Community Places entails responding to emails and telephone enquiries, development of easy-read facts sheets and guides to planning, and it also undertakes a number of outreach advice clinics each year. Where groups seek advice on a development issue which may have a wider impact on the community or create a precedent, Community Places advises those groups throughout the whole planning application process as appropriate.

A.6.3   In anticipation of the transfer of planning functions to local government which occurred in April 2015, an embryonic Planning Aid NI service was established in 2000 by the RTPI NI branch. The difference between the planning advice service provided by Community Places and this planning aid service was the involvement of volunteer planners from across Northern Ireland.

A.6.4   PLACE NI was a registered charity set up in 2004 as a result of an initiative by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA), Belfast City Council and the Arts Council. Its aim was to connect people to place and it ran a programme of talks, tours and exhibitions to teach people about the built environment. The organisation ceased to operate in August 2019 and the RSUA is exploring re-establishing a sustainable structure.

A.6.5   There are planning aid services in Wales, Scotland, England, and one specifically for the London area. These organisations are all registered charities and companies limited by guarantee. Planning Aid Wales and Scotland both receive some Government funding whilst

Planning Aid England and London do not. Planning Aid England and London were established in 1973, Planning Aid Wales was established in 1978, and Planning Aid Scotland in 1993. All of the services offer general advice and guidance to the public through a range of measures, such as email and telephone advice, and web-based planning advice and guidance. They also provide additional support to disadvantaged communities, but do not provide an advocacy role.

A.6.6   Planning Aid Scotland has increasingly developed a community-led approach to planning and place-making. Alongside their advice services they run training events, and an educational programme for young people which includes awareness raising and involvement in the planning system to give young people a role in the creation of Scotland's future places. They also undertake charrettes which is a collaborative design process in which the public and stakeholders work directly with a specialised design team to generate a community vision, master plan and action plan. The organisation has produced a practical guide known as SP=EED which is a benchmarking tool for community engagement.

A.6.7   Following a review in 2014 of Planning Aid Wales, it has shifted its focus to become a provider of proactive services such as training, capacity building, support and community engagement. It has also been commissioned by planning authorities to facilitate community engagement for emerging Local Development Plans and their reviews. Furthermore, in relation to its planning advice services, it seeks to manage expectations to support delivery of the planning system. Planning Aid Wales uses volunteers to assist with providing its planning advice services.

A.6.8   Planning Aid England and London also use volunteers to assist with providing their planning advice services. Planning Aid England provides a proactive engagement programme aimed at individuals and communities who might not otherwise engage with the planning system. They have a consulting service aimed at generating an income stream, comprising bespoke training and community engagement. Planning Aid London offers training for residents groups and other groups within the community that are keen to better understand the planning process and their ability to influence decisions. This includes summer courses, community outreach, and specialist support for disabled people and youth engagement projects.

A.6.9   There is no equivalent of planning aid or advice in the Republic of Ireland. Such advice is provided in alternative forms, for example through the Citizens Information Board, a statutory body, which provides basic information via website, telephone service and in their citizen information centres. However, in Dublin, a community technical aid service was available from 1996 to 2017.

A.7   Conclusion

A.7.1   The above information was gathered through a desk-top research exercise, and does not intend to provide a complete like-for-like analysis of the various planning systems, but rather intends to highlight some of the main similarities and differences in relation to the community engagement aspects. The information provided does not constitute legal advice and is not intended to present the pros and cons of each planning system.

A.7.2   The documents that were used to inform this comparison are included in the bibliography below.

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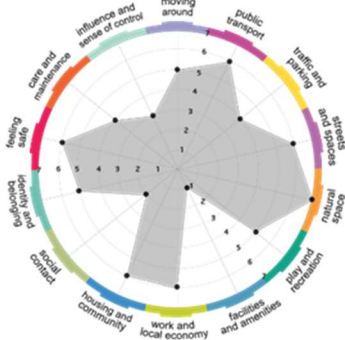
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B – Good Practice Template

Planning Engagement Partnership – Community Engagement Good Practice Template

Practice and Brief Description	Category	Purpose and Added Value	Links to Additional Information, Case Studies
Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement – 7 standards designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement: Inclusion; Support; Planning; Working Together; Methods; Communication; and Impact. Originally launched in 2005, During 2015/2016, the National Standards for Community Engagement were reviewed and updated during 2015/16 to reflect policy and legislation relating to community empowerment in Scotland, and to build on the growing range of practice.	Guidance	Benchmarks and improves 'meaningful' engagement. Application can build and sustain relationships between public services and communities. 	https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/ Short video outlining Standards https://youtu.be/ec4w7uqnaE4
Place Standard The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing you to consider all the elements of a place in a methodical way. The tool pinpoints	Tool	Structures and facilitates conversation and deliberation around 14 place criteria. Produces a visual analysis of a place – through a simple diagram.	Website for Place Standard Quick Guide https://placestandard.scot/guide/quick

the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve.		Can support Digital engagement through Place Standard App. 	Short video which introduces Place Standard Tool https://youtu.be/kbEh9wv60Lc
Participatory Budgeting Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic innovation that can be described as *"local people deciding how to allocate part of a public budget."* It is a way for citizens to have a direct say in how public funds are used to address local needs.	Decision-making process and technique	Citizens have a direct say in resource allocation. 'Empowering' – IAP2 Spectrum of Participation. Strengthens connections between and within communities and with service providers. Reaches out to people who don't often have a voice Quality PB processes can harness community energy and resilience; grow capacity and confidence and crucially is creative and engaging. In-room and Digital Engagement.	PB Works Network www.participatorybudgetingworks.org Dundee Decides – Regeneration and Infrastructure Fund https://www.dundeedecides.org/ Portugal –Green PB in Lisbon https://op.lisboaparticipa.pt/home See Planning Your Place Session 3
Healthy Streets Survey It is designed to collect Londoner's 'real life' perceptions of existing streets and can be used as part of monitoring the impact of a project. This is part of Transport for London's Healthy Streets Approach, which 'puts people and their health at the centre of decisions about how we design, manage and use public spaces'.	Tool	Tool, used over several years to gather changing perceptions as improvements are made (or not, as the case may be).	http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-surveys.pdf There is a Healthy Streets toolkit, which can be found here: https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets

Tactical Urbanism This is a form of Co-design and is also known as DIY Urbanism, Planning-by-Doing, Urban Acupuncture, or Urban Prototyping.	Technique	This approach refers to a citizen-led approach to placemaking using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions to bring about long-term change. If successful, temporary and pilot projects that gain local support can be made permanent over time.	The following website is a great source of information about the approach and school of thought: http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/about/
"Know Your Place"- This is a website that includes maps, images and linked information. It is about learning about and sharing information about historic Bristol. Information is also uploaded by the public in the form of photographs, images, memories.	Tool	It was set up by Bristol's City Design Group in partnership with GIS and Bristol Museums and volunteers in 2011. It was funded by English Heritage. It includes layers of information, including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens and LDP policy. It has been used to inform "Local Listing". "Know Your Place" has since expanded to "Know Your Place – West of England" and this was a project which ran from June 2015 to July 2017 to expand coverage from Bristol to the six surrounding counties of Bath & North East Somerset, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. The county of Devon has now been added. This expands the coverage for the West of England by another 2,590 square miles. Know Your Place now spans eight counties and 7279 square miles	Know Your Place - bristol.gov.uk, Know Your Place (kypwest.org.
Embellir Paris - Embellish Paris is a call for projects open to artists, collectives, students of art schools, associations, designers and architect with 20 places to be embellished with a contribution from the City of Paris up to a maximum of 50,000 euros per site.	Technique	Citizens' Jury Process. Enabling mechanism for bottom-up placemaking with voting on tactical urbanism ideas.	https://www.embellir.paris/

Play the City - Urban Gamification for public consultations.	Tool	Lowering technical threshold to get involved in discussions relating to area masterplans.	https://www.playthecity.eu/
Block by Block began in 2012 with the radical idea of integrating the computer game Minecraft into public space planning to get community members more involved. Minecraft is easy to use, and people of all ages, backgrounds, and education levels can pick it up quickly. It is a surprisingly effective, and cost-effective, way to visualize a three-dimensional environment, in a format designed for rapid iteration and idea sharing. Minecraft helps neighbourhood residents model their surroundings, visualize possibilities, express ideas, drive consensus, and accelerate progress.	Tool	Broadening participation in placemaking.	https://www.blockbyblock.org/
Placemaking Engaging Children and Young People Belfast Healthy Cities	Guidance	Outlines the need for engaging young people in planning and includes some engagement models.	https://www.belfasthealthycities.com/sites/default/files/custom_search/19042%20-%20HC%20Engaging%20Children%20%28Print%29.pdf
South Dublin County Council County Development Plan 2022-2028	Tool	Virtual consultation room (for Development Plan).	https://sdcc-27240.web.app/
SP=EED Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery	Guidance	Provides a clear and practical framework for carrying out engagement.	https://www.pas.org.uk/speed/

Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS)			
Community Places: My Place Participatory Card Game	Tool	Participatory Card Games are a fun way to encourage all age groups to engage with an issue. They can provide information on an issue and help people to identify priorities and potential solutions or improvements. They can be played anywhere and by anyone. You can involve the people who will be playing the card game in the design and card content process to build ownership of the game. You can create your own rules, content and game play to suit the theme, issue or audience.	https://www.communityplaces.info
Community Places and DTNI: Planning Snakes and Ladders Board Game	Tool	Interactive Board Game which breaks down a complex planning scenario into bite size chunks of information. It takes the players through some of the steps which may be experienced when responding to or commenting on a major housing application.	https://www.communityplaces.info
Community Places: Engagement Toolkit	Toolkit including Suite of Engagement Methods	Aligns a range of methods to the IAP2 Spectrum of Participation ranging from Inform to Empower.	https://www.communityplaces.info
Community Places: On-line Engagement Tools in response to COVID 19	Toolkit including suite of on-line Engagement Methods	Assistance with community engagement during Covid-19 pandemic.	https://www.communityplaces.info
CFNI: Civic Engagement Toolkit	Toolkit including suite of Engagement Methods	Range of civic and participative democracy tools.	http://civicinnovationni.org/tools-directory

INVOLVE: Civic Engagement Methods including Citizens Assemblies and Juries	Toolkit including suite of Engagement Methods	Involve have a range of resources for improving public participation in decision making processes; their website also carries a number of case studies. Involve is a leading UK public participation charity. They develop, support and campaign for new ways to involve people in decisions that affect their lives.	https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods UK Climate Change Citizen Panels https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/case-studies/uk-climate-change-citizens-assemblies-citizens-juries
VU:City Belfast	Interactive 3D Digital Model and Tool	VU:CITY has created the largest and most accurate interactive 3D digital model of Belfast. Covering 57 sq km – including every building, road, tree and public space – it is accurate to within 15 cm. VU:CITY saves time and money for anyone involved in planning development and is directly leading to better decision making. It is already being used by local government, public bodies, architects, landowners, developers and property agents. VU:CITY gives anyone involved in the development and planning industry in Belfast not only a new view of the city, but also a revolutionary tool that can transform the planning and communication process around proposed and new developments and infrastructure projects.	Showcased during Planning Your Place Session 4 by Charlotte Dove McCarthy. https://vu.city/vucity-belfast An intelligent platform capable of visualising significant amounts of data, including protected views and historic buildings.
Jigs Audio	Tool	Developed by researchers at Newcastle University (Zander Wilson). Made up of jigsaw pieces or tiles which have a chip embedded into them, people can draw or write on the tiles and then record their ideas with their voice. It creates a visual and audio record of ideas which can later be uploaded to the internet	Showcased during Planning Your Place Session 4 by Prof. Mark Tewdwr-Jones.

		to create a presentation of the results. Jigs Audio consists of a small electronic box of gadgets, fitted with a Raspberry Pi device.	http://jigsaudio.com/
UrbanPlan	Educational Initiative	Developed by the Urban Land Institute. UrbanPlan currently work with school age children (ages 16-18) studying geography at GCSE level and above. They help young people understand the development process and the different professions within the sector. This involves planning the regeneration of a town to meet specific criteria within an agreed budget. The format generally requires students to meet the housing need for the town, create a viable town centre, provide public open space and other amenities.	https://urbanplanuk.uli.org/

C – Issues Log

Figure 1 – Frequency of Issues Raised by Public
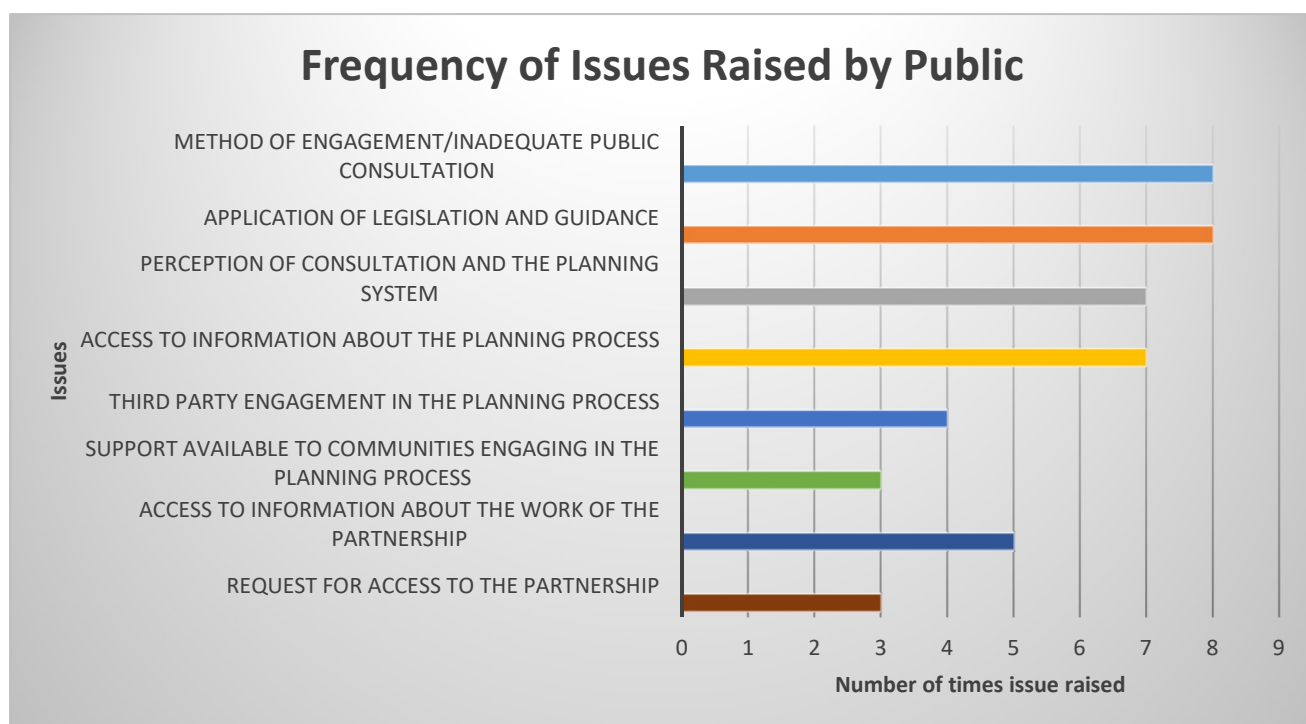
C.1 **Method of engagement/inadequate public consultation**: There is a need to ensure that community engagement is inclusive and incorporates sectors such as local businesses and children and young people. Inadequate neighbour notification was cited as an issue. Community engagement could be improved through the introduction of site notices and by undertaking wider neighbour notification. Greater inclusivity is regarded as important to a more democratic planning process. More guidance is needed on methods of engagement and how the community can be heard in the planning process. A panel or forum for discussing community engagement would prove beneficial.

C.2 **Application of legislation and guidance**: More could be done over and above the minimum requirements of the legislation in relation to community engagement on planning application proposals. There were concerns about how legislation and guidance is being put into practice and not being applied as it is intended. Further concerns that were raised related to transparency of decision making in order to understand why a decision is made and that the appropriate procedures were followed.

C.3 **Perception of consultation and the planning system:** It can be perceived that community engagement carried out is not genuine, leading to a belief that there is a lack of integrity amongst planners and the planning system and a lack of competency in those making decisions. It was stated that there is a lack of protection for the community and the environment under the current planning system. The Stakeholder Evaluation of Planning in Northern Ireland 2020 survey found that approximately 70% of all respondents believed that the planning system in Northern Ireland serves the public interest 'poorly' or 'very poorly'. It was stated that people feel powerless and as a result unable to influence how their area changes and develops.

C.4 **Access to information about the planning process:** There is a need for advice for communities on how to make their voice heard in the planning process. There is a lack of

information provided on council processes and information on protection of the environment and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) issues. There are also concerns that it is difficult for third parties to reach planning officers and decision makers in order to discuss proposals and get information. It was stated that communities sometimes find out too late in the planning process for their representations to be effective.

C.5   **Third party engagement in the planning process:** There is a need to improve the process for including the community in local planning decision making. Related to this, there is a need to look at introducing third party rights of appeal and consider the lack of finance to enable communities to engage later in the planning process through court challenge. Third party engagement across the full planning process was raised.

C.6   **Support available to communities engaging in the planning process:** Information was requested on existing support for communities engaging in the planning process and looking at possible improvements. Concerns were raised about a lack of support for communities engaging in the planning process.

C.7   **Access to information about the work of the Partnership:** There is an interest in this project and how it is being implemented. The Terms of Reference, membership, minutes of meetings and information on how public views will inform the work were requested.

C.8   **Request for access to the Partnership:** There were a number of requests to engage with the Partnership, to share views on community consultation and to contribute information and perspectives.

C.9   **Other issues raised:** There is a lack of community engagement in the Certificate of Lawful Use Development (CLUD) process and the enforcement process. It was stated that the Community Asset Transfer process, and how it is dealt with by councils, needs to be standardised across Northern Ireland.

D - Workshops for Practitioners

D.1 Workshop One 'Community Engagement in Development Management' was held on 25th March 2021, followed by Workshop Two 'Community Engagement in Forward Planning' on 30th March 2021.

D.2 The objectives for both workshops were:

- To share experience of community engagement;
- To identify what is working well and areas for improvement; and
- To explore practical steps or actions to enhance community engagement.

D.3 Workshop One was attended by 23 people whilst Workshop Two was attended by 37 people. Each had a reasonable spread of participants across the following sectors: development and industry; consultancy; council planning officers; voluntary and community; environment; and representative or professional groupings.

D.4 **Workshop One - Community Engagement in Development Management:** The case studies presented were:

- The Transport Hub, demonstrating ongoing engagement throughout the application process, by Helen Harrison of Juno planning;
- Digital pre-application community consultation during Covid-19, by John Davison of Turley Associates Belfast; and
- A breakdown of the issues emerging from information received by the Department, by Catherine McKinney of the Department for Infrastructure.

D.5 **Workshop Two – Community Engagement in Forward Planning:** The case studies presented were:

- Engagement in the Draft Plan Strategy for Belfast City Council, by Dermot O'Kane;
- Plan Making, LDPs and Place Plans in Wales, by James Davies of Planning Aid Wales;
- Place Plan for Armagh and links to community planning, by Khadidja Konate of Urban Scale Interventions; and
- Balbriggan Regeneration Project, by Councillor Karen Power of Turley Associates Dublin.

A word cloud was created by the participants at each workshop illustrating what is important to practitioners in relation to community engagement in planning and place shaping.

Figure 2 – Workshop One - word cloud

One or two words which explain why engaging with communities is important to you and your work

Figure 3 – Workshop Two – word cloud

One or two words which reflect what good community engagement in forward planning processes can achieve?

D.6   The findings from the two practitioner workshops resulted in some general themes emerging:

- The increased use of digital engagement during the Covid-19 crisis has altered the profile of those getting involved in planning to a younger demographic;
- Different methods of consultation and engagement reach different sectors of the community, and a variety of approaches reaches a wider group of people;

- Youth and young people emerged as an important sector to engage with in relation to planning, as they may use places and spaces differently;
- The purpose of the engagement and the nature of the information being sought needs to be clear to ensure community engagement is most effective;
- Presenting technical planning information, for consultation and in general, needs to be user friendly and engaging.Innovative approaches could assist with communication;
- Any consultation or engagement programme can be used as an opportunity to assist people to learn about planning and why it is important for them to engage in the process;
- Transparency in the decision making process could be an important tool in improving the perception of planning and building trust with the community. Feedback on representations and comments made closes the loop and assists with transparency;
- Consultation fatigue can disengage people but we still need to engage the community on the wide range of issues that impact them;
- There is a challenge in engaging the community on broader and longer term planning issues such as climate change, sustainable development etc.;
- Public access to information on the planning system is important to achieving transparency. Access to planning information could be improved and trialled through the use of digital mapping and scaled models;
- Tackling misinformation on social media could be assisted through a fact checking service or against a source of trusted information; and
- Improving the link between planning and community planning processes could assist people with relating to longer term planning and place shaping processes, and better understanding of the outcomes of community planning and planning. It could also assist with improving understanding of the language used in relation to place shaping.

D.7   These emerging themes informed the design of the third public facing event.

Planning Engagement Partnership, Reflective Practitioner Workshop 1: Development Management Breakout Room Discussion

Thursday 25 March 2021

Breakout Room 1: Pre- Application Community Consultation (20 Minutes)

How effective is current community engagement in Pre-Application Community Consultation?

▪ **What is working well?**
Identifying the stakeholders at PACC stage and ensuring that they are kept informed throughout. We are identifying the right stakeholders e.g., communities, other representatives in area. There are 2 different aspects to community engagement – one is for new developments and the other is existing businesses wanting to expand/change etc. There is a need for ongoing engagement outside of formal planning processes where existing businesses exist e.g., in the case of an operating quarry. Improving IT and virtual reality has made a big difference – there is more interaction now in relation to planning applications.

▪ **Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?**
It is considered that the minimum legislative requirement may not be fully inclusive. Also, legislation does not promote the use of a wide range/all forms of engagement. There is a need to define at the start who is impacted, positively and negatively, by the proposal. Thought needs to be given to how the information is presented. There is no reason why we could not use technology a lot more. Engagement needed across a rural area can be quite widespread, and there may not be the same access to digital methods. There is a need to ensure that the approach is catering for the specifics of site and locality. Developing a better understanding of how the different tools can assist and what they address/who they reach would be beneficial.

▪ **What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?**
The validation checklist needs looked at. The PAN may not be sufficient and could be expanded e.g., wider involvement of the community before an application is submitted. It could also be used for a wider range of developments, e.g., lowering the thresholds for housing significantly. What triggers the need for a PAN, how the PAN works etc should all be delegated to the Council to decide and should not be decided by the Department. A similar arrangement to the Scheme of Delegation could be introduced where local Members decide their Scheme and notify the Department. The PAN should also require a PAD to be submitted at the same time. This twin tracked approach significantly raises the quality of the subsequent planning application and speeds up the applications. PACC Report – no reference made in the application reports to the level of community engagement carried out. Reporting back on community engagement/comments and

discussions of the scheme would be beneficial to understanding how the comments were used in the decision making process.

Making sure people understand what they are/are not influencing, and what material considerations are, relevant to the application. If people don't understand then it can lead to frustration by the community.

Guidance needs updated to take account of more up to date methods – existing guidance is already out of date in terms of methods.

There is a need to improve on the 'do minimum' requirement – there is a need for a more tailored / bespoke approach relevant to the particular development proposal. Legislation is too rigid – legislation triggers a PACC but we should think about what does it add to the process, is it working and achieving what we want it to, and is it always necessary? Major development makes up a small percentage of the number of applications – there is a need to think about widening community engagement aspects to other types of development.

There is a perception that there is a presumption in favour of development, but it is not the case that decisions have already been made.

Managing expectations is important in dealing with the community, but also scheme proponents.

PACC report – when it is submitted it would be useful to know how it used in the determination of the planning application.

The threshold for PACC is quite high for major applications – size of housing development, industry, retail floorspace. Proposals just below the threshold could have the same impact as a major application but there is no requirement for PACC. Even much smaller developments e.g., 10-15 houses, can have a significant impact, so perhaps a smaller scale engagement requirement is needed e.g. Letter drop or information leaflet explaining proposed development and inviting email responses.

Site notices are a good idea.

Resource and capacity issues – information relating to analysis around demographics, reach and inclusivity could help with understanding the effect of community engagement and if resources are available to ensure effectiveness.

An engagement toolkit could show a sliding scale of different methods appropriate to different circumstances.

Best practice illustrated today doesn't always happen due to other factors.

- **Any other comments?**

Breakout Room 2: Keeping communities engaged throughout the application process (20 Minutes)

How effective is current community engagement in Keeping communities engaged throughout the application process?

- **What is working well?**

People can have voice through councillor involvement.
Pre app consultation process – people more familiar with it. Stakeholders and applicants.
Range of different methods of engagement including digital – reach lots of target groups.
Active presence on the ground also important for clarifications
'You said we listened' leaflet – cut out jargon and a tangible piece of engagement.
Rural communities – stronger communication in general? Can use parish newsletters.

Committee process works fairly well – allows voice for objectors and supporters.
Process/protocol gives time and opportunity for people to get involved.
Councillor involvement – they know the local area best. Having members that are locally accountable. More transparent.
Some councils are working well in supporting planners in their professional judgement.

- **Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?**

May not receive any notification – post submission especially not inclusive.
Some people not digitally aware e.g., elderly
Very young (under 18) – how do we reach them? Jargon and process confusing and inaccessible
Not enough different methods post submission. Letter and planning portal – not good enough.

Need to ensure narrative is available to everyone. Build trust.
Relies on public to be proactive.
How about BSL translations? How do we reach people who can't view applications online?
(NB Groups thought this wasn't working well so most comments relating to this are in next section)

- **What needs to be improved, and how?**

Planning application process makes engagement more difficult –more formalised and remote. Engagement outside of planning application process is better.
Jargon is a barrier.
Communities may not know the process – when can they be involved? Can we be better at detailing to communities how they can be involved?
Planning Portal – very un-user friendly: could we provide a consultation pack – non tech summary?
Need to signpost next steps – people don't know the process.
How can we keep communities engaged through lifetime of planning process? Resource intensive but necessary to build trust.
Perception that everything goes quiet – how can we keep engagement and trust going?
Idea that applicant and authority in league or aren't interested in stakeholder input/it wont make a difference/tick box exercise.
Building trust – need to be clear about benefits of schemes.
Can we share more info – more than notification? But risk that info goes out of date quickly.
Integrated consultant teams – very different approaches. Some do minimum.

Committee meetings should be more discursive – not so black and white.
Need ongoing engagement – not just tick box. 'You said we listened' – good approach.
Application can evolve between stages. Not apparent for stakeholders. Need to be better at demonstrating who is influencing development scheme and that people are listened to.
Planning portal not accessible – not clear to non-planners. Need a summary of consultees' responses and how these influenced proposals – build trust.

Need one post application exercise – not just pre app. Keeps applicants accountable. Create dialogue between officer and public and applicant – three-way conversation. Different agents should be communicating changes e.g., Roads, water – not just applicant but all stakeholders. Many people do not know how to respond – where to start? Onus is on councils and dept to make process more accessible. People do not understand process – can lead to conflict. People turn up to object straight off. Conflict between councillors and planners. Councillors can ignore professional opinion of planners – can this be right in some instances or is it unhelpful? However, very few applications are overturned. Healthy process where there can be opportunity to have dialogue. But how much have public been involved in process? Are the public really engaged with councillors, or just a few voices being heard?

▪ **Any other comments?**
Difference between rural and urban communities and the approach required.

Breakout Room 3: Neighbour Notification, Advertising and Accessing Information on Applications (20 mins)

How effective is current community engagement in: Neighbour Notification, Advertising and Accessing Information on Applications

▪ What is working well?
Leaflet drops could be widened out to perhaps include the entire local area rather than a specific distance (more a pre-app issue)
Newspaper advertisements are useful for a certain demographic who will not see social media etc, but it is not only method of advertising.
Most affected are notified as per the current legislation and it is defined (as opposed to the approach taken by applicants/agents)
Weekly lists are useful as people can view new applications
▪ Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?
Pre-app is reaching more people, but at application stage may not reach everyone.
A lot of websites do have weekly advertisements but not all Councils do or is it easily accessible.
Hard to tell if reaching those most impacted. It is likely not reaching everyone -therefore consider widening the remit.
Bigger schemes need to target more than immediate neighbours e.g., retail, cinema.
▪ What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?

Searches on google and other search engines are not working well. Even though members of the public are provided with information about the application etc people often cannot find the application and other information online. This results in additional phone calls to the Planning Department (Officers and Admin).

Council websites could be improved in terms of accessibility e.g., a link to planning portal. This is more relevant since the NI Portal webpage removed (now on the Department's website) and is more difficult to find.

Planning agents are more innovative but could be an onus on the developer/agent to work along with Council once the application is submitted.

List of advertisements in the newspapers is a financial burden for the Councils including descriptions. Possible that it a member of the public wants a full description they contact the council?

How we neighbour notify -less specific -can mean the Council starting on the wrong foot if a member of the public doesn't get a letter

Requirement for community consultation -developer carry out.

One post-application community consultation -continued developer/agent involvement after the initial consultation

Weekly list on council's social media page and link to council's webpage for more details.

A webpage on the council website about current consultations that could link to the agent's website details.

Make sure people/public know who the Case Officer is on each application. A contact and an email address would be useful and make them more approachable.

Site Notices -people may notice when walking past etc.

Apps on Phone -useful to get information also.

More training required in the public sector (as the private sector) -innovative techniques and websites.

Problems when someone doesn't get a neighbour notification letter e.g., wind turbines. Is it possible to remove the letter and use site notices instead? The cost of letters is excessive. It is a statutory requirement but difficult to ensure all neighbours get letters.

Misinformation on social media can develop into a campaign -how to handle this? Can't respond to every issue. Developer could help council to address any misinformation

How to address people who continuously write in -complaints procedures (often 3 stage) - but some parties will contact planners which is resource intensive whilst providing opportunity to comment.

In the lead up to Committee information is submitted that needs considered and even a delaying tactic if it raises new issues and possible consultation with consultees. It can be done by both applicants/agents and objectors but there should be a time frame/limit/cut-off period.

> Drip feeding information is preventing decisions being made -if information is not sent in and the deadline passes -it would allow planners to make decisions quicker.
>
> If the information is more available e.g., social media and site notices, people would have no excuse that they were not informed. Also, would be assisted by pre-application information -not just for major applications -would open lines of communication before application reaches council.
>
> Newspaper Advertisement -Developer/agent advertising in the paper would remove the cost from council. Do people still want advertising in the paper? Thousands of pounds on advertisements -including 2 newspapers to reach all/both communities. Would site notices be better? Councils would like to make the decision themselves about this rather than the Department -like a scheme of delegation -the Councils know their people and a 'bottom up' approach as then the Council can decide what is best.

▪ Any other comments?

> Planning Portal is difficult to navigate. It is difficult for planners so more problematic for the public. It is not obvious where the information is and wastes planners' resources directing people as to how to navigate the portal. Some documents are too large for the public to download and the public cannot access confidential information. Will the new portal/system be better?
>
> When an application is called into committee the council must notify the applicant but not the objector. Therefore, is the system weighted in favour of the applicant?
>
> Issues with third party speaking rights at Committee as people need to know more about how to request speaking rights i.e., people are not aware of how Committee operates.

Breakout Room 4: Open Call (20 mins)

How effective is current community engagement in Engaging with Younger People in Development Management

▪ **What is working well?**

In development of recent Environment Strategy, Grass Roots, NI Youth Forum – Young people massively engaged in environmental issues, level of knowledge excellent. Politicians listened to the young people's arguments- clear impact. Young people get their position across and are listened to - they say it as it is. Outdoor classrooms – schools are an obvious area to engage with young people.

My Place – participatory card game to support and animate discussion on what is important to younger people in their 'places' engaged school children at post primary level.

Big Streets Survey – with primary schools, ties in with the curriculum.

> Joint venture RTPI and Belfast Healthy Cities – teaching materials on sustainable development, competitions where schools created ideas to make school more sustainable e.g., allotments, travel to school ideas.

▪ **Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?**

Social Media used to engage with younger people – Digital Engagement – virtual reality may be more appealing to younger people.

PACC – online, younger people less likely to come to public events during the day. Geo target people within/ next to development – on Facebook and Instagram. This is how younger people get their news. No legislative requirement for this currently.

Newcastle UK- school development: mindful to respect the ideas of younger people and engage meaningfully, don't talk down to them, how- needs to be more interactive, engaged at early ideas phase – have more say.

▪ **What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?**

Planning Portal and advertising not fit for purpose for young people to engage.
Programme for Government – child friendly version – learning here.
Consultation on planning applications – child friendly versions, information in accessible manner.
Young people will be living with these decisions for longer.

Inclusive for all – those with disabilities, height of seats at bus stops – lowering them so younger people can use them.

Develop an Infrastructure Panel – with a Youth Panel given the longevity of Infrastructure development. Direct input from younger people.

Use Youth Forums and established mechanisms. All council's have community forums, youth panels?

Youth Forum as a stat consultee? Not adults representing the youth- their voice/ ideas. Responsibility of developer to produce information/materials that are engaging suitable for younger audiences.

Realistic for certain categories of development public spaces, schools, houses, public buildings, to have youth friendly information.

Especially development/application relating to play parks, places for younger people, Skate boarding, scooters – sometimes we design places to prevent these activities!! Can be designed to include these uses as they are using the natural environment – takes thought and time. Starts with that could be a threat- where do we put these spaces e.g., skate parks. Rather than dedicated play space, make the whole city playful – integrated space. Park in Barcelona, different surfaces and materials which helped different users navigate the space, different heights for climbing etc principle of spaces being used for range of age groups.

Do we do post evaluation on the design of these spaces? Desire Lines – good analysis of the spaces and how people will use the space.
Seats – for older people to access the space, design may think this can clutter the space which can ruin the beauty of the area, balance needs.

Legislative min to do public consultation – legislative option for council to decide other groups to be reached out to. Development next to school, play area, consult with those users. Council ensure that this happens.

Replacement school, pupils were not consulted on about what they wanted to see happen. Schemes led by Department of Education – requirement where there are schemes that are for younger people, this also educates younger people in planning.

Net carbon, supply chain, sustainable procurement plan, standards for responsible sourcing – for materials. Younger people are interested in these issues.

Module in Geography on Sustainable Development, circular economy- World Planning Days and Schools, explaining what SD goals are and how planning sits with that. How they get to school etc. Important agenda – drive for this, should be teaching our children. Companies who could go into schools and talk about their experience – recycling materials, circular economy.

Universities and FE colleges, students, engaging with planning schools. Transport Hub experience for students to help facilitate. Student Accommodation and University, talking to students – future decision makers, customers, consumers. Demand driven- lower carbon and eventually zero carbon materials. This is what drives change.

Younger people are more vocal e.g., Climate Change – high on agenda – but may not see the role and connections between planning and Climate Change and Net Zero.

Young families – older people maybe because of the time. Often you hear about the negative views. People who are content with scheme don't attend as they are in support. How do we capture this – Social Media plays a big part, in capturing those who are often quiet on these issues.

Public Realm – and younger people. A lot of space that can be better used. Engage with younger people on how they can use it. Uses expensive materials, quality of materials rather than quality of the useability. You can sit, but what about being active?
Who is engaging in the creation of these spaces? Not planning public realm for one generation.

Establishment of a Youth Planning Forum

- **Any other comments?**

Planning Engagement Partnership – Reflective Practitioner Workshop 2: Local Development Plan / Forward Planning

Tuesday 30 March 2021

Breakout Room 1: Early community engagement in local development plans/ regeneration (20 Minutes)

▪ **What is working well?**
There is a desire and a will from planners to engage with the community. Early community engagement works well for people who are competent in planning and their knowledge of planning - workshops etc work for them. There is definitely a shift away from presenting pre-defined ideas to the community and towards earlier engagement in the planning process and this is an improvement.   The formal planning process is being carried out well i.e. what is set out in legislation and guidance.
▪ Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?
In ROI there is a lot more focus on engagement/regeneration and it is more informal which seems to work better. A more informal style of engagement seems to work better. The 'regeneration' scale of a plan seems to assist in achieving more effective community engagement. Planning policy e.g. in the local development plan process is difficult for people to engage with at the start of the process – it would be beneficial to know how to make it engaging. There is a need to manage expectations, as there are parameters set in law e.g., in relation to the requirements of the local development plan process. The challenge is to get to point of production of a document, and the scale of engagement needs to be relevant to the particular project. Approaches and methods used could help to develop an understanding of the planning process, such as a media campaign. This would help with peoples' knowledge of planning and their contribution to engagement. Being creative in presentation of planning information can engage people more effectively.
▪ **What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?**
Timeframe for engagement – if momentum drops in the planning process e.g. where it is conducted over a long period of time, it could disenfranchise people so it is important to provide ongoing communication. There needs to be work done on understanding the purpose/intention of the engagement, communicate to assist with people's understanding of the impact that the engagement will have, and what the scope of the engagement is – it is not intended to address all issues people may have about the planning system/ their council etc. Soundness is a difficult concept to explain and what is expected from those engaging in the process. This can make the process inaccessible and how does a person make a representation in this circumstance. There are a lot of technical terms and jargon. There needs to be improvement around explaining the process as planning is a complex process.

There is a challenge in getting local knowledge and intelligence into a larger scale plan. This is difficult to achieve for council wide plan, whereas focused plans/regeneration plans are more relatable. It is difficult but not impossible.
There needs to be a multi-disciplinary approach to engagement.

It is important to communicate the relevance of planning and the process at the early stage – there is a lack of understanding of the new IE process which is not objection based any more.
Education about the planning system needs to happen across the community. Youth engagement is important – a module in schools about planning would assist in developing an understanding of what planning is and does, and what a planner does. There is a need to develop a better general understanding of planning which could perhaps be done through a media campaign.
Webinars on community participation on engaging with communities would be helpful.
Early, ongoing and long-term engagement can lead to consultation fatigue – there is a need to make it more creative, innovative and user friendly.
In relation to local development plans, there have been different methods used for the focussed changes documents – making documents user friendly is important.
When the community itself is pro-active it helps with engagement.
There is a need to adapt language to the audience, and visual aids are very important - this has been done for children / young people friendly documents.
Giving feedback to those who engage is important, but feedback needs to happen in a more relatable format than a large document – e.g. a non-technical summary document specifically for community engagement.

- Any other comments?

Breakout Room 2: Community engagement throughout the forward planning process (20 Minutes)

Community engagement throughout the forward planning process

- What is working well?

Level of engagement often over and above statutory requirements e.g., youth engagement

More formal engagement working well with opportunities to comment -but the more informal engagement varies across local councils depending on resources etc.

Certain groups are working well

Social media is good for getting the message out e.g., through twitter and can also answer questions. It can facilitate two-way engagement and live chats also work. However, must be careful not to be negative.

Bringing plans/policy to the public using social media but also conscious of digital divide - don't assume who would fall into digital divide -often older people are good at engaging digital.

- Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?

Challenge in reaching the entire community despite how hard people are trying. It is difficult but must think of creative ways to reach others beyond the statutory requirements.

What looks good and what doesn't? What level/type of engagement? How to improve for the next 25 years…?

Engaging with schools' needs considered

Engagement must be holistic.

Younger age groups can be missed but it will be the plans that will impact their lives further down the line. It is a long-term plan.

People speaking at those already using the system i.e., the same people who have already engaged.

Shouldn't just use social media but also more 'hands on' approaches e.g., Saturday in a market town with tea/coffee at a stand etc will mean people will approach and discuss. Needs to be a blended approach.

On social media often he who shouts loudest is heard but may represent the minority

Virtual workshops are better attended, and engagement may be better e.g., NMD is rural with two centres and when using physical workshops there wasn't a good representation - virtual has been better.

How to engage young professionals with families? Often easier to go online and therefore a hybrid model going forward.

Evening sessions allow many to get involved.

Independent Examination -what are the numbers attending? People decided not to participate due to speaking in a public forum or presenting in an online forum but hopefully engagement before this stage has captured the opinions.

Marketing groups, e.g., Youth Forum, helps gather variety of commentary.

Go where group are already established e.g., weekly meeting where people are already comfortable gain understanding

Face to face engagement e.g., physical attendance at school and the teachers engaging in activities. Also, in youth clubs

Multi-media approach e.g., videos / short clips -also statutory responsibilities -not just what we feel comfortable with -not just replicating real world consultations but what works well online.

> - What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?

Engaging with schools needs improved. How to be inclusive of all schools? Do councils have the resources?

Engagement needs to be holistic with a good level of buy in e.g., every care home. But how to do this at scale?

Councils are often good at engagement within other departments (outside planning) but it is a particular skill set and not always within the planning department. Could consider employing outside help to assist.

Councils did 'town hall' engagement and some forums but unless people have a particular concern they were not seen/heard. Might engage with a lot of people but what difference?

Bound by legislation.

If you are excluding people, how do you know they are being excluded?

Community Councils and local town plans are useful e.g., local participation officers etc in Balbriggan -how to address the divide.

Review of what works and what doesn't across different councils -share this across councils and this would feed into future consultation/engagement -so valuable to share across councils -e.g., examples and slides etc.

In ROI schools programme paid by central government and therefore already established connections etc to schools.

Co-ordinated body for planning, architecture, engineering as they are all linked and when they are brought together it is more meaningful for public.

Make sure people/organisations want to hear from the public rather than do the minimum and 'get through it'

Public think it is 'slow' -need political buy in -pace of change after 5/6 years in local government.

Budget and resources

Enable the public to see how their input has impacted the process e.g., what is the point of engaging?

100/300-page document -how to break down into manageable feedback?

Documents need to make message simple. A 100/300-page document is ok for stakeholders but for the public consider other ideas e.g., the front page of the council website with main themes and how to get involved. What is the best way to get the message across to the public?

Resources in council are limited e.g., a team sitting there but no-one showed up. Council can only work within its means.

Braille etc to engage with people e.g., someone could not read all braille, so someone went out to speak to her -more ideas like this going forward.

Consultation fatigue sets in
▪ Any other comments?
Opportunity presented by LDP process -launching into time of climate change, aging population, WFH etc -use established relationships to think about wider topics and to start/continue the conversation. So many changes happening at pace -significant changes -use LDP etc to have wider discussion. Expectations have changed e.g., housing development not reflective of current thinking. The results are the opposite of what people expect. How to change the process? How to bypass? Original timeline was 4 years for LDPs -what has gone wrong? They should be in place. Indicative timeframes didn't reflect level of consultation that was required -it wasn't counted in and was unrealistic. Councils need to make this public (second group of councillors and another mandate) -rehearsal of same issues.

Breakout Room 4: Open Call (20 Minutes)

Youth Engagement and Children and Young People

▪ **What is working well?**
Engage with Youth Forum- City Council, going into schools works, that's where kids are; and in the neighbourhood on the street. Belfast Healthy Cities have done a lot of engagement with young people – learning. BCC- Youth POP good practice. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Planning my Place in 2015 – 600 children from schools to undertake planning exercises and was connected to planning processes, attended by planning team. It was an opportunity to announce that planning had arrived in the Council – Teachers on board for young people to come along – very open to engagement especially when there is a clear outcome which will influence and have an impact on younger people. Also focus on third level education to raise understanding and awareness – for future generations. Level of effort to engage, outcomes / reporting how is this taken forward in plan. For example, at Independent Examination – do levels of engagement drop off? Interesting to find out numbers engaging at IE stage. Easy read documents – Belfast City Council Youth POP, Programme for Government recently produced youth friendly versions.
▪ **Are approaches and methods used inclusive? reaching those who will be most impacted?**
Example of USI engagement where a **Tee-pee** was erected in the neighbourhood as a focal point for on-street engagement; lightbulbs used to write down ideas; **Superhero**

Packs to engage both older and younger people about their environment – draw/write 0-90 years old. Use of graphics and images, people using them, making community vibrant and bright. On Street engagement around the tee-pee as young as 3-4 to 14 years range – hanging out with older siblings.

My Place, Participatory Card Game – exercises with younger people aged 12-18 years about what is important to them about Place – identifying priorities and actions to improve areas – but not directly linked to a plan making process.

Methods in rural areas – where there is opposition it can be more difficult to engage.

World Town Planning Day, reach out to schools, promote Sustainable Development Goals – suggestion that SONI could piggyback on these events to raise awareness.

Give something to people – superhero pack different activities/ masks/ skills Primary School kids exploring the city, taking pictures of the area and exhibition of the young people's captured images where they stood up and explained how they felt about the process – meaningful process.

A good pen!

The Good Neighbour Scheme, building trust, sense / stake in your operation e.g. jobs, local sustainability. Kilwaughter Minerals have a Community Engagement Plan resulted in a picnic area for use by the community at side of the quarry, means a lot to the community - can be low cost but have a big impact – Good Neighbour Scheme pilot, Companies sign up to the scheme.

- **What needs to be improved, and <u>how</u>?**

Awareness of youth engagement in POP – promote good practice e.g., Belfast City Council process.

Wales Statutory Duty to engage with younger people, we are behind on that.
Future Generations – Climate Change, engage with younger people.

Digital poverty? Access to everyone? Inclusivity, who are you engaging with and how, can they get involved? Better use of Social Media and Instagram

Youth friendly planning documents- e.g., POP, Applications for development that is connected to younger people e.g., schools, play facilities, open space.

Better engagement through schools and existing social infrastructure e.g., youth forums. Why not have a youth forum at council level – culture of engagement built up over years. Difficult planning legacy here. Trust and Engagement. Sense of ownership of the process – all critical – need quality engagement to achieve this.

Planning terminology can be very challenging – people need to know how will this impact on me?

Managing expectations, what can change and what is possible to change.
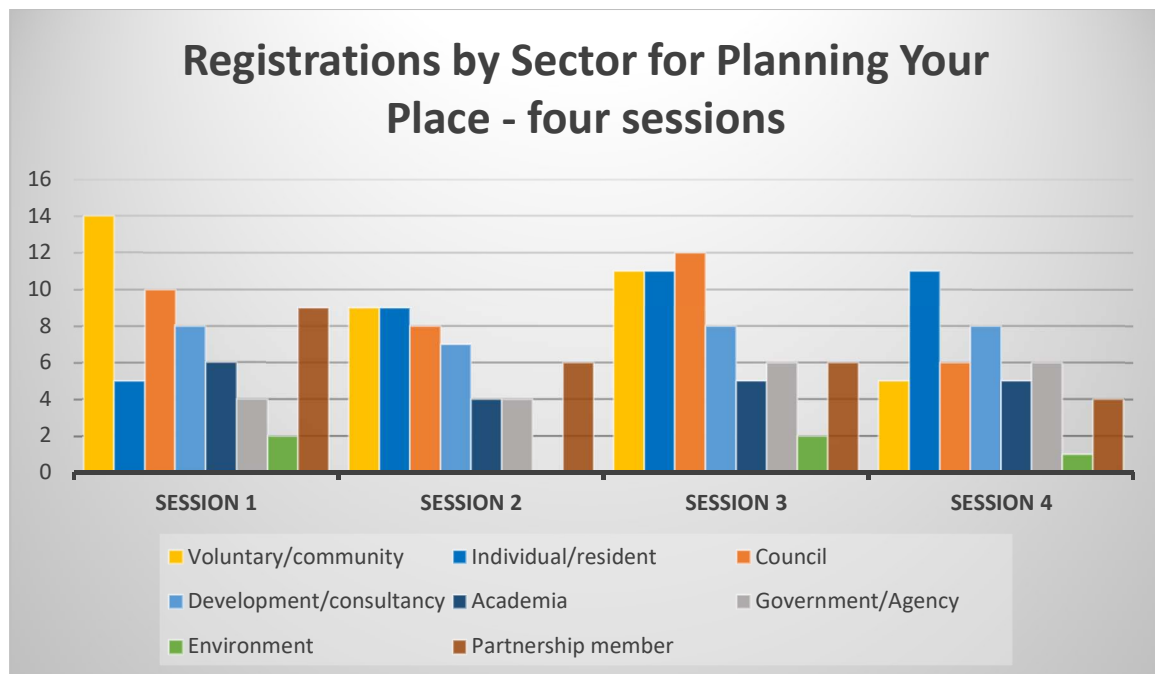

- **Any other comments?**

E - Public Event – Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

E.1   The public event 'Planning Your Place: Getting Involved' was held on 25th May 2021.

E.2   The main aim of the event was to gather information about engaging the community in planning. The overall event was structured as four sessions spanning across one day, and the timeslots chosen were to maximise the opportunities for people to become involved and express their opinions and thoughts on community engagement.

E.3   The four sessions were:

- Successful Placemaking;
- Communicating Creatively About Planning;
- Open and Inclusive Engagement; and
- Engaging Communities Digitally.

E.4   The sessions were designed to provide people with an opportunity to share comments and ideas about how to improve community engagement in planning and place shaping. The Partnership agreed that a similar format for each session to that which was used for the two workshops in March would assist with gathering information. Therefore, each session lasted one and a half hours, with two speakers each presenting a good practice example to illustrate the theme, followed by an opportunity for questions and answers, and then smaller group discussions to gather information on how community engagement in planning and place shaping could be improved.

E.5   The sessions were open for anyone to attend, thereby addressing the issue of people becoming involved and requesting access to the Partnership and its work. The Department and Community Places publicised the event/sessions through their websites and social media, and a press release by the Minister for Infrastructure encouraged the public to get involved. Those who attended the workshops in March, and persons who had written to the Department about the work of the Partnership, received an invitation. All members of the Partnership were asked to contact their existing networks to reach as many people as possible.

E.6   **Session One – Successful Placemaking:** There were 58 people registered for this session which was facilitated by Angus Kerr, Chief Planner of Northern Ireland. The two case studies presented were:

- Community-led street design to support walking and cycling in Marks Gate, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, by Ben Addy of Sustrans UK; and
- Open Ormeau Community Collective, by Ciaran Fox of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA).

E.7   **Session Two – Communicating Creatively About Planning:** There were 47 people registered for this session which was facilitated by Karen Smyth of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA). The two case studies presented were:

- Sion Mills Housing For All Scheme, by Ruth Montgomery of the Rural Housing Association; and
- Engaging Communities in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, by Julie-Ann Bain of the Highland Council in Scotland.
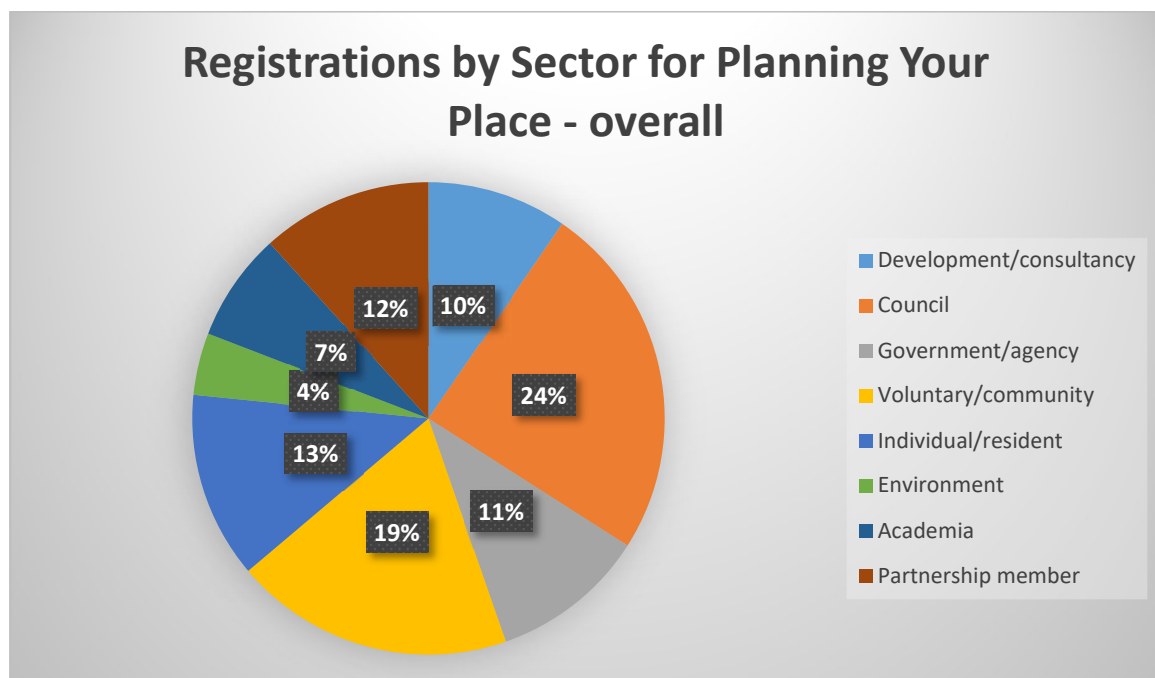
E.8   **Session Three – Open and Inclusive Engagement:** There were 61 people registered for this session which was facilitated by Dr Louise O'Kane of Community Places. The two case studies presented were:

- Lisbon's Green Participatory Budget, by Adalberto Barreto and Roberto Falanga of the Citizen and Participation Department, Lisbon Municipality; and
- Belfast Urban Childhoods, by Dima Zogheib and Sogol Ayazi of Arup in London.

E.9   **Session Four – Engaging Communities Digitally:** There were 46 people registered for this session which was facilitated by Dr Gavan Rafferty of Ulster University. The two case studies presented were:

- Digital Mapping and Engagement, by Charlotte Dove Bowen of VU:CITY; and
- Digital Planning Tools for Engagement, by Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones of University College London.

Figure 4 - Registrations by sector for Planning Your Place – four sessions

Registrations by Sector for Planning Your Place - four sessions

Legend: Voluntary/community, Individual/resident, Council, Development/consultancy, Academia, Government/Agency, Environment, Partnership member

E.10   The numbers relate to those who registered for each individual session, however there were a significant number of people who registered for a number of the sessions. The attendees were from a wide range of sectors: development/consultancy; council; government/agency; voluntary/community; individual/resident; environment; and academia. Overall, approximately one third of those attending came from the voluntary/community sector and individuals/residents.

Figure 5 - Registrations by sector for Planning Your Place – overall

Registrations by Sector for Planning Your Place - overall

- Development/consultancy — 10%
- Council — 24%
- Government/agency — 11%
- Voluntary/community — 19%
- Individual/resident — 13%
- Environment — 4%
- Academia — 7%
- Partnership member — 12%

E.11   The range of speakers over the course of the day, and their presentations, illustrated the wide range of understanding of what planning and place shaping involves, and the wide variety of approaches to community engagement in planning and place shaping. The presentations generated a lot of discussion and thought, and the discussions at each of the breakout sessions were cordial and frank.

Breakout Room Word Templates -Session 1 Successful Placemaking

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 1

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
A legal obligation on councils /decision makers to engage with the community or discuss the proposals. There is no requirement to follow best practice, and improvement in community engagement won't be as effective without a change to legislation.
The community can present their views at Committee stage, but this is too late for views to inform the proposal – by then the proposal will be approved/refused by a vote.
There is a need for a better feedback loop to those who engage in the planning process, and explanations of decisions. Community engagement should be more of a dialogue.
There should be more testing of ideas and proposals. This could include meanwhile uses, consultation/engagement methods, civic engagement through e.g. art-based events which involve closing the streets (Belfast Thrives was mentioned which involved 5 key partners including the Council, DfI and DfC).

Breakout Room Word Templates -Session 1

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 2

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Empower local communities/neighbourhoods with upskilling and professional support (my comment – some good examples from IAF of matching architects with community groups interested in place)
Make it real by making it local. Trying to engage at a high level and then eventually make it relevant to people's everyday lives is tough. Start from the hyper local as a way of working back out toward the strategic
Current process seen as too big, too slow, too technical

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 1

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 3

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Engagement rather than traditional consultation -there is a perception that the scheme has progressed before people are asked for comments. Much more difficult to make changes at a later stage i.e. once things are designed
Allow time to 'think through before' about materials, language, time etc. Preparation and discussion time. What is the challenge? People are under pressure in consultations and they select the tried and tested methods. Extra space and time to build connections before is important
Time and appropriate budget
Materials -the information should be in formats that people can understand and access e.g. for blind and partially sighted people. Often what feels visible is not the right format for everyone -how to reach other parts of the community
Testing -as conversations get underway it is important to test, change and evolve. Model scales can be useful to engage. Building on point about materials, testing and playing with ideas is important but our systems do not allow and support this.
Why don't systems allow? Even risk aversion to doing something differently. Councils own consultation process often follows other evidence. How do we do it?
An example is a road layout -problem identified about children not feeling safe walking to school and the only reaction is the Highway Guidance i.e. a speed bump. If this is not enough then the guidance must change to allow the engineer 'to go outside' the guidance. Major issue/challenge is how to get changes to (i) allow the engineers to train up (ii) time to engage as well as (iii) flexibility to react to those they engage with
Standard solutions etc don't allow for creativity

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 1

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved -

Breakout Room – 4

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Pop Ups and other engagement tools used by ben (Sustrans). See it as a journey and starting early at the very beginning.
Taking on board what people say and changing the process.
Feedback on specific ideas – there is often a long time lag so need to keep communication and engagement active throughout this.
Testing and trialling good ideas to help people see reality of possible solutions and respond
Engagement needs to be with the Developers and the planners for communities to feel engaged – there can be huge changes impacting on local areas. Planners and developers need to demonstrate that they are listening and responding to local voices.
Facilitators for engagement are needed to involve people and provide good feedback as project goes along throughout its life
Digital tools good but not enough on their own – innovative ideas needed – pop ups etc etc (as in the Sustrans presentation).

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 1

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 5

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Accessibility – improvements, Dagenham Vipers group established. How do you do this where no organised group in place?
Building trust with communities – know how, who engaging with and there is trust. That doesn't seem to exist – people feel not listened to. Without training people feel they can't feed in, to have an opinion, especially in rural areas. How do we get those voices heard. Engagement officers to help facilitate this, work with communities. Sometimes these roles are first to be cut- short term thinking, they take so much info with them, knowledge and relationships lost on local issues.
Testing things to see how they work, live with things not working, try it and see, test, refine. Trials not necessarily become permanent – back to listening. Use of hay bails to try out new layouts. Information/knowledge, from screaming to designing! Local champion through testing out.
Admit make a mistake, don't mind when people make a mistake but can connect to it.
Trust, local contact and trust. Appeal within community to the 'lowest common denominator' – assume everyone starting from zero in terms of knowledge and info. A lot can start from 1 tweet. What is wrong with LA/CA tweet the community?
Elderly people access to twitter – different ways of reaching out

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 2 Communicating Creatively about Planning

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room -1

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Site notices would be more effective than consultation letters – it can be very limited as to who receives consultation letters. The pre-application community consultation and the pre-application discussion processes should be used together to manage community engagement.
It would be helpful if there was criteria set for community engagement during LDP process, the IE process, and the PACC process.
Ongoing dialogue with the community is important throughout a planning process, and the scope of the PACC could be widened to support this. Engagement post-development should also be considered.
Capacity building and education needed for the community around understanding planning concepts and the planning process – children and young people and the community sector are key groups to target. Communicating about planning and understanding maps needs considered.
It is a civic responsibility on everyone to get involved, so how we encourage this needs considered.
The approach to community engagement needs to be flexible in order to reach out to all sectors of the community. Learning from Community Planning Partnerships, and incorporating IT with traditional methods of engagement should be done.
There is a lot more scope now with digital methods of engagement being used due to Covid-19. However there may be resourcing issues associated with digital engagement tools
Promoting the sharing of information and learning from good practice is required.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 2

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –2

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Preparation and use of videos is a great idea that will be suggested back in at least one council. The documents we use are unwieldy and can be intimidating. Recognisable footage would open up engagement locally. It's a great way of extending the scope of engagement.
Website quality is vital and must be improved by local government. Serious concerns expressed about how off-putting poorly designed, slow websites can be. Councils need to up their game with available technology.
Councils should explore the provision of portals to allow detailed exploration and engagement on local development plans. Not clear whether the function of the new portal extends to this – might be necessary to develop locally, like Highland or Fingal CoCo.
Awareness of inaccurate information/misinformation on social media, and lack of permissions to address this. Ensuring source of trusted planning information locally/fact checking service?
Council GIS provision purely for planning would be useful (*cost implication?)*
Overarching Comment: Councils need to resource, become confident in and use new engagement technology, social media – legislation needs to develop. Covid has forced the issue but non-traditional engagement will stay once the pandemic has gone. Councillors are skilling up and are becoming adept at Twitter, Facebook, Zoom etc.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 2

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room -3

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
How is "meaningful" engagement assessed at the Examination?
How to involve people in decision making?
Make engagement a clear legal requirement. With assessment criteria for Pre app consultation and engagement in LDP processes.
Engagement patchy depending on who is leading. Real need for learning and sharing good practice.
Pandemic has required us to try new ways and be innovative – thus demonstrating that engagement can always be improved.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 2

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 4

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Engagement needs to be proportionate -early and buy-in. Also need to avoid consultation fatigue
Multi-channel approach which is demonstrated recently as there has been more need for online techniques which captured harder to reach groups
Access to online and other methods. The costs can be off putting if there are no resources -the cost of printing etc and delivering to households
Appropriately designed technology -online methods to support remote consultation. Need to be able to do consultation without confusion etc so any system needs to be easy to use
Digital mapping is useful to view their area
Face-to-face is needed alongside digital. With restrictions over the past year people have been unable to do this and everything has been slowed down. Needs to be a mix going forward e.g. a community event is suitable for some people but for others they may only get an hour in the evening so digital may work better.
People will communicate differently face-to-face -if asked to assist more likely to agree
Walk about of area

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 2

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 5

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Trying to capture positive views for schemes and encourage them to come forward. How do we encourage them to participate? Community engagement has a role to play here – are we doing this? Are we engaging with all aspects of the community?
We hear from the extremes, both positive and negative but need to capture those in the middle.
Engage with established groups as they will know the areas and have the connections.
People are engaged with from the beginning. Some organisations (eg. RNIB) can be an after-thought. Can lead to scheme being revised or started again. Benefits to early engagement can be monetary.
Covid has impacted on the quality of consultation in some cases. Still important for key stakeholders to be engaged and for a meaningful length of time.
PACC requirement – often hear too late about the consultation as not widely advertised. A guide for developers?
For local applications – newspaper only but can this be more engaging?
Collaboration with social housing on land zoning would be welcomed.
Encourage central government to up skill new technologies required
Information need to be in accessible format for all! Making all parts of the community feel empowered.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 3 Open and Inclusive Engagement

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –1

No need to do introductions because of time constraints.

- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Better use of technology such as videos, dedicated portals for consultation;
Legislation needs to be reviewed/rewritten
Invest more in people and technology systems
Need to encourage people to be involved and show the benefits
Support systems that are in place need improving. Not just about being a voice for planning but a community voice for all issues.
Gatekeepers is important and influential – technology would allow a wider reach.
Technology – what is out there, is it easy to use.
Need to use a mix of toolkits
How do we overcome apathy – communication? Better explanations of why ideas are not taken forward. 'You said, we did' or 'You said, we didn't'
Text messaging for consultation – voting or yes/no questions
French – major infrastructure projects. Local communities will be given support to represent themselves. Those adversely affected by development should have equality of arms.
Community need to able to engage with Council on their plans.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 3

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 2

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Monitoring and evaluation is key to understanding if a scheme is successful, achieving its objectives as well as the delivery of the scheme. There is a need for effective engagement throughout the planning process from initiation to evaluation.
The language we use can be complicated, so we need to simplify it in order to educate people about planning.
New ideas and approaches to community engagement will need funded – provision of funding and support for implementing new ideas at council and regional level needs considered. It was stated that funding can be made available if there is a will at political level, including the Assembly.
How councillors can support community engagement requires further consideration as it is relatively recently that councils took on the planning powers.
The voice of children is missing in the process – there are small scale actions that can be taken forward through primary and secondary schools that can bring forward some creativity into the process. Playboard is studying participatory methods and it was stated that there was need for a participation mechanism.
Community representatives can find it difficult to engagement with officers/decision makers.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 3

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –3

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Know your stakeholders (all) and then how to engage different types with different methods.
Be inclusive – right thing to do (and can avoid objections later on). Meet people "where they are" – accessibly (in all forms) so we really understand the local issues and build trust on an ongoing, lasting basis
Know and listen to stakeholders and be realistic (what is and isn't possible) so you are not raising unrealisable expectations
Target the underrepresented and reach out in whatever ways possible. Identify community priorities initially and then develop ideas for engagement – so the process is responding to expressed needs.
Be clear what you want to achieve, be meaningful and use different methods
Effective engagement of citizens at all stages is critical from initiation to evaluation. Be honest from outset and not just extractive.
Validation stage sounds interesting as a way of getting buy in.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 3

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 4

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Removal of jargon
Education campaign
Independence of Environmental Advice
Braver leadership – if progressive policies (for example – banning parents driving kids to school) are proposed, the rationale and argument needs to be strongly conveyed as a more democratic approach that values everyone's opinion equally will not result in any change.
IT can help but real issues with older uses and rural connectivity
Representativeness of those consulted

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 3

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 5

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
For PB to work, do you go through information/education process? Are people ahead of politicians? Or political leadership? Not just about the local needs/issue but understanding and framing problems – common understanding. Shift to face to face to online major change. Most of city councils are not prepared/skills/ or technology to advance pb via online engagement. Make info public and engage people before the decision making. PB at outset focused on addressing social justice e.g. Brazil due to severe poverty in cities. New policy instrument. In Europe PB had this flavour too – identify priorities, use PB to address issues. Shift in approach to PB – emphasis on good governance than goals of social justice and inclusion of the most disadvantaged people.
Enjoyed presentation – encouraging. Projects which have come out of projects here are similar to those in Portugal. If we present PB or CA, can't be in a vacuum. Needs to be information and background. Leadership.
In UK very different social bg – more engagement tradition. PB roots. PB plays a different role, driver for change, creating links and connections.
LT cost savings via technological improvements with PB – environmental costs. Commitment for PB or any participatory process – initiate and sustain process and outcomes. Sustainable.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 4 Engaging Communities Digitally

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room -1

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Simplicity of the message is really important as language and jargon can be intimidating. Talking about 'place' is more understandable than talking about 'planning'.
There is a 'digital divide' – the young are digital savvy and older people generally are not. Digital engagement on LDP proposals during Covid-19 was tried by all councils but most people still wanted to submit forms and volumes of information – assistance is needed on using best practice. A combination of traditional and digital engagement is required and this would also fulfil EqIA obligations.
There is a big opportunity with increasing digital engagement. The Planning Portal provides an opportunity for capacity building with users. There are opportunities for developers to use tools such as VU:City. It would be beneficial to provide access to and support to enable use of a range of tools for councils, developers and the community.
Digital engagement brings with the opportunity of availability of additional datasets, however it is important that it is managed so as not to become overwhelming. Also, support around the use of digital engagement is required so as to translate the information and not misinterpret it. Connected Places Catapult was cited as a good example of connecting businesses and public sector leaders to cutting-edge research.
Innovative approaches to engaging people digitally should be considered. 'Sook' was cited as an example where a council could set up a digital hub in an empty shop.
Emerging planning policies being brought forward by councils through LDPs need to be backed by councillors at Committee level when decisions on applications are taken, otherwise there is a lack of trust in the process.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 4

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –2

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
The public needs to be vigilant, development is a large machine while communities are too often taken by surprise and always under resourced.
Usability of Portal is awful and needs endurance. Why not simple mapping interface? Like treacle now!
BCC LDP process – lots of information and papers- too much. There is a short summary, but it is much too short – something in-between would have been much more useful (say 30-40 pages).
Councils seem to be competing to produce the longest LDPs! Key messages are being lost in the voluminous papers. And there is a real disconnect between planning policy and application approvals! Policies too often ignored – no certainty as a result – for anyone.
There is some innovative engagement by a few Councils – spread this good practice and planners should get out more to different communities/groups/ages etc (Use future story telling techniques etc)

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 4

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –3

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Participants found the presentations fascinating from both speakers.
Some questions raised around how best to use the information collected through these digital tools for informing/shaping planning outcomes
Participants welcomed the point about how it's not about planning, but about places
One participant commented on how there is a need to encourage more positive responses supporting proposals, rather than the way planning engagement - chiefly consultation - processes tend to facilitate only objections
Participants valued how the presentations, particularly Mark's content, emphasised the need to engage citizens, and indeed shape places, on people's own terms, rather than following traditional methods that meet bureaucratic purposes.

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 4

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room – 4

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Mobile phones and augmented reality -mobile phone is 'almost' free technology as nearly everyone has one -why?   A project on 'app' development -town subject to regeneration plan so when people entered area there would be a notification on phone -when entered physical space and then could comment digitally whilst in the place/space
What about people without a smart phone? Want to encourage them and get involved - also those with a phone it is a novelty
As well as digital and non-digital we need different types of digital -different approaches
Can you use digital for very large scale? Maybe not
Some form of intermediate body between planners and public -as we get into more high-tech societies leading to person on the street less connected. Even if technically minded a member of the public has no chance of an informed opinion. The education of the public and how planners connect the public
An example of a digital project 'Newcastle City Futures' which operated as a halfway house between range of groups within the city. It aimed to try to get people to listen/talk and find a common language.   There are vested interests (universities, planners, community). How to operate without the barriers? Got people sitting at the same table together using Lego. What will be the focus of this city in the next 10 years?   Once barriers broken down there were less issues and people talked to each other and listened. Very quickly people came up with solutions -ended up with a collaborative approach which may be translated into a project which was co-owned and could work together. Councillors didn't like this as people were doing it themselves.   This led to 70 or more projects e.g. safe havens for people with drug rehabilitation or housing for older people.   Needed facilitators to push it in certain directions

Breakout Room Word Template -Session 4

Planning Your Place: Getting Involved

Breakout Room –5

- No need to do introductions because of time constraints.
- Pose the question below and ask for comments / thoughts.
- Capture all responses in the table below.
- There will be a 2-minute warning when break out room is about to close.
- At the end we will agree 1 key comment to be fed back to full group.

Reflection and learning from what we have heard from speakers to improve engagement here:

Any comments and what do you think is the most important thing/action to improve engagement in planning and place shaping?
Get all age groups involved – forward planning, development planning, more creative methods and techniques
Change format of consultation – sharing ideas publicly in real time, not having to wait on feedback loop – instant feedback.
Creative approach to getting people involved. Planners may not be best placed to do this! Comments / opportunities to comment are not currently creative. Planners fit the creative comments into their 'boxes' People with 'patches' on a local level, someone they know, make a difference – old fashioned but a good approach. Someone who is known, accessible, available. Perhaps planners don't want to be too accessible?!
Schools and younger people -more creative like jigsaudio rather than directed questions – ask the wrong questions not going to get the information that you need / want. Sharing experiences through jigsaudio, creative way.
VU city different tool for visualising. Layers of info for example conservation, listed buildings, etc all information together – easier to get user friendly information.
Legalistic language very off putting – people stop engaging.
A picture paints 1000 words – visualising
Negative side- images can mislead, accuracy is important – who policies it? Enhanced version of the reality.
Glossy rather than reflecting reality – someone checking info is correct and can be trusted.
Both people on ground and digital
How to get people to get involved – still needs to be done