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Communication and engagement techniques in local flood risk management

Companion guide

ciria

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Where we are

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Communication and engagement techniques in local flood risk management

Companion guide

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Communication and engagement techniques in local flood risk management

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CIRIA

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record is available for this book from the British Library

Keywords		
Local flood risk management, engagement, communities, communication, surface water management, flood risk management		
Reader interest	**Classification**	
◆ Managing local flood risk.	AVAILABILITY	Unrestricted
◆ Obtaining engagement on local flood risk.	CONTEXT	Technical guidance
◆ Raising awareness of flood risk.	STATUS	Committee guided
◆ Preparing a local flood risk management project.	USER	Local authority flood risk managers, risk management authorities, drainage engineers, engagement specialists, environmental regulators, consultancies
◆ Delivering a scheme to manage local flood risk.		
◆ Event recovery.		

Acknowledgements

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Matthew Wright is a chartered town planner with over eight years' professional experience, with significant experience in stakeholder engagement and flood risk management projects. He has managed and delivered numerous water and flood related projects including river and coastal flood protection schemes, redevelopment of a 58ha wetland park, major reservoir projects, flood barriers and other forms of defence, including works to the Thames Barrier, and development in floodplains. Matthew was also part of the Arup team awarded the RTPI prize for "leading the way in planning for the community" for his work on Beam Parklands.

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1.1   The purpose of this companion guide

This companion guide should be read together with CIRIA C751 *Communication and engagement in local flood risk management* (the 'main guide') and is not intended as a standalone document. This companion guide provides further detail to supplement **C751 Chapter 5**.

1.2   Choosing the right techniques

C751 Section 3.5 recommends and sets out a proportionate and pragmatic approach to communication and engagement, using techniques appropriate to the scale, nature and challenge of the local flood risk management (FRM) intervention. It should not be assumed that smaller projects, including Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs), will automatically require less time and resource than larger ones. The planning carried out as part of the development of your communication and engagement plan will help you to decide what is appropriate.

C751 Section 4.4 (Framework Part C) shows you how to produce a communication and engagement plan to set out your methodology and approach to undertaking communication and engagement the techniques to be used and the skills needed to apply them (see **C751 Section 3.3**).

There are many different techniques that can be used, mixed and matched to deliver the objectives of your communication and engagement plan. It is important to choose and implement a selection of techniques that fit the circumstances of your project, the purpose of your communication and engagement and the role of all stakeholders concerned. Resource considerations, your target audience, the type of issue and the stage in the flood risk management project (eg raising awareness, developing options, construction of a physical flood defence) should determine the type of communication and engagement techniques used.

This companion guide provides examples of techniques which can be used together as part of a tailored approach. For example, engagement for a flood protection scheme could include (see **Example 4.4** in **C751 Section 4.7**) information leaflets initially, followed up with public meetings or exhibitions. More than one method may also be required to reach the various segments within the target audience, so for example interactive games or activity days may be more appropriate to engage with a younger audience, which can in turn be used to attract parents.

Setting realistic aims and objectives for your methodology and techniques, and ensuring that there are clear links between what is done and its outcomes, will help to build momentum, credibility, participation and both short and longer term project delivery.

When deciding on the most appropriate techniques it is helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you defined the people you want to reach?
- Have they been broken down into clear segments or groups to target?
- Is there a common or shared understanding of the flooding problem between partners, other stakeholders and the local community or communities?
- Has the audience previously been affected by flooding? If so, what techniques have already been used? How well did they work?

- How receptive will your audiences(s) be? If they are hard to reach or unwilling to engage you may need a multi-pronged approach using a wide variety of techniques.

- What message needs to be communicated? Is this awareness raising, full on engagement, or both?

- How can the message be communicated in the right language? For example, do you need to simplify language or use visual aids or icons?

- What levels and types of communication and engagement are needed for each of the stages of the project?

- What resources do you have to implement the process?

1.3 Using the companion guide

This companion guide covers the most common communication and engagement techniques, with advice on the opportunities, challenges and the degree of engagement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) offered by each technique based on the distinctions as set in **Figure 1.1**.

The degree of engagement offered by a technique will often reflect the aims and objectives of the initiative and how it is used. The techniques will often use more than one type of communication method, for example social and electronic media can provide information (inform), obtain feedback on options (consult) and provide a platform to share ideas and provide discussion (involve).

	Inform	Informing stakeholders and letting them know what is going on.
	Consult	Gathering information to inform LFRM interventions. Offering a number of options and listening to the feedback received.
	Involve	Involving stakeholders to provide an opportunity for discussing and sharing ideas.
	Collaborate	A partnership approach, sharing decision making and responsibility with others.
	Empower	A community-led approach, where the community will also need to deliver.

Figure 1.1   Degrees of communication and engagement

For each technique in **Table 1.1** an indication of the effort required for delivering and managing the process is shown from 1 to 3 with '1' being the least and '3' being the greatest amount of time and resource required. The effort required will vary depending on the specific approach and a more detailed assessment should be made when developing the communication and engagement plan. The techniques considered in this companion guide are listed in **Table 1.1**.

This companion guide also suggests some key considerations for the planning and use of the techniques together with some tips and common pitfalls to avoid when using them.

Table 1.1   Examples of resource levels for communication and engagement techniques

Technique	Engagement					Effort required	Approach
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower		
Information and publicity materials	✓					2–3	Techniques present and broadcast information, primarily used to inform and potentially consult stakeholders.
Local media (printed and broadcast)	✓	✓				1–2	
Using a website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	Techniques to develop a virtual conversation with stakeholders, or present complex information used to inform, consult and potentially involve. Often not used in isolation, but supporting other techniques.
Social and electronic media	✓	✓	✓			1–3	
GIS maps and paper maps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	
Visualisation tools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	
Door knocking	✓	✓	✓			2–3	Techniques use personal or face-to-face contact with a wide range of stakeholders to inform, consult and involve. Opportunities for collaborative working as appropriate.
Telephone contact	✓	✓	✓			3	
Surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	
Public meetings	✓	✓	✓			3	
Public exhibitions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	
Flood Fairs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	
Communication through education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	Techniques use a range of existing frameworks and established relationships. Can help empower stakeholders and identify those who can deliver actions.
Communication with and through existing groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1–3	
Site visits and activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	Techniques to work in depth with small groups of stakeholders (selected or self-selected) to develop the higher levels of engagement.
Engaging local councillors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	
Deliberative, interactive workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2–3	
Community flood planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	
Innovative methods	?	?	?	?	?	Variable	Techniques help improve communication and engagement; particularly where there is lack of interest, or specific groups need to be targeted.

1.4   Case studies

Communication and engagement for local flood risk management (LFRM) encompasses a variety of situations. Table 1.2 summarises the cases studies used in this companion guide.

1

2

Table 1.2   Case studies used in this companion guide

	Case study	Flooding memories website, Cambridgeshire	SWMP consultation, Norfolk County Council	Water Town game, University of Abertay Dundee	Communication through flood fairs, Northamptonshire	Stakeholder engagement workshop – River Durme pilot action, Belgium	Community flood plan development in Par and St Blazey, Cornwall
	Issues covered	2.1 p10	2.2 p15	2.3 p15	2.4 p33	2.5 p36	2.6 p39
Location	Urban				✓		
	Rural				✓	✓	✓
Type of flooding	Surface water	✓	✓		✓		✓
	ground water	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Ordinary watercourses	✓	✓		✓		✓
Timing of flooding	Newly flooded						
	Previously flooded	✓				✓	✓
Type of activity	Plan-making	✓	✓			✓	✓
	Flood warning campaign		✓	✓	✓		✓
	Development of practical measures					✓	
Community ownership of LFRM	High						✓
	Low	✓	✓			✓	
Scale of LFRM intervention	Large	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Small						✓
Practical examples	Building and engagement awareness		✓	✓	✓		
	Recovery after a flood event						✓
	Preparation of LFRM Strategy	✓	✓		✓		✓
	When a LFRM project is planned					✓	

2 Techniques

2.1 Information and publicity materials

Description	An important part of the communication and engagement process is to provide information and raise awareness, such as via newsletters (online/paper), posters, leaflets.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing clear information about a project.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	♦ Effective at most stages. ♦ Potential to reach a large audience. ♦ Can be used for a variety of purposes. ♦ Good for reaching those who may not make time to attend an event (can be combined with door knocking or engaging the community when delivering information).	
Challenges	♦ Can be ignored. Without follow up, can cause concerns. ♦ Needs to be well designed to ensure it attracts attention. ♦ Requires contact points and contact information to enable follow up.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of information and publicity materials

1 What message(s) need to be conveyed? Is it just information giving, eg that there is a project or do you want to encourage and obtain participation and attendance of an engagement event? Is it friendly and easily understood? Is the design attractive and engaging?

2 Do communities realise they are at risk?

3 Are you explaining realistic risks to people?

4 Is the language tailored appropriately?

5 Are you aiming your messages at the correct people rather than targeting everyone? Consider the target audience. Is the publicity material for the wider community, to inform them of the scheme and its purpose, or is the information for those who may be directly affected by flooding?

6 Can you use current weather events to raise awareness about flooding issues?

7 Have you identified the right person(s) to be the point of contact for enquiries?

8 If arranging an engagement event, how much notice do you need to give the audience?

9 How will you address potential confusion with other, similar projects?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using information and publicity materials

Appearance and language

♦ Provide information in a way that can be understood by as many people as possible. Plain language is preferred and generally, the use of overly technical language should be avoided. Statutory notices are an exception, but should be clear in their intention, and timely.

- Remember those with visual impairments. National guidance (and accepted best practice) from organisations such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), provide guidance on the required size of fonts and presentation of information.
- Consider the use of icons and graphics for complex issues, preferably developed in collaboration with stakeholders and the community.

Communicating risk

- Where communities do not realise they are at risk, emphasise that individuals or communities are already vulnerable to flooding and highlight previous flooding events.
- Use current weather events or other topical issues to raise awareness about flooding issues.
- Be aware of potential property or insurance blight issues.
- Do not frighten people.
- Provide a contact point.

Encourage a greater degree of engagement

- Provide information regarding what they can do to limit flooding impacts and, when appropriate, explain opportunities for becoming more involved in community flood planning.
- Ensure people are informed of events they may want to attend, in a timely way.
- For larger, longer term projects, examine whether giving it an identity through branding will offer benefits. For example by making information with a recognisable logo quicker and easier to identify or enabling a sense of bonding with the project within a community.

Use alongside other tools

- Use information and publicity materials in combination with other tools, eg to promote events, or to follow up on previous engagements.

The Environment Agency and Lincolnshire County Council general awareness raising campaign is a good example of how visually effective publicity can play a large role in raising public awareness. The techniques used here are equally transferable to local flood risk management (LFRM) (see **C751 Case study 4.4**).

Publicity materials/co-ordination of events

AECOM (2011) *Flood risk management. Community engagement toolkit*, Welsh Government, Cardiff (ISBN: 978-0-75046-794-0). Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/p9oyrvh**

HARMONICOP (2005) *Learning together to manage together, improving participation in water management*, Harmonising Collaborative Planning, University of Osnabrück, Germany (ISBN: 3-00016-970-9). Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/qze2cge**

MARTINI, F and ROO, A D (eds) (2007) *Good practice for delivering flood-related information to the general public*, EUR 22760 EN, European Commission, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/pfecsau**

RISK AND REGULATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (2009) *A practical guide to public risk communication. The five essentials of good practice*, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, London. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/pkwqfwg**

TAPSELL, S, TUNSTALL, S, GREEN, C, FERNANDEZ, A and PENNING-ROWSELL, E (2004) *Communication audit. Report to the Floodscape project*, Flood Hazard Research Centre, University of Middlesex, Enfield, UK

Websites
Plain English Campaign: **www.plainenglish.co.uk**

Websites accessed 29/01/2015

2.2   Local media

Description	Publication of information or events via local media, such as radio, television or press, eg BBC Online (2012). Local newsletters, eg community newsletters.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information
	Consult	Gathering information (eg inserting questionnaires in printed media).
Effort required	1–2	
Opportunities	♦ Can generate discussion and awareness among local communities, encourage involvement in the management process and help address people's preconceptions about flood risk. Local media can provide good access and be targeted or focused on potentially affected communities, generating better awareness especially of engagement opportunities. ♦ Potential low or no cost if publication of information is of mutual interest to media outlet or if it can generate increased readership, listeners or online visits due to the interest to the audience. ♦ Community able to raise awareness at the same time as undertaking their own promotional activities. ♦ Availability of online local media means that local news can be viewed by a wider, national audience. ♦ Use of local media for statutory public notices. ♦ Can address misinformation or balance views of vocal minorities.	
Challenges	♦ Potential reach of local media is limited to the local community or the area of distribution. ♦ Unreliability of free publication delivery. ♦ Readership profile differences between paid for and free publications. ♦ It is common for some local newspapers to be published on a weekly or monthly basis, so consider programming and release of information. ♦ Running a basic advert in the local newspaper or radio station is likely to incur a cost. ♦ Inclusion of an insert questionnaire will have a cost. ♦ Wording of newspaper articles and/or adverts needs to be tailored to local audience(s). ♦ The audience may be very diverse, so your messages need to be consistent and transferrable. ♦ Possible need for media training if interviewed on television or radio. ♦ May require public relations expertise. ♦ Media can be unduly influenced by vocal and/or influential individuals who may 'hijack' the process. ♦ No control over what may or may not be published, and when, or who it may attract.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of local media

1   Why do you need to use this form of outreach? Is it to inform or consult, or a combination?

2   Who are your target audiences, and why?

3   Do you have the right skills to undertake radio or television interviews?

4   Do you need media training?

5   Do in-house media and public relations support already exist whose skills could be used?

6   Consider the risk of incorrect messages being communicated – how will this be overcome?

7   What forms of local media should you use to promote the project and its messages?

8   What message(s) should be conveyed, and why?

9   What backup materials might you need? For example, frequently asked questions (FAQs)?

10   Who will be the designated contact point, and why?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when communicating through local media

Build a strong working relationship with the media

- Identify and understand readership profiles for both paid for and free publications.
- Communicate with the media on a regular basis.
- Regard the media as important and influential when stakeholder mapping, especially when exploring challenges and opportunities.
- Identify local sources of media and main contacts, such as journalists or editors – keeping them up-to-date can generate their interest in the project making it more likely for them to run a story.
- Local journalists tend to know a lot about the local area and have a good network of contacts that you could involve in the FRM engagement process.
- Prepare and update project briefing packs for the media.
- Consider face-to-face media briefing sessions.

Know the publishing programme well in advance of your needs

- It is common for some local newspapers to be published on a weekly or monthly basis, so you need to be familiar with their programmes when deciding when you want to release or publish information. Especially important when informing people about events they might attend.

Appearance and language

- Wording of newspaper articles and adverts need to be tailored to local audiences.
- Audiences may be diverse. Plan for and offer information in other formats and languages on request.
- Minimise words and where possible use illustrations.

Addressing misinformation

- Some stakeholders and community members may not understand the message (possibly deliberately).
- The media often cannot be controlled. Once information is in the public domain, it is likely to attract different kinds of attention. This also applies to potential national and wider interest.
- Include the wider audience in your stakeholder mapping and identification of challenges and opportunities.
- Decide what supporting materials you may need. These may include FAQs and evidence, eg research, investigations, briefing notes.
- Consider placing an advertorial (a paid for article, which is a cross between an editorial and advertisement). You control its placement, the content, what is published, where and when.

Decide the appropriate scale

- Availability of local media (particularly online information) means that local news can be viewed by a wider, national audience. Establish whether wider interest is a benefit or a risk to the project and decide how to address that.
- Include a wider audience in your original planning.

> **Local media**
>
> BBC ONLINE (2012) *Flood warning after showers in Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge.*
> Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/c5m8ccq**
>
> NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING CENTRE FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (2014) *Working with the media*.
> Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/mbbdgef**
>
> SEPA (2014) Communicating flood risk, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scotland.
> Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/l5zpcps**
>
> THE COMMUNITY TOOLBOX (2014) *Media advocacy*, Chapter 34, KU Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas, USA.
> Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/lgb7xey**
>
> **Websites accessed 29/01/2015**

2.3   Using a website

Description	A useful tool for both providing and seeking information. It provides a single place to give high quality detailed information, including photographs and videos, updates on progress, upcoming events, and is a good place to deposit reports etc for public access. A website can present information or enable input for those not attending an actual event. It can also be used to gather data (see **Case study 2.1**). Operating a closed website (with password access) enables it to be used as a collaborative design and development tool, as well as leaving a recorded legacy for actions beyond those of an immediate project.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Disseminating and providing information.
	Consult	Obtaining online feedback.
	Involve	Providing an opportunity to obtain input and develop a relationship with the community.
	Collaborate	Sharing ideas and developing options for decision making.
	Empower	Providing access to information and plans for those delivering a project.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	◆ Provides one place for all relevant project information, resources and news. ◆ Provides consistent messages. ◆ Helps deal with misinformation. ◆ Opportunity for two-way engagement through forums, and links to other techniques like online surveys, exhibitions and workshops materials. ◆ Helps to reduce the risk of exclusion. ◆ Helps reach those who are unable or may not have time to attend an event. ◆ Supports openness, mutual understanding and trust. ◆ Provides opportunity for visual display of information.	
Challenges	◆ Commitment required to keep information up-to-date. ◆ Need to advertise the website. ◆ Excludes those without access to the internet. Potentially self-selecting method of engagements, eg if you have access you can engage, if you don't, you can't. ◆ May exclude those who do not have a good understanding of English or IT.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of websites

1   What exactly is its purpose? Simple information giving, information gathering, greater involvement or a combination?

2   Who will ensure that it is kept up-to-date and well promoted?

3   Who may be excluded? Members of your intended audience may have visual impairments, not speak English, or limited internet access. How might this be addressed by other means?

4   How will the website be advertised?

5   Is the language clear and suited to the audience(s)?

6   Is there an opportunity to make it interactive?

7   Where are the logical links, to and from other websites?

8   Will the website be handed over to others at any stage? If so, what preparations for this will you need to make, and when?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using websites

Appearance and language

◆   The website should be well designed and easy to navigate, if possible use a professional web designer.

- Make the website interesting, provide pictures, local stories, and avoid too much technical information.
- Update the website regularly.
- If the website is to be used by non-English speaking audiences consider providing some different language options.

Publicise and use alongside other tools

- Publicise the website elsewhere. Include the website address on other promotions, and give links from the council/other relevant websites.
- Link to other tools, eg videos, online simulation models and games, maps, online questionnaires, exhibition materials, forums, blogs, Facebook and twitter.
- Ensure the website is optimised by registering with search engines such as Google.

Encourage transparency

- Encourage openness – upload meeting minutes and feedback on consultation events as soon as possible.
- Provide the project timescales, updates on progress, what happens next.

Ensure appropriate resources

- Ensure that staff and volunteer resources are available to maintain the website especially at busy times.

Case study 2.1
Flooding memories website, Cambridgeshire

Background

The Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership carried out a programme of collecting flood risk data in the early stages in the SWMP process. The Partnership wanted to raise awareness of flooding and obtain information from the local communities on small to medium localised flooding events that historically may not have been captured well. To help generate interest, and add to existing data, a website entitled Flooding memories was launched at the start of the SWMP process.

Challenges

It was necessary to raise awareness of flood risk by providing and requesting information in language that would be easily understood by local residents.

Formally recorded flooding information needed to be augmented with anecdotes from the public. Flooding memories had to offer the community enough information from which they could identify and report on sources of flooding, but also had to be easily understandable and accessible, as well as provide enough information on the source of flooding for detailed analysis later. This balance is not always easy to strike.

Any information provided and surveys needed to be understood by local residents.

Overcoming the challenges

The Partnership attempted to reach as many people as possible by using a variety of engagement activities. Members of the public were asked to complete an online questionnaire on their memories of flooding (the questionnaire was also available as a paper feedback form). The Partnership raised awareness of the website (through press releases, road shows) and they also held a series of flood memories workshops around the county to capture local people's memories of previous events.

Outcome
- The website proved to be a good tool to engage with the local public.
- It allowed people to suggest and better understand the source of flooding they were at risk from, and over 250 responses were received.
- The website proved useful as an information collecting tool in the early stages of the SWMP process. Comparisons of outputs from this method with pre-gathered information, raised confidence in the accuracy of existing data.

Lessons learnt
- A small number of peoples' responses on their potential source of flooding may not have been completely accurate. Anecdotal information needed to be cross referenced with data on actual flooding.
- The website was a useful technique to complement flood road shows, which had limited success in engaging the community.

2.4   Social and electronic media

Description	A range of online and electronic media tools offer opportunities to communicate and interact with desired audiences. These include Facebook, Twitter, online versions of local printed media, chat rooms, blogs and forums. They also include specific online sites (local or national), eg for posting surveys.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information.
	Consult	Gathering information by asking simple questions, possibly on a one time only basis.
	Involve	Obtaining input by asking more complex questions, encouraging an exchange of views and offering feedback, possibly on a longer term basis.
Effort required	1–3	
Opportunities	◆ Messages can be spread quickly and feedback obtained efficiently. ◆ Online blogs and forums provide a means for people to share experiences and to keep in contact. ◆ The right choice of medium can enable the targeting of specific audiences and complements other techniques. ◆ Film, animations and/or simple video clips are high impact techniques that can be shared via social media as a vehicle for communication, engagement, instruction, education, entertainment, marketing and research. It can provide an effective learning aid and accurate reproduction of events. ◆ Provide focus on a survey, or particular stage of a project, eg plans	
Challenges	◆ May only be used by those comfortable with IT, so it is important to make sure it is part of a wider strategy. ◆ Film, animations and/or simple video clips can be relatively expensive to produce but the use of local film production companies may lower the cost, as may the use of community members themselves to undertake the filming. This has the added benefit of further inclusion.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of social and electronic media

1   Why do you need to use this type of media?

2   Who is likely to follow particular websites or twitter hashtags (#)?

3   Do you need to create a tailored blog or website?

4   Are there resources available to keep websites and feeds up-to-date?

5   If running a formal public consultation, how will comments received via Twitter or Facebook be considered? For example will they be given the same importance as formal letters of response or online feedback forms?

6   How can any provided data be downloaded and analysed?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using social and electronic media

Keep active in the online community

◆ Provide regular updates.

◆ Thank people for their input.

◆ Be clear about the role of social media inputs.

◆ Monitor open forums and social media to understand community feeling and provide reassurances where necessary.

Promote social media forums through other tools

◆ As with websites, provide links to other related materials or information such as leaflets and newsletters.

◆ Link to existing websites.

◆ Online surveys can be promoted through social media.

Social media

PAS (2009) *Using social networking sites in public consultations: Trafford*, Planning Advisory Service, Local Government Group, London.
Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/pnq7uov**

BIRD D, LING, M and HAYNES, K (2012) "Flooding Facebook – the use of social media during the Queensland and Victorian floods" *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, vol 27, **1**, Australian Government, Australia, pp 27–33. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/n37e9vf**

Websites accessed 29/01/15)

2.5 Geographical information system (GIS) maps and paper maps

Description	GIS maps and paper maps can be used to support public participation across a range of degrees of involvement They should not be standalone engagement tools but be used to support discussions at engagement events. Examples of use include explaining flood risk, describing options for a scheme design and showing the location of stakeholders, especially vulnerable stakeholders. They provide visual real time summaries of situations, they can help to present risk and help to monitor progress across time.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing clear information.
	Consult	Obtaining further information about a situation. For example at workshops.
	Involve	Exploring and assessing potential solutions with stakeholders.
	Collaborate	Developing plans and agreeing roles and responsibilities with stakeholders.
	Empower	Providing important baseline information to communities who will be delivering actions, updating GIS information to monitor progress against objectives.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	◆ Provide a means to demonstrate various options and their benefits and complements other techniques. ◆ Can be used to receive feedback, public knowledge, perceptions and comments as people can add notes and comments, which can be fed back into a GIS. ◆ Can be used to communicate spatial information and identify spatial phenomena. ◆ Can be used to identify the location of stakeholders, especially those at risk. ◆ Provision to store and share data. ◆ Contributes to mutual understanding. ◆ Can be used as the basis for three-dimensional (3D) physical models. ◆ Provides layers of information, enabling people to see how apparently unrelated issues affect each other, eg with transport overlays timescale effects, green infrastructure.	
Challenges	◆ Requires trained GIS technicians to support this. ◆ Cost of data and licensing. ◆ Will require data sharing protocols especially where information is to be handed across to communities.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of GIS and maps

1 In what ways will GIS or maps help you and your stakeholders?

2 Is what you want to convey better communicated simply via paper or is a more flexible but complex system required?

3 Do you have the resources to manage and maintain the GIS?

4 Is there an opportunity for local people to contribute to the ownership of the database?

5   Can the maps be incorporated onto a website as a continuing point of reference?

6   Can maps be used effectively in a number of engagement methods, eg workshops, public meetings, exhibitions and flood fairs?

7   How will the results of any brainstorming or spatial discussions be communicated back to participants?

8   How can feedback from local people be transferred into the GIS? For example, using paper maps can they identify locations where there is a flooding problem that can then be integrated with the GIS mapping?
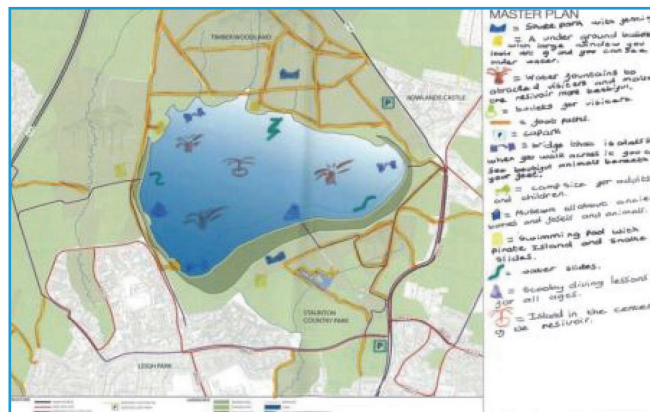
Figure 2.1   School children can use maps to draw-up their ideas

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using GIS and paper maps

The accessibility of GIS maps and paper maps

◆   Technical specialists are often required to develop maps in a GIS format. If being used as an online tool for the community to access from their own computer, remember that it can be very difficult to make some types of GIS data directly accessible to those using text, speech or braille formats to access their PC and the internet.

◆   Paper maps can be are more accessible than GIS maps. You will need to include the costs of printing the maps, however they have the benefit of not excluding those without full, or any, access to PCs or the internet.

◆   Make the best use of GIS maps and paper maps to capitalise on your investment.

Layout and format

◆   Supplement maps with field pictures and local facts to avoid the maps seeming too conceptual.

◆   Avoid overly technical production in GIS, as this can alienate participants.

Engage the audience

◆   Design the GIS in a participative way, so people are involved in the

Figure 2.2   Using GIS map software to explain a project issues and proposals

development of the GIS, eg in the contribution of the data, and testing of the database outputs.

◆   Use GIS and maps to support engagement events and processes, eg to collect comments, suggestions and present information.

◆   Update maps following any feedback from engagement activities, to contribute to local ownership and continued interest in the system.

Have GIS technicians on hand

◆   In meetings, if using GIS, have technicians on hand to solve any technical issues.

2.6　Visualisation tools

Description	These tools can assist with any degree of communication and engagement. Visualisations can include maps, 3D computer animations (eg fly throughs), videos or simply past photographs of flood events. They can be used to graphically present the impact of what could happen in different scenarios (see Case study 2.3) or to demonstrate how flood events can affect individuals. These can be used at public events, in option selection, and meet many interactive engagement needs. They are useful for unmanned exhibitions.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Representing a complex or dynamic situation clearly.
	Consult	Obtaining peoples' views and illustrating how a situation may change.
	Involve	Improving peoples understanding of the situation and obtaining informed views (on potential actions).
	Collaborate	Assisting the development of plans with others.
	Empower	Facilitating the understanding and agreement of decision and actions to be delivered by others.
Effort required	3	
Opportunities	♦　Useful for engaging people visually in what could happen, especially for those communities that have not experienced flooding before.	
Challenges	♦　Need to be wary of distressing residents if the extent of the problem seems out of their control. ♦　Resource constraints on developing tools and games. ♦　Those with visual special needs may be excluded.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of visualisation tools

1　How will these tools help you, and why?

2　What is appropriate to the scale of the problem?

3　Is there sufficient budget available?

4　Are there photographs, images or videos available?

5　When showing the impact of flooding, what information can you give so that local people know how to manage that risk? Are there things they can do, are there things that are being done to manage the risks, or both?

6　How can those with visual special needs be included, such as through physical 3D models?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using visualisation tools

Communicating risk

♦　Visualisations are successful because they can be used to show the impact of changes in water levels on individual buildings and used to effectively start raising awareness.

♦　They can be used to demonstrate how wider benefits and opportunities can be realised.

♦　Consider who is in the audience, people who have been flooded previously may find it brings back painful memories.

Visualisation tools

ALEXANDER, M, VIAVETTENE, C, FAULKNER, H and PRIEST, S (2011) *A tool for the assessment and visualisation of flood vulnerability and risk*, Flood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University, London.
Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/lv7722w** (accessed 29/01/15)

Case study 2.2
SWMP consultation, Norfolk County Council

Background

Norfolk County Council led three months of engagement during the development of a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) supported by city and district councils, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and external consultants.

The challenge

The SWMP was an opportunity to communicate and engage with local residents and communities to inform them of the risks associated with surface water flooding. The challenge was to present an accurate and understandable picture of the flood risk in an area that had not suffered from extreme flooding in living memory but had many instances of localised flooding.

Successful engagement was necessary for the project as their knowledge and experiences fed into the final report, which was to become publicly available.

Overcoming the challenge

Letters were sent to all properties that were at risk of surface water flooding in each of the three critical drainage areas (CDA) identified in the SWMP to inform them of the consultation meetings. The venues were schools or halls in a central location to each CDA. The meetings were held from late afternoon to early evening to allow working residents to attend. Local maps, visuals and photographs were used, together with leaflets outlining the roles and responsibilities of each organisation in attendance.

Flood visualisation software (computer generated images showing what the area would look like if a flood event happened) was a useful communication and engagement tool, actively engaging the community and giving them the opportunity to explore the consequences of flooding their local area.

Outcome

- Flood visualisation software actively engaged the community and has proved more successful at engaging the community than the colour graded maps used at previous consultation events. This was particularly useful in areas that had not experienced a severe flood event.

Lessons learnt

- Greater explanation of the flood visualisation was needed as the images were realistic enough to confuse some local residents into thinking it was from a real flood event.
- Public consultation in subsequent SWMPs has happened earlier in the process to allow greater involvement and sharing of information before the modelling of flood risk, eg site visits are publicised and arranged through local councillors to allow local residents to be involved.

Case study 2.3
Water Town game, University of Abertay Dundee

Background

The SKINT project team at the University of Abertay Dundee developed an interactive video game, released in 2013, which communicates flood risk issues in a non-technical manner. The aim of the game is to increase the awareness of flood risk affecting communities and demonstrate that small actions, such as the development of SuDS, can play a large role in decreasing localised flood risk.

Information

The game consists of four main districts, each representing a real life scenario:

- Wetley-Tetley resembles a district in northern England with problems related to local fluvial flooding mainly from small streams flowing down steep hillsides.
- Bryggen is a World Heritage Site in Bergen, Norway. The archaeological deposits are at risk of drying out due to inappropriate drainage arrangements for a nearby development. There is risk of the ancient wooden buildings being lost as a result of subsidence.
- Egmond is a coastal tourist town in the Netherlands, which has over the last decade suffered from extensive pluvial flooding. Many SuDS and conventional drainage choices can be selected, each with a different social and political outcome.

The project team hopes that the game will be used in schools as an exciting, interactive tool, as well as part of consultation and engagement events.

For more information go to: **http://watertown.abertay.ac.uk** (accessed 18 February 2015)

Figure 2.3   Computer visualisation of the Water Town game

2.7   Door knocking

Description	Provides the opportunity to target and engage with a large number of people in specific areas. To directly deliver leaflets and answer questions.	
	Inform	Providing key background information to (ultimately) help engage communities.
	Consult	Gathering feedback (can be used in tandem with informing).
	Involve	Providing opportunities for wider input (eg via a survey). Identifying individuals who would like further involvement.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	- Reach a large audience. - Provides the opportunity to answer questions. - Provides a reference for further information, events and resources for people to follow-up on. - Good for generally raising awareness and if you are not looking to receive detailed feedback. - Provides the opportunity to combine with a survey. - Helps to address the issue of those who claim to not know about a risk of flooding or project.	
Challenges	- People may dislike door knocking at home, may perceive as a nuisance and have a lack of trust in door knocker. - Can be time consuming and no guarantee somebody will be home. - Some may claim they were not visited, and thus excluded. - Time for extended engagement is limited. - May be difficult to obtain worthwhile inputs without a survey or scripted conversation. - Sometimes challenging to take notes or capture a general conversation?	

Questions to ask when considering using door knocking

1   What do you want this method to deliver, and why?

2   How can you effectively advertise this process in advance?

3   How much time will there be to answer any concerns?

4   What information will be provided?

5   Is this combined with other follow-up techniques?

6   If gathering information, how will this be structured, how will the information be recorded at the time?

7   What are the mechanisms by which people can follow up to find out more information?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using door knocking

Prepare for door knocking

- Appoint a team manager, to co-ordinate the task and its aftermath.
- Target households based on level of risk.
- Prepare (and issue) a frequently asked questions section on the information given to those carrying out the door knocking.
- Brief staff on all possibilities and how to be polite in the face of criticism.
- Consider cultural responses to door knocking. For example some religions and cultures do not allow single females to answer doors, nor allow them to speak to unknown males. Appropriate liaison with local faith leaders will help resolve any cultural issues. They may also offer to provide

translators and guides (free of charge) and advertise door knocking or the project among their community. For minority groups, time can be saved and better outreach achieved by engaging via a local place of worship, such as a mosque, temple or a church.

Out in the community

- Choose an appropriate time to catch people when they are home and more likely to want to talk.
- When a door is opened, make it clear early on that it is not a sales visit.
- Engage with the community on the way around the area.
- Work in teams to enhance safety, ie work in pairs, or have a 'buddy' system, ie make a colleague aware when entering a house. Ensure that those undertaking door knocking carry identification. Inform the local police you are doing this, when and where. Ensure that all potential risks are identified, assessed and mitigated in an appropriate way.
- Consider leaving material for unanswered doors.
- Make notes of unanswered doors. This will mitigate claims of not being visited.

Ensure appropriate resources

- Use door knockers who understand the project, the issues and can communicate these in lay terms. May raise fear of risks, with limited opportunity to ease fears, if those knocking on doors lacks knowledge or is unconvincing.
- Consider a community champion as a door knocker, who can help to build trust.

Use alongside other tools

- Door knocking should be used in combination with other techniques to ensure that people are not concerned by the risks without a further opportunity to identify how to manage those risks.
- Consider how best to ensure that supportive advertising and promotion can be achieved, such as through press releases, community networks, posters and community briefings.

> **Door-knocking**
> The Citizen's Handbook: **www.citizenshandbook.org/doorknocking.shtml** (accessed 29/01/15)

2.8 Telephone contact

Description	Provides a direct point of contact that can be used for active dialogue or leaving comments in relation to a project. People can telephone a dedicated hotline to express their concerns, ask questions and find out information. For example, the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct is a free service that provides automated flood warnings by telephone, mobile, email and text. Usually a supportive tool at any stage in a project. Has some limitations so use may not be suitable beyond securing 'involvement'.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing basic information about a project.
	Consult	Obtaining views and feedback from (informed) people.
	Involve	Making contact and obtaining more detailed information that can be explored on the phone.
Effort required	3	
Opportunities	• Provides reassurance. • Encourages contact.	
Challenges	• Costly if a 24-hour phone line. • Some dislike not being able to speak to a person if a recorded message is used for information purposes. • Misuse of the number, eg abusive phone calls.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of telephone hotlines

1   How will this method assist you?

2   Will this be an interactive point of contact, ie direct contact between callers and operators, or is it to provide or collect information only?

3   What is the volume of calls likely to be, from whom and why?

4   How will it be resourced?

5   Can you work with colleagues using existing customer contact centres? Do you need to buy in an external agency for this task? How will you deal with any abusive phone calls?

6   What hours will the phone line be available?

7   How long will the phone line be open for?

8   How will the phone line be promoted?

9   Is there a mechanism to provide a free number to avoid people incurring high calling costs?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using telephone contact

Ensure appropriate resources

- Work with colleagues who may already have experience of customer contact phone lines.
- Ensure the contact number is well-resourced so enough people are available to answer questions.
- Provide training so staff are well briefed and have the appropriate skills to deal with potentially distressed people during flood scenarios, and can offer calm advice in a stressful situation.

Publicise the telephone hotline

- Make sure the telephone number is widely advertised, for example on websites, and via the media, publicity material, and local groups.

Prepare in advance

- Write a telephone script to ensure that key information is effectively communicated.
- Those receiving calls should have access to further information and resources that people may need.

> **Telephone contact**
> Environment Agency *Floodline Warnings Direct:* **http://tinyurl.com/7kfhzsy** (accessed 29/01/15)

2.9 Engaging local councillors

Description	Councillors provide a link to wider community groups, and engaging with them can spread the message more widely. Some are also decision makers (for example environmental portfolio holders), which has implications for the acceptance and delivery of action plans. Generally, it is best to involve them as early and as appropriately as possible.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Advising stakeholders of a project, perhaps via a briefing note.
	Consult	Seeking stakeholder general views.
	Involve	Extending the relationship for information gathering, ascertaining their priorities, determining who else should be involved, actively engaging them in the planning process, seeking their opinions.
	Collaborate	Actively involving stakeholders in project decisions, gaining their support.
	Empower	Delivering actions and monitoring outcomes as part of a community or group.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	◆ Links to wider communities. ◆ Improving political and community support for LFRM. ◆ Well known and respected. ◆ Ensure that those who are decision makers are well informed. ◆ Support for the project and its funding. ◆ Information on links to related local schemes and by implication, funding.	
Challenges	◆ Political connections and potential bias. ◆ Timing of election Purdah. ◆ May have other, conflicting, concerns.	

Councillors have an important role to play in engaging the public due to their links to wider community groups and involvement in local issues. They also represent the public. It is important to communicate with three different types of councillor:

◆ **Elected members of the Regional Flood and Coastal Communities (RFCC).** There is a pivotal opportunity for the engagement of elected members in the strategic management of investment in regional flood risk management priorities. As such they provide a valuable resource for linking into the local community. It is important to brief and gain the support of elected members who can champion your causes in their meetings.

◆ **Cabinet members.** It is important that the appropriate cabinet members are briefed. They will represent the Council perspective and can advise on who else should be informed or involved.

◆ **Local ward members for the affected areas.** Local members sometimes consider themselves as representing their residents to the council. They can provide helpful feedback from residents. It is important to consider the relationship between the local member and the government cabinet such as different party affiliations.

Questions to consider before engaging local councillors

1 Who do you want to engage with, and why?

2 Be aware of the potential for councillors to have conflicting interests, which may limit their ability to have full involvement.

3 Are there any other things going on in the ward or causes supported by the councillors that you can connect with to encourage greater interest, eg local plans?

4 Is there likely to be any political tension between the ward councillor and the cabinet member?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when engaging local councillors

- A number of councillors may have a role to play. Inadvertently excluding someone may cause resentment.

- Consult with the secretariat well in advance of your deadlines. Identify diary events and meetings that you may be able to attend to brief members.

- Elected members are busy people. They will require as much advance notice as possible and strong reasons to get involved.

- Work with councillors to identity networks of local groups who may be interested in developing a community flood plan.

- Plan ahead and consider writing briefing papers for your RFCC.

- Avoid an overreliance on just one individual.

- Consider the timing or impact of election Purdah on councillor engagement.

- The Localism Act 2011 gives councillors greater scope for involvement in consultation and engagement.

- Remember that councillors consider themselves as representing their electorate to the council, not the other way round. It is your job to represent the council's aims and plans to residents. In a good relationship, councillors will explain the resident's aims and plans to you.

Engaging local council

Localism Act 2011

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (2014) *Stakeholder engagement,* Planning Advisory Service, Local Government Group, London. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/ooodv2g** (accessed 29/01/15)

2.10 Surveys

Description	Examples include self-completion questionnaires, feedback forms, face-to-face interviews, attitude surveys, flood surveys and focus groups. The level of engagement will be dictated by the aims and objectives of the survey.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Letting people know what is happening to obtain good quality feedback.
	Consult	Obtaining information through well-defined feedback forms and questionnaires, eg information on local flooding.
	Involve	Obtaining views and prioritisation of actions.
	Collaborate	Checking consensus on decisions and undertaking planning.
	Empower	Ensuring there is sufficient consensus to proceed with a decision. Sharing relevant information to enable a community to deliver project.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	- Gather feedback and views directly from those affected. - Can be used to gather feedback on a range of options. - Can be used to help scene set at the beginning of a project. For example, with a flood questionnaire, to explore people's understanding and experience of flooding. - Can be used to address misinformation. - Can help identify those who want further involvement. - Useful in checking a project's progress and how it is viewed. - Enables identification of consensus on proposed actions that empower decisions.	
Challenges	- Sometimes only those who object to proposals will take the time to respond. - Need to consider whether the findings are representative. - Some may regard the outputs from the survey as binding in relation to decisions. - Getting the questions right. They should be aims and objectives led.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of surveys

1   What information will be gathered, and why?

2   How will the surveys be developed, will they ask for quantitative or qualitative information?

3   Are you as interested in perceptions as you are in facts and objective data?

4   How will the questionnaires be disseminated?

5   Are there resources available to hold focus groups, analyse data?

6   Do you need focus groups? Focus groups, if properly constructed, with an appropriate survey instrument, though low in numbers can provide a robust evidence base. It forms part of a social model for enquiry.

7   Who will attend the focus group? Do you have a representative sample of the community?

8   What about face-to-face interviews?

9   What about attitude surveys? Will you present your results back to the community? If so, how?

10   How will you manage expectations?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using surveys

Appearance and format

♦   The questionnaires or feedback forms should be well designed and easy to use. Use appropriate signposting to relevant questions and make sure you avoid any leading questions.

♦   Consider using both open and closed questions.

♦   Keep the surveys short and ask important questions only.

♦   If there is a qualitative element, ensure there is sufficient space for people's comments.

♦   Only ask questions you will use responses from, consider explaining why it is useful to ask for personal information.

Responses to the survey

♦   Surveys sometimes have a low return rate so may not always be the best way of gathering data. In these circumstances they can be augmented by other surveys, eg face-to-face interviews or focus groups.

♦   Decide how you will analyse and categorise qualitative answers and threads, eg keywords.

♦   Vocal minorities may create bias in responses.

♦   Include questions to identify whether respondents are members of local groups and organisations, and if so which? This will help identify potential bias.

♦   Especially in early stages of a project, take the opportunity to identify those who would like further involvement and the best way to communicate with them.

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2.11 Communication through education

Description	Education projects provide a powerful way to involve a large number of school children. It offers the opportunity of raising awareness and outreach to related groups, such as parents, and for schools themselves to help problem solve and deliver actions.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information about a project both to younger audiences and others they are in contact with.
	Consult	Obtaining further information and simple views.
	Involve	Seeking ideas for solutions, together with developing a longer term relationship.
	Collaborate	Working with students, parents and/or schools to develop all or part of a solution.
	Empower	Supporting those involved in delivering actions.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	- Uses school resources. - Provides learning through real life scenarios, which bring the curriculum to life. - Generates many good ideas. - Through learning in a participatory way, children are enthused and discuss with their parents, raising awareness of the issues. - Can involve parents through pester power and presentation of work to parents. - Projects can be applied across several schools. - Schools and those attending them may help to provide solutions, eg reducing impermeable surfaces, location greening, localised design.	
Challenges	- Schools may need convincing that this will not take up too much of the teachers' time for an unproven return. - May need support from an education specialist. - Intensive planning required to fit school curriculum - Resource intensive. - Need to manage expectations. If expectations about outcomes of involvement and/or delivery times for actions are high, children can become disappointed and disengaged.	

Questions to ask when considering communicating through education

1   What do you want this to achieve, and why?

2   Can the project be applied across a wide area? Or is it more relevant to a localised area?

3   How can parents and wider members of the community get involved?

4   What materials are the children working with, and can these be shared with family to spread the message further, eg surveys?

5   What are the best links to the curriculum? What are relevant education needs, locally?

6   Which years are you targeting? This will affect the resources needed and the programme itself.

7   How and when will their involvement both begin, and importantly, end? How will potential disappointment be identified and addressed? How will expectations be managed and how will feedback, later in the project, be given and by whom?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when communicating through education

Engage schools

- Implement the project on a wider scale, across several schools to achieve economies of scale.

- Work with teachers to develop a range of interactive methods such as role playing games, presentations, model community flood plans, site visits and days out.

- Consider how children can influence their parents on this issue, for example through homework tasks, presentations of their work to parents.

Involve the media

- Consider using the media for pupils to report on their school projects, it will give them a sense of pride and achievement in their work, and spread the message further across the local area.

> **Communicating through education**
>
> ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL (2014) What if...?: Developing Community Resilience through Schools programme, Essex County Council, Chelmsford, UK. Go to: www.whatif-guidance.org/ (accessed 29/01/15)

2.12 Communication with and through existing groups

Description	Potential to engage with, and communicate through existing groups and organisations. Offers a range of opportunities, depending on a project's needs.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Sharing project information through established conduits.
	Consult	Gathering information.
	Involve	Obtaining inputs to help with decision making.
	Collaborate	Working together with communities to identify, agree and solve problems.
	Empower	Supporting situations where the community will be delivering actions and plans.
Effort required	1–3	
Opportunities	- Economies of scale, sharing of resources, reach to a wider audience through established communication and engagement channels. - Cross working with organisations and groups with shared interests, such as SuDS, green infrastructure or land management, and promoting multiple benefits.	
Challenges	- Messages can be diluted among other organisations' interests. - You should be willing to delegate power to other organisations. - Information holders may not want to share information. - Potential isolation or alienation from the process of those not included in specific groups. - Lack of consensus delaying agreement about decisions. - Engagement beyond 'involve', will need Terms of Reference (TOR) - Will need regular monitoring and checking. - Dependence on particular individuals to make the process work.	

Questions to ask when considering communication through existing groups

1. What do you want to achieve, and why?
2. What types of groups could be involved, and why?
3. Do the groups require further support, training or mentoring?
4. To what degree may you need terms of reference and a plan for groups to become empowered?
5. How will feedback (both ways) be managed?
6. How much decision making power do the groups have, or are they conduits only?

7   Do any of the groups have their own agenda that may affect how reliably the message you are trying to communicate is delivered?

8   How will resources and knowledge be shared?

Top tips and common pitfalls when communicating through existing groups

Sharing knowledge

◆   Consider existing community networks, buildings and facilities. They could provide convenient and natural places for people to meet and congregate.

◆   Work with groups who may already have experience of communicating with communities at risk of flooding. Trust may already exist between the community and the group.

◆   Information may be kept to a few individuals and not shared with a wider audience.

◆   Resource constraints in some groups may affect its ability to communicate in a timely way.

◆   A project community page on Facebook will help add interest and peer group approval.

2.13 Site visits and activities

Description	Particularly when carried out in conjunction with other participatory activities, site visits can be used for stakeholders and community representatives to bring plans and/or problems to life.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing a good introduction to a project, particularly when short timescales exist. For example SWMPs.
	Involve	Gathering further information.
	Consult	Including stakeholders in the key aspects and details of a project.
	Collaborate	Assisting with identifying the best way forward.
	Empower	Helping to provide confidence to support decision making.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	◆ Can be tailored to the needs of the audience and the degree of involvement required. ◆ Opportunity to see the problem in a practical environment. ◆ Allows people to take ownership of agreed actions (see CIRIA C751 Case study 3.2). ◆ Can provide greater clarity on roles and responsibilities. ◆ Provides a strong baseline for future monitoring of actions. ◆ Enhances understanding, opportunity to bring problems and potential solutions to life for participants.	
Challenges	◆ Resource intensive. ◆ May exclude people with mobility or visual special needs. ◆ Managing information gathering at the event. ◆ Engagement beyond 'involve' will require agreement by all parties on the purpose of the event and how its outcomes will be used.	

Questions to ask when considering site visits

1   What do you want from the site visit, and why?

2   What stage of the project are you at? Who will ultimately have responsibility for delivery of various actions? This will influence who and how many people you should invite.

3   Will you want to organise a specific visit for a selected number of community representatives, or organise a day of events on site as part of a larger consultation event?

4   Will the site visit be by invitation, or open to all who want to attend? If the latter, you will need to have resources to organise unknown numbers of people into groups on the day, to look at problem areas.

5   What information and resources will participants and leaders need to properly inform people and then capture their views on the day? Consider preparation of a site pack including maps, itinerary, key problems, issues, and space for notes. Are clipboards needed?

6   How will the site be accessed and the visit carried out especially if a number of locations are involved? Will it be on foot or is a minibus or other transport required? If so, can it be used for discussions and outcomes sessions?

7   How will people with mobility or visual special needs be included?

8   Will there be a mechanism to incorporate feedback from the visit to influence decisions?

9   Is there already another event that can be run in parallel with other activities, eg a local fair to attract people?

10   What other activities can be run in parallel to make the event engaging?

11   Who will lead such events? Will there be sufficient people available to help run the events?

12   What are the health and safety requirements?

Figure 2.4   Poster publicising an event

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when undertaking site visits and activities

◆   For site visits consider a smaller group, or breaking larger groups up into small guided groups, to allow for meaningful discussion

◆   Individuals in large groups may be unable to hear and useful discussions maybe difficult to facilitate.

◆   Consider developing and promoting a timetable for visits and taking groups on guided tours.

◆   To engage a wider audience, consider an all-day event with a range of activities, such as tree planting, nature trails, and games for children.

◆   If there are other events and activities in the local area, consider running activities in parallel. For example can children be engaged through nature, tree planting etc while their parents undertake other tasks or view information?

Publicity and advertising

◆   If the site visit is by invitation only, ensure the invitation is attractive and engaging while avoiding any suggestion of secrecy about the event. Otherwise, people may be alienated.

◆   If this is an open event, use attractive advertising that will encourage people to attend.

◆   If using a timetable to view problem areas, ensure this is advertised and understood in order to avoid confusion and potential disappointment.

> **Site visits and activities**
>
> THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS TEES VALLEY (2014) *Living waterways*, Environment Agency and Tees Valley, Durham and Northumberland Wildlife Trust, UK. Go to: **www.teeswildlife.org/new/living-waterways** (accessed 29/01/15)

2.14 Public meetings

Description	Public meetings provide an opportunity for a large number of people to be informed and for the public to ask questions. A public meeting will typically involve presentation(s) and questions from the audience. Public meetings should help assess a situation. One meeting is unlikely to be an appropriate way to make binding decisions that may affect many people.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing direct and accurate information or dealing with misinformation.
	Consult	Providing information and obtaining feedback, views and opinions.
	Involve	Developing further relationships, with the opportunity of ongoing exchanges of information.
Effort required	3	
Opportunities	- Provide an opportunity to introduce and explain the role of all those involved and to work with other organisations to demonstrate a joined-up approach. - Inform and discuss issues. - Meet the public either before, during or after a flood. - Opportunity to diffuse a heated local situation. - Possibility of using interactive media such as videos, games, and 3D modelling.	
Challenges	- Can add to any sense of divisions, ie 'them and us'. - Can cause stress and enmity between locals. - Feedback and collaboration depend on how hot the topic is and how much conflict may be present at the public meeting. - People can be intimidated about speaking out in large meetings. - Need to ensure the loudest voices don't dominate. - May require use of public relations expertise.	

Questions to consider when organising public meetings

1   Why do you want a public meeting? Is it a traditional event in the circumstances you are in?

2   What is the purpose of the event? Is it to present information, or to gain feedback? If so, could some more interactive elements be included? For example, a small display stand with information and/or questionnaires.

3   Do you know the likely audience and will they be coming with pre-conceived ideas?

4   Do you need to use public relations expertise?

5   Have you involved colleagues and partners who may already have engaged or have events planned – look for synergies and experience.

6   Has the event been well publicised in a timely way to allow people to attend? Is the publicity interesting and engaging?

7   Have the local councillors been made aware of the public meeting before invitations are issued?

8   Is it at a time and place suitable for most people?

9   What materials would be useful during the session?

10   Is there an opportunity to use interactive elements, such as videos, computer animation, flood models, GIS plans and maps? What would these contribute?

11   Do you need an external, recognisably neutral, chair for the meeting?

12   What will the meeting agenda consist of, and why?

13   How will any feedback be communicated back to the attendees and wider public?

14   Post event analysis. How useful was the session? Does the format need to be changed in the future?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using public meetings

Prepare in advance

◆ Research local concerns beforehand so that you can highlight these.

◆ Are the media commenting? Is this influencing people's thinking?

◆ Will the media be present?

◆ Decide what you want to get out of the public meeting.

Publicise the event

◆ Publicise the events widely, in a timely manner to allow people to attend. Use different formats, and place publicity in noticeable locations, as well as in the media. This will help encourage attendance by the desired audience.

◆ Ensure publicity includes all the details needed such as day, time, location and who should attend, as well as appropriate information on what the event is about.

◆ Ensure the publicity explains why people should come, and shows them how they can benefit from it.

Event logistics

◆ Arrange the events at a time and place suitable for most people, eg outside of working hours, and in a local accessible venue.

◆ Consider the layout of the room and facilities available, ie refreshments, room temperature and appropriate seating contribute to holding the audience's attention. Give consideration to those who have childcare issues, and perhaps organise a play area or use part of the event to engage with children. Make sure you have made provision for using staff with appropriate clearance from the right authorities to work with children.

◆ Consider mounting a small exhibition or table where people can be spoken with and welcomed as they arrive.

◆ Consider an informal structure to prevent participants feeling intimidated or reluctant to speak.

◆ Consider combining with workshop breakout sessions rather than keeping everyone together for the whole time.

◆ Involve representatives from all the various bodies involved. You need to avoid situations where the right expertise and/or authority is absent when addressing questions about the different sources of flooding and partners' responsibilities.

◆ Ensure senior people (decision makers) are present, not junior staff without the necessary authority.

Techniques for managing the public meeting

◆ Circulate a printed agenda, and keep to the time allocated for each item. Such techniques help to establish and reinforce the process.

◆ Keep presentations short with an opportunity for audience response.

◆ Use an independent, skilled and locally respected person as chair or facilitator. They can also log attendance and feedback to provide an understanding of public opinions and important concerns.

◆ May require the use of a public relations expert to facilitate and achieve a positive outcome.

◆ Designate a 'hot space' for people who are agitated and/or continuously interrupt others. They can be taken to the hot space and their issues addressed with respect, but without continuing to interrupt the main meeting.

◆ Provide a roving microphone with an attendant. This provides a clear signpost about who is speaking now and next. It also discourages raised voices and talking over others.

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- Carefully arrange the seating. The traditional theatre style may not be appropriate, and encourages talking over others. A horseshoe arrangement diffuses tension. Move any 'top table' close to or among the audience to encourage equality and openness.

Language and use of materials

- Consider using interactive visualisation tools such as computer simulation at the event. This can be an effective way of showing what the area could look like in a flood. However use with caution to avoid causing distress to residents.

- Use visualisations, such as maps, to explain arguments, describe concerns, show several flooding scenarios, show options, and to allow local people to identify with the local area.

- Keep the terminology and language relevant to the audience.

> " Confusion can occur over whose responsibility it is between the lead flood risk authority, the environment agency and the water company. This is why jointly run sessions work well, as we all have different roles to play and can be available to answer questions."
>
> **Practitioner's view …**
> **a water company**

See **Section 2.1** for further reading and useful links to practical advice on the co-ordination of public events, including public meetings.

2.15 Public exhibitions

Description	Staffed exhibitions provide the opportunity for members of the public to access information ask questions of staff with a good level of knowledge, and give their views. This type of event can be used to provide information and receive feedback. They can be useful before issuing statutory notices or periods of formal consultation. To maximise your investment, unstaffed exhibitions can be placed in suitable locations, such as public libraries, so that people can still find out what is going on and give their views.

Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information and/or updates.
	Consult	Gaining people's views.
	Involve	Providing more in depth information and obtaining informed opinion.
	Collaborate	Working with a range of people to agree on a situation and what should be done. Offer choices that will influence decisions.
	Empower	Helping assess consensus on and secure support for actions being taken forward by others.

Effort required	3

Opportunities	- People are able to ask questions on a one-to-one basis, making it easier for people to express individual concerns. - Helps to build relationships and trust with participants. - Can be combined with other local events to help increase footfall and awareness, creating better value for money through limited additional investment. - Can help identify potential local champions and those who want further involvement.
Challenges	- Need to advertise widely. - Need to organise events at times and locations convenient to the stakeholders you may be targeting. - May require public relations expertise. - Need to ensure materials are accessible to all. - May attract negative media attention.

Questions to ask when considering the use of public exhibitions

1 What is the purpose of the exhibition? Information giving, consulting, involving etc or a combination?

2   Have you involved colleagues and partners who may already have engaged or have events planned? Identify synergies and experience.

3   Will the exhibition be staffed or not?

4   Do you need to use public relations expertise?

5   Has the event been appropriately publicised in a timely way?

6   Is it at a time and place suitable for the target audience?

7   What materials would be useful during the session to communicate information and obtain feedback?

8   How can other tools such as GIS maps, plans, and interactive games be integrated into the sessions? Is there an opportunity to use interactive elements, such as videos, computer animation or flood models?

9   At what stage in the project is the exhibition being held, have any proposals been considered? Is it to gather feedback on options, or to invite comments on the final scheme?

10 How will feedback be captured, if so could some more interactive elements be included?

11 How will any feedback be communicated back to the attendees and wider public?

12 How will the feedback be used to inform future events? Can it be used to inform the structure of workshop sessions that explore topics of most concern to attendees?

13 How will inputs influence the project and its outcomes? How will you inform the participants?

14 How will you undertake post event monitoring to determine effectiveness? Does the format need to be changed in the future?

15 Is there an opportunity to have a static exhibition, once the manned exhibition has finished, so that information can be distributed and a point of contact provided

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider for public exhibitions

Prepare in advance

♦   It will be important to research local concerns beforehand so that you can address these and prepare accordingly, with briefing information etc.

Publicise the event

♦   Publicise the events to encourage a wide attendance among your target audience by using a variety of methods.

♦   Ensure publicity includes all the details needed such as date, time, location and who should attend, as well as enough information on what the event is about.

♦   Ensure the publicity explains why they should come to find out more, to encourage participation and shows them how they can benefit from it.

Event logistics

♦   Consider how the layout of the exhibition will avoid too many people crowded around the same information. The layout should have a logical structure and flow. This also helps to avoid people giving their views without really understanding what they are commenting on.

♦   Consider how to arrange the exhibition board stands, so that people can move round them and see everything that is relevant.

♦   Consider a guided approach to facilitation where people are talked through the exhibition and discussion is encouraged.

♦   Meet and greet people, encourage them to sign in. This is for health and safety purposes, as well as information gathering.

- Arrange the events at a time and place suitable for most people, eg outside of working hours and in a local accessible venue. It may be necessary to have a range of times and days when the exhibitions are open.

- Can an informal stall, tent or marquee provide similar results to a public exhibition? For example, a stall outside the supermarket or transport hub (ie where people naturally go to). Other locations could be close to the venue under consideration, or high footfall areas where you are most likely to find a mix of people, or in some instances people with a specific profile.

- Give consideration to those who have children, so perhaps organise a play area or use part of the event to engage with children.

- Involve representatives from all the partners and responsible bodies involved in the project, so that people are on hand to answer questions about the different sources of flooding and responsibilities.

Language and use of materials

- Consider how you can make the event as interactive as possible. Examples include feedback forms, short surveys, and recording where they live and work with a sticky dot on a map that can help capture important information on specific geographic locations.

- Consider using interactive visualisation tools such as computer simulation at the event. This can be an effective way of showing what the area could look like in a flood situation, however use with caution to ensure to avoid causing anxiety distress to residents.

- Consider using visualisations, maps and graphics to explain arguments, describe concerns, show several flooding scenarios, show options and potential opportunities, and to allow local people to identify with the local area.

- Remember to accommodate guidelines on visual accessibility, font size, use of colour so that you do not exclude those with visual impairment.

Figure 2.5   Public exhibitions – visualisations can help explain proposals

Figure 2.6   Techniques for gathering feedback using vote tokens

Review the approach taken

- Log attendance and feedback to provide an understanding of public opinions and important concerns.

- Consider whether the event was successful and worthwhile, if not why not, and change the approach taken.

- Ask those attending what they thought of the event, against given criteria, eg did you have enough information available to help you give your views?

2.16 Flood fairs

Description	Flood fairs provide an opportunity to meet and involve people who would not normally attend a public meeting or exhibition, although it does not exclude those who would In the past, flood fairs have been organised jointly by local authorities, the Environment Agency and local water companies to raise awareness about local flooding issues and collect feedback (see Case study 2.4). Depending on the stage a project is at, local groups are increasingly involved in the fair, sometimes managing stands. The fairs often take the form of stands, and related activities, in busy local places where people have the opportunity to stop and talk to members of staff from the different bodies present. They can learn about the flood risks and the part they can play in managing them.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information where required.
	Consult	Obtaining views and opinion.
	Involve	Capturing more complex information and actively obtaining more detailed views that are likely to influence decision making.
	Collaborate	Reaching and obtaining collective agreement.
	Empower	Facilitating consensus and obtaining support on the way forward to enable others to deliver actions.
Effort required	3	
Opportunities	◆ Can engage with people who would not normally attend a public meeting, exhibition or workshop. ◆ Generate interest and positivity about a project. ◆ People are able to ask questions of the relevant representatives. ◆ Can make an important contribution to enhanced awareness and understanding. ◆ Provides a chance for people to follow up afterwards. ◆ Way of finding people who may be interested in becoming flood wardens or community champions. ◆ Can be combined with local events such as markets, fairs, and resident's association meetings. ◆ Can offer the opportunity of a wider role for informed community organisations.	
Challenges	◆ Resource intensive. ◆ Potentially difficult to communicate the risks in 'lay' terms. However minimising the use of overly technical language and using simple diagrams and visuals may help communicate information, especially the different sources of flooding and responsibilities of different organisations. ◆ May not involve or engage all targeted stakeholders. ◆ People may feel alienated if surrounded by too much technical information and/or high level of pressure.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of flood fairs

1   What do you want the flood fair to achieve, and why?

2   Is there a suitable role for local residents, or those affected by flooding?

3   Where would be a suitable location with a high footfall (this information is often recorded by local authorities particularly in town or city centres)?

4   What else is going on in the area where you could combine or stage the fair?

5   When and where is likely to be most convenient for people to have time to engage with the fair?

6   How will you arrange the representation from different bodies involved in managing flood risk?

7   How will you communicate the flood risk in layman terms?

8   How can the event and stalls be made interactive to attract people to stop?

9   How will the event be effectively publicised?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using flood fairs

Event logistics

◆ Plan how to reach groups that wouldn't normally attend an event, for example through holding an event in places where there is a lot of footfall, eg a public square to catch passing shoppers on a Saturday.

◆ Attractively arrange stalls and representatives from organisations involved in managing flood risk so that people feel comfortable to visit and engage with them.

Engage the audience

◆ Consider inviting an appropriate community group to man a stall or provide support in some way as local champions.

◆ What freebies can you offer to attract people's attention, such as coffee mugs, fridge magnets, key rings?

◆ Have representatives available from the relevant bodies to answer people's questions.

◆ Plan how to make the event interactive, eg through maps where people can leave comments.

◆ When communicating with the public, avoid using overly technical language and help to communicate the risks in a way that they understand.

Publicise the flood fairs

◆ Because the fair will be resource intensive, consider advertising it via an advertorial. That way, you will have control over what is said, how and when. Ensure the event is well publicised, for example through leaflets, posters, newspaper adverts, and a slot on broadcast media.

◆ Provide information on how people can keep in touch, attend future events or where to look for details.

Case study 2.4
Communication through flood fairs, Northamptonshire

Background

Northamptonshire County Council wanted to launch the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) so it set up a series of flood fairs over a three month period to discuss the Strategy, offer information and advice from professionals and flood risk specialists. The flood fairs were held in partnership with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water, and the invitation to attend the fairs went to parish and town councils, district and county councillors, environmental and community groups across the county, and residents located within a flood risk area.

The challenge

It was the first time that residents had been engaged on flood risk, and getting them interested in flooding when there wasn't recent flooding was challenging. It was also difficult to ensure that there was appropriate coverage of awareness-raising activities across the entire county, obtaining engagement and information from residents was difficult.

Overcoming the challenge

The flood fairs were publicised through leaflets and posters in community spaces, on the local radio and on the Council's flood and water related website.

The Council actively promoted self-reliance with regard to flood risk and staff were on hand to give advice on the preparation of a flood emergency plan for householders, and also more specialist advice on the preparation of a business continuity plan for businesses. Staff also promoted awareness of the Councils new roles and responsibilities under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010.

Information was available from the Environment Agency on how residents could get involved through the parish council flood warden schemes, checking postcodes and encouraging the sign up to Floodline Warnings Direct. Representatives from Anglian Water were also in attendance to answer questions relating to the BIG sewer switchover. The fairs brought together a large gathering of flood protection equipment suppliers, manufacturers and specialists.

Outcome

- The flood fairs were attended by over 240 people within a specific flood zone.
- Fifty-four additional historic flooding hotspots were collected from individuals attending the flood fairs.
- The flood fairs enabled verbal discussions with the community about what the flood risks are, and allowed the community to speak to a wide range of people.
- The fairs enabled households living in flood risk areas to take some degree of personal responsibility. By registering to receive Environment Agency flood warnings they will be aware of the likely risks and changing weather patterns in their local areas.

Figure 2.7   Newsletter publicising the flood fair, Northamptonshire

Lessons learnt

- If the community has not recently been flooded additional effort may be required to get them to engage in activities. Different promotional activities like letter drops, radio advertising may be required to obtain involvement from residents.
- Footfall for flood fairs can be maximised by having a central, busy and easy to get to location.
- The use of technology at the flood fairs captivated the public and worked well – visual display boards and an interactive flat screen TV containing local flood risk information and highlighting existing hot spots were set up and got the attention of all attendees.
- Feedback provided during the flood fairs suggested that there was still a lack of understanding of flooding sources and roles or responsibilities of different risk management authorities (RMAs).

Figure 2.8   Setting up the consultation boards at the flood fair, Northamptonshire

Figure 2.9   Visualisations at the flood fair, Northamptonshire

2.17 Deliberate, interactive workshops

Description	Workshops are a commonly used consultation and engagement technique as a forum for different stakeholders and partners to share views and build consensus, (see Case study 2.6). Workshops can be used for both internal (partners) and external (communities, groups) stakeholders. They are helpful at the start of a project, for stakeholder mapping and communications and engagement planning. Workshops can form part of a continuing process of community involvement and can bring people together. They are an opportunity to engage members of the public who have shown greater interest to be involved. The best workshops are deliberative and interactive, enabling discussion, the sharing of views and clear outcomes.	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information to be used for decision making. Assisting with stakeholder mapping and planning communications and engagement.
	Consult	Presenting and checking information and obtaining feedback on potential solutions.
	Involve	Sharing more detailed information, obtaining feedback and moving towards consensus on actions.
	Collaborate	Obtaining robust agreement on actions, roles and responsibilities.
	Empower	Supporting agreement and delivery by others by providing project updates and facilitating decision making.
Effort required	2–3	
Opportunities	◆ Encourage consensus building and understanding of various viewpoints. ◆ Benefits of participatory planning and community involvement in the design process. ◆ Opportunity to achieve multiple benefits through bringing together different interest groups and stakeholders and identifying shared interests. ◆ Can help transfer decision making and action, eg to communities and other parties. ◆ A good method for addressing misinformation.	
Challenges	◆ Finding the right venue. ◆ Getting key individuals or groups to attend. ◆ Costs of facilitation. ◆ Limited representation of the community and stakeholders as workshop numbers are usually limited. ◆ One group or individual can dominate proceedings.	

Questions to ask when considering the use of workshops

1   What do you want the workshop to deliver, and why?

2   For external stakeholders, how will participants be selected to ensure fair representation?

3   How will smaller working groups be selected from the wider group to ensure that there is an even representation?

4   Is the workshop at a time convenient for attendees?

5   What methods will be used during the workshop? How will you make it deliberative and interactive?

6   What equipment will be needed to support the event?

7   How will feedback be captured and incorporated into decisions?

8   How will scheme development be communicated back to participants and the community?

9   Will participants be able to attend a follow-up event?

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using workshops

Participants

- Guided by your stakeholder mapping and/or engagement planning, decide who needs to be there. Ensure that there is a good representation of different interest groups, to avoid one interest dominating.

- Consider the make-up of the small (breakout) groups – do you want specialist groups, teaming like with like or would a mix of people suit the purpose better?

- Where possible identify local people who can help facilitate small breakout groups in the workshop. Check that they have the right skills (eg patience, objectivity, able to accurately summarise).

Managing the workshop

- Plan different workshop methods suited to the stage of scheme development.

- It is important to manage expectations so that people are aware of what can be changed and what cannot. Communicate clearly the purpose of the overall workshop, each session and what their aims are.

- Combine feedback from small group sessions, via a plenary session with a summary of findings to the wider group.

- Write up the comments as you go along – consider having a neutral or an independent party to take notes.

- Create an open atmosphere where people feel free to express their perceptions.

- Facilitate the management of comments, for example write all comments down on note cards, flip charts or a laptop and provide feedback to the group both at the event and afterwards.

Logistics and the use of materials

- Plan the venue space (including wall space) to accommodate key information, flipcharts, and plans.

- Provide participants with a briefing note in advance of the workshop. This should set the scene, tell them what their role is and help them prepare for the event.

- Ensure everyone has a timed agenda.

- Appoint a chair person who will ensure good timekeeping.

- Provide space for breakout group working.

- Provide working materials such as post it notes, flipcharts and coloured pens.

- Decide how you will use tools such as maps and plans to inform and aid discussion.

- Give participants plenty of activities and good instructions. For example, selecting preferences, voting opportunities, prioritising aims, objectives and/or actions.

- Limit the time spent on presentations to avoid boredom, lack of interest, and one topic dominating the proceedings. Consider limiting presentations to five minutes. Spread presentations out across the workshops sessions, to provide focused information relevant to each session.

See the information box in **Section 2.1** for further reading and useful links to practical advice on the co-ordination of public events, including workshops.

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Case study 2.5
Stakeholder engagement workshop – River Durme pilot action, Belgium

Background

The River Durme, a tributary to the River Scheldt, had significant flooding. Developing flood control around the River Durme was considered essential to improve FRM.

The challenge

There were a large number of stakeholders that needed to be engaged with, all with varying degrees of understanding around the problems and flooding mechanisms. Stakeholders were likely to be significantly affected by approaches to reduce flooding.

Overcoming the challenge

A pilot action site was set up around the river to:

- study solutions for new landscapes
- develop a long-term comprehensive master plan,
- develop and implement a strategy for public communication and engagement
- develop understanding and acceptance amongst the public of flood risk management (FRM) and the measures proposed.

One of the first participation methods used was a workshop aiming to achieve agreement on the problems to be solved and exploring the conditions and boundaries to the project.

Five brainstorming/discussion groups were set up to deal with the five main topics of the project:

- agriculture
- water management
- land use
- nature development
- recreation.

Opportunities and bottlenecks in the region were identified and outlined on a map.

At the end of the day, the discussion groups came together to make sure all the important issues for each topic had been dealt with.

Outcome

The workshop was successful with 70 participants attending from organisations and interest groups. The methods used gave everyone an opportunity to participate and voice their opinions.

Lessons learnt

The use of moderators allowed everyone to participate. However, you need to ensure an equal representation of groups at the workshop.

Interactive workshops

Floodscape (2006) *Stakeholder participation evaluation report*

2.18 Community flood planning

Description	The Environment Agency has been encouraging local communities to work together to develop community flood plans to help them prepare for a flood event. Community flood planning includes the practical steps that communities can take to inspire and encourage people to work together to improve how to deal with flood risk. The plan can be shared with others and can be enacted in the event of a flood (see Case study 2.6).	
Degree of communication and engagement	Inform	Providing information.
	Consult	Obtaining views and opinions.
	Involve	Obtaining ideas from the community and looking to form a working group.
	Collaborate	Developing ideas and options together to produce an action plan.
	Empower	Providing the right framework for the community to agree the plan and take action (sharing information, developing agreed aims and objectives, providing support).
Effort required	3	
Opportunities	◆ Provides an opportunity for members of the community to be involved in developing a flood plan for their area. ◆ Provides a practical means for managing risks. ◆ Gives local community ownership of the plan and greater feelings of control.	
Challenges	◆ Key people identified may not want to be involved. ◆ Over-reliance on community champions who, in the event of a flood, may themselves be at risk. ◆ Highly likely that the community or champions will need considerable training. ◆ Plans require periodic updating or redesign. ◆ Likely to require terms of reference (or a project charter).	

Questions to ask when considering the use of community flood planning

1   Why do you want to achieve a flood plan?

2   What are your timescales?

3   Who are the community? What methods would be appropriate to approach them initially? Are there any hard to reach groups?

4   To what extent has the local community already experienced flooding? Are they aware of the risks?

5   Are there existing community groups that can be approached to form a flood action group? Are they representative of the local area and people? Who would be appropriate as a community champion to encourage a group to form?

6   What levels of information, training or up-skilling will be needed?

7   How can volunteers be recruited to put the flood plan into action, in the event of a flood?

8   Once the group has formed and has developed a community flood plan, how will it be promoted to the wider community?

9   How can the group sustain momentum once it has formed?

10   What level of support is required to sustain the group, and for how long?

11   What terms of reference or governance are required?

> **Benefits of a community flood plan**
>
> The Environment Agency (2012) sets out the following benefits of developing a community flood plan:
> - improves communication before, during and after a flood incident, making sure the right people are involved at the right time
> - prevents different people or groups doing the same thing, saving time and money
> - helps share local knowledge and that of people who have been flooded with professional organisations and ensure people's concerns are heard
> - clarifies the responsibilities of all those involved
> - encourages the involvement of volunteers
> - reduces the damage and distress of flooding by helping people to prepare.

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when undertaking community flood planning

Encourage partnership

♦   Set up a partnership working process with all relevant agencies, to raise and address community concerns early on. Bringing together the relevant risk management authorities allows the public to get the answers they need on all sources of flood risk and is beneficial in addressing flood related concerns comprehensively. It also avoids people being passed from organisation to organisation when passing the blame or responsibility.

Empower community groups and build capacity in the community

♦   Empower groups to run themselves by being clear about the different responsibilities of the individual, the community, other responsible bodies and the local authority.

♦   Consider the long period of time it takes to build capacity among the local communities.

♦   Support existing community groups in forming a flood action group that can take ownership and produce the community flood plan.

> " In order to engage successfully with any community it is important to appreciate what they want to achieve and how they want to be supported in this, how their community functions, how much do they understand about flood risk among other things. I have found an adaptable approach which reflects these aspects of society to engage successfully. In addition, I think it is important to understand that it can take years to successfully engage a community, whereas civil works may take a much shorter time period to complete."
>
> **Practitioner's view … RMA**

♦   It can be difficult to engage all members of your community, especially vulnerable and/or hard to reach groups. Some members will be actively engaged, however others may only become more aware through the activities of those actively engaged members.

Involve community champions

♦   Identify, agree and involve community champions who can lead in setting up a group, and developing the community flood plan.

♦   A good community champion is enthusiastic, can see the problem and, importantly, can network and engage with people to show them that there really is an issue.

♦   Avoid an overreliance on one person in the community.

♦   Identify a number of ways to find the community champion, for example via existing groups.

♦   Clearly define the role of the community champion, in-line with the terms of reference of the group.

♦   Work with local councillors to identify likely local groups, but consider carefully whether a councillor would be appropriate to act as a community champion. For example, are there likely to be conflicts of interest?

Use alongside other tools

♦   Consider using a range of techniques to reach the community (see **Table 1.1**).

Community flood planning

DHONAU, M (2014) *How to plan for emergencies*, Mary Dhonau OBE and Associates – Community Flood Consultants.
Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/nquaynl**

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (2012) *Flooding – minimising the risk. Flood plan guidance for communities and groups. Practical advice to help you create a flood plan*, Environment Agency, Bristol. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/o5gx96a**

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (2012) *Make a flood plan*, Environment Agency, Bristol. Go to: **http://tinyurl.com/7zajmzu**

Websites

Flood Plan UK. Available online: **www.floodplanuk.org**

National Flood Forum: **www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk**

Websites accessed 29/01/2015

Case study 2.6
Community flood plan development in Par and St Blazey, Cornwall

Background

Par and St Blazey have over 600 properties at risk of flooding. These communities have flooded in the past, for example an event in November 2010 affected around 55 properties.

The Environment Agency had already been working with this area on developing a flood plan. Their objectives were to ensure that the community accepted that they were at risk of flooding and were aware of actions they could take to minimise the risk. Community flood plans were promoted as the best way of achieving this through a partnership approach.

The challenge

Par and St Blazey cover two parishes and it was initially difficult to get both parishes to support the development of a flood plan for the one community. Neither parish were keen to lead on the development of a plan and were wary of insurance issues relating to volunteers. However, following a flooding event a local car garage owner who had been affected offered to lead on the development of a plan.

There were also challenges around the number of people at risk and how to engage them and include them in the process. The community as a whole were keen to know what was being done by RMAs to manage their risk.

Overcoming the challenge

Initial contact was made with the parish councils through face-to face-meetings. A joint Par and St Blazey flood group was established with a lead flood plan co-ordinator identified. A community flood plan was developed with guidance from the partnership. Regular meetings with the flood group were held and a timescale for completion was agreed – the one year anniversary of the November 2010 floods.

Defra grant for individual property protection was also received for the area, pursued by the Cornwall Community Flood Recovery Group, further incentivising the community to engage in plan making.

The Environment Agency also developed a pilot early flood warning system based on forecasts. This meant the flood plan co-ordinator was well informed and engaged on flood forecasting and warning, which helped understand the relevance of a community flood plan.

Innovative methods of engagement included a text group so flood wardens can contact large sections of the community quickly, and a Facebook page to report the latest information on flood events. These methods have also been used to communicate with neighbouring flood groups such as Lostwithiel and Mevagissey, which suffered from the same flood event in November 2010.

Outcomes

♦   The community is now very engaged in flood risk issues.
♦   A flood warden network has been established (with over 60 members of the community), and a workable, comprehensive plan has been adopted by the two parish councils.
♦   The Cornwall Community Flood Recovery Group has since received a lottery grant to establish the Cornwall Community Flood Forum. This has enabled other communities at flood risk to get together to share information, experiences and to get support and advice for developing their own flood plans. The Par and St Blazey Flood Group were key in establishing the forum.
♦   The work in this community has led to the development of a resilience toolkit for other communities to use through the Cornwall Community Flood Forum.
♦   Since the flooding in 2010 the plan has been activated a number of times, which has subsequently minimised the impact of further flooding.

Lessons learnt

♦   Getting the community to understand their flood risk and what it means to them was vital in establishing a workable plan. Every community is different in terms of flood risk and it is important to highlight this.
♦   Linking the plan to what else was happening in the community, such as the individual property protection grant, and the early pilot flood warning system was important as it put the plan into action.
♦   The collaborative working with the council was invaluable in terms of keeping the momentum going to make things happen.
♦   Having the right individual to lead the flood plan and develop it within the community was also vital.

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2.19 Innovative methods

Description	Any extraordinary action taken to directly attract attention may be deemed innovative. No one approach fits all. Differing methods may be needed and can be specifically developed to reach identified – and perhaps hard to engage audiences. Innovative methods alongside traditional approaches (eg public exhibitions or workshops) can be developed to catch people's attention and convey key messages to specific groups.
Degree of communication and engagement	Variable depending on method and local situation.
Effort required	Variable depending on method and local situation.
Opportunities	◆ Attract people's attention and generate interest by an approach that is outside of traditional means, eg DIY Streets (see C751 Case study 5.1). ◆ Likely to generate high levels of media interest.
Challenges	◆ People may not respond as anticipated. ◆ You may reach one target audience, but miss others. ◆ Unless carefully managed, the cost may outstrip the benefits. ◆ May be inappropriately reported by the media.

Questions to be asked when considering the use of innovative methods

1   What do you want to achieve with innovative methods, and why do you need them?

2   How can these methods be effectively used to communicate LFRM?

3   Are innovative methods the best way of engaging the whole community (such as DIY streets and temporary illustrative road changes)?

4   Do you need to obtain external expertise?

5   What happens afterwards especially in terms of further involvement?

Figure 2.10   Engaging young people in the design process

Top tips and common pitfalls you should consider when using innovative methods

◆   It can be an exciting way of raising flood risk awareness.

◆   Allows you to be creative when communicating to the local community. Helps to capture the community's attention.

◆   Be sure not to overly raise both expectations and excitement.

◆ Ensure the media understand the purpose of the initiative.

◆ Innovation can range from simple approaches to get attention, or more imaginative approaches to capture the imagination of community groups. Suggestions can include:

   ◊ ringing a hand bell around an area to call people out and attract their attention

   ◊ running an engagement event as a market, where people can view options 'on sale' and compare information, costs etc

   ◊ getting local people to make a film or video about the project or keeping an historical record of progress

   ◊ running a charette-based local planning session where issues and solutions are discussed and worked through with the community through a process of participatory planning.

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Core and Associate members

AECOM

Arup Group Ltd

Atkins Consultants Limited

Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering Ltd

BAM Nuttall Ltd

Black & Veatch Ltd

Buro Happold Engineers Limited

BWB Consulting Ltd

Cardiff University

Environment Agency

Galliford Try plc

Gatwick Airport Ltd

Geotechnical Consulting Group

Golder Associates (Europe) Ltd

Halcrow Group Limited

Health & Safety Executive

Heathrow Airport Holdings Ltd

High Speed Two (HS2)

Highways Agency

HR Wallingford Ltd

Imperial College London

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Lafarge Tarmac

Laing O'Rourke

London Underground Ltd

Loughborough University

Ministry of Justice

Morgan Sindall (Infrastructure) Plc

Mott MacDonald Group Ltd

Mouchel

MWH

Network Rail

Northumbrian Water Limited

Rail Safety and Standards Board

Royal HaskoningDHV

RSK Group Ltd

RWE Npower plc

Sellafield Ltd

Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd

SKM Enviros Consulting Ltd

SLR Consulting Ltd

Temple Group Ltd

Thames Water Utilities Ltd

Tube Lines

United Utilities Plc

University College London

University of Reading

University of Sheffield

University of Southampton

WYG Group (Nottingham Office)

February 2015

This companion guide should be read together with CIRIA C751 *Communication and engagement in local flood risk management* (the 'main guide') and is not intended as a standalone document.

Users of this guide may include flood risk managers, drainage engineers, planners, and communication and engagement professionals from LLFAs, district authorities and other local authority (LA) organisations.