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An introduction to deliberative methods of stakeholder and public participation

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An introduction to deliberative methods of stakeholder and public participation

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Introduction

The following pages introduce principles and practices of processes to engage stakeholders and the public in nature conservation decision-making. Involving people in the formation of decisions that affect them is increasingly advocated in policy-making. However, who to involve, when to involve them and how, is a challenge for many public agencies and organisations, keen to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of their operations. Within English Nature there is increasing enthusiasm for involving people in land management decisions and policy-making, but there appears to be little awareness of the options available and the resources and skills required. The review should be of interest to anyone who wants to understand more about the principles of participatory decision-making. It provides an overview of why participation is increasingly advocated and frequently required as part of decision-making, a range of different methods and approaches available, and issues to be considered when deciding when and how these should be applied.

For the sake of this review, participation refers to processes that involve a range of people exploring and discussing ideas, values and experiences relating to a particular issue, which will be fed into a policy process. Traditional written consultation exercises, information provision or the participation of volunteers in active site management are not included, as they do not devolve any of the decision-making power to the participants. Deliberative participation processes have a wide range of potential applications within English Nature – including conflict resolution, management decisions on complex multi-issue, multi-stakeholder sites, outreaching communities around local sites, as well as helping the organisation learn more about what the public value about nature.

The structure of the review is as follows. The first section includes an introduction to the concepts 'deliberation' and 'inclusion', which are used as key principles of a good participation process, and explains why these are seen as beneficial characteristics of a decision-making process. Section 2 outlines the different ways in which deliberative and inclusionary processes could be applied, referring to a range of different methods (outlined in more detail in Appendix II). The third section builds on issues raised in the previous two sections, exploring some of the key decisions that influence why, who, when and how deliberative and inclusionary processes should be applied and drawing out lessons of best practice.

This review does not provide a toolkit of what process to use where. This is a deliberate omission. The challenge for practitioners wishing to use participation is to first understand the principles and reasoning underlying different methods, and from this understanding develop an innovative means of engagement, relevant to the issue and situation, rather than encouraging the use of 'off-the-shelf' methods. This is the basis of the concept of fitness for purpose. In addition, the section on methods does not go into detail on process, but instead provides an analysis of the underlying principles, benefits and restrictions of that method. Other reviews which focus simply on process are available, referenced at the end of the document in Appendix III.

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1.   Introducing deliberative forms of participation

1.1   Socio-Political Drivers.

Support for more inclusive participatory approaches to policy-setting has evolved in response to a range of social and political factors:

1.   **The 'Crisis of Legitimacy' faced by institutions** (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001:23). The current system of representative democracy and expert-dominated decision-making, where decisions are taken on behalf of the public by representatives, is criticised as being remote and failing to adequately take into account the concerns and needs of citizens, especially marginalised groups (Fischer, 1993; Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001). Renn argues that traditional decision-making processes '*de-emphasise the consideration of affected interests in favour of "objective" analyses, (*so) *they suffer from a lack of popular acceptance.*' (Renn et al, 1995). Decisions may be seen as unaccountable and irrelevant to the public, and in the worst cases, rejected. Not only do public agencies need to provide accountability and transparency to their funders, but also to the citizens they are meant to be representing. **Participatory processes can help agencies understand public values, making them more responsive to public needs, as well as making decisions directly accountable to the participants who helped to develop them.**

2.   **Mistrust of expertise and the role of science in decision-making**. This has evolved in part as a result of the increased public understanding and interest in science and the availability of information through the media and popular press. Recent experience has shown that scientific and technological developments have the potential lead to unanticipated and undesirable side-effects (e.g. BSE, GM crops). The process through which scientific and expert decisions are made is predominantly removed from public scrutiny and democratic processes (Fischer, 1993). We exist in a political culture in which public trust must be earned not assumed (Kass, 2001). There are demands to bring science further into the policy process, increasing transparency, and opening the policy debate up to alternative values and sources of knowledge (Fischer, 1993). Processes which rely on expert knowledge and ignore local experience and anecdotal knowledge '*risk producing outcomes that are incompetent, irrelevant, or simply unworkable.* ' (Renn et al, 1995:1). **Deliberative participation processes allow the exchange and scrutiny of different perspectives and knowledges.**

3.   **Complexity and uncertainty of environmental problems**. Organisations are increasingly faced with complex and contested environmental issues, frequently crossing institutional and administrative boundaries. Examples of these problems include what are referred to as 'wicked' problems - ill-defined, tightly coupled with other sectors and resolved only through imperfect and transitory political agreement - there may be no simple scientific or technological solution (Fischer, 1993; Coenen et al, 1998). Resolution of such issues requires flexible solutions, which are supported and owned by the various parties involved. **Involving those who have an influence over the implementation of a decision in the development of that decision increases support, ownership and effectiveness of that decision.** Uncertainty in the

extent of the problem and the effectiveness of the solution (not to mention the risks involved) requires transparency in the process of determining that solution. Traditional models for assessing the acceptability of risks tend to rely on quantitative assessment procedures and statistical models, which may not be seen as legitimate by the public. There are frequently striking differences between expert and lay perceptions of risk problems (Fiorino, 1990). **Participatory processes encourage transparency and the incorporation of public concerns in decision-making.**

4. **Grass-roots participation / Deliberative Democracy.** Citizens are increasingly demanding more say in decisions that affect them as illustrated by the rise in grassroots protest movements. Local participation forms a core theme of sustainable development, and is linked with democratic arguments of fairness and equity in governance - allowing the public to exercise their basic human right to participate in decisions that affect their quality of life. Human rights links to environmental decision-making through the environmental justice movement. These arguments are driven by a vision of a new active citizenship with a role in shaping their society, rather than the 'using and choosing' basis to our consumer culture (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). **Participatory processes can be used to empower citizens, encouraging them to learn and understand more about the values and needs of other sectors of society, which may have transformative benefits on how their perceptions and actions within society.**

5. **Policy and Funding Imperative.** In response to these drivers, participation and partnership working has become a key objective of the Labour Government and a requirement for some funding sources. These processes are particularly being applied in the health service and local government. Ensuring the public and public interests can participate in environmental decision-making is a one of the three pillars of the 1998 Aarhaus Convention (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters), of which the UK is a signatory.

1.2 Internal English Nature drivers

1. English Nature recognise that '*the broad objectives of nature conservation can only be secured through widespread public support*'. (People and Wildlife – Working Together, English Nature, 2002). This principle applies to varying extents in designated sites and the wider countryside, and is important to ensure the organisation has political legitimacy and leverage. Participatory processes can help increase raise understanding, support and ownership of nature conservation and the activities of English Nature.

2. A core part of English Nature's work is taking part in policy debates about land use and sustainable development in the wider countryside. These debates take place in the context of contested values and priorities for land use involving a range of organisations and individuals. Traditional processes of economic cost-benefit analysis do not effectively capture the social, cultural and other intrinsic values of nature. The development and use of participatory processes allows the capture and prioritisation of all values, encourages innovative ideas and win-win solutions.

3.   English Nature want to highlight the role of biodiversity in people's quality of life. They also identify the importance of making '*English Nature and nature conservation relevant to a wider range of people*' (English Nature, Corporate Plan, 2000-4). Deliberative participatory processes can help English Nature increase its understanding about the values people place on nature, and how it can help deliver these.

4.   English Nature is increasingly active in the management of large-scale dynamic sites, particularly in the coastal, marine and riverine environments. The threat of climate change adds to the uncertainties and contested nature of management decisions. Participatory processes can help the development of sustainable partnerships and integrated ecosystem-based management.

5.   Partnerships and community involvement are increasingly appearing in legislation and English Nature policy documents. English Nature staff need to understand how to use these in a cost-effective way.

2.   Definitions

2.1   Participation: - '*to take part*'

Participation is used to describe processes ranging from agencies involving volunteers in day to day activities (such as site management), public meetings, written consultation exercises to supporting and empowering local communities to deliver their own objectives. It is used for such a broad range of activities that without further details of its role in any particular case, referring to participation can be misleading and confusing. To give further clarification of the range of activities covered by participation in decision-making, a 'typology' of participation is outlined below - a modified version of Sherry Arnstein's famous 'ladder of participation' (Arnstein, 1969):

- **Information Giving**- agency reports about a decision that has already been made
- **Information Gathering** - stakeholders provide information which inputs into a decision made by the agency
- **Consultation** - offering a number of options, or a draft decision, and asking for feedback - stakeholders have a limited opportunity to influence the decision
- **Deciding Together** - interests are brought together to decide the best way forward, but plans implemented by one agency who often hold responsibility for that decision
- **Acting Together** - deciding together and forming a partnership to implement the decisions - sharing responsibility
- **Supporting independent community interests** - enabling others to make and implement plans - citizen empowerment

  Adapted by Sidaway (1998), from Wilcox, (1994)

The above typology illustrates how processes can vary along two scales. Firstly the extent to which there is two-way exchange during communication, and secondly the extent to which responsibility for decision-making and implementation is shared between the agency and its stakeholders.

Communication can be:

one-way (provision of information with little concern about a response);
partial (inclusion of a feedback mechanism about the extent to which the message has been received and accepted, with the initial message coming from either the Agency (e.g. consultation reports), or the consultees(e.g. focus groups);
full (a completed message is received in reply), leading to dialogue (Rowntree, 1992).

The extent to which stakeholders or the public are involved in the decision, can range from:

Informing of decisions already made by the agency,
Listening & Learning: stakeholder input into a decision to be made by the agency
Exchanging: exchanging ideas and views to make the decision together (DETR 1998)
The typology of participation is outlined again below, illustrating the main direction of communication and the extent of shared decision-making.

	Examples	Knowledge flow		Decision-making	Implementation
		Agency	*Participants*		
Information giving	Leaflets, signs, articles	→		Agency	Agency
Information gathering	Focus groups, participatory appraisal	←	⇠⇢	Agency	Agency
Consultation	Citizens' juries, consensus conferences	→	⇠⇢ ⇠	Agency	Agency
Deciding together	Partnerships, Consensus building, workshops	←——→		Agency + Participants	Agency
Acting together	Consensus building, partnerships	←——→		Agency + Participants	Agency + Participants
Empower-ment	Capacity building, grants & skills provision	⇢ ←→		Participants	Participants

The above diagram illustrates a changing trend in the relationship between agency and participants as you move from information provision to empowerment. As can be clearly seen there is increasing emphasis on the involvement of participants in debate and decision-making and two-way communication (dialogue) between agency and participant until the far point of the continuum where agency involvement is reduced to an enabling and support role.

It is only at the stage of information giving, where an agency informs the public and / or stakeholders of a predetermined decision, where there is no opportunity for those outside the agency to input their ideas and knowledge, and thus there is no real dialogue or devolution of decision responsibility. The more traditional levels of participation, where the agency maintains control and responsibility over the decision, i.e. information gathering and consultation (often perceived as less valid forms of participation), are increasingly carried out through deliberative procedures instead of more traditional remote processes of surveys and

sending out written consultation documents. Deliberative approaches to information gathering and consultation means that instead of thoughts and perceptions of individuals being fed back to the agency; stakeholders and/or the public engage in a process of sharing ideas and perceptions, and then feed these shared ideas and values back to the agency to act on. However, these processes do not give participants any power over the final decision itself, and there is a danger of raising expectations.

2.2   Deliberation and Inclusion as Key Principles of Participation

Processes of participation are often evaluated according to the extent they allow dialogue (deliberative) and are accessible to interested and affected parties (inclusionary). These two terms are examined in more depth:

Deliberation - *'careful consideration', 'discussion of reasons for and against'* (OED, 1994)

Bloomfield et al (1998) acknowledge the difficulty in coming up with a solid definition of a deliberative process is. They have identified a series of characteristics which Holmes and Scoones (2000) have summarised in the following six points:

- social interaction (usually face to face, but increasingly practitioners are exploring the potential role of Information and Communications Technology)
- processes based on language - usually verbal discussion and debate
- processes require respect for the different views and positions held by participants
- processes have a reflective capacity - designed to encourage participants to evaluate and re-evaluate their own position in relation to the statements made by others
- the emergence of mutual understanding and / or a consensus by a process of reasoned dialogue is seen as being of greater value than the quality of decision that emerges
- discussion is encouraged to take a relatively open-ended and unhurried approach to allow time for discussion and learning

Inclusion - *'the act of involving others…. An inclusionary decision-making process is based on the active involvement of multiple social actors and usually emphasises the participation of previously excluded citizens'* (Pimbert & Wakeford, 2001:23).

Inclusion extends beyond the opportunity for people to have access to a process, to the influence people have within a process (Barnes, 1999). This links to what Webler (1995) refers to as fairness - the degree to which participants have an influence over the agenda, the structuring and moderation of the process, and the debate in terms of initiating discussion, challenging and defending claims, and decision-making. In other words, Webler argues not only for allowing a wide range of viewpoints access to the debate, but also for empowering the participants within the process to act, influence and shape the process. Inclusion raises the issue of who to include and how to include them, and raises particular challenges such as how to represent the values of those unable to represent themselves such as future generations and non-humans (e.g. biodiversity).

The relationship between deliberation and inclusion

The relationship between deliberation and inclusion is complex. These two aspects bring different values and benefits to a process. In one respect their qualities can enhance each other, but the need for deliberation and inclusion is often traded off against each other in process design.

 '*Inclusion encourages breadth in decision-making,* (i.e. broadening the range of experience and knowledge involved) and *deliberation is more concerned with depth'* (i.e. exploration of values and perceptions in detail to develop mutual respect and understanding) (Holmes & Scoones, 2000:31). A process can be inclusionary without being deliberative. For example public meetings and referenda are widely used as a method to provide a large number of citizens the opportunity to comment on a proposed plan / decision, without providing the opportunity to discuss the issues in any depth, or develop relationships and understanding between decision-makers and stakeholders. A process can also be deliberative without being inclusionary when a small group of people, not seen as representative of all the relevant interests, are brought together to discuss and decide on a course of action.

According to Holmes and Scoones, only when deliberation is linked to inclusion can participatory processes start to meet their potential to tackle problems of democratic deficit, decreasing public trust in institutions and the decisions made 'on behalf of society', and concerns that centralised policy decisions don't meet the needs of all sections of an increasingly diverse society (Holmes and Scoones, 2000). They claim that legitimacy of an outcome in terms of acceptability by the public and the suitability of that decision to the local situation, can be compromised if the process is not seen as representative of the interests of all stakeholders, or if not all relevant information and knowledge was considered.

However, deliberation is less likely to be effective the larger the number of participants, or the size of groups involved (Bloomfield et al, 1998: 9), and many of the processes referred to in this report rely on manageable group dynamics. For example, the number of participants in processes such as Citizen Juries, Citizen Panels, Community Advisory Committees tends to be limited to between about 15 and 20, which is seen as a major constraint in the fairness of the processes, because it is questioned whether all the values and interests of the public can be truly represented (e.g. Renn et al, 1995, Rowe & Frewer, 2000). There are also concerns that involving too many different viewpoints at one time in a process could lead to confusion over aims and judgements, hinder decision-making, make clarification of issues impossible, and only produce defensive arguments of one standpoint against another (Rowe & Frewer, 2000) Good facilitation and the use of 'break-out' groups, where smaller numbers discuss issues in depth and then report back to the whole forum, is a common way to ensure that everyone is able to engage in discussion and participate fairly.

Summary:

Deliberation and inclusion emphasise the importance that a participation process involves a range of different interests, and enables them to express, debate and assess issues relating to the topic in question, in an open and non-adversarial way. Emphasis is on two-way dialogue both between participants and between participants and the commissioning agency, and drawing on values and experiences as well as scientific knowledge in decision-making.

3.   The Benefits of Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes

The Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions, in its good practice guide for local regeneration partnerships refers to two levels at which benefits can be seen as a result of participatory processes: **programme outcomes** (changes in local conditions as a result of the decision / output) and **process outcomes** (changes as a result of the process used to reach the decision) (DETR,1999).

3.1   Better outcomes

The emphasis given to the importance of language, dialogue, and the reflective nature of discussions in deliberative participation, is supported by theorists who argue that decision-making should be based on open and reasoned discussion of all relevant knowledge types rather than an immediate appeal to logic or science (Holmes and Scoones, 2000:9). Social science classifies knowledge at three levels:

- cognitive (information based on technical expertise and facts);
- experiential (common sense, knowledge gained through experience); and
- value-based (moral, normative values, based on an individuals perceptions of society) (Glicken, 2000).

A commitment to deliberation is based on a recognition that knowledge at all three levels are valid. In nature conservation decision-making, judgements are made at all three of these levels – what species or habitats require the most attention and investment of resources (value-based), the results of ecological surveys about the requirements of that species (cognitive), and the experience of English Nature staff and local stakeholders in managing similar systems (experiential). Everyone has experience of nature and holds values relating to these experiences. To effectively consider and develop from these different values and knowledges to a competent and consensus decision, requires a carefully designed and facilitated process. Hence the focus on process design in the participation literature.

Processes which have included a range of perspectives relating to the issue and local experiential knowledge, are considered to deliver solutions and decisions that are effective, because they are more relevant to the local situation and needs of the community. This pooling of information, resources and ideas can result in more creative thinking, innovative solutions integrated into other local objectives, initiatives and plans, and efficient delivery. Involvement in the decision-making process also can help to engender support and ownership of the decision and its implementation amongst the participants and the interests they represent.

3.2   Benefits are accrued as a result of the process itself

The process of participation is said to have a value in its own right (Petts, 2001). However, capturing benefits from the process itself is hard as the benefits tend to be diffuse and / or long-term.   As previously stated, deliberative processes encourage sharing knowledge, and emphasise the importance of reflecting and learning from the experiences of others. There are

a whole range of benefits that can be linked with this way of working – these can be referred to as 'educative' benefits (Button & Mattson, 1999).

Personal benefits: The inclusion of values and needs of those voices formerly under-represented in the decision-making process, may encourage reflexive behaviour among participants as they try to understand the positions of others, and as a result reflect on their own assumptions and think beyond their own interests (Young, quoted in Barnes, 1999). The participants can gain more personal benefits if they are given the opportunity to develop, express and explore their points of view through the discussion. Through feeling that their views are valued, participants may feel they are a more knowledgeable and active member of society.

Relational benefits: Information exchange and a transparent decision-making process can aid in the development of trust in the honesty, integrity and sincerity of other individuals, and confidence in the knowledge, capabilities and authority of individuals/organisations involved in the decision-making process (Jones et al, 2001). In other words, deliberative processes can help develop social capital. Social capital can be defined in terms of networks, norms and trust between participants, which improve the capacity of the community to act together (Walker & Lingayah, 1999).

Organisational benefits: The agency can benefit from listening and learning about the values and needs of the participants through scoping ideas and objectives for future projects, or analysing and reviewing existing initiatives. This can help the organisation shape its policies and processes to become more reflexive and relevant to local needs, and build trust between agency and public. This can also improve public confidence and the perceived legitimacy of their work (Barnes, 1999). Organisational change tends to be hard to link to any particular event, but can be one of the most lasting influences of a participatory effort (Chess & Purcell, 1999).

4. Deliberative Participatory Processes: Possible Applications

As discussed above, deliberative and inclusionary processes can help tackle a range of issues at different stages of a policy process. The following section outlines some of the ways in which deliberative and inclusionary processes can be applied, referring to techniques available. Some processes appear under more than one heading illustrating that the categories used are not discrete. More detailed descriptions of these techniques can be found in the Appendix II.

The values and benefits of nature are multiple, complex and often hidden. These benefits can be categorised into scientific (biodiversity and as knowledge resource), economic (ecosystem services, products) and cultural - '*People benefit spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially through contact and involvement with nature*' (English Nature draft Corporate Plan 2002-5). Despite the central role that nature and wildlife plays in peoples' quality of life, experts are still struggling to find mechanisms to firstly capture and understand the types of benefits nature provides people, and secondly to incorporate and prioritise these values in a rigorous way into decision-making processes. Deliberative processes have been identified as playing a potentially important role in these two stages (e.g. Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs, 20th Report, 2000).

Traditionally market mechanisms have been relied on to capture and incorporate values of nature into decision-making, through cost-benefit analyses and public willingness to pay exercises (Contingent Valuation). However, such processes are widely criticised for the following reasons:

- values are expressed as the individual preferences of consumers, whereas the commodity being valued is a public good which relies on judgements of what is best for the whole of society (now and future generations), not just individuals;
- the process assumes public preferences are well informed and formed;
- the complex array of values and motivations held by people are reduced to a single monetary figure which may not truly reflect their position.

(see for example Niemeyer & Spash, 2001)

Processes such as questionnaires also rely on capturing information from individuals. Whilst this can be an effective way to collect data from a broad range of perspectives, the process is extractive (with those people usually having no knowledge of how that information is used), answers are at risk of being biased by the way questions are framed.
Processes that allow groups of people to explore and discuss all the dimensions of the issue are valued for the following reasons:

- Through discussion participants can become more aware of the hidden values of nature.
- Participants are given the opportunity to explore and construct their own preferences.
- People can speak for silent voices such as future generations and non-human.

- Policy makers are provided with more of an understanding of the contexts and reasons why the results were obtained.

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology supports the view that to develop a vision for nature conservation in the wider countryside requires the use of participatory processes which capture and incorporate the range of values of nature:

'given the range of perceptions and values of nature that people hold... ultimately, it will be a matter of social debate to establish the priorities. This has led to calls for a process of wider consultation and deliberation, open to a broader range of interests than has been the case'.
(Appendix A. Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs, Twentieth Report. UK Biodiversity. (2000))

The problem with such deliberative techniques is that they make the process of incorporating these values into the policy process much more complex than CBA, which can be assessed alongside all other financial calculations. Therefore cost-benefit processes still tend to be seen as the pragmatic choice (Niemeyer & Spash, 2001). However, processes are being developed which combine deliberation with more systematic procedures (such as Deliberative Monetary Valuation which uses deliberation to discuss an issue and then reach consensus over a single monetary figure which represents the cost – benefit calculation of their considerations – see Jacobs, 1997). Some of the deliberative processes outlined below could be used to get public participation in assessing Quality of Life Capital, an approach jointly developed by English Nature alongside English Heritage, the Countryside Agency and Environment Agency.

4.1 Deliberative Processes to Capture Values and Local Knowledge of the Public

The processes below are a means of the decision-making agency to capture the views and perceptions of citizens, and incorporate these into any future policy decisions. Deliberation occurs between citizens, with minimal exchange between 'experts', decision-makers and citizens. These processes are exploratory and relatively unbounded, allowing participants to explore and discuss issues on their own terms. By allowing the public to articulate their values and ideas in their own terms, the outcomes may not be easily translated into policy decisions which have predefined values and boundaries (Davies, 1999). Outputs tend to be used for scoping, getting a feel for public opinion or information provision. Deliberative processes which involve participants recommending policy options also usually involve some sort of process of exploring values and knowledges, and go on to use this in future stages. For example Citizens' Juries, Consensus Conferences and Citizens' Panels produce a report to the commissioning agency, giving them an insight into the values and concerns of the participants. Processes under the family of Participatory Appraisal focus on empowering participants to go on and develop their own plans and projects.

The Focus Group – a one-off facilitated exploration of the views, perceptions and attitudes of a sector of society. Processes like focus groups provide the space for members of the public to express and explore their thoughts, and the views of others in relation to an issue. By transcribing and analysing the results, the commissioning organisation can increase its understanding of what the public value and want. They are an effective and relatively cheap

way of getting an overview of public values and concerns, but outcomes may not be easily translated into the policy process (see above).

Community Advisory Committees / Local Advisory Groups – These are ongoing groups of citizens who meet to discuss a specific issue, and advise agencies of the attitudes, views and priorities of those who are likely to be affected by that issue. As opposed to the focus group, the participants are given a considerable amount of information through site visits, seminars, presentations etc., and the groups may meet over a series of months.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) – a selection of methods used to elicit information from local communities, which is then taken away by the researcher. Methods include interviewing, observation, case studies, transect walks and group discussions. Used mainly in international development research.

Participatory Appraisal (PA) / Participatory Learning and Appraisal (PLA) – PA and PLA have evolved from RRA, to empower and enable people to analyse and tackle their problems themselves. They are approaches that enable people to analyse and share their knowledge, and from this identify their own priorities and make their own decisions about the future. The focus is on empowering and enabling people to express the situation as they see and experience it, with the organising agency taking on the role of facilitating, listening and learning (Chambers, 1997). PA uses visual and flexible tools such as maps, spider diagrams and charts to enable people to start at their own level, and to ensure that everyone can participate, regardless of their background. There is a risk that in its translation to 'Northern' policy processes, the focus on empowerment is lost and it becomes more of an extractive, information providing exercise.

4.2 Deliberative Processes to Capture Values and use these to Prioritise Policy Options (Stakeholders and Public)

These processes tend to be closer to the decision-making process than those above. The processes below involve members of interested organisations, representatives of the public, and / or experts. The processes link value exploration with structured prioritisation processes.

Stakeholder Decision Analysis (SDA)– This process involves representatives of stakeholder organisations in identifying value-based criteria to prioritise policy options. These criteria represent values which the participants feel should be considered when determining priority issues. The development of criteria occurs through deliberative workshops. Participants then evaluate the performance of different options against these criteria, and weight the criteria to indicate which are seen to be most pertinent to the issues. Results of simple mathematical calculations indicate which options are seen as the greatest priority to be tackled.

Deliberative Mapping -. This process is an adaptation of multi-criteria mapping which maps out the range of values and perspectives held by individuals towards a particular controversy or series of policy options(see Stirling 2001). The emphasis is not on reaching a consensus, but making explicit all the different aspects and considerations surrounding an issue. Deliberative mapping aims to integrate expert and citizen assessments of policy issues, emphasising diversity and social learning between participants. Representatives from the public as well as policy experts explore their values and concerns about a policy issue, and as with SDA develop a series of criteria which reflect the value-based issues which they would

like considered during policy decisions. Citizens meet and learn about the issue through a series of citizens' panels, and enter into a workshop process with the experts to discuss the issue and learn from each other's perspectives. This process is currently being developed and trialled through a project funded by the Wellcome Trust, by a group of academics at University College London, University of Sussex, and the Policy Studies Institute. (Because the process is still under development there is no evaluation of it in Appendix II).

Negotiated / Regulatory Rule-making. - This is a group of processes in which rules are negotiated by which policy decisions are made. In regulated rule-making, representatives of agencies used to working within the legal / policy sphere, come together to negotiate and reach agreement on the rules within which a regulation is devised. The principle could have wider application for situations where the responsible agency doesn't want to or isn't able to devolve its control or authority to the group. The process has similarities with SDA in that participants have no influence over on the ground decisions, but in this case they are able to influence the values inherent in the rules underlying a policy decision.

4.3   Engaging an Informed Public in Recommending Policy Options

Involving the public in the development and prioritisation of policy options not only helps those with responsibility for that decision to understand public values and priorities, but it also can help the development of solutions that are locally relevant and publicly supported. Issues such as whether the solution is seen as socially acceptable, and possible implementation problems can be resolved at an early stage, thus increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of the policy. Other benefits from involving public representatives in the policy process in this way, is they understand the issue and the complexity of the policy process better. Trial processes have shown that members of the public are well able to understand and consider complex issues, make good judgements and competent decisions (Smith & Wales, 1999).

Citizens' Juries, Citizen Panels, Consensus Conferences – These three processes are similar. Members of the public seen as broadly representative of society are brought together to learn about an issue through questioning experts and discussing their thoughts. The participants can be asked to make broad recommendations regarding a policy issue or decide between a range of policy options presented to them. The recommendations then get fed back to the decision-makers with a report giving the reasons underlying their decisions.

4.4   Processes to engage public and experts together in developing policy options

Some processes effectively manage to bring experts and the public together. Citizens' Juries, Panels and Community Advisory Panels effectively allow deliberation amongst the public participants but there is little true dialogue between participants and the experts. The following processes and approaches adopt different means of integrating the ideas and values of both experts and the public. This does raise challenges in that these different groups have very different expectations, use different types of language and hold very different knowledges about the issue. There is a risk that public representatives may be less willing to voice their opinions in a situation where experts are present. By focusing on values rather than technical details the processes below aim to resolve this issue.

Visioning - Visioning encompasses a whole range of approaches and techniques to agree a shared vision for the future of an area, and use this vision to develop plans and policies. The value in such an approach lies in taking the attention of participants away from present conflicts and constraints, and encouraging creative and forward-looking thinking about an issue (LGMB, 1996). In addition, because the processes focus on values and aspirations of what is a desirable future, they do not exclude those who hold no technical knowledge or experience of the issue. Professionals, interest groups and citizens are all able to participate. However, a vision is only as good as its implementation (Meadows et al, 1992, cited in Ball 2001). It is important that the process of developing the vision has created a sense of commitment and motivation amongst the community, and that the vision itself is coherent, realistic, consistent with broader goals and flexible (Ball, 2001).

There is increasing use of mapping techniques and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in visioning exercises (e.g. Environmental Future State Visioning – Ball, 2001, computerised visualisation techniques – Al-Kodmany, K. (1999)).

Such methods may be particularly useful when planning habitat creation / recreation schemes, to develop plans which deliver benefits for a range of interests – such as incorporating public recreation with biodiversity conservation.

Consensus Building / Stakeholder Dialogue – Consensus building aims to treat the values and knowledge of the public in the same way as that of the experts and professional stakeholders to define the problem and encourage true dialogue between all viewpoints. This creates a flat, non-hierarchical decision-making structure. The needs of the different parties and the values underlying these needs are used as the focus of debate.

Deliberative Mapping –Although experts and public devise criteria to evaluate the policy options, and the two groups come together at a workshop at the end of the process, the emphasis of the process is not integrating expert and public voices, but understanding the different perspectives each offers to a policy process. However, the workshop does offer an opportunity for facilitated dialogue between the experts and public.

4.5   Integrated Environmental Management and working in Partnership

English Nature increasingly works in partnership with other organisations and groups to deliver integrated decisions and to enable sustainable development. These partnerships frequently use the rhetoric of consensus and dialogue, but do not necessarily take adequate consideration of the conditions and procedures through which discussion and decision-making takes place. According to Margerum (1999), Integrated Environmental Management consists of 4 elements:

- holistic approach - considering the entire system rather than certain elements of subcomponents;
- acknowledging interconnections in both the physical and human systems,
- goal-oriented; and
- strategic (Margerum, 1999).

In a partnership and integrated decision-making system there is a lack of individual authority or control, expertise, skills and resources; agencies need to learn how to work together in a joined-up, collaborative way. For these partnerships and any solutions developed to be sustainable in the long-term, requires the establishment of common goals, mutual understanding and trust between participants. For broader legitimacy the partnership and the process of integrated environmental management must ensure that all interests are represented and able to contribute to the discussions. Therefore the principles underlying participatory working must be incorporated into the ground rules and norms of the partnership.

Deliberation and inclusion can play a large part in terms of process as well as principle in Integrated Environmental Management, because of the need to work with large groups of stakeholders in a potentially conflicting environment. Hartig (1998) refers to the following 'important elements for ecosystem-based management', which clearly indicate the role that participation must play in the development and practice of partnerships and integrated working:

- empowering local communities as equal partners;
- participation of professional planners / facilitators;
- commitment of senior government officials;
- communicating with stakeholders at all levels;
- developing partnerships with existing programmes;
- emphasising co-operative learning for strategic planning.

Consensus Building / Stakeholder Dialogue – An approach which incorporates a range of participatory techniques to help participants identify common ground and mutually beneficial solutions. The processes adopt a flat management structure, involving all stakeholders in defining the problem, devising the methods and creating the solutions. The emphasis is on basing dialogue on the needs of different interests rather than the positions they adopt, and working towards a win-win solution.

Workshop Techniques – there are a range of techniques available which facilitate the building of relationships and communication skills within a group, which can be used to improve the effectiveness of any meeting. Approaches that can be effectively used as meeting management tools include facilitation instead of chairing, brainstorming, prioritising, visioning and the use of break out groups. Many of the processes used by The Environment Council can be effectively used in this way.

4.6   Conflict Resolution

Sidaway identifies common elements which may fuel conflict, these are misunderstanding between individuals and organisations, competing interests, and opposing beliefs or values (Sidaway, 1998). He goes on to identify six ways of resolving these conflicts:

avoiding the issue, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, litigation, coercion

Arbitration and litigation involve the decision being taken out of the hands of the conflicting parties, and can be expensive. In addition, outcomes tend to be win-lose and relationships between the parties can be badly damaged.

Processes such as mediation and negotiation are based on the principles of consensus-building. The disputing parties to resolve the conflict, aided in the case of mediation by a third party who brokers the negotiations. A facilitator in a negotiation process, does not have such an interventionist role as a mediator, but assists by suggesting processes to ease the process of movement towards agreement. By encouraging the disputants to explore and understand the values and needs underlying the position each other are taking in the dispute, it is hoped an innovative solution can be reached that everyone can live with, and relationships can be improved.

4.7   Using the principles as best practice in communications and relationship management

It is important that organisations don't simply rely on one-off participatory processes to develop good relationships with the public and stakeholders, or see them as a 'bolt-on extra (DETR, 1998). Talking about different deliberative methods for engaging the public, the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology conclude:

'all these approaches have value. They help the decision-making to listen to public values and concerns; and they give the public some assurance that their views are taken into account, increasing the chance that decisions will be found acceptable. They are however isolated events, and no substitute for genuine changes in the cultures and constitutions of key decision-making institutions... A meaningful response to the need for more and better dialogue between the public and science in the United Kingdom requires us to go beyond event-based initiatives like consensus conferences or citizens' juries'.

(Select Committee on Science and Technology, Third report. February 2000).

The principles on which participation is based, should also be seen as codes of conduct for effective communication and relationship management between groups or individuals with potentially conflicting interests. Respecting and learning from different viewpoints and aiming to reach mutual understanding of the needs of the other party and win- win solutions, are as important in one to one relationships as they are during a participatory exercise.

English Nature increasingly realise the importance of incorporating locally held knowledge of the problem or situation, not only to improve their understanding of the problem context, but also to gain support for the final decision as people feel their views have been taken on board. By seeing the development of positive working relationships as a priority, English Nature staff can reduce the need to yield their regulatory powers or entering into long conflict resolution procedures, as well as improving positive management for biodiversity. In its work in the wider countryside in particular it is essential that English Nature make it a priority to respect and understand the values and needs of those with an interest in the countryside. Instead of seeing education as the principal component of English Nature's relationship with local communities, the principles of deliberation and inclusion teach us of the value of listening and learning from others as well as raising awareness of English Nature's concerns.

4.8   Using multiple methods

Many of the examples in the literature where the principles of participation have been applied to a situation are complex procedures involving a range of different methods to engage with organisations, stakeholders and the general public. The process of stakeholder and situation analysis is likely to illustrate that different stakeholders and interests have different needs and demands in terms of engagement with the decision-making process. Fiorino (1990) recommends complementing one participatory mechanism with another to enable the initiative to benefit from the strengths of a range of processes. The success of consensus building and Stakeholder Dialogue as an approach is that the actual construction of the process is developed by the participants, and is able to evolve as the process develops. This allows the participants to assess what is needed, and from their understanding of the principles of consensus building, devise a process that will achieve those aims. This principle of devising a method based on an understanding of what needs to be achieved, the skills and resources available and a knowledge of the principles of deliberation and inclusion should allow creative and effective development of processes.

It is also seen as important to understand how the outcomes of participatory processes can be combined with scientific expert procedures and technical assessments (Holmes and Scoones, 2000). Participatory processes should not be seen as an alternative to the use of scientific information to make environmental decisions, but as a way of enhancing these procedures with other forms of knowledges. However, how these processes are combined is a key issue.

4.9   Using electronic methods

Organisations are increasingly turning to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to provide opportunities for the broadscale distribution of policy information, plus cheap, interactive and inclusive policy discussions. Online techniques for measuring public opinion such as online surveys and polls or petitions are well developed and used, but there is the potential to use the internet to engage the public in more deliberative way. Conducting deliberation in this way can reduce meeting and travel costs, access more participants and allow them to participate at a time and place that suits them. Dialogue sessions can run for up to 2 weeks, followed by a process of collating and structuring information by facilitators before the next session starts There is a danger that ICT deliberative processes are seen as a cheap and easy alternative to face to face processes such as workshops. In fact, Dialogue by Design, a company that runs such events, acknowledges that the internet is no substitute for people meeting (Dialogue by Design, 2002).

As with all deliberative processes, it is critical that participants are given the opportunity to scrutinise, discuss and weigh up competing values and policy options through exchange of ideas, enabling them to develop ideas and preferences toward the issue. Unless the process is carefully managed and facilitated, such e-debates will become less about exchange and creating mutual understanding as the expression of individual opinions. There is also a danger of '*impulsive rather than considered responses*' (Select Committee on Science and Technology, Third Report 2000).

As with face to face processes, facilitation and moderation of written exchanges should include agreeing ground rules and boundaries of the debate, helping people reach conclusions, and ensuring the debate is able to develop and remains focused.

Although the internet can potentially reach a broad audience, it is important that accessibility is considered and providing opportunities for those who would not usually participate in online debates. Despite these concerns, if invested in properly these debates can reach a wide audience, encourage responses from people who may feel less intimidated to state their opinion in a remote environment. A series of pilot studies for the UK Parliament were undertaken by the Hansard Society, starting in 1998, engaging people in discussions about a policy issue such as stem cell research for a one month period.

5. The Application of Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes: Fitness for Purpose

Different situations require different processes; the use of participatory processes is very much a case of 'horses for courses'. The issue of concern is how they are applied and whether they are fit for their purpose. Of course participation can't be used at every opportunity due to agency resource constraints and the nature of the issue under debate. In addition it is important to remember that participatory processes tend to rely on a considerable input of time and effort by the participants on a voluntary basis. The challenge for organisations like English Nature is to understand where it is appropriate and relevant to open a decision-making process, and which process to use where.

There are 5 steps of designing dialogue processes:

1. understanding context and content (i.e. situation and problem / issue)
2. defining objectives and outcomes – what do you want to achieve
3. identifying interested parties
4. process to elicit best approach and choice of techniques
5. process design

(from Kass (2001))

The following section goes on to explore in some detail some of the factors that should be considered in the process of devising or selecting a participatory process for a particular policy process or problem situation. Firstly there needs to be a good understanding of what participation can achieve and familiarity with some of the possible techniques available (see previous sections). The organising agency must then analyse their own situation according to the questions **Why? When? Who?** and **How?** to ensure the appropriateness of the process to the problem.

- What is the situation context and nature of the problem? **Why** would participation be appropriate to this situation?
- **Who** are the stakeholders to this issue? Who should be involved in a process?
- **When** in the decision-making process can participatory approaches be used?
- **How** should a process be designed and undertaken to ensure the equitable involvement of all interests in an effective way?

5.1   Situation and problem analysis

Before undertaking any participation process the organising agency must have a good understanding of what is feasible and what it wants to achieve from the exercise. Different situations require different approaches to achieve an effective outcome, and processes must be carefully designed to meet these requirements. Whether the overall objective is the development or implementation of a plan, strategy, addressing a particular local concern or resolving a conflict, or simply trying to improve communication and understanding between stakeholders, it is recommended that the organising agency takes time to understand the 'decision situation' or 'problem context' (Clark et al, 2001), not only in technical-scientific dimensions, but also within its social, historical, political, and institutional context (Gass, Biggs & Kelly, 1997). I will refer to this as a situation analysis.

A situation analysis requires an analysis of the 'problem' or 'issue' to be tackled, but also the social, economic and cultural environment in which the issue is embedded. Martin and Lockie (1993), argue that organisations must move away from the analysis of an environmental problem from a purely expert and technical perspective. By trying to understand the situation from the perspective of others, they argue that a 'thick description' of the issue can be built up, providing a much broader understanding of how a problem has developed in a particular area, and some of the relationships between cause and effect. There are two aspects to a situation analysis:

Social and Political Analysis - It is broadly accepted now that many environmental problems are caused or exacerbated by social and political factors, and that resolving the problem requires tackling these broader issues. In particular when considering the role that participatory processes could play, it is important to understand the social and political culture surrounding the situation - the extent of communication, partnership working and trust between different groups both now and in the past. In cases of high conflict, communication between groups may have broken down completely or never existed. These are referred to as situations with low social capital, and a considerable amount of time and effort must be put in by the organisation, working with the different interests independently to reach the stage where these different interests are willing to come together and discuss an issue. By understanding the social and political situation and its impact on an environmental issue, an organisation can develop insight into the sort of approach that may be most effective in reaching the desired end point.

Problem Analysis - An environmental problem may have multiple dimensions and be affected by a range of factors acting and interacting at different scales. Therefore the problem may only be resolved by working with different stakeholders at different political levels. It is important to understand what decisions / issues can be resolved through local deliberative processes, and which require broader institutional or political change (e.g. agricultural subsidies). Underlying the immediate problem definition may be more subtle and pervasive problems such as a lack of trust or understanding of the organisation and its activities or fundamentally conflicting beliefs about an issue. Part of the problem analysis therefore should thinking beyond the immediate problem to the organisation's longer-term objectives and broader issues surrounding the debate.

Renn et al (1995) have been instrumental in highlighting how different types of problem demand a different focus for participation. They refer to 3 levels of debate, and suggest the sorts of issue that can be tackled at each level:

Type 1: Factual arguments about probability, cause-effect relationships, extent of damage. The conflict tends to be seen as resolvable by debate about facts and information (including scientific and local knowledge) leading to solution characterised by expertise. Renn et al suggest that processes which allow different knowledges and information to be shared and discussed in an open process, can help reach an agreement based on the best available knowledge.

Type 2: Issues concerning public confidence in the ability of institutions to deal with environmental threats adequately considering all viewpoints. There is often a lack of public confidence in the decision-making body to give adequate consideration to all party's concerns, to distribute costs and benefits equitably, and/or to fulfil promises and expectations. Processes which encourage sharing and learning about expectations and ideas between participants, can help an organisation be more reflexive and responsive to local interests as well as raise the understanding of stakeholders / public of the organisation's responsibilities.

Type 3: Conflict about competing social values, cultural lifestyle, world views. In this case neither technical expertise or institutional competence and openness will resolve the conflict, a solution requires discussion, understanding and agreement on the values and beliefs underlying the debate. Participatory processes can enable exploration of different values in a non-adversarial atmosphere allowing people to move away from entrenched positions to build common ground based on mutual needs, and reach agreement on a way forward that is acceptable to all.

Renn et al (1995) adapted from Functowicz & Ravetz (1985)

5.2   Understanding the organisation's objectives and motivations for participation

It is important that the organisation running the process has analysed its own internal objectives and motivations for using participatory processes (Kass, 2001). These reasons may range from wanting to achieve a task in the most effective way, to more indirect goals such as wanting to raise support and increase local understanding of the organisation, to a belief in the democratic rights of citizens to have a say in decisions that affect them.

Button and Mattson (1999) came up with 4 expectations of what deliberative and inclusionary processes could deliver by reviewing applications in the USA. These categories covered process-oriented goals such as encouraging social, political and institutional learning (educative), or enabling citizens to develop, express and explore their values and ideals through discussion (conflictual); and outcome-oriented goals of reaching a supported and reasoned consensus (consensual), or achieving a set task which could then fit into a further decision (instrumental). Their work and the work of Cowie & O'Toole (1998) introduce the fact that there may be competing definitions of what is an effective process, depending whether it is seen from the perspective of the process or outcome, from the participants or broader society, and from its ability to achieve a set task or deliver broader benefits. It is

important that these factors are agreed within the organising agency and with the participants. This analysis of expectations can also provide a good starting point for evaluation (Clark et al, 2001).

5.3   Understanding the boundaries of debate – what is up for negotiation

All decisions must be made in the context of legal, administrative, economic, cultural and environmental constraints. Part of the problem analysis must be to understand the extent to which the process can be opened up to people with different agendas, priorities and views, and whether the agency is willing to accept the outcomes of any participatory exercise. Indeed it must be considered whether participation is a relevant approach to decision-making at all. Lowndes et al (1998), listed the following situations where it was felt to be inappropriate to involve the public in local authority decision-making:

- internal management decisions;
- confidential or commercially sensitive decisions;
- issues where there is no room for negotiation - the decision is determined through by statutory obligations or resource constraints;
- where a quick response is needed;
- where participation may create or exacerbate community tensions;
- where public fears and sensitisation to an issue may be raised unnecessarily.

Where participation is not seen as relevant, it is important that the agency is open and transparent about how the decisions are made, and the reasons why broader participation was not seen as suitable.

The principle of inclusion explores the extent to which participants are able to raise and discuss issues of concern to them, or have to stick to a predetermined agenda. Richard Harris's 'typology of involvement' (2001) makes a distinction between 'bounded dialogue' and 'open dialogue'. Bounded dialogue occurs where an organisation has a specific decision to make, the subject and purpose of the dialogue within the process are predetermined, often non-negotiable and there is little opportunity for participants to state what is important to them. Open dialogue enables all stakeholders to decide the process parameters amongst themselves through analysis of their needs and values. By framing the discussion in a certain way there may be little or no opportunity for people to address the issues that really matter to them. Typically the later in the decision-making process that participation is used, the more the decision has been bounded by internal decision-making procedures, and the less influence the participants can have over its parameters. For example, processes like Citizen Juries tend to involve participants selecting between predetermined decision options. There is a danger that participants may feel unable to raise issues that are of real concern during these processes, and therefore that the outcome is not reflective of their interests. Alternatively, because organisations such as English Nature have a fairly narrow remit, there is a risk that when running a more unbounded process such as visioning, they are only able to deliver on certain aspects of their outcomes. For the organisation to take away and deliver only those ideas and solutions that they agree with, and leave the rest as a 'wish list', may result in participants having raised their expectations of what the process would offer, feeling that their voice hasn't been listened to and that their participation was tokenistic. One mechanism to tackle this is to ensure during the process that other participating agencies agree to take on ideas and issues that fall within their remit, or to enter into an initial dialogue with

participants to understand where interests overlap and focus the debate on these areas. There is a tendency within organisations to draw very narrow boundaries around what can be negotiated within a dialogue. This could be caused by a fear of losing control of the decision or exacerbating existing conflicts. However, as Sidaway (1998) states, *'while its remit may not be negotiable, the way it exercises its responsibilities will be'*. A general rule of good practice is to explore the boundaries of the debate with the participants, explaining why certain aspects are not negotiable and be transparent about how the outcomes will be used (Rose & Dixon, 1996; Rowe & Frewer, 2000). However an organisation must not simply use participatory processes as a means of delivering their own objectives, or as a way of legitimating policy directions they have already agreed. The objectives of the organisation are unlikely to meet exactly the agendas of potential participants, if the organisation needs or wants to engage stakeholders in decision-making, the process objectives and agenda will need to be shared and mutually beneficial.

5.4   Who? – Selecting Participants

Who should be involved in the process depends very much on the process objectives. It is important for the organising agency to understand the difference between public participation processes, which involve participants seen as broadly representative of society in general, and stakeholder participation processes where the participants each directly represent or speak for a certain interest (Petts, 2001). (Of course members of the public can also be stakeholders.) These two sorts of processes have very different roles. In cases where the organisation wants to understand the views and values of the general public relating to a policy issue, the selection of participants should be representative of wider society (who may or may not have direct experience or interest in that issue). In the process of resolving a case-specific policy issue, or devising a new vision for an area, it is very important that all interests are represented in that process (including those interests that are unable to speak for themselves).

5.4.1   Identifying and Classifying Stakeholders

Identifying and classifying stakeholders is a vital part of the preparation for any project to determine whether and how stakeholders should participate in the project activities (ODA, 1995). A stakeholder can be defined as any individual, group or institution that has an interest, or stake in a particular issue. In other words their interests will affect, or be affected by any decision regarding that issue. The definition of a 'stakeholder' is therefore relative to the specific issue in question (Glicken, 2001). The selection of the most appropriate stakeholders to involve in a participatory process is problematic because for issues of broad public concern (e.g. climate change or biodiversity loss), it can be claimed that everyone has some stake in the issue, and therefore has a right to be involved. Therefore there needs to be some process of identifying those who can represent the range of interests, those whose presence is critical for effective problem resolution, and those whose rights and interests will be affected by the outcome. There is a tension between wanting to be fully inclusive of all interests, and wanting a manageable process. This tension between deliberation and inclusion was referred to in Section 1. The use of break out groups and a team of facilitators is an effective way of ensuring everyone is able to participate in a fair way.
Which and how many stakeholders to involve depends primarily on the purpose of the process, but also the scale of the issue and its impacts and the stakeholders' interests.

Borrini - Feyeraband et al (1999), describe criteria for selecting stakeholders in their guidance on participatory environmental management. The following are adapted from their list:

- statutory obligations;
- rights to resources (including land);
- dependency on resources (primarily economic);
- unique knowledge and ability to manage resources;
- interests affected by management change;
- present and potential impact on issue;
- historical and cultural links to the issue.

In addition, there must be consideration of the following, more practical issues:

- ability to represent the interests of those unable to participate (e.g. future generations, non-human entities);
- the authority to make judgements on behalf of those they are representing (either an organisation or a constituency);
- those who have an influence over the issue (whether direct or indirect).

The process of stakeholder analysis is a useful way to gather contextual information about the issue in question (see Situation and Problem Analysis) by gaining an understanding of stakeholder knowledge, perceptions and interests. In addition a stakeholder analysis is a good way of scoping a process by assessing stakeholder expectations, identifying the knowledge and resources they could bring into a process, and identifying existing good relationships that could be built on and potential conflicts of interests that could arise. This analysis of who expects and needs to be involved to allow an effective and equitable process is a key factor in process design. NB. Much of this process can be done intuitively by staff who work in the area.

Stakeholders have been classified in the literature in different ways:

Reference	Categories
ODA (1995)	Primary stakeholders - those whose interests and behaviour are ultimately affected by the programme Secondary Stakeholders - intermediaries in the delivery process (i.e. umbrella groups, lobbying groups) Key Stakeholders - those who can significantly influence or are important to the success of the process.
Grimble & Wellard, (1997)	Active Stakeholders - who affect a decision or action Passive Stakeholders - who are affected by a decision or action
Baker Associates (1997)	Direct Partners - priority relationships where there is ongoing contact Participative Groups and Significant others - those with an interest in the situation, important to the process, some ongoing contact Statutory Agencies - General Consultees - community groups, general public

Reference	Categories
Hislop & Twery, (2001)	Professional Community Local economy interests Users (in the case of Forest Enterprise these are forest users) Neighbours
Gass, Biggs & Kelly (1997)	Internal Stakeholders (part of the organisation implementing the project) External stakeholders (likely to be affected by changes) Agencies in the same geographical area / related interests (possible competitors)

The process of stakeholder analysis should help to highlight the key stakeholders, who if they are not willing to be involved in a process, or are not supportive of the outcome will make it very difficult for the issue to be tackled effectively and efficiently (Margerum, 1999). ODA recommends working out the key stakeholders to involve according to their **influence** ('the power which stakeholders have over a project', in terms of their involvement in decisions, control over implementation, power over the actions of others) and **importance** (how closely their interests coincide with the objectives of the process) (ODA, 1995).
This can be illustrated using the matrix below:
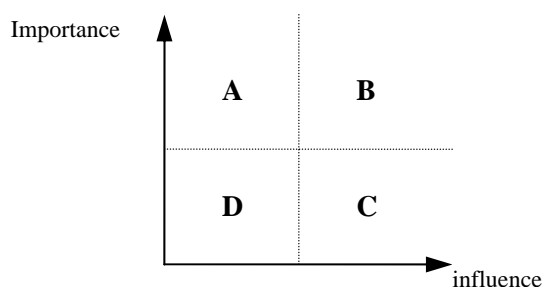
Groups **A, B, C,** are referred to as key stakeholders.

A - require special initiatives to protect their interests because of their low influence. This group tends to include the traditionally socially excluded groups such as ethnic minorities.
B - important that there are constructive working relationships with this group, to 'ensure an effective coalition of support for the project'.
C - source of significant risk to the project because of their high influence but little overlap of interests with the project. They may not want to participate in the process but could jeopardise the effectiveness of the outcome.
D - low priority because of low influence and low importance - unlikely to be involved in project activities

In the context of marine management planning, Jones et al (2001) stress that if there are only a few potential stakeholders, it is much more important to ensure that there is an opportunity for inclusive participation, compared to urban areas for example, with high numbers of potential participants where there is a lower expectation and need for participation by a lower proportion of stakeholders.

5.4.2   Public Participation

In some cases it is seen as relevant to involve the public directly into the decision-making process. This often occurs when the issue is seen as being of direct public concern (either

because local residents may have to bear the effects of that decision - e.g. the siting of waste, or because the issue is socially contentious and therefore in the broader public interest). The selection of public participants can occur through a process of self-selection (based on the volunteer principle), selection by the organising agency, or random / systematic selection (Renn et al, 1993). Many authors have discussed the problems associated with self-selection, as it has the danger of attracting the 'usual suspects', and resulting in disproportionate representation of members of the public who have time, resources, status and motivation (Holmes & Scoones, 2000). The selection of participants by the organising agency may be advantageous in that it could ensure the inclusion of traditionally marginalised communities who wouldn't normally volunteer. Processes that involve a representative sample of the community tend to use systematic selection procedures - i.e. randomly generated. However, there are some situations where a randomly selected group of participants is unsuitable. Renn et al suggest that citizen panels are not suitable for issues that pose major inequities between different social groups or geographic areas, because randomly selected citizens can not legitimately represent these groups facing the inequity (Renn et al, 1993). Kenyon et al questions the ability of such a small number of participants to really inform an organisation how citizens in general will respond to an issue (Kenyon et al 1999). In addition, people who are involved in a process over a period of months and become informed about the issue, will no longer be able to represent the 'uninformed' public. Despite these criticisms, processes to allow public input at a national level into the framing and appraisal of issues in the public's interest are increasingly being used within the UK. Consensus conferences and citizens juries have been used in this way - e.g. The Citizen Foresight Project (see Wakeford, 1998), and deliberative mapping is being trialled by the Wellcome Trust to explore issues around the kidney organ deficit in the UK.

Experts have traditionally been reluctant to involve the public in technical decision-making because it was perceived that citizens lack the capacity to grasp complex issue or form views of any relevance (Smith & Wales, 1999). However, experience from processes such as Citizen's Juries and Panels have found that providing citizens are given a supportive environment and time to collect and process information, they are able to '*understand and process technical information and to articulate well-balanced recommendations*' (Renn et al, 1993:209).

5.5   When? What stage in decision-making

As a result of analysing the problem and its context, the appropriate boundaries of the debate, and the objectives of the organisation, a picture should be developed of when in the policy process participation could be effectively used. There are two main questions here:

- When in the decision-making process is participation appropriate?
- How closely linked is the process outcome to the final decision?

Citizen / stakeholder involvement in the decision process can occur in the scoping of a decision (using process such as focus groups, or visioning), the process of actually making a decision (either directly through consensus building, or indirectly through like Citizens' Panels), choosing between policy options (e.g. Citizens' Juries or SDA), or monitoring / assessing a policy approach (e.g. CACs, Citizens' Panels).

The stage in the decision-making process has a huge effect on how dialogue can be framed, who does the framing, and how flexible and exploratory the debate is. There is a trade off between having an open and inclusive debate, and ending up with outcomes which can be easily translated into policy. Thus, while it cannot be denied that it is the nature of the deliberative process itself that delivers many of the benefits (as outlined previously), it is also seen as important that innovative processes of participation are linked into more formal decision-making processes (Bloomfield et al, 1998). Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger are concerned that by carrying out participatory processes for their own sake without the outcomes being translated into a definable outcome or influence on policy, that the process could be seen as nothing more than a talking shop, resulting in stakeholder expectations being let down and so-called 'stakeholder fatigue' (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). On the other hand, the difficulty with processes designed to feed directly into a policy decision, is that such processes must be bounded according to predetermined policy parameters, thus limiting the extent to which participants are able to influence the agenda.

It is generally recommended that in situations where the organisation wants stakeholder / public input in generating or recommending policy solutions, that they are involved as early in the process as is reasonably practical. An outcome is more likely to reflect the interests and generate the support of the participants if they are given the opportunity to discuss the underlying assumptions of the process, and have an involvement in setting the agenda. In narrowly defined processes, there is a danger that participants are asked to choose between options of which they feel none reflect their real interests. In these situations participants may feel they were not given the opportunity to discuss the issues of importance to them, only the situation as framed by the agency. Another risk would be that the potential for integrated planning and win-win solutions is lost because the process was too narrowly defined too early in the process.

In addition it is suggested that where possible stakeholders are involved throughout the process from scoping to decision-making, to implementation and monitoring. Such a commitment to stakeholder involvement means that participants are able to state their values and concerns at the start of the process, and then through an inclusive process these values and concerns are narrowed and refined to build agreement as to appropriate actions.

In some cases the results of the situation and stakeholder analysis may indicate a position where there needs to be the development of trust, communication and understanding between potential participants as part of the problem solution, and / or before an inclusive decision-making process can commence. This could almost be seen as preparatory processes - to build understanding and good working relationships between interests. This highlights the importance that who, why and how stakeholders are to be involved in a decision-making process must be considered at the start of any project or policy process - participation should not be an after thought, but included in the process design. Building relationships and the development of social capital takes time, and is often critical to a successful partnership and inclusive decision-making process.

5.6   How? – Enabling an Effective Process

Planning

Preparation is key. Wilcox suggests that 80% of the potential for success lies in preparing well before engaging with individuals and groups (Wilcox, 1994:25). This may include preparatory informal meetings with stakeholders to discuss the proposed process and reach agreement on how best to tackle the issue.

Facilitation

Independent facilitation is an important part of any deliberative and inclusionary process. Facilitators can be brought in from outside, and should be seen as independent of all participating interests or positions. Their role is to assist the process by suggesting techniques and procedures and helping the group explore the issue in a constructive way to reach an endpoint (Sidaway, 1998). Facilitators are an important tool to create and maintain non-confrontational conditions by:

- Agreeing ground rules with participants (e.g. attitudes towards offensive language, length and frequency of submissions),
- agreeing rules of the debate (boundaries, non-coercion etc.)
- guiding and encouraging the active participation of all and reducing powerplay;
- adopting techniques to help people reach conclusions
- ensuring the debate is able to develop and remain focused by summarising and clarifying deliberations so key points and main conclusions are clear and accessible,

Resource requirements

Participation can require high costs and be resource-intensive. Time is required to arrange workshops, recruit participants and write up the process. Costs of venues, facilitators, payment for those volunteering their time, information resources etc. must be considered. There is no point undertaking a large scale, costly participatory process for a minor and uncontroversial decision. However, using more participatory approaches can be cost effective (e.g. Sidaway, 1998, Petts, 1995). Facilitated and effectively managed workshops can lead to solutions being agreed much more quickly, than if a series of one-to-one negotiations are used, or a meeting becomes bogged down in circular or acrimonious discussions. It is argued that outcomes are more sustainable, and time and money can be saved in mediation and dispute resolution after a bad decision has been made - once conflicts and disputes escalate they tend to become more costly to resolve (Owen et al, 2000).

It also should be remembered that to use more deliberative and inclusionary approaches to decision-making doesn't have to involve big workshops and complex methods. By developing an expertise in facilitation and an understanding of the principles of deliberation and inclusion in-house, there can be financial benefits for the organisation by simply operating through more effective working practices in terms of one-to-one negotiations, internal policy setting, running meetings as well as engaging stakeholders and the public. In addition, the process outcome benefits of participation such as the development of trust and better working relationships, are diffuse, difficult to capture, and may not relate to any monitoring targets. Thus they may go unnoticed.

Organisational Skills, Expertise and Attitudes

One of the factors currently constraining a more broadscale use of participation processes is the lack of in-house expertise and skills in participation. Within environmental organisations, for example, staff tend to be experts in environmental science, not necessarily with any knowledge or experience of social processes such as participation or facilitation. Organisations who wish to use participatory processes widely within their day to day decision-making and problem solving processes must commit to capacity building to develop the skills of their staff, and enable them to bring in outside expertise where necessary. An evaluation of a range of process options by experts according to what defines a 'close and responsive relationship' indicated that a 'good' process done 'badly' could deliver less benefits than a 'bad' process done 'well' (Clark et al, 2001). At worst a process applied badly or in the wrong situation could further increase tensions between parties, or increase public apathy (hence it is important that processes are not just picked 'off the shelf'. Chess and Purcell, in their review of public participation exercises in North America, concluded that the actions of the lead agencies, and the way in which the participatory process was applied to a situation enhanced or limited success (Chess & Purcell, 1999). The principles of participatory working and the way in which these are incorporated into day to day working practices is seen as increasingly important. The way an organisation engages with its stakeholders and the public in specific processes should be part of an ongoing strategy of open and transparent communications. *'Behaviour and attitudes are seen to matter more than methods and procedures'* (IIED/IDS 2000).

Institutional Challenges

Becoming more deliberative and inclusionary raises many challenging issues for an organisation's culture and traditional practices of decision-making. The strength and innovation of participation lies in the opportunities provided to extend debate on an issue beyond traditional scientific assessments and to bring in a broader range of knowledge, experiences and perceptions. The organisation with responsibility for this decision must firstly be willing to commit to acting on or building on the outcome of the participatory process, to prevent the exercise being seen as tokenistic. In reality, this may mean that the organisation has to deal with ideas and values alien to traditional, often technocratic approaches to environmental problem solving. The organisation must learn to accept these values as valid and integrate them and possibly debate them alongside their own in-house expertise and procedures. To deal with these issues organisations need to adopt a more flexible and reflexive approach to decision-making procedures and resource allocation (IIED & IDS, 2000; Pimbert, 2001). Some communities may need more investment of time to build social capital before a process, and as explained, different processes are relevant to different situations. There is a danger that organisations will bound and limit deliberation to topics which fall within their traditional conceptions of the issue, or use participation as a simple 'add-on' to traditional procedures, by-passing issues raised which do not 'fit' their ideas (Holmes and Scoones, 2000). However, this approach could a) delegitimise the role of participation, as it is used / abused to simply justify pre-determined actions, and b) reduces organisational learning from the experience, by never having the opportunity to understand an issue through the eyes of others.

An organisation which does want to more fully integrate participatory principles and practices into its activities, needs to ensure its structures and targets encourage innovation and experimentation, gives staff the skills and ability to determine the most suitable

approaches to use, and incorporates systems to share best practice and learn from experiences (IIED & IDS, 2000).

On a more basic level there are issues concerning intra- and inter-organisational communication and transparency. There is still a culture of protectionism and competitiveness between organisations and in particular academic disciplines over data and information. To effectively tackle the complex and diffuse environmental problems of today, which overlap the jurisdiction of many organisations and agencies, there needs to be a move for more transparency and openness in the sharing of scientific knowledge, experience and data. This is true to some extent within organisations - between departments, and strategic and local staff.

Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can help to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the process and improve project management, raise awareness of the range of benefits coming from participation and share lessons of best practice (Clark et al, 2001). Evaluation can cover whether the objectives set at the start of the process have been met, or the extent to which the process met the ideals of deliberation and inclusion, such as was the process and the outcome fair and competent? (Webler, 1995). For more on evaluation see the review in Clark et al, (2000).

6. Summary of Fitness for Purpose and Best Practice

As the experience of participatory processes grows amongst practitioners, suggestions of best practice in participation are increasingly found in the literature. A selection of these are summarised below:

Process design

- Process is as important as the technical aspects of a problem or policy in achieving success. It should be considered at the start of a project and the necessary staff training and resources supplied.
- The agency must have a clear understanding of what it wants to achieve from the process, be sure that there is the in-house commitment and expertise to achieve this, and that it is able to commit itself to the process outcomes in the final decision-making process.
- The agency should analyse the problem and context from a range of perspectives. This can help ensure the process is locally relevant, and identify what broader process outcomes could be delivered.
- The objectives, scope and limitations of the process should be communicated and where possible negotiated so participants feel the process can offer them something.
- The appropriate process depends on the local context, and shouldn't be selected ad hoc.
- Although this review has focused on deliberative (i.e. verbal) methods of participation, there are strong arguments in favour of non-verbal methods such as mapping, the use of GIS, 3-d models etc.
- The process should, where possible have a clear link to policy.

Recruiting participants

- Care should be taken to ensure that **all** potential participants have been identified, and that the process is equally accessible to all participants. Whilst it is advisable to build on existing structures and networks, the agency must make sure these networks aren't excluding some social groups or interests.

Process Management

- Independent facilitators play an important role in keeping the process moving, ensuring dialogue is fair, and agreements based on best available understandings rather than coercion or the influence of power.
- The process should independent and unbiased. Any facilitators are advised to be independent from the sponsor organisation.
- Participation shouldn't be undertaken at the expense of quality of outcome. It is important that the proposed solutions are competent. Webler defines competence as '*the construction of the best possible understandings and agreements given what is reasonably knowable to the participants*' (Webler, 1995:65). Participants should have access to the resources necessary to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief. This includes information, human (experts, scientists), material and time resources, as well as the techniques and tools to explore issues effectively and resolve disputes. Information should be carefully constructed so it is sensitive to the audience, avoiding jargon where possible. Communicating information in a meaningful way can also help potential participants understand the relevance of the issue to their own interests (Reid et al, 1998).
- If participants are to make decisions on behalf of the public, or other absent stakeholders, it is important that the group is seen as representative of the views of all interested parties, if not there is a danger that the process won't be perceived as being legitimate (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). It is also possible that the proposed solution will be ineffectual, if successful implementation is blocked through lack of support from marginalised groups, or if all issues have not received adequate consideration.

Managing Outcomes

- Any decision-making process should be as transparent as possible, so those not involved can understand and trace the process of decision-making. This can help build trust and confidence in decisions made by public agencies.
- The final decision and details of any action should be fed back to participants so they can clearly see how their input has influenced the final decision.
- There should be ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the process to assess the process and outcomes in terms of predetermined evaluative criteria.

Learning from Experience

- Mechanisms should be developed to share lessons and best practice both within the organisation and between organisations who are going through a similar process (e.g. Forest Enterprise, Environment Agency, Local Authorities).

Appendix 1

Glossary

Consensus - general or widespread agreement. Tends to be used to describe an outcome that 'everyone can live with', as well as unequivocal agreement. A win-win solution.

Consensus Building - '*a collaborative approach to making a decision in which the interested parties identify common ground and work voluntarily towards finding a mutually acceptable solution to a contentious problem*' (Environment Council, quoted in Sidaway, 1998)

Consultation - where people are offered the opportunity to comment on what is planned, but are not able to develop and input their own ideas or participate in putting plans into action.

Deliberation - *careful consideration', 'discussion of reasons for and against'* (OED, 1994)

Empowerment - '*giving, or enabling, self-esteem, self-reliance, personal competence, coping skills and community building*' (O'Riordan & Ward, 1997).

Facilitation - a (preferably independent) third party helping participants explore their ideas and move towards desired goals

Inclusion - the act of involving others

Mediation - facilitates discussion and take a more active role in brokering negotiations between conflicting parties, through a process of joint and independent meetings

Participation - '*a social process through which people are able to influence and share control over the decisions which affect them*' (Jones et al, 2001).*,*

Social Capital - '*the norms and networks of social relations that build trust and mutual reciprocity among community residents, social organisations and civic institutions*' *(*Potapchuk, 1998 quoted in Owen et al, 2000)

Stakeholder - any individual, group or organisation who has an interest, or stake in a particular issue or system, and whose interests affect, or will be affected by a change in that system.

Appendix II - Review of Processes

1.   Citizens' Jury

The Citizens' Jury was developed independently in Germany (as planning cells) and the USA, as a process to introduce the 'considered views of lay people' into the planning process (Petts & Leach, 2000). The process involves the random selection of between 12 and 20 people as 'jurors', seen as broadly representative of society (in terms of gender, age, occupation etc.). They are brought together for between 2.5 and 5 days to learn about and discuss a specific issue by listening and questioning expert witnesses, and make public their views. There is a lot of emphasis on allowing the jurors time to learn about and understand the issue through this questioning process, and they are encouraged to challenge statements as well as express their own opinions in discussion groups (often moderated to ensure all voices have an equal chance to speak). The process does not aim for consensus, but jurors arrive at a final position through majority vote. A final report is produced which is passed onto the decision-makers. It is seen as important that this report explains the reasoning behind the recommendation made by the jury as well as detail about other issues seen as important to increase transparency of the process (Smith & Wales, 1999) Involvement in the decision-making process can be direct or indirect: the jurors' charge is either to respond to and make recommendations regarding a particular policy area, which then has an indirect influence over the decision-making process or, make an informed decision about the most appropriate solution to a particular (often contentious) issue, frequently deciding between options presented to them. (Toogood, 2000).

Extent of deliberation

Processes vary greatly on the balance achieved between hearing evidence and questioning witnesses, and discussion within the group. It is important that there is time both for witness scrutiny and deliberation amongst the jurors (NEF, 1998). Discussion and deliberation between jurors throughout the process is important to allow jurors to evaluate and discuss what they have heard so far in light of their own experiences and knowledge, as well as to help develop trust and mutual understanding between participants. Smith & Wales found that many jurors changed their position on a particular issue as a result of this discussion with others. Questioning of witnesses occurs within a non-adversarial atmosphere, with the emphasis on learning and understanding of information, views and values. However, there is no true deliberation between jurors and witnesses, beyond the question-answer process, which emphasises the one-way transfer of information from expert to citizen (Armour, 1995; Petts, 2001). There is little opportunity for the witnesses to learn from the values and experiential knowledge of the public, or the development of understanding and respect between jurors and experts (Smith & Wales, 1999; Petts, 2001).

Extent of inclusion

Citizen's juries allow representatives of the public to engage in political decision-making and thus the process is an important way to include a sector of society who previously were excluded from the decision-making process. However, it is questionable whether a jury of about 12 people can be truly representative of all interests held by the wider public, and there are no mechanisms in place to ensure that the outcomes are supported by the wider public (Armour, 1995).

In terms of including participants in setting the agenda, structuring of the debate and raising issues for discussion, Citizen Juries are often not inclusive. The jurors are often reacting to a closely defined charge framed by the decision-making agency, which also tend to select the witnesses, and therefore the type of evidence received. Smith & Wales highlight the importance of ensuring that the process is not biased to reach a desired endpoint (Smith & Wales, 1999). In some cases juries have been allowed to alter the agenda and call new witnesses as they develop an understanding of the issue (ibid.), but this can be constrained because of the resources and time required to arrange witnesses (Petts, 2001). In other cases a stakeholder panel (made up of a wide range of people with experience and knowledge of the issue) has been set up prior to the process to set the agenda and select witnesses.

The development of social capital

Citizen's juries provide an important link between citizens and policy makers and are characterised by a 'confrontational' approach to discussion that requires witnesses to individually defend their positions through argument. This cross-examination approach allows the jurors to understand how and why different positions are held and actions suggested. This may have the effect of increasing the perceived transparency of the policy process and thus help develop the trust and confidence of jurors in the process they are scrutinising. However, some commentators raise concerns about the lack of transparency over how the final report and jury recommendations are implemented by the decision-makers (Smith & Wales, 1999). The legitimacy of the process is reliant to some extent on the good faith and commitment of the decision-makers to implement recommendations, or explain why they are unable to act on them. Citizen's juries are not open to public observation and the process through which the final recommendations are reached is not transparent to outsiders, so it is not clear to what extent the process raises trust and confidence within the wider public sphere in the final decision (Armour, 1995).

Outcomes / Influence on policy

The issues tackled are often complex, and there are typically no techniques to help jurors structure or order their thoughts and values, or assimilate their experience (Renn et al,1995; Petts, 2001). However, despite this, decision-makers and observers have noted that the jurors are able to good judgements and competent decisions (Smith & Wales, 1999).

The reliance on the majority vote to make the final decision may disregard minority views held by participants (Renn et al, 1995), but any disagreements or important discussions should be included in the final report (NEF, 1998).

Citizen's Juries are one of the most widely used participatory processes used by agencies in the UK, particularly by Local Councils and Health Authorities (Delap, 2001). The widescale acceptance of the process by agencies is partly to do with the fact that the process complements rather than tries to replace traditional processes.

'*The intent is not to usurp the decision-making power of elected officials, but to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of the general public's views when they exercise that power*' (Armour, 1995:175).

One of the strengths of the Citizen Jury process is that it reaches an endpoint that has a direct route into the policy process. However, as mentioned previously there is often a lack of transparency in exactly how the findings of the Citizen Jury are translated into the final decision.

Costs

Costs are estimated to be anywhere between £15,000 - £30,000 for a Jury of 16 participants meeting for 4-5 days.

Case Studies

The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), took the lead in developing Citizens' Juries in the UK, and commissioned a series of pilot projects with the Local Government Management Board. Citizen's Juries have been widely used by Local and Health Authorities in particular. Examples include:

- development of waste strategies for Local Authorities in Hertfordshire and Lancashire (Petts, 2001)
- validation of options for wetland creation in the Fens (Ely Citizen's Jury - Aldred, 1997)
- Lewisham Citizens' Jury - 'what can we do to reduce harm to the community and individuals from drugs?'
- Also widely used in planning, energy policy, environmental issues, social issues, ethical issues, transport issues (Smith & Wales, 1999)

2.   Citizen's Panel

The Citizen's Panel is similar to Citizen Juries in that its purpose is to incorporate the informed views of citizens into the policy process, after they have been given information and had an opportunity to discuss the issue (Toogood, 2000). However the concept of a Panel is much more flexible than the Citizen's Jury - in its most basic form it is simply a means of exploring and capturing the views of an informed public on a policy issue. The traditional Citizen's Panel is comprised of a random selection of about 10 citizens, but Citizens' Panels can also be used to describe processes where the views of up to 5,000 members of the public are accessed through surveys, questionnaires or smaller deliberative processes. The number of times they meet depends on the issue - it can range from a intensive 2 - 3 day meeting, to regular meetings over a couple of months, to a panel lasting the lifespan of a particular project. Panels are provided with access to expert information usually through a series of speakers, but this can be provided through computer models (Toogood, 2000). Moderated discussions then takes place to enable the panel to discuss the various arguments they hear. A report is drafted by the moderator and discussed with the panel members before being presented to the sponsoring agencies.

Citizens' Panels tend to either develop policy options, or appraise and review current practice and suggest changes in policy direction (Toogood, 2000). Variations on the central theme have been developed to fulfil different purposes. Holmes and Scoones refer to Interactive Panels (ongoing panels of about 12 people, meeting about 3 times a year), and Research

Panels (a tool for tracking changes in public opinion involving 500 - 3000 people) (Holmes & Scoones, 2000).

The Extent of Deliberation

Because the range of applications of the Citizens' Panel model is flexible, the balance between scrutinising expert information and group deliberation depends on the objectives of the process and the policy issue.

In comparison with the Citizens' Jury, Citizens' Panels tend to be more open and flexible processes with greater emphasis on exploring the views and perceptions of the public rather than discussing and making judgements on expert presentations. There is a strong educative element to the process as illustrated by Renn et al who use a Citizen Panel to '*provide citizens with the opportunity to learn about the technical and political facets of policy options and to enable them to discuss and evaluate these options and their likely consequences according to their own set of values and preferences*.' (Renn et al 1993:191).

As with Citizen Juries though, the process does not allow for true deliberation between panellists and the policy-makers and experts.

Extent of Inclusion

Again the extent of variation of processes under the theme Citizen Panel, makes it impossible to make generalisations. As numbers increase the opportunity for all panellists to fully deliberate issues decreases, as seen with the Research Panels discussed by Holmes and Scoones, which involve between 500-3000 people and are really a means of collecting individual opinions as a market research tool.

As Citizen Panels often occur over a few months it is feasible in terms of time and resources for panellists to request experts and information sources. However, the sponsor still tends to set the initial agenda and frames the issue.

The Development of Social Capital

Panels that run over a series of months give the opportunity for trust and relationships to develop between participants. However, long-term panels tend to have a regular turn-over of members to ensure that the panellists remain closely representative of the wider public. The panellists may gain personal benefits such as a sense of involvement in the decision-making process and form a better understanding of the policy process (Toogood, 2000).

Outcomes and Influence on Policy

A final report drafted by the moderator and discussed with the Panel is fed back to the sponsors. This report should give a richer understanding of the public to policy makers and lead to better research directions and policy decisions (Toogood, 2000). However, as with Citizen Juries, how the sponsors react to the report is not transparent.

Cost

The process can be quite resource intensive - panellists are paid between £15-20 per meeting.

Case Studies

- widely used in urban and community planning, and energy policies in Germany (Renn et al, 1993).
- Citizen Foresight on the future of Agriculture and Genetically Modified Crops (LCGIS, 1998)

The UK's People's Panel is an example of a large scale Research Panel process, where 5,000 citizens were enrolled as representatives of the views of the public. This panel was then drawn on for a range of surveys, interviews, and smaller scale deliberative processes. Panels of this sort tend to be used as a sounding board and market research instrument by the public sector for a range of issues in a range of ways (not necessarily deliberative). The People's Panel can be used by any Government department, Next Steps Agency, NPDB etc.

3.   Community Advisory Committee

Lynn & Kartez (1995) refer to Community Advisory Committee (CAC) as a generic term which describes '*several techniques in which relatively small groups of citizens … are called together to represent ideas and attitudes of various groups and / or communities*' (Rosener, 1978:118, cited Lynn & Kartez, 1995:90). Processes resembling CACs have been used in the USA for over 100 years (Petts & Leach, 2000). Their role in decision-making seems to be a mechanism to inform agencies about public attitudes, views and priorities regarding a specific issue, rather than enabling representatives of the public to set detailed policy recommendations (Petts, 2001), and therefore are very similar to the concept of a Citizen Panel. A group of between 10 and 20 citizens seen as representative of relevant interests, are selected by the sponsoring agency or problem owner. The main difference between CAC's and Citizens' Juries and Panels is that participants aren't reliant on expert witnesses to learn about the issue, and the processes can go on for a significant length of time. A variety of methods and approaches (site visits, seminars, presentations, discussions, documents) are used to encourage discussion and move to a mutually acceptable consensus about the way forward. Minutes are taken throughout the process and made publicly available and a final report will be drafted, including non-binding recommendations. The process typically runs over a period of weeks and months, giving time for extensive deliberation and consideration of issues in some depth. This approach has been used in the UK by county councils in the development of waste management strategies (see Petts, 2001 for details of case studies). The process is resource-intense - requiring considerable commitment of time by participants and the decision-maker and may be up to 5 times as expensive as a Citizen's Jury (Petts, 2001)**.**

Extent of Deliberation

Petts sees the process more as a method using deliberation to extend consultation, rather than decision-making per se (Petts, 2001), and Vari describes it as a process which encourages value reconciliation rather than a process instrumental in problem solving (Vari, 1995). Participants are given access to many different types and sources of information, thus reducing reliance on expert witnesses for technical knowledge (Petts, 2001).

Extent of Inclusion

As with all processes involving small groups of citizens, and particularly because participants are not randomly selected, there are questions raised as to how representative of public views the outcomes of CACs are (Petts & Leach, 2000). However, CACs frequently occur as part of a wider public consultation process, and findings are made publicly available. The sponsoring agency holds considerable control at the start of the process - they frame the question, set the agenda, select the participants, controls the budget and selects appropriate witnesses. Therefore the legitimacy of the process is fairly dependent on the attitude and commitment of the agency to listen (Renn et al, 1995), but the long timespan of the process does provide the potential for participants to suggest amendments to the agenda and raise issues for debate compared to processes such as Citizens' Juries where this flexibility is constrained by time.

Development of Social Capital

CACs may go on for several months therefore giving the opportunity for participants to reflect on their own position between meetings, encouraging reflexive and carefully considered debate, and to develop good relationships between participants. However, there tends to be less face-to-face interaction with experts compared to Citizens' Juries and Citizen Panels, which may lower the degree to which trust and understanding in the policy process and the validity of expert knowledge is developed. Nevertheless, the CAC is seen as a means of increasing the acceptability of sometimes contentious decisions, as well as educating the public about proposed actions, and thus may have a role in raising trust in the policy process.

Outcomes and Influence on Policy

There is typically no moderation or facilitation of discussion within the process. Renn et al (1995) question therefore whether the final decision is really consensual or whether there is strategic behaviour by participants who frequently already held strong views on the issue. The report's recommendations are non-binding and the link into a decision may not be direct, therefore there is a danger that participant expectations of their influence over the policy process is raised.

Costs

For a Advisory Committee formed of 3 groups of 16 members, running for 6 months, Petts & Leach estimate the costs to be between £100,000-£150,000.

Case Studies

- CAC's have been used in Hampshire and Essex in the development of waste management strategies (Petts, 2001)
- have been widely used in USA in environmental decision contexts

4.   Consensus Conference

'A forum in which lay people develop and put forward their views on socially sensitive questions through dialogue with experts' (Consensus Conferences, 1994). Seen as an

extension of the Citizen's Panel, where a panel of between 10 - 20 lay people assess a complex social or political issue, through discussion with experts, as part of a 3 - 4 day conference. The Panel are volunteers, selected through advertising. The conference is sometimes preceded by one or two training weekends where participants are briefed on the issue, and time is spent identifying questions to be tackled in the conference. The panel question experts, discuss and assess the responses they have received and prepare a report or feedback through a press conference. Only a couple of Consensus Conferences have been carried out in the UK, and always on issues of national concern.

Extent of deliberation

The emphasis is on providing the opportunity for a selection of members of the public to discuss a particularly contentious issue. Because participants do not have to choose between policy options, discussion can potentially be more open-ended than Citizens' Juries, with the objective simply to reach some sort of informed, agreed position on an issue.

Extent of inclusion

The participants are self-selected and therefore may not be representative of the wider public. However unlike other processes, members of the public (other than the participants) have access to the discussion but are not invited to add to the final decision process. This adds to the transparency of the conference process, and provides the opportunity for the public to ask questions and learn about the issue. The pre-conference training weekends are important to enable participants to be involved in setting the agenda.

Development of Social Capital

The process is particularly valuable in developing trust and reducing misunderstanding about an issue. For this reason consensus conferences have been used to tackle national level issues which are usually socially contentious - i.e. where the issue needs to be tackled in the social and ethical as well as scientific sphere - '*dealing with disputes over the existence, extent and nature of a problem' (*Petts & Leach, 2000:38). The process enables the public and participants to learn about an issue for themselves and to raise issues of concern to them and therefore should reduce secrecy and misunderstanding

Outcomes/ Influence over Policy

Despite its title the objective is not necessarily to reach a consensus, but to '*discover the extent to which agreement can be reached*' (Petts & Leach, 2000). The conference does not necessarily have a direct influence over policy, but educates policy makers about the views and attitudes of a selection of citizens. However the process' value lies in its ability to improve public trust and confidence in the policy process.

Costs

Petts and Leach estimate that a 3-4 day conference for 16 participants, including a weekend preparatory workshop will cost between £85,000 - £100,000.

Case Studies

There have been 2 national consensus conferences in the UK, One on plant biotechnology and the other on radioactive waste management (www.ukceed.org). However they have been widely used in other countries for issues of national importance such as ozone (Austria), GMOs (Denmark), telecommunications (USA) , fishing (Denmark).

5.   Focus Groups

Anything between 5 and 12 people are recruited to enter into a facilitated exploration of their thoughts, attitudes and perceptions regarding a particular issue. The process, traditionally used as a market research tool, is about listening to and understanding the positions of specific groups of society - the group is not designed to be representative of the public, but of a specific sector (social, cultural, gender, age). Involvement in decision-making is indirect, but focus groups have been used to make an organisation aware of public perceptions before developing a programme / policy-setting process, or to monitor and review a previous decision / initiative to gain feedback on the effectiveness and appropriateness of that decision on the public (Toogood, 2000). Focus groups usually meet once for between one and two hours, and the discussions are typically recorded and transcribed. They are seen as more of a deliberative social research tool than a decision-making tool. **Community Issues Groups** meet up to 5 times over a series of weeks and allow a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the subject area by the participants. Each meeting builds upon the previous discussion, giving participants time between meetings to reflect on what was discussed and refine their views (Holmes & Scoones, 2000). Information is often introduced to the discussion to build up the participants' knowledge of the subject area. The processes tend to be taped, and resources are required to transcribe and analyse tapes as well as pay a contribution to participants for attendance.

Extent of Deliberation

The emphasis is on an open agenda enabling participants to state and explore their opinions in their own terms. However the short timespan during which the process occurs doesn't allow for in-depth exploration of the views of others and the development of a shared understanding of different positions or reflexive behaviour by participants. Focus groups do not aim to reach an endpoint or consensus, and any recommendations or assimilation of views tend to be reached through the analysis of transcripts, rather than being a feature of the discussion.

Extent of Inclusion

An individual focus group is not designed to be inclusive. But often a series of focus groups are held with different sectors of society seen as relevant to the study. A broad agenda is held by the facilitator, who leads the group through the discussion. This ensures participants are respectful of different views and everyone has a fair chance to contribute.

Development of Social Capital

A one-off meeting for 2 hours cannot realistically facilitate the development of substantial levels of trust between participants. In fact, because participants frequently don't know each

other before the process, there are concerns that people will be unwilling to fully expose their true feelings during the discussion. The similar background and/or experience of the participants may reduce the opportunity for broader social learning, but enables people to feel at ease more quickly. The opportunity for an individual to explore their values in a supportive environment and know that these views are listened to and respected, may help contribute to the development of self-confidence.

Outcomes/ Influence on Policy

Focus groups tend to be used in research and to gather public opinion. The findings allow the sponsor to gain information on the attitudes, needs and desires of specific sectors of society, as well as an understanding of the context in which the participants set the issue in question. However, participants have no access to the final decision and the agency cannot necessarily act on the outcomes of the focus group which may be seen as a wishlist. In research on the role of focus groups in environmental planning, Davies found that there was a general lack of experience of how to translate the publicly articulated values into policy processes that may be framed around different values (Davies, 1999).

Costs

Focus groups can be relatively cheap to run. Costs include attendance fees for participants (£15-£25 / day), venue hire, and consultant fees (£250/day).

Case Studies

RSPB held a series of 6 separate focus groups to gain views from community groups about views of the environment and life in the Uplands, to help inform RSPB's Upland Policy. They have also been used widely in academic research and by Local Authorities because they are a quick and relatively cheap way to capture public views.

6.   Consensus Building / Stakeholder Dialogue

Consensus building can be defined as a collaborative approach where interested parties identify common ground and work together from the start to create a mutually beneficial solution to a contentious problem. The dialogue is managed by a neutral, independent facilitator who concentrates on helping participants to understand the position taken by others, encouraging an non-adversarial atmosphere and helping the group move towards a decision. Consensus building can be used to resolve conflicts or help prevent conflicts. Consensus building is labelled an approach rather than a method, because a range of different participatory techniques (e.g. workshops, roundtables, visioning) can be used, and the process is tailor-made to the particular situation and agreed among the participants, who also are involved in setting the parameters for dialogue (Harris, 2001). Consensus building is distinctive in its emphasis on aiming to engage as many stakeholders as it is feasible in the process, involving interested parties from the outset in defining the problem and devising the methods, addressing problems by basing dialogue on the needs of stakeholders rather than their positions, exploring and working with feelings, values and perceptions as well as factual information, and using this to reach a *win-win* outcome by consent (Sidaway, 1998; Harris, 2001) . The Environment Council explain consensus building as a move away from *decide-announce-defend* approach to decision-making, to *define-agree-implement*. Although this

approach can be applied to any decision situation, Ingram & Juni (1998) see consensus building as being particularly suitable for situations where:

- there are many issues and parties involved
- implementation of a decision or solution requires the commitment of many parties
- where from experience traditional processes have, or are likely to fail
- stakeholders need to work together in the future so it is in their interest to develop good relationships
- there is an absence of, or disagreement over scientific information - Consensus Building encourages the sharing of information, and working together to obtain any missing knowledge
- parties hold different values or beliefs - consensus building doesn't just concentrate on the factual arguments and allows parties to express their views in a way that requires other parties to listen and respect them

Extent of deliberation

The approach emphasises the exploration and sharing of values and meanings throughout the decision-making process. Unlike many deliberative techniques, the knowledge and information held by the public is not treated in a different way to that of the experts and stakeholders, and there is true dialogue between all viewpoints. This enhances the learning potential of experts, decision-makers and stakeholders. Because stakeholders are involved throughout the process, there are many opportunities for reflection and iteration about issues to ensure all aspects have been considered.

Extent of inclusion

Consensus building aims to involve stakeholders throughout the process - from its initiation through to implementation: in the setting of the agenda, shaping the debate and making the decision. Because of this more long-term view of inclusion, stakeholders can be brought into the process at different relevant stages and as the issue develops different people can be identified and invited into the process. However, depending on the issue, it is not always possible to have a completely open agenda, due to institutional and legal constraints to which the final decision must adhere.

Development of Social Capital

By involving stakeholders throughout the lifespan of the issue, there is plenty of time for development and enhancement of relationships, levels of trust and reciprocity. Consensus building approaches to decision-making tend to be based on the principle of a flat management structure where there is no hierarchy of responsibility. This encourages shared responsibility and ownership of the outcomes - something particularly important where co-operation is required for implementation. This bottom-up approach to decision-making requires the agency to develop a culture that is responsive and able to delegate total control over the decision to the stakeholder group.

Outcomes / Influence on policy

Consensus building is flexible and can be applied to many different conflict and decision-making situations, including policy development. Consensus as an endpoint is not always seen as desirable or possible especially when beliefs are deeply held. In these cases it is agreed that an solution acceptable to all will be settled with. As all relevant authorities tend to be directly involved and committed to the process, there should be no concerns that the outcomes will not be acted on.

Costs

Costs can vary considerably depending on the scope of the project. In general professional facilitators are required, (£250/day), and the process tends to be time-consuming.

Case Studies

- Consensus Building has been used by English Nature in the NE Kent, Thanet Coast mSAC process.
- Blackdown Hills AONB Management Strategy
- Brent Spar discussions (taking a more predominantly conflict resolution approach)

7.   Regulatory Negotiation

This is a process whereby representatives of key parties with an interest in a particular policy decision come together to negotiate and reach agreement on rules by which the regulation is devised. The purpose is to avoid misunderstandings, delay, expense and complexity that can occur not just with litigation, but with prolonged administrative proceedings, or inaction (Forester, 1999:159). The issue negotiated is selected by the agency responsible for implementing the policy. The group of between 15 - 25 stakeholders meets several times for 2 /3 days over a period of 1/3 - 2/3 year (Hadden, 1995). Discussions are facilitated to reach an agreement that everyone is happy with. The agency doesn't give up its regulatory responsibility or authority over the policy. The principle of regulatory negotiation could be used to set the rules of any potentially controversial decision in a situation where the agency feels unable to devolve decision-making responsibility.

Extent of Deliberation

The process is very goal-oriented, and there tends to be a tendency for participants to focus on practical details and factual arguments rather than work from a value-base. This is partially because participants are experienced and well established at working in the policy community where a certain level of understanding of the policy process can be assumed. Hadden sees the equality of participants as being critically important to the success of the process (Hadden, 1995). Success tends to be judged in terms of a technically competent decision.

Extent of Inclusion

Access to the debate tends to be limited to a few representatives of organised interests, and there is no means by which those not at the table can observe the process or influence the

result (which may include marginalised groups who have to bear the costs of the policy). To reach a consensus requires that there is a relatively small number of participants. However, once within the forum, all participants have equal rights and authority over the process. The result is not meant to be a policy representative of the views of the public, it is a means of conflict avoidance - as Fiorino states ' people do not participate in negotiations as citizens who are taking part in a democratic process, but as professionals doing their job (Fiorino, 1995:239).

Development of Social Capital

The groups involved tend to be well established in the policy network and therefore new networks and relationships are not usually established. However, better working relationships can be developed as trust and confidence are enhanced through the process of sharing ideas and understanding the position of others (Fiorino, 1995), and hopefully the final decision will be seen as more legitimate.

Outcomes / Influence on Policy

The process has a direct influence on the policy. The negotiation is seen to improve the effectiveness of the policy by providing new ideas, reaching agreement among opposing interest groups. In the longer term the responsible agency benefits from the development of an understanding of different approaches seen as acceptable, and a raised awareness of areas of critical concern to various interest groups (Forester, 1999).

Costs

unknown

Case Studies

Regulatory Negotiation is increasingly used in the USA for the setting of environmental and other policies.

8.   Stakeholder Decision Analysis (SDA)

This is a process combining deliberation with systematic multi-criteria decision analysis. The process was first used to prioritise issues according to criteria devised by the participants in the New Forest Local Environment Agency Plan (LEAP) (Clark et al, 1998). 14 stakeholders were recruited from the public, voluntary and private sector as a way of representing a range of different values towards the local environment. The group went through a process of identifying potential criteria based on the values they hold towards the ecosystem, ranking them according to their perceived importance, and finally reviewing and prioritising a list of issues (provided by the Environment Agency) that the LEAP was going to tackle according to these ranked criteria. Participants were not included in decisions about how the actions are undertaken which remained the responsibility of the Agency. (This is not a requirement of the process: SDA can be used as part of a wider process where stakeholders are involved in determining the actions). The process combined individuals working alone, in pairs and in small groups, and the workshops took place over a period of several months. At all stages of the process, participants were encouraged to enter into discussion about the results of the

structured processes - this emphasis on contextual information as well as the final prioritised issues is seen as a strength of the process.

Extent of Deliberation

The process is a fusion of structured decision-making and deliberation. At all stages SDA emphasises deliberation between participants when identifying and exploring values, developing criteria and ranking options. Discussion focused on the multi-criteria ranking process at hand, so individuals did not spend time defending their particular views, thus conflict was minimal (Clark et al, 1998). The process design is very 'instrumentalist' - i.e. motivated to achieving a desired endpoint. The nature of the process allows participants to explore all different values and factors which they feel are important to take into consideration, therefore the focus of the deliberation is still be reasonably unbounded.

Extent of Inclusion

The process aims to involve a representative sample of different interests, but there is no way the results can be seen as representative of the wider public in the area or their needs. The process did not have any mechanism for the 'unorganised' interests to enter the discussion. The process is very structured and predetermined. The LEAP SDA involved 14 participants - limited to this to make the fairly complex process manageable. It involved representatives of interest groups only, but there is no reason why the process can't be adapted for public participation.

Development of Social Capital

The process occurs over several months encouraging the development of good relationships and trust. This is particularly important because the support and co-operation of these groups during the implementation of the action plan is desirable.

Outcomes / Influence on Policy

The structured process meant that the Environment Agency were presented with an easy to use list of prioritised policy options, which they were committed to implementing. The process has an added advantage in that the process through which this prioritised list was arrived at was transparent and systematic.

Costs

For a process using 4 workshops and external facilitators, costs could come to around £3,000.

Case Studies

- The process was pioneered to develop the New Forest LEAP.
- The Severn Estuary Strategy.
- The River Avon cSAC Strategy (part of the LIFE in UK Rivers Project).

9.   Visioning

Visioning combines a variety of approaches and participatory techniques concerned with making plans for the future within an area. Originating in the USA, visioning techniques have been widely used in the UK, especially within Local Agenda 21, and developing options for the future shape of local places (e.g. incorporating into the local planning process or regeneration projects). The process involves local residents, representatives of interest groups and policy makers. The approach works systematically through a process of reviewing the past, exploring the present, creating a vision for the future whilst identifying the current barriers to achieving that vision, and identifying the measures that need to be taken to achieve that vision (NEF, 1998). Visioning can be used at various stages of the policy process: scoping - generating ideas of future actions that a community wants to see in their local environment; developing options and scenarios for a particular plan or development; or appraising policies and plans to explore whether they meet local aspirations (Toogood, 2000). Visioning exercises are a very effective way of building up a shared understanding and vision amongst participants before they go on to make policy decisions. However, it can be labour intensive (Toogood, 2000), involving a range of consultations, conferences and workshops. But the concept of visioning can be adapted to the local situation and can be a relatively cheap way of finding out what people want.

An example of some of the processes used includes Visioning Conferences. A visioning conference is a 2-3 day facilitated meeting between local community members, representatives of local organisations and policy makers. It can cost anywhere between £5,000 - £40,000 (Toogood, 2000). It involves individual and small group discussions, to brainstorm all the issues affecting the local environment, and what people would like to see done to tackle them. Other variations of visioning include Future Search which involves ideally 64 stakeholders (in eight groups of eight) and Planning for Real (NEF, 1998). These often incorporate visual elements - Planning for Real for example, focuses the debate on a 3-D model of a area. It involves people putting suggestions on this map, and then brainstorming which suggestions should be prioritised. Forest Research have suggested an adaptation of Planning for Real called Forests for Real, to be used in Forest Design Plans (Hislop & Twery, 2001).

Extent of Deliberation

The benefits of the approach are that the focus of discussion is on the future so it takes peoples' attention away from present conflicts and resource constraints, encouraging creative thinking (LGMB, 1996) and thinking around an issue beyond the immediate situation at hand. The process also allows people to explore and express their views in their own terms - thus it can be seen as empowering especially if the process them moves on to joint implementation to achieve the vision (NEF, 1998). Visioning techniques often rely heavily on visual as well as discursive techniques providing participants a range of means by which they can express themselves.

Extent of Inclusion

One of the strengths of visioning is that it is open to all - professionals, interest groups and the general public, and because of its emphasis on values and aspirations it does not preclude anyone from joining in due to lack of knowledge or understanding. By allowing people to

explore their ideas, participants can raise issues for discussion which they think are important and relevant, defend their claims and be involved in reaching a final vision for the area. One of the strengths of the process is that by involving a wide range of people experience, ideas and resources can be maximised for implementation

Development of Social Capital

The inclusivity of the process and its non-confrontational approach to tackling complex local issues encourages a collaborative spirit within a community, and good relationships between public and professionals (Toogood, 2000). There is an educative element, helping people understand about competing needs within their local environment (Petts & Leach, 2000), thus leading to social learning. Some participants may go on to help implement the action plan to achieve the vision that may result in the development of long-term, stable partnerships.

Outcomes / Influence on Policy

The process is action-oriented - creating local interest, motivation and support to improve the local environment (LGMB, 1996). However, there is a danger that expectations can be raised, as people imagine and discuss options that are unrealistic (Toogood, 2000; Petts & Leach, 2000). There is not necessarily a direct link into a particular decision.

Costs

A visioning conference can cost anywhere between £5,000 - £10,000, but costs of up to £40,000 have been found.

Case Studies

- visioning is a widely used technique in Local Agenda 21 (e.g. Gloucestershire)
- It has also been used in local planning - to get a picture of the aspirations of the residents before a plan is drafted (Mendip District Council), and to discuss the expansion of Stevenage.
- Future Search has been used by English Nature as part of the Essex Estuaries mSAC process.
- Planning for Real has been used in planning exercises in the Brecon Beacons National Park (see Tewdwr-Jones & Thomas, 1998).

10. Workshops and Roundtables

Workshops and Roundtables do not strictly count as 'processes', because in reality they are a forum in which different techniques could be used. However, because of their widespread use as a fora in which discussion is facilitated and increasingly decisions are made, it is worth referring to them in brief. Workshops and roundtables are simply a way to bring people together to discuss issues of shared concern and brainstorm ideas for action (NEF, 1998). They differ from traditional meetings in that they tend to be facilitated rather than chaired, there is emphasis on deliberation and exchange, and the tables are arranged to reduce any obvious hierarchy developing between participants (i.e. 'experts' and representatives of the public). Numbers are normally limited to between 7 and 10 per table to ensure everyone is able to fully participate in the discussion. The strength of this approach is really to build

relationships between different interests, and the participants at each table are selected to ensure mixed interests to encourage discussion and share knowledge and experience. This approach can be a useful way to develop relationships and communication skills between groups, and use this to make shared and supported decisions. The processes can go on for as long a period of time as necessary to discuss the issue in question - frequently workshops can occur in an afternoon. Costs can range depending on the number of people and whether this fora is combined with another participatory technique, however each table should have a facilitator to help participants develop their ideas and to record any suggestions.

Appendix

Further reading on processes

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MORGAN, 1995. The Focus Group toolkit

Visioning
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Environmental Future State Visioning:
BALL, J., 2001. Environmental Future State Visioning: towards a visual and integrative approach to information management for environmental planning. *Local Environment* 6 (3). 351-366

Planning for Real:
Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford, nif@cableinet.co.uk, who provide Planning for Real kits and training videos.

Future Search:
Centre for Participation, New Economics Foundation, 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH.
participation@neweconomics.org, www.neweconomics.org

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Middle left: CO_2 experiment at Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR, Lancashire.
Peter Wakely/English Nature 21,792
Bottom left: Radio tracking a hare on Pawlett Hams, Somerset.
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