

Flood Risk Management



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Community Engagement Toolkit

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This document has been prepared by AECOM who carried out the research on behalf of Welsh Government. Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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About the Toolkit

The purpose of the toolkit is to assist those responsible for flood risk management schemes¹ or those who may be involved in wider flood risk management activity, and provides guidance on how to approach community engagement and partnership working.

The Welsh Government wants communities to become involved in the local solutions for managing flood risk at the earliest stage where they will understand the risks, what is being done to manage those risks and what they can do themselves to increase their personal and community resilience.

It is primarily likely to be used by flood risk management stakeholders, although it also aims to be transferrable to others such as emergency planners which may have an interest.

The toolkit is based on an evaluation of the effectiveness of recent flood risk management schemes including the three pilot flood alleviation studies that have been implemented in Prestatyn, Barry and Pwllheli and a sample of the European Regional Development Funded Programme Schemes. It provides good practice guidance which has been derived from these experiences².

The toolkit is not intended to be prescriptive but instead provides a range of ideas which can be drawn on for effective community engagement and partnership working within flood risk management. The user should consider whether different elements are appropriate for their particular scheme before implementing any specific strategy.

It is important to note that an end objective of engaging with the public about flood risk is to catalyse behavioural change and to increase the resilience of communities and individuals to the impacts of flooding. The provision of information only, relating to any schemes being undertaken, will not change behaviour alone. In order to ensure there is a change in behaviour relating to flood risk management and resilience, other methods would also need to be adopted.

Below are several links which refer to previous work on behavioural change which can be adopted by users.

- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: a guidance document on behavioural change at population, community and individual levels³;
- MINDSPACE: a tool developed by cabinet office which considers the nine key factors in influencing behaviour⁴;
- House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee: provides a report on behavioural change relating to government interventions⁵;
- Central Office of Information: website has links to a research document on behavioural change which draws on the disciplines of social psychology, economics and behavioural economics⁶; and

¹ The term scheme is used within this document can also mean any raising flood awareness activity/project

² There is also a wide variety of other guidance on engagement which is available through searching on the internet for community engagement toolkits.

³ <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH6/Guidance/pdf/English>

⁴ <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/content/133/mindspace-influencing-behaviour-through-public-policy>

⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/ldsctech/179/17902.htm>

⁶ <http://coi.gov.uk/documents/commongood/commongood-behaviourchange.pdf>

- [MECHanisms](#): this is a practical on-line resource to assist managers design and improve energy behavioural change programmes⁷.

The toolkit is set out in two parts and whilst focusing on community engagement also provides a guide for effective partnership working. The toolkit includes a brief overview of how to ensure effective partnership working within flood risk management. It aims to show that the creation of a strong partnership can help with engaging communities and ensuring a focused and unilateral approach.

The community engagement element of the toolkit also incorporates a number of examples of community engagement techniques and how they have been used in practice.

⁷ <http://mechanisms.energychange.info/>

The Community Engagement Process

The process of community engagement for flood risk management schemes should involve, as a minimum, four key stages as show in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Community Engagement Process



Once the scheme reaches completion, with the partnership fulfilled and the community engagement ended, all stakeholders should aim to undertake a full evaluation of the work involved. It is a key part of the learning process, and integral to the completion of the scheme, for all stakeholders to return to their original aims and examine the success of the project, the areas which went well, those which didn't and lessons to be learned. It is advised that this is done as a formal process whereby all stakeholders are able to become involved in the procedure; methods of evaluation can include both primary and secondary research and more detail is provided on this at the end of the toolkit.

Contents of the Toolkit

The toolkit is split into three sections covering each of the steps in the community engagement process.

Section 1 provides guidance on defining the scope of engagement under the following headings:

- Importance of partnership working for community engagement
- Set and implement partnership terms of reference for engagement
- Manage expectations and avoid confrontation
- Use engagement process for multiple functions.

Section 2 provides guidance on defining the target audience under the following headings:

- Consider size and extent
- Segments
- Key groups.

Section 3 provides guidance on selection of the engagement method(s), including brief details on each method, a matrix indicating when throughout a scheme it is best to use specific methods, and a flow chart demonstrating a possible community engagement scenario on a scheme.

Section 1: Define scope of engagement

- Importance of partnership working for community engagement
- Set and implement partnership terms of reference for engagement
- Manage expectations and avoid confrontation
- Use engagement process for multiple functions

Importance of partnership working for community engagement

The precise purpose of the community engagement exercise and its overall scope should be made clear at the outset. Is it to inform the local community, businesses and the wider public of risk management works being planned or in progress; to consult on different measures or options; to raise awareness of flood risk with the local community, businesses and the wider public and/or to promote community of resilience measure? It might involve just one or all of these objectives but it is vital to be clear about the scope of the task and the aims and objectives of the engagement process to successfully plan the way it is approached and the techniques to apply.

It is important to note that communities offer a wide range of perspectives and experiences relating to flooding that can be invaluable in helping to create the vision and response for flood risk management. By encouraging their participation, schemes can achieve a more complete picture of flood risk and better understand and promote solutions. In return, it is incumbent on all those involved, including the public, to understand the effects and limitations of flood risk management actions flooding which is the key issue to promote measures to increase individual and community resilience.

Creating a solid partnership to aid in the success of community engagement

The establishment of a successful partnership is essential for the success of any scheme, including those which manage flood risks. A well established partnership is necessary to ensure subsequent successful community engagement and should not be perceived as merely a 'tick box' exercise. Much previous research has been done into this area.

When looking at the composition of a partnership, you should first identify the key stakeholders it would be useful to involve. For example, in the case of a scheme which may affect a variety of key community groups such as local sports teams and youth groups, the involvement of an individual to represent the interests of these groups can be highly beneficial. The skills and influence brought by such individuals can also bring advantages to the group such as in depth knowledge of the local people as well as the area.

Community representatives who work with a partnership on a scheme can be seen as "honest brokers" and so may alleviate any issues of conflict or mistrust of authorities, because of their involvement. Community representatives should be sought on the basis that their interest is relevant to the scheme.

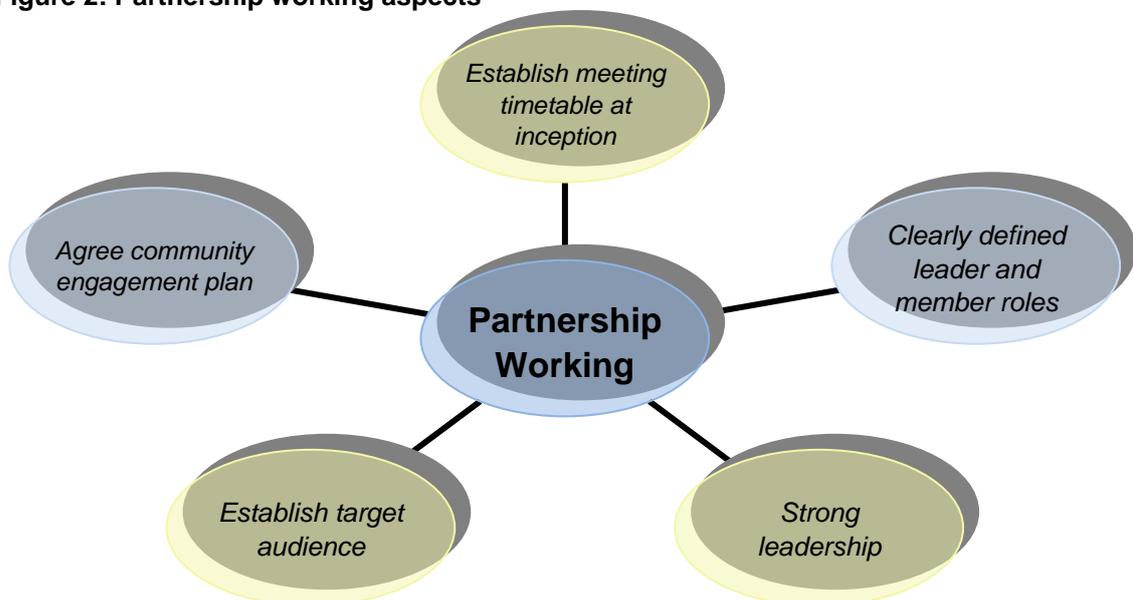
For community involvement especially, it is useful to be aware of the cycle below which may aid in the establishment of a successful partnership and subsequent successful community engagement.

- **PLAN:** What do you intend to do?
 - Plan new actions.
 - Think about how they will be monitored and reviewed.
 - Try them out.
- **ACT:** What did we do?
 - What didn't we do?
 - Did we do things as planned?
- **REFLECT:** What happened and how do we know?
 - Seek input from anyone with an 'interest'.
 - Document and share observations.
- **RESHAPE:** What does this mean for changed practice?
 - Document and share what worked and what didn't
 - See understanding from different sources

This will ensure 'action engagement' which is collaborative, participative and inclusive of all stakeholders in the scheme.

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of how to ensure partnerships are implemented successfully and achieve their aims.

Figure 2: Partnership working aspects



- **Clearly defined leader and member roles:** partnerships were successful if the scheme aims fitted within the wider aims of the organisations partner members were part of. This should aim to be maintained in any future schemes;
- **Strong leadership:** this is essential in the early stages of the partnership to ensure that all members are working towards the same goal and that any conflicts of interest are resolved. Partnerships with members who had worked together before was particularly beneficial in some cases.
- **Establishment of meeting timetable on initial set up:** despite there being no recommended frequency for meetings it is essential that communication between members is undertaken

on a regular basis to ensure all members remain fully informed and that information is openly shared when required;

- *Establish who the target audience is:* this may be a relatively small community who are at risk of flooding or a larger community covering a wide geographical area. Within the target audience there will be different segments of the population and different approaches may be required for each. There may be differences, for example, between property owners and tenants, or young people and older householders. Across different groups a range of measures can be taken to ensure the community is aware of their risk, what they can do to minimise risks and impacts and what to do in case of flooding; and
- *Agree a community engagement plan:* identifying target audience and engagement methods appears to be lacking with some of the schemes. Monitoring the success of the plan and continuity of engagement was also sometimes absent. If the major aims and scope of the engagement plan are laid down in advance this reduces the risk of communities not feeling fully engaged and the scheme not gaining wide enough exposure.

Setting the Terms of Reference and carrying it through in practice

The evaluation the Flood Risk Management schemes found that it was useful for community engagement forums to have clear terms of reference and a stated desire to adopt a consultative and collaborative process. Terms of reference do not need to be long detailed documents; rather, they should set out brief details regarding the aims of the process and what is and is not in scope. All those involved in delivering the community engagement process can then sign-up to the terms of reference having a clear and agreed direction.

Figure 2 shows an example of terms of reference produced by one of the recent flood management schemes. As can be seen, it clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the flood management group and what the group will and will not do.

Figure 2: Example of Terms of Reference

Purpose of Management Group To act as a consultative forum for water management proposals within the area.

Aims and Objectives

- To act as a sounding board for new ideas and proposals.
- To be an integral part of the collective decision making process in respect of any proposed remedial measures or engineering works for the catchment.
- To assist in enabling the various partner organisations to reduce and manage the future risks posed by heavy rainfall events within the catchments.
- To assist in communicating the positive work of the Group to the wider catchment community.

What do we do?

- The Group will provide a forum where residents can input into the flood management decision making process.
- The Group will consider the larger picture (strategic direction) in respect of flooding prevention.
- The Group will assist in the dissemination of information between residents within the catchment and the Group.

What we do not do

- It is not a forum for complaints
- It is not to seek to apportion blame
- It is not do deal with problems of individuals or single properties
- It is not to concentrate on the past

However it is apparent from some examples that if terms of reference are agreed at the beginning and then not referred to as the scheme progresses the main purpose of the group can break down and groups can begin to focus on areas that were originally out of scope and lose sight of their key aims and objectives. It is therefore important that the stated aims of the forum through the terms of reference are carried through into the agenda and discussion at all meetings. The scheme's terms of reference should be revisited during the operation of the management group and actions assessed to ensure that they are being adhered to.

Managing Expectations and Avoiding Confrontation

The evaluation found some evidence of confrontation between risk management authorities and the communities. This typically arises because:

- Some residents may not have been affected by flooding yet still have to suffer the inconvenience of works to benefit the wider community;
- There is an expectation that authorities should fix the problem and so a culture of blame towards them; or
- There may be traditional mistrust of government and authorities regarding any new scheme or policy implementation.

Much depends on the level of engagement prior to the decision to implement the scheme, and involving community members at the very early stages can help provide advocates for the scheme. Ways to address problems, manage community expectations and avoid confrontation include:

- **Emphasising the positive** - in most cases the authorities are undertaking activities that are of community benefit and that will result in a reduced risk of flooding. Schemes should not be unduly controversial and it should be a case of '*what's not to like?*' It should be clear that consideration of short and potentially longer term impacts of the scheme on the local community, including the business community, have been considered and ways to mitigate the impact considered. For example, there were concerns in one scheme area of the impact of necessary roadworks on local businesses both in the short and long term as it was felt that if people got used to shopping elsewhere they may never go back to their usual behaviour. To reduce this impact it was suggested free or reduced parking was offered in the area whilst the roadworks were in operation to encourage people to continue shopping in the area.
- **Giving ownership to the community** – the scheme should be able to be presented as being *by* rather than *for* the community. Evidence of community input is necessary to make this credible. Getting key players and groups involved is important. Allied to this, the community should be consulted where there are real choices and decisions to be made, so that the outcomes take into account the results of the consultation.
- **Being honest and managing expectations** - it is important that residents understand that schemes are designed to reduce and not eliminate risk; there should be an explanation of the level of any residual risk.
- **Avoiding an overly authoritative or bureaucratic tone** – a friendly and non-authoritarian style will help engagement. It is important to reinforce here that the introduction of the scheme should be a partnership venture between the community and the local authority as opposed to an undertaking which is being imposed upon them.

Use engagement processes for multiple functions

When considering the scope of the engagement it is worth considering how best to capitalise on the effort being put in and any achievements to avoid duplication. For example, where a forum has been set up and is running successfully it may be worthwhile considering how it can be used for other related activities. It may be of benefit to involve existing community

organisations rather than starting from scratch. You may also want to involve other areas of the organisation who are routinely working in partnership with communities to use existing channels.

An engagement process was set up and underway with a group that included resident representatives within the area to inform of, and consult on, works being carried out. The forum was in favour of setting up a separate flood awareness group to raise awareness and tackle issues of community responsibility and resilience. It would seem to make sense to utilise and build on the network and success of the existing engagement process rather than start again from nothing.

Section 2: Define the target audience

- Consider size and extent
- Segments
- Key groups

An agreed community engagement plan should be drawn up and agreed within partnerships. This would aid definition of the target audience, allowing initial thought to be given to their audience and the range of methods that may be necessary at different stages of the scheme. It would enable partnerships to outline their key aims, who they were going to target and how they intended to target them, subsequently looking at what actions were in or out of the partnership's scope.

It is important to establish and agree the target audience for any community engagement activity as this will provide a clear direction for the process as well as potentially impacting on the engagement method(s) used. There may also be more than one audience, for example the scheme may want to engage more fully with a small group of community residents affected by the flooding whilst also providing less in depth information to the wider community.

Consider size and extent

This may be a relatively small community who are at risk of flooding or a larger community covering a wide geographical area. The size and extent of the target audience is likely to impact on the method of engagement appropriate. For example, if the scheme covers a wide geographical area a key consideration for the method used will be to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Segments

Within the target audience, there are likely to be different segments of the population and different approaches may be required for each. There may be differences, for example, between property owners and tenants, or young people and older householders but across different groups a range of measures can be taken to ensure the community is aware of their risk, what they can do to minimise risks and impacts, and what to do in case of flooding.

Children are an audience who can be targeted in order to reach their parents. For example, a leaflet taken home from school may be given more consideration than a leaflet posted

through the door, which may be rejected as 'junk mail'. Alternatively, getting children more involved through lessons/assemblies can result in 'pester power' to encourage parents to become more engaged.

This provides an example of one particular segment it may be useful to target, however other techniques could be used to target different groups e.g. house owners or older community residents. The aim of this section is to provide suggestions for key groups which may be of relevance to schemes, but these segments need to be decided on the basis of each individual scheme.

Key groups

The following key groups need to be considered for each scheme: land owners, property owners, and tenants in the area directly affected; land owners, property owners and tenants in the wider community who may be impacted in the short-term or may query the money being spent; businesses/organisations in the area directly affected; businesses/organisations in the wider community who may be impacted; representatives of special interest groups in the areas affected e.g. voluntary sector or sports groups. The scheme may not necessarily need to engage with all groups; however, the management group should consider each community group and record the decisions taken.

Section 3: Select engagement techniques

- Information and Publicity Materials;
- Public Meetings and Exhibitions
- Involving Local Political Members
- Appointing Community Advocates
- Liaison Group with Community Representation
- Focus Groups
- Community Survey
- Scheme website
- Using social media
- Participatory activities

You will need to consider the range of methods available for community engagement. Methods of engagement should be selected based on:

- the type and scale of engagement; and
- the intended outcome of the engagement method e.g. is your aim to inform, in which case a leaflet may suffice, or is it to change behaviour, and so a different model of engagement may be needed.

It is important to be flexible and review and adapt the engagement process as required during the process of implementation. Where possible use the people with engagement expertise within your organisation to draft or advise on plans.

Partnerships should not be afraid to be innovative and creative in their engagement materials or approaches. They should look at methods used by other partnerships and determine how successful these might be for use with their own community. In many cases, such methods do not need to be complex or expensive but can involve simple ideas, such as 'piggy-backing' on to other well established community groups to promote the scheme and then creating a separate working group as a scheme progresses and interest and engagement in it is generated.

It is likely that more than one method will be required throughout the life of a scheme; for example information and publicity materials may be used initially, and then followed up with public meetings or exhibitions. It is also likely that more than one method will be required to reach the different segments within the target audience, for example using participatory activities or social media to engage with younger members of the community. At the end of this section a matrix of methods has been provided to help you identify the one(s) most suitable for your scheme.

Information and Publicity Materials

Materials such as community newsletters and information leaflets are an important part of the engagement process. When drafting these materials consider:

- **What you are trying to convey? Is it just information or are you trying to persuade?** Your target audience needs to be considered as part of this, for example you may be providing a leaflet for the wider community and therefore just wish to inform them of the scheme and its purpose. Or the leaflet may be for those who may be directly impacted by flooding and so you want to provide information regarding what they can do to limit impacts and persuade them to become more involved.
- **Is the language appropriate? Is it friendly and easily understood?** Avoid being technical (a danger with engineering schemes) or too bureaucratic. Try and keep it simple but avoid being patronising

- ***Is the design attractive and engaging?*** Use colour and graphics where possible. Make it easy to read and not too small or cramped. Don't make it too long.
- ***Do communities even realise they are at risk?*** There are issues around risk perception where people do not believe that flooding events will affect them. Sometimes it is useful to emphasise that individuals/communities are already vulnerable to flooding and highlight previous flooding events.
- ***Are you explaining to people realistic risks?*** It is not effective to just stress the magnitude of the impacts of flooding or climate change, as this may provoke a reaction of fear which can result in a negative effective. Partnerships need to be honest about the impacts that are likely to be felt and not exaggerate, which reduces credibility. Individuals need to feel motivated to change behaviour but also feel like they can take action themselves. Consequently the use of shocking imagery should be used with consideration, and with clear and positive messages as to how such impacts are being managed, and can be dealt with by the actions proposed.
- ***Are you aiming your messages at the correct people?*** Research has shown from the health sector that messaging around personal vulnerability can be quite effective (e.g. smoking and lung cancer), making the individual feel that it may only affect them, rather than being a global impact like that of climate change. Consequently it may be useful to target individuals or specific areas, rather than the blanket messages for everyone.
- ***Can you utilise current weather events to raise awareness?*** Extreme weather events can sometimes be used as an ideal opportunity to raise awareness about flooding issues.

Where possible use public relations and marketing professionals within your organisation to draft or advise on materials. They will have expertise in preparing copy and graphic design that will be useful in preparing engaging materials.

Public Meetings

Public meetings can play a key part in the engagement process. They provide an opportunity for large numbers of people to be informed and for the public to ask questions. They provide the opportunity to display materials and convey information.

When organising and managing these events consider the following:

- ***Has the event been well publicised?*** This should normally include posters/flyers in the local area (shops, supermarkets, schools, surgeries etc) so that people will be aware of the event⁸.
- ***Is the publicity right?*** It should include all the details needed such as day, time, location and who should go as well as enough information on what the event is about. It is also important that publicity explains why they should come to find out more, to encourage participation and shows them how they can benefit from it.
- ***Is it at a time and place suitable for most people?*** This should be outside normal working hours and in a local venue that is accessible and with sufficient capacity. Consideration should also be given to those who will need to bring along children, either putting aside an area where they can become involved with the scheme or a play/reading area (schools may be appropriate venues, where older children can be allowed to play outside). Childcare problems are one of the main reasons people provide for not attending community information events.
- ***Computer animation:*** Consider investment in computer visualisation showing how the area would be affected if flooded, particularly in areas that have not been flooded to date. This is an effective way of graphically presenting impacts. Computer simulations that were shown during focus groups were well received and expected to be successful tools in community engagement. One reason they were expected to

⁸ These are just a few examples of possible methods of publicity. The toolkit is designed to provide ideas and suggestions, rather than an exhaustive list of options

be successful is because they could be used to show the impact of changes in water/ sea levels on individual buildings and used as a 'shock tactic'. However, for this reason care needs to be taken in the use of shock tactics, particularly if the proposed schemes will not deal with this level of impact to keep people flood free. There is a real risk of distressing residents and disengaging people completely if you can't show clearly that you have a plan to deal with this impact.

For example the 3D models which were produced for the Pwllheli exhibitions and public meetings, raised strong opinions of flood risk awareness. When stills of the models were presented in the focus groups, these also had a profound effect on respondents.

"Well my house is under water here"

"It's very scary really it's not a nice thought to think that it could be where you are in the future."

"It's all about catching your eye and when you look at it compared to other ones"

- **Log attendance and comments:** It is useful to evaluate meetings by logging the numbers attending, providing a comments book and recording comments made to staff as far as possible. This provides useful feedback and a gauge of public opinion and key concerns. It will be particularly useful in designing and targeting future engagement activities.

Staffed Exhibitions

These are also an important part of the engagement process. A public meeting will typically involve presentation(s) and questions from the audience. Some members of the community will feel intimidated and reluctant to speak at a formal meeting so it is therefore worthwhile considering using a less formal structure. This may take the form of a staffed exhibition where members of the public can view the exhibition and ask questions of staff with a good knowledge and understanding of the issues, on a one-to-one basis. As with public meetings, as far as possible number of attendees should be logged along with any comments.

When organising and managing events like this, many of the same issues should be considered as for public meetings.

Comments made in response to this type of exhibition included:

"excellent informative display and staff on a vital subject"

"Very helpful staff"

"Interesting, well presented and staffed by knowledgeable youngsters!"

Involving Local Political Members

Local authority, town council and community council members have a significant role to play in community engagement both as representatives of their local community and as a point of contact for ensuing consultation with local residents. Councillors will know and have direct contact with local residents through their social networks, contact with existing organisations and groups such as residents associations and schools as well as their own surgeries. It is recommended that councillors are involved in flood risk management plans as their local understanding and experience is seen as an important resource for accessing local communities.

One local ward councillor played a very positive and active role in engaging the community on flood issues. She chaired the project liaison committee, was active in warning of flood risk after heavy rain (using a megaphone) and used her links with the wider community to raise awareness and get people involved in activities and events. She provided a vital bridge between the authorities and local people.

Appointing Community Advocates

A further method for engaging with the community is to appoint representatives to act as community advocates. This worked well in Pwllheli especially.

A community ambassador for Pwllheli was present at the focus group and showed how these representatives can be very beneficial in raising awareness in the community.

"I do a series of lectures. I do a power point it gives some sort of idea of what is in front of us".

It can be achieved by identifying volunteers who would be willing to knock on doors in the local area and give out promotional materials along with having a quick chat explaining the purpose of the scheme, why the materials are important, an explanation of any community engagement activities (encouraging residents to get involved) and how to find out more information. Alternatively, volunteers can be used to speak to organisations (e.g. local business forums, Rotary clubs, Scouts and Guides) about the scheme, providing more detailed information and using visual/interactive tools.

Currently there is little evidence regarding the impact of this type of approach; however the idea was supported during focus groups with residents and expected to be successful.

Setting up a Liaison Group with Community Representation

Community engagement can also be achieved by establishing a project or liaison group which includes community representatives. This may involve individual residents from affected flood risk areas as well as key players in the community such as residents associations and schools. Targeting children through schools resulting in 'pester power' has been successful in other areas such as recycling and energy saving⁹. Similarly, respondents in focus groups thought that providing information via schools and/or engaging school children in flood risk management schemes were effective ways of reaching parents.

The role of community representatives needs to be clearly defined and in line with the terms of reference of the group (see Setting the Terms of Reference in Section 1). If this works well, with the right people involved, community representatives can play an important role in demonstrating community ownership of the project; playing an advocacy role and actively disseminating information to the wider community.

Focus Groups

Focus groups can be a useful tool for gaining an in-depth understanding and insights into how the community perceives particular issues such as the obstacles to getting involved and how this might be overcome. A focus group is useful for establishing the views of less engaged members of the community who may be unable or unwilling to participate in other forms of engagement such as public meetings or forums. A focus group is different in that it involves going out to directly recruit local people to attend a discussion group. Focus group

⁹ This is supported by research done and shown in the Flood Risk Community Engagement Report.

participants will often be found by going out into the community, knocking on doors and, provided they fit certain criteria, will be invited to participate in the group. Focus groups used in schemes in Wales typically have had 8 to 10 participants and are usually around 1½ hours in duration. Respondents are usually paid a monetary incentive for their attendance.

Schemes in both Barry and Rhydyfelin have been particularly effective in involving key community members. The head teacher of a local secondary school was heavily involved in flood risk awareness in Barry, and Newydd Housing and Glyntaff Farm Residents Association were involved in a similar scheme in Rhydyfelin; helping to raise awareness in these areas.

A topic guide should be prepared for each focus group. There is skill in designing a good guide that takes account of the dynamics of group formation, the issues to be discussed and how best to ask questions to gain real insights. Focus groups often make use of indirect or projective, questioning techniques to gain these in depth insights. There is also a skill to moderating groups to ensure, for example, that threads of discussions are followed up and that group dynamics are observed and taken into account. For further information refer to the Market Research Society (MRS) Guidelines on Qualitative Research 2006 at:

<http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/downloads/2006%20Qualitative%20Research%20Guidelines.pdf>

If professional market research assistance is required in designing, conducting and analysing focus groups you can find an accredited research supplier through the MRS's Research Buyers Guide at <http://www.rbg.org.uk/>.

Community Survey

The evaluation found that face-to-face surveys had sometimes been used to collect intelligence on people's experiences of flooding. This can be a resource intensive activity but as well as providing important data for flood risk management planning it should also be seen as an ideal opportunity for community engagement:

- The survey questionnaire can be extended and, with the addition of a few short questions, can be used to identify community levels of awareness of flood risk, actions that can be taken, gaps in their understanding, and the obstacles they perceive. This provides useful intelligence for planning community engagement and identifies gaps in current information provision;
- The face to face contact that the survey provides is, in itself, a valuable tool for communicating with local people. It provides an opportunity for raising awareness by, for example, leaving information leaflets, giving information on any forthcoming events and providing information on any website. It also provides people with a vehicle through which to voice their opinions e.g. if they cannot or prefer not, to go to a public meeting.

This can be an expensive exercise; however costs can be reduced by using volunteers to conduct the survey or using a self-completion survey and supplying questionnaires through schools, businesses, libraries and other local centres. An online survey could also be considered and would be considerably cheaper, however it will not reach as wide an audience and you will not get the additional advantage of raising awareness that a face to face survey would provide.

It is also worth considering whether the scheme can 'piggy-back' on other community surveys, including a section of additional questions just for the geographical area of relevance. You should be able to find out if any relevant activities are taking place in the near future through your authority's research and intelligence or community engagement department.

Again, if you require support in questionnaire design, sampling, conducting fieldwork, and analysing the survey, you can find an accredited research supplier through the MRS's Research Buyers Guide at <http://www.rbg.org.uk/>.

Further advice can be found in 'Using Surveys for Consultation' (MRS/LARIA 2005) at: http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/downloads/revise/active/using_surveys_final.pdf

Scheme website

The majority of people now have access to the Internet so a website is a useful tool for providing information as part of the process of community engagement. It provides people with a single place to go and can provide high quality detailed information including photographs and videos. It can be used to provide information about progress and upcoming events, and is a good place to deposit reports etc for public access.

Key things for a successful website for community engagement are:

- ***It must be well designed and easy to navigate.*** People now have high expectations of websites and will not tolerate a site that is unattractive or difficult to navigate when looking for the information they require. Using a professional web-designer should be considered.
- ***It must be regularly updated*** with any new information added as soon as possible and out of date information, such as notices of meetings that have passed, taken off.
- ***It must be publicised elsewhere*** – the community will not know about the website unless it has been publicised. The website address should be included on other information and advertising and links to the website should be available from Council and other organisations websites.

A scheme website in itself is unlikely to be an effective way of engaging the community; however it is useful way of providing additional information following other community engagement activities and for keeping people up to date as a scheme progresses.

Using social media

The evaluation suggests that other social media such as Facebook and Twitter are not key tools for engaging with the community and accounts which have been set up have had limited activity. There is a perception that they may be a good method for engaging with young people in particular and are increasingly used as a marketing tool. However, social media are primarily tools for interacting with friends. It requires a duplication of resources to set up and maintain Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as a website, so it may be preferable to focus these resources on a single well designed website. However, this is something that should be kept under review and the use of social media as a secondary source of engagement could be considered appropriate for particular schemes.

Participatory activities

There is currently only limited evidence of the success of any participatory activities undertaken. For example a weather station was provided as a prize for a poster competition as part of a West Rhyl scheme and the weather station was given to the school of the winning pupil. Careful consideration of the aims and audience for any future participatory activities would therefore be necessary. There is evidence that community members in Rhydyfelin intend to set up an Environment Group to manage a local pond at risk of flooding but this has not currently been implemented and so its success would have to be evaluated at a future point.

For example, concentrating on younger people may be worth considering either through schools or youth organisations (e.g. local youth club, scouts/guides).

Other methods

The list of possible engagement methods illustrated above provides only a selection of suggested methods, and the most frequent methods that were used in the research undertaken across a sample of the Flood Risk Management Schemes in Wales. Other methods of engagement are possible, including:

- Appreciative inquiry;
- Citizen's juries or panels;
- Community empowerment networks, dialogue/consensus building;
- Deliberative mapping;
- Future search or future visioning; and
- Participatory appraisal.

Matrix of engagement methods

In Table 1, a list of the engagement methods is detailed along with an indication of the size of the audience they can reach, level of engagement likely to be achieved by those reached, level of likely cost, time in scheme progress at which they would be most useful, and any other key issues to consider e.g. it may be necessary to do a cost-benefit exercise, looking at ways of getting the most value for money.

As mentioned earlier, it is likely that more than one method will be required to ensure all audiences are included as each stage of scheme progresses.

Table 1: Matrix of Community Engagement Methods

Method	Extent of audience reach	Level of involvement	Likely cost	Time most effective*	Things to consider
Information and Publicity Materials	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM	ALL STAGES	Can be seen as junk mail, so need to be colourful and interesting
Public Meetings and Exhibitions	MEDIUM	HIGH	MEDIUM	PRE & DURING	Informal is better, consider manned exhibitions or drop-in sessions Need to think about when and where Need to be well advertised
Involving Local Political Members	LOW	LOW	LOW	ALL STAGES	Helps direction of the group and encourages community engagement
Appointing Community Advocates	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	PRE & DURING	Need to have the time available and commit for the whole process
Focus Groups	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	ALL STAGES	Make sure includes typical residents, not just active members of the community
Community Surveys	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	PRE & POST	Consider piggy-backing on other surveys
Website	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM	ALL STAGES	Needs to be well designed and advertised Long term commitment
Social Media	LOW	LOW	LOW	ALL STAGES	Could be useful for flood warnings once already engaged
Participatory Activities	LOW	HIGH	LOW/MEDIUM	DURING	Consider targeting specific groups/organisations

*points in scheme development are: pre, during and post.

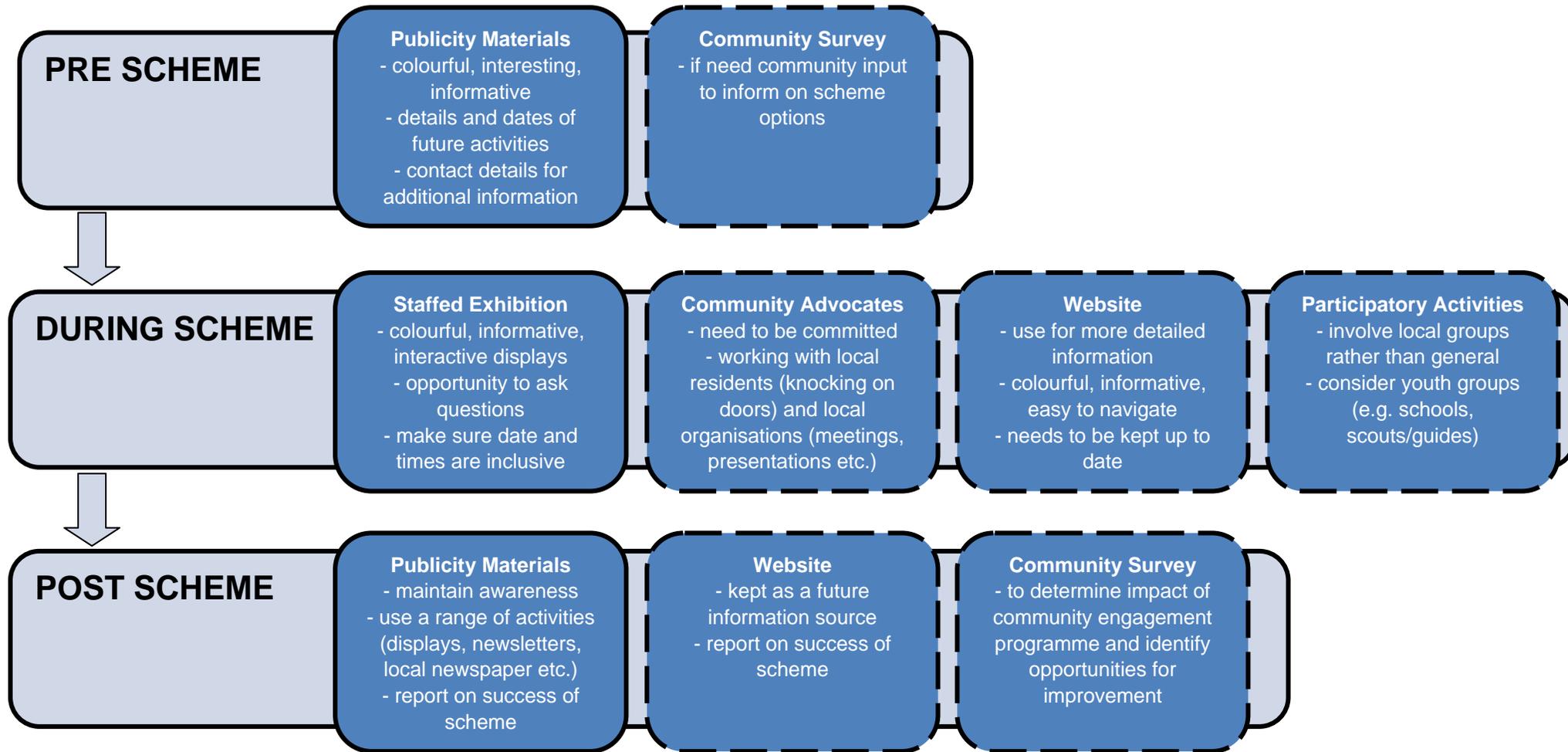
An example of a community engagement programme has been designed showing core activities that are recommended as minimum and optional activities that can help ensure the engagement process reaches a wider audience. Core activities are shown with a solid outline and optional ones with a dashed outline. This is just an example and you will need to consider your audience and scheme objectives when designing an appropriate community engagement programme.

Overall Scheme Evaluation

Although not shown in the figure below, in order to get the most from any community engagement schemes, a full evaluation by the partnership and stakeholders should be undertaken upon completion. Partnerships should log any successes they have throughout the length of a project, but also consider evaluation procedures such as:

- *Secondary Research Material*, could include:
 - logs of attendees at public meetings or exhibitions;
 - number of visits to scheme websites; and
 - calls of enquiry to flood information lines.
- *Primary Research Material*, could include:
 - community surveys which include questions to monitor change in awareness and behaviour;
 - focus groups to assess behavioural change; and
 - self evaluation so partnership members can evaluate their own success or failure with regards to community engagement.

Figure 3: Example of Community Engagement Programme¹⁰¹¹



¹⁰ A scheme can be interpreted as either a building or construction project or an engagement activity

¹¹ Pre scheme includes planning stage