

## **‘Shaping better places together:**

Research into facilitating participatory placemaking’

**Husam AlWaer (Principal Investigator)**

**Ian Cooper**

**Frances Wright**

**Kevin Murray**

**Iain MacPherson**

# **‘Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking’**

## **Introduction**

This report has been prepared by a specialist team from the University of Dundee, Eclipse Research and Kevin Murray Associates, managed and directed by Dr Husam AlWaer (Architecture + Urban Planning). It details the results of research, undertaken early in 2017, into the potentially significant role of facilitation in participatory community design events, such as charrettes. **The research was supported by the Scottish Government.**

The publication of this report - “Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking” - marks (what we believe is) a first attempt to look into the significance of the role of facilitators in participatory community design processes. The topic area is a vast, yet highly relevant subject, given the increasing application of participatory and community design events in Scotland, along with the use of engagement tools such as the Place Standard Tool. This research provides a start in identifying all of the many components and variants involved. Overall, we hope that the findings will aid understanding and ultimately enhance the output performance of charrettes and similar participatory design processes. The research should give confidence to professional facilitators, local authorities, local communities and the development industry active in collaborative processes, underpinning the investment in skills and expertise of appropriate facilitators.

We gratefully acknowledge the support, guidance and encouragement, but particularly the ideas and inputs, received from a wide range of people in the business and community sectors, academia and practice, and the political and public policy communities – across Scotland and beyond. Our thanks also go to all those who helped make this project possible. We would particularly wish to acknowledge the contributions of the 115 individuals who responded to our online survey, as well as the 24 people who participated in the follow-up workshop in Dundee. We are also very grateful to those who have contributed images, giving permission for their use (including the report cover by Dr Joe Ravetz of Manchester University). We hope this research project will provide new knowledge and renewed ambition both for those who undertake facilitation and for those who seek to engage facilitation expertise.

## Research aims

The purpose of this research is to:

1. **Develop a broader understanding of the current role, qualities and skills expected from an effective facilitator operating within Participatory Community Design Processes;**
2. **Consider whether the role of the facilitator needs to be adapted or extended to encourage more inclusive and effective decision making, for promoting place based well-being and tackling inequalities; and**
3. **Based on 1 and 2, consider the potential contribution of effective facilitation to the key stages of community design processes.**

Within this context, 'participatory community design processes' may include charrettes or any other participatory design-led event like design workshops. Such events would normally form part of a participative, collaborative co-design process and not simply occur as a one-off consultation or as narrowly-based engagement around a specific issue.

In essence, the collaborative design process is viewed as a positive and proactive place-shaping process that can bring '*tangible* and *intangible*' outcomes and benefits, such as a sense of place and ownership/stewardship, a healthy environment and a good quality of life. A key recurring point emerging from community design processes assessed in this report, is that attention needs to be given both to the *processes* to be undertaken as well as to the resulting *outcomes* that are to be delivered.

This project is timely, given the increasing application of participatory and community design events in Scotland. However, despite the growing popularity of community design events and other engagement tools (i.e. Place Standard and techniques for engaging effectively with young people and 'seldom heard groups'), there has been a growing view of a gap around the quality and skills required to support effective facilitation in community participation. Two different sets of skills are at issue here. First, there are **non-context specific skills in managing the processes** involved in the facilitation of community design events. Second, there are the skills required to provide the **professional specialists and context-specific information** required for such events. Both sets of skills are important. So too is the effective integration of them.

The focus of this research is on the identification and integration of process management skills and professional specialists – such as the knowledge required to properly consider wider place-based issues (impacts on physical and mental health, public service reform, local economy and assets, tackling inequalities, quality of life issues, etc). Specific attention is given to the role of the facilitator overseeing public engagement throughout participatory community design processes. Here it is argued that the existence of different understandings and interpretations of the role and effectiveness of facilitators risks creating barriers to communication across different participant groups, reducing trust and confidence. Despite confusion over exactly what the role of the facilitator entails, there is agreement that it is extremely important.

It is anticipated that if facilitators, and the professional specialists, involved in community design events were to be provided with more specific skills and

competencies around the expectations of their role, they are likely to have an improved performance, hence positively enhancing the outputs of charrettes and other participatory design and engagement processes and can add to the likely deliverability of the outputs/outcomes. Skilled facilitators do not ensure deliverability per se, but they can help guide towards it in manner that less knowledgeable (in a professionally technical sense) facilitators cannot. This might relate to knowledge that helps align **technical processes or open up funding streams**.

The project explored new ideas and share insights and learning which will have significant value within Scotland and, potentially, internationally. The project also adds to the wider discourse surrounding collaborative community approaches along with the use of engagement tools within both the practical and academic worlds. It needs to be recognised, however, that each case/project has its own particular context and circumstances, and so there is no '**one-size -fits-all**' approach to the role and effectiveness of facilitators in community design events.

### Why Community Design Processes?

Better engagement and collaboration with local communities is judged to be fundamental to the planning and delivery of sustainable places. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has a specific focus on promoting effective engagement and participation to help communities achieve greater control and influence in the decisions and circumstances that affect their lives. This policy imperative is being accompanied by a commitment to empowering local communities, giving individuals (including young people and other 'seldom heard') greater voice in shaping decisions from engaging in the planning system.



*Figure 1: Community Design processes are a component in delivering policy imperatives of community empowerment, delivering better places for communities and also building trust in the planning system. Photo Credit: Kevin Murray Associates.*

Further, an independent review of the Scottish planning system (May 2016) commissioned by the Scottish Government recommended that actions should be

taken to ensure that community involvement in planning for place is 'fairer and more inclusive', taking into account the scale, appropriateness and resource implications of engagement processes (mapping of different techniques - multi-day charrettes/ surveys/ workshops etc.). Stating that "public trust in the system has declined rather than grown", the report calls for "more positive and productive relationships in all communities", with "a significant and substantive shift towards local community empowerment". A closer collaboration between local people and other key actors is a way to combine local and technical knowledge. The report recognised that local people contribute lay 'expert' knowledge about 'their place' and will ultimately have responsibility as 'owners' or 'stewards' of the eventual outcomes.

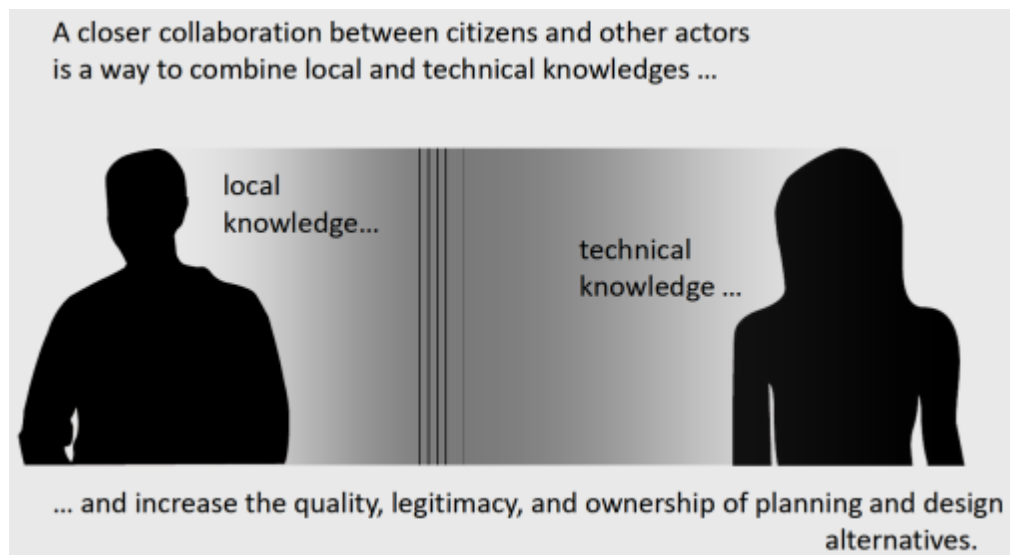


Figure 2: local people contribute lay 'expert' knowledge about 'their place' and will ultimately have responsibility as 'owners' or 'stewards' of the eventual outcomes.

Photo credit: Jayne Engle-Warnick, Montréal Urban Ecology Centre.

Community design processes have the ability to harness and focus the efforts of professionals and local communities working together on a specific project or place and, as a result, they move beyond more traditional forms of engagement, such as information-giving and consultation, by apportioning responsibility and accountability to those involved. Participatory design processes (also referred to as: charrettes, participatory placemaking, Enquiry by Design...etc) include a synthesis of elements, not all of which are unique:

- Intensive and 'open' collaborative placemaking
- Participants may come from a wide range of groups and backgrounds – public + community + private + specialists – with correspondingly varied objectives and responsibilities.
- Strong design focus, live drawing, sketching, visual outputs/graphics
- Use of design as informed dialogue
- Testing, review, explanation sequences
- Associated with the approaches and terms:
  - a) **Co-learning**: collaborative skills, information & exchange:
  - b) **Co-knowing**: collaborative knowledge which is wider & deeper than the individual:
  - c) **Co-creation / co-design**: creative insight, imagination & innovation
  - d) **Co-production**: roadmap / action plan / future vision and scenarios
- Integration of intuitive, rational and emotional knowledge
- Construction and review of future scenarios of place – 'what if...?'
- Series of iterative feedback loops



- Thinking in terms of **whole place outcomes**.



Figure 3: 'Participatory community design processes' may include charrettes or any other participatory design-led event like design workshops. Such events would normally form part of a participative, collaborative co-design process and not simply occur as narrowly-based engagement around a specific issue. Photo credit: Nick Wright.

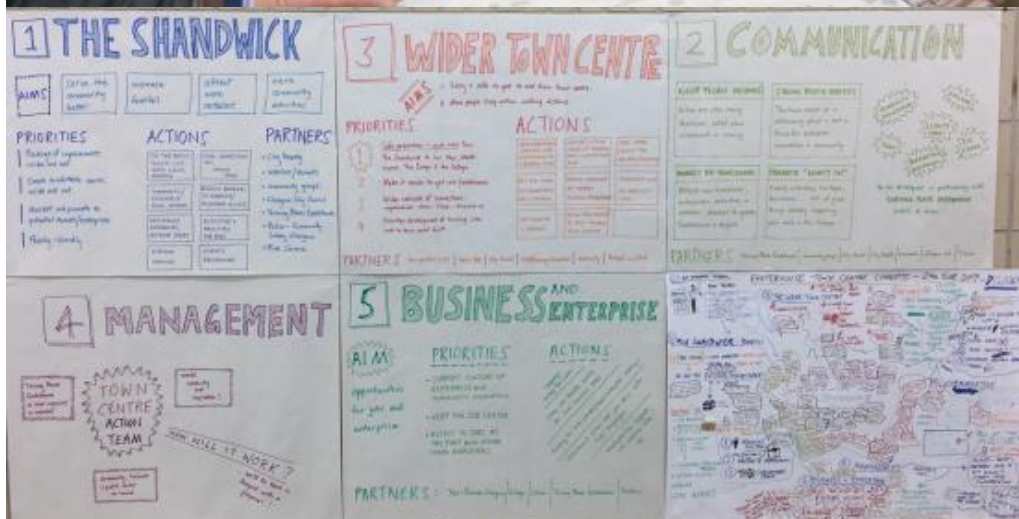


Figure 4: 'Participatory community design processes' involves 'mutual dialogue' between everyone involved, aimed at working collaboratively towards designing future solutions, interventions and visions/scenario for a certain area, and taking joint action to achieve positive change. Photo credits: Kevin Murray Associates; Nick Wright.

## The role of the facilitator at Community Design Processes

In this research 'a **facilitator** is an individual who enables groups to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy' (Kaner, et al., 2007, p xv). She or he is a "content-neutral" party who, by not taking sides or advocating a particular point of view during a process, can enable a fair, open and inclusive engagement in the accomplishment of the group's work.

The term '**facilitation team**' is used to include the Lead Facilitator of the Participatory Design-Led Event and members of their Team who act as sub-facilitators during Participatory Group Work. The primary concern of the Facilitation Team is the smooth and effective running of the participatory design-led process. They use different engagement tools to 'promote meaningful participation, such as generating mutual understanding, inclusive solutions and cultivating shared responsibility' (Kaner, et al., 2007). Members of the Facilitation Team may be:

- a) built environment professionals with expertise in facilitation, or
- b) professional facilitators with no built environment expertise, or
- c) built environment professionals with little or no expertise or experience of facilitation.

As this characterization makes clear, the nature of the facilitation that participants encounter at community design events can vary considerably.

Critics have suggested that the facilitator's style can often be biased, may be overpowering, manipulative, and more concerned with the form of the built environment than meeting wider community needs, resulting in outputs that are insufficiently resilient to be capable of delivering long-term outcomes that meet community needs and provide desired benefits. The common thread emerging from all these critics - be they governmental, academic, or professional - is their perception of the problem (lack of capacity/skills shortage) and the solution (closing the skills gap by maturing the competencies of core professional facilitators).

Working in response to this shared perception, this research draws particular attention to:

- an over-dependence on 'subject specific', as opposed to generic, process-based facilitation skills;
- there is need for the core professional (built environment) facilitators to address this very broad range of skills by **supplementing their knowledge-base of technical specialisms of urban design and planning and towards the social competencies required for effective process management and stakeholder engagement**; and
- linking spatial planning and community planning, including co-ordination between service provision and physical design considerations.



*Figure 5: linking spatial planning and community planning, including co-ordination between service provision and physical design considerations. Helle Søholt, GEHL Architects.*

Within the growing body of practitioner and academic research into the role of the facilitator at design-led events, there are calls for greater 'clarity' in the way facilitators operate voiced in practice, from clearer articulation of problems and goals to more inclusive exploration of potential solutions and actions on the ground. If community design processes are not conducted in an open and transparent way there can also be a loss of faith/trust and, ultimately, opposition to the exercise.



*Figure 6: A facilitator is an individual who enables groups to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy, can enable a fair, open and inclusive engagement in the accomplishment of the group's work. It is essential that the facilitator/ the facilitation team promote meaningful participation, such as generating mutual understanding, inclusive solutions and cultivating shared responsibility. Photo credit: Dr. Joe Ravetz, Manchester University.*

## Methodology & information collection exercises

This report brings together diverse expertise and contributions from across Scotland to address this aim. This was achieved through three interrelated steps:

### *Step One – A Literature Review (Content Analysis):*

In this step, we analysed the content of **literature about facilitation**, in order to extract key themes about the role of facilitators in community design processes that in turn the survey needed to address.



### *Step Two – A Preliminary Survey (**Contextual Analysis**):*

An **online survey** was devised as a means of capturing relevant experience from both 'event participants' and 'facilitators'. It took account of the key themes within the consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System (Places, People and Planning) launched in February 2017. The survey was exploratory - its aim was to develop an analytic framework for more robust and systematic enquiry. The survey followed key themes, for both the 'participant and facilitator' surveys. These key themes were ordered broadly around activities and actions that take place **prior**, take place **as part of the event** and activities and actions **that take place following** the participatory community design event. The key themes are as follows:

#### **Prior activities and actions**

- Basic Facilitation Skills
- Practical Preparation & Event Organisation
- Meaningful Participation

#### **Event activities and actions**

- Tools and Activities
- Inclusive Decision Making

#### **Follow-on activities and actions**

- Reflection on the Process & Outcomes
- Aspirations for the Future

See appendix 1 for the detailed survey analysis.

### *Step Three – An Interactive One Day Workshop*

The outputs from the survey were used to inform the format and focus of a one-day interactive workshop that was held in June 2017, involving a cross section of representatives from the full range of stakeholders who had responded to the survey. The interactive workshop brought together 24 participants identified earlier from the four sectoral groups (Community and Civic Society, Professional Facilitators, Authorities, Planners and Policy, and Developers, Landowners and Agents) from across Scotland to address and frame answers to the aspirations and concerns identified earlier in step one. The workshop aimed to use the 'aspirations and concerns' generated from the survey to frame a future agenda for improving professional practice and help ensure that the outputs of charrettes and other participatory design processes are robust and deliverable. Drawing from step two, the interactive workshop was designed to help participants address the following questions: *What has been happening? What works? What needs improving? And what would we like to see in future?* The outcomes of this workshop are provided in the appendix.

The mixed method of information capture described in the three steps above drew together academia, practice and experience in order to develop a rounded understanding of the role that facilitation plays - integrating perspectives from the 'received' literature, the experience of those who have directly participated in events, and from the expertise of practitioners who have worked in the field of participatory design processes.

### **Key outcomes**

#### **Response Overview**

- At the outset it was recognised that this is a vast, **highly relevant and topical subject**, in the current Scottish context. The study generated a **significant level of interest and engagement** from a wide range of people across communities, practice, academic, political and public policy communities within Scotland.

- As the challenges encountered in conducting the study indicate (see below), community design processes are a **good example of a 'wicked problem'** - one that defies clear definition, has contradictory elements, a multiplicity of stakeholder views, and is difficult to appear to 'solve'. Faced with the complexity of contending forces, there is **no single paradigm around which to organise thought and action**. Instead there are competing view-points about how best to deliver collaborative design events, and indeed about how much priority should be given to this. New approaches or solutions will require new outlooks, values, and practices.
- Community design-led events **should never be seen as one-off**; rather they should be seen as part of on-going conversations with communities and relevant stakeholders to help to show progress, explain decision-making, and demonstrate that their contributions have made a difference. **Pre-event and post-event engagement with the community is necessary** to provide a transitional period of support that enables the community to take ownership of the process and outcomes.



Figure 7: Pre-event and post-event engagement in Tranent.  
Photo Credits: icecream architecture, Willie Miller Urban Design.

- There is a clear need to consider **how to embed and deliver outcomes** from design-led events within community-based approaches, and to address 'hang-over' effects where community members are left confused as to how their participation 'follows through' into the next stage of the process.
- Community design-led events are **likely to be undermined if there is no clear link to such post-event decision-making**. Without tangible delivery and real follow-up change/action – events may have a negative effect by leading to disillusion, fatigue and even growing distrust.
- It is important to recognise that design-led events, such as charrettes, **do not normally have any real legal or policy status in themselves**. However, a community-led design process may be used as part of a statutory requirement to engage. So their outcomes lack status until they are taken forward in some way within the planning process. This lack of legal status, and hence the legitimisation of the outcomes of design-led events, needs more research, review and thought - especially around effective/best practice. More work needs to be done on how design-led events are followed through in subsequent planning, design and other processes – be this through mechanisms, management/oversight, and policy shifts (e.g. some charrettes produce outputs that sometimes become Supplementary Guidance).

- **Aftercare and post development/implementation of the outcomes** arising from design-led events, including monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of design intervention goals (such as **monitoring the delivered quality of decisions and outcomes** as a measure of performance over time) are needed. This requires the development of solid key performance indicators (KPIs) and monitoring techniques that reflect measurable impacts. This area requires more research, review and thought around effectiveness and best practice.

**On the role of the facilitator and facilitation team:**

This study has identified a number of recurring themes which, if acted upon, could improve performance, enhancing the outputs of charrettes and other participatory design-led events and processes, and can help strengthen the likely deliverability of the outputs/outcomes.

- Overall there was a clear acknowledgement that the **role of the facilitator is extremely important** but that each case/project has its own particular context and circumstances. So there is **no 'one-size -fits-all'** approach to the role and effectiveness of facilitators in community design-led events. The context in which these take place is often unpredictable, turbulent and ambiguous.
- The study **distinguished between three groups of operators** that are engaged in three parallel processes (*While each of these processes have distinct tasks to deal with, the reality is that there is a lot of crossover between them, with each requiring the others to enable continuity and progress towards events and outcomes, see figure 8*):
  - o the **design process** (supported by a design team): The design team may comprise architect/landscape/urban designers/ engineers/ transport and infrastructure planners, neighbourhood/environmental planners, sometimes economic and costs planner, also heritage and cultural specialists. The scope depends on the brief and challenge. They could be independent consultants, local authority/public agency, or third sector, including volunteers – eg students.
  - o a **stakeholder engagement process** (supported by stakeholder management team): The term 'stakeholder engagement process' is used to include people who want/need/desire to be comfortable communicating in front of people. Often coming from clients, consultants, planning, housing, development project management, architecture and design, even art world. In this sense the stakeholder management team 'often' pre-exists the collaborative design event and it continues afterwards; and
  - o **facilitated event(s)** (supported by a 'time-limited task force' or 'facilitation team' whose members may be drawn from the design and stakeholder management teams supplemented by (professional) facilitators).

In practice, the real world is much messier than this description suggests. The extent to which these three teams function as recognisably separate entities is a moot point.

The stakeholder management team often pre-exists the collaborative design event and it continues afterwards. There is a degree of overlap between the role/ responsibility of both the 'stakeholder management team' and the facilitation team, but their functions are different. Both can be challenging in different ways. For example, the stakeholder management team has to build and maintain a degree of *trust* from all of the stakeholders it is engaging with throughout its activities, including the client and commissioning partners - whereas a Facilitator must instantly gain the trust of community members and other participants from the start of a design-led event. So often, the facilitator *temporarily* joins the stakeholder management team -

to facilitate the event – rather than to say that the stakeholder management team join the facilitator to make a facilitation team. In other words, the facilitation team is *time-limited*: (it is more properly a task force). Its activities grow leading up to the collaborative design event and then diminish (cease) after it. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that these three (parallel) processes are operating, and clarity is needed about the specific support that each requires.

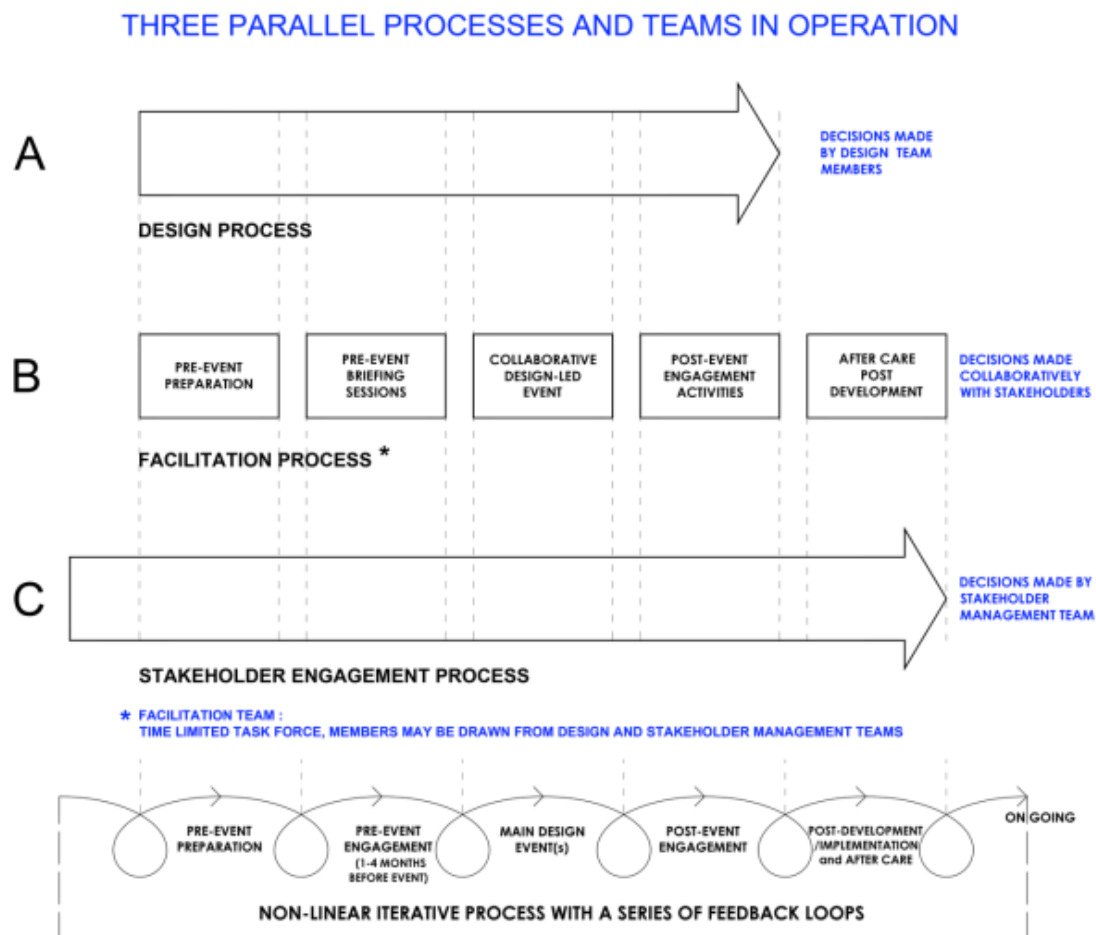


Figure 8: While each of these processes have distinct tasks to deal with, the reality is that there is a lot of crossover between them, with each requiring the others to enable continuity and progress towards events and outcomes. Photo Credit: After Kevin Murray Associates.

- There is a need **to undertake a robust stakeholder analysis**, identifying: who needs to be involved from start to finish of the whole process (including the facilitation team); who needs to be involved in specific design-led events; who needs to review progress; and who needs to be involved further, looking forwards and implementation etc. Some stages in this process might not need a facilitator – but some degree of facilitation is required throughout the whole process. Where and when is dependent on the context.
- There needs to be a **clear definition of the scope and type of facilitation** required, the facilitator's role and purpose. Others involved in the process (whether members of the design team or the stakeholder management function) need to clearly understand their role and contribution.
- The study highlights **strongly divergent opinions on the role of facilitators** in community design-led events. For instance, some suggest that facilitators need



domain-based (design) understanding; others hold that facilitators should be independent and professionally trained in order to ensure that the outputs of charrettes and other participatory design and engagement events can add to feasibility and potential deliverability of the outcomes.

- The **role of the facilitator in community design processes is very varied**. These variations relate to the range of fields in which facilitation is employed, the wide array of disciplines that can be employed, the varying agenda and techniques, as well as when the facilitator's role begins and ends. There is no single right answer here, just as there is no expert who can provide a single simple solution. Instead the knowledge and ideas that need to be called upon reside in many agents and requires input from multiple stakeholders.
- It is important to **recognise the time-limited (task force) nature of the facilitation role** because this raises the question of who is responsible for delivering the decisions and acting on the outcomes of any collaborative design-led event. In part, these responsibilities can be taken back into, and acted upon, by the design and stakeholder management teams. They may need to be enacted through what may be regarded as 'delivery groups' who may have wider memberships than these two teams. Such delivery groups cannot themselves act separately, since their activities need to be integrated through 'networking' (see figure 11).
- **Ensuring meaningful engagement** is a key priority at the outset of any community participation process, embracing both positive and negative discussions to allow individuals and groups to feel not just included, but also valued. This means not letting experts or one particular interest group hijack facilitated events but instead allowing local participants time to develop capability (and hopefully building consensus).



*Figure 7: Embracing both positive and negative discussions is key priority at the outset of any community design process in order to allow individuals and groups to feel not just included, but also valued. Photo credit: Kevin Murray Associates.*

- The engagement process should be as '**simple, open, creative and transparent** as possible', with plain English used at all times. To achieve this objective, the facilitator should set clear guidelines that empower others, such as 'no idea is a bad idea' and 'build on the ideas of others' and participants should be encouraged to see the issues from the perspective of others.
- The **roles of the facilitator may change/vary throughout the community participation processes/stages**. For example, a facilitator may at some point in the process be acting to at one point to understand an issue, at another to explore design possibilities, and at another helping to articulate recommendations/decisions. Some clarity may needs to be established about whether design input is required from a facilitator or this may be provided by members of the design team participating in events.
- Equally, during design-led events, the facilitator has a responsibility to **help the participants develop meaningful action or forward momentum**, and not just have open-ended conversations. Facilitators are not therapists - even if that is part of the role. There is a need to help construct routes forward, and not simply interpret the past, or build lowest common denominator consensus. That implies either that facilitators need some knowledge of design and planning processes (e.g. funding bids) and potential outcomes – or that they ensure that participants who do are party to the event – in order to assist community members in constructing a way forward.

#### **On the facilitator/ facilitation team skills set:**

The **skills deemed to be useful for facilitators are listed** in appendix 2. Some of these skills are actually personal qualities or behaviours, like empathy or humility. Some can be more readily taught and learned – like mediation, leadership, authority, consensus building, and urban design. Key skills within the set are: preparation (as an adaptation of organisation), impartiality and seeking inclusive solutions, and consensus building. A well-structured event will encourage use of these skills – the event structure should be **constructed to lead to effective listening and communicating**.

- In the survey, both the professional facilitators and participants were asked to rank what they saw as the top 'six priorities' of the selected competencies, skills and qualities explained in appendix 2 - those which they considered to be the most essential for successful facilitation. The following is a breakdown of the submissions by *both* participants and the facilitators based on the frequency of responses and in hierarchy order.

Facilitation Skills	Participants (57 responses)	Facilitators (58 responses)	Total (115 responses)
Effective Communicator	41	41	82
Organised	42	36	78
Good Listener	33	34	67
Impartial	39	25	64
Empowers Others	28	26	54
Challenges Assumptions	21	29	50
Inclusive/ Fair	20	28	48
Seeks Inclusive Solutions	27	15	42
Open- Minded	19	21	40
Approachable	18	21	39
Practical	21	16	37
Flexible/ Adaptable	15	21	36
Building Consensus	11	17	28
Mediator	13	15	28
Honest/ Trustworthy	17	8	25
Empathetic	9	6	15
Self Aware	2	5	7

**Table 1:** Both the professional facilitators and participants were asked to rank what they saw as the top 'six priorities' of the selected competencies, skills and qualities.

- In aggregate, and across both types of respondent, the first six priorities were respectively: 'effective communicator; organised; good listener; impartial; empowering others; and challenge assumptions'. Interestingly, the first three priorities were ranked similarly between the two types of respondents, highlighting a shared importance attached to these issues by both facilitators and event participants. However, the Issue of impartiality was not as high a priority to the facilitators as it was to participants. Conversely the issues of inclusivity and challenging assumptions were not high priorities to the participants but were to the facilitators. So, while those who run community design events and those who participate in them share some criteria for assessing how well such events are run, their views are not identical. Facilitators need to understand where they and those they facilitate (dis)agree and consider how to make the necessary adjustments to how they behave in order to meet participants' expectations.
- Facilitators require skills **drawn from the domains of coaching, mediation, therapy, and community development** - not simply architecture, planning and urban design. However, the facilitation team does also need to understand planning law, policy, local government, action planning, and the production and management of built environment, in order to build traction and secure funding and regulatory approval. In other words, just because the facilitator is neutral - and may deliberately play a 'naïve role' - does not mean they are ignorant. **They should know where things are likely to 'end up'**. For example:

- **Skilled/creative facilitation can make for engaging events** - that are fun - but may not be taken forward;
- **Skilled facilitation - with some knowledge of processes** - can help generate more plausible/feasible ideas solutions etc (eg in design terms);
- **Skilled facilitation - with deep knowledge and understanding of process and funding streams** - can add to the likely deliverability of the outputs/outcomes. They do not ensure deliverability, but they can contribute towards it in manner that less knowledgeable (in a professionally technical sense) facilitators cannot.
- Accordingly, there is a need for the core professional (built environment) facilitators to address the very broad range of skills. They need to do so by **supplementing their knowledge-base of technical domains, of urban design and planning, with social competencies required for effective process management and stakeholder engagement**. This is necessary in order to link spatial planning and community planning, including co-ordination between service provision and physical design considerations.
- One skill which was missing from the list identified in the survey- but which the workshop suggested cut across all aspects, was the **nature of the leadership provided by facilitators** (which participants agreed should be non-dictatorial).

#### On developing facilitation skills:

- The study found that the **facilitation skill set is experientially based**, though it can be improved through training. Importantly it can be learned (honed) through action. Confidence and reflexivity on behalf of facilitators are key personal traits, as is the ability to handle difficult social and interpersonal situations.



Figure 8: Facilitation skill set primarily learnt through practice.

Photo credits: Angus Council, Nick Wright.

- At the workshop, participants discussed **formal facilitation training** and the current situation in Scotland. The majority of people involved in facilitation were judged not to have had formal training and are therefore highly dependent on their own personality and character traits and instinct. This was acknowledged to be a weakness in how current design-led events operate;
- **Self-awareness should be a key area of development for facilitators** as this builds an ability to understand what current areas of weakness and where new skills need to be learnt or matured.
- Another way of covering individual areas of weakness is through the **development of a set of skills across the whole team** that cover all the areas.



This is likely to be necessary anyway as it is unlikely that a single person would have a high level of ability in all areas;

- Urban planning and built environment education does not have an emphasis on some of these 'soft skills' – therefore **incorporation of these into initial training would be valuable**. Also, Planning needs to be promoted as a crosscutting discipline where **mediation needs to be explicitly added** to the list of subjects which planners study.
- However workshop participants conceded that the **academic route is not the only one**: there was much interest in vocational training and the possibility of 'planning apprenticeships'. The older career paths for planners to work into the discipline through local authority admin and technician support were also seen as valuable.

### **On promoting diversity in engagement, including reaching seldom-heard and hard to reach groups**

- Inclusive participation needs to be treated as a series of differentiated occasions employed to **connect where, how and when different social/age/gender groups themselves interact** with the collaborative design process. This is seldom accomplished in a single event. Enabling the 'hard to reach' groups (a category made up of many different types of people) to participate requires multiple approaches - all requiring appropriate skills, methods, experience and time to conduct. The challenge here is often around building confidence prior to the design-led event, in order to encourage people to engage.



*Figure 9: Working with 'hard to reach' groups often necessitates visiting them in classrooms or day centres, rather than expecting them to come to a facilitated event. Photo credits: Nick Wright, Kevin Murray Associates.*

- The **use of briefing sessions** can provide one platform for addressing this challenge. For example, it is useful to have preparatory sessions (possibly as part of the briefing sessions activities) aimed at specific sections of the community (e.g. elderly, school or youth groups, minorities, disabled people, diversity forums, and community groups). Each of these groups can then come to main design events with prior knowledge and expectations of what is going to happen and of the issues to be addressed. Much of the success of such early conversations depends on meeting these groups in surroundings in which they are comfortable.
- Ironically, busy people (eg the economically active and parents of young children) can also be as difficult to engage as those more conventionally considered marginalised by society, such as those in economically deprived areas. In each case it is **important to consider the needs of the target group**,

when they might be available, and what can be done to put them at ease. This might necessitate daytime or evening sessions or perhaps a crèche or other child-centred activities so parents can concentrate on the participatory tasks.

- Survey respondents recognised that engaging young people in the design process could be difficult particularly as some younger children found it difficult to participate in adult type workshops. Many of the responses suggested it was best to **organise separate workshops for young people**, in conjunction with local schools and youth groups. Although teenagers can contribute to adult workshops, separate workshops for them allow tasks and discussion to centre on issues relevant to their own age group within a more familiar context.



*Figure 10: Engaging young people in the design process could be difficult, and it is best to organise separate workshops for children, in conjunction with local schools and youth groups. Photo credits: Kevin Murray Associates.*

- Traditional methods (such as, posters, flyers) of pre-event publicity tend to attract primarily those with existing networks and interests in the outcomes. However by utilising **a wider range of media and devising innovative engagement approaches specifically targeted to attract under-represented or harder to reach groups**, involvement in the event can be promoted to wider sections of the community, resulting in a more diverse attendance.
- Using a street or public space where interventions are being planned or going into neighbouring schools to do **sessions in advance of the design event enables the inclusion of young people**: likewise going into nearby care homes or sheltered housing can enable the elderly to contribute to the conversation.
- Survey respondents suggested that the facilitation team should get to know the locality, such as where people congregate, and take their discussion to these venues. This might mean visiting businesses, workplaces, shopping centres, cafes, pubs, community groups or attending other community events. This is about **taking the message to the streets or other public spaces**, possibly using innovative approaches such as setting up in the local supermarket carpark, or surveying people at the railway station during their morning commute.



Figure 11: Using a street or public space where interventions are being planned to do **advanced sessions secures the views of larger number of people than is normally indoors**. Photo credits: Helle Søholt, GEHL Architects.



Figure 12: On-street engagement and site visits can raise the profile of participatory events. Photo credits: John Thomson and Partners.

- Venues should be local, easy to reach by public transport, provide familiar and comfortable surroundings to put people at ease, and be accessible to all. The advantage of such approaches is the ability to build different discussions with different target groups. By using appropriate methods and techniques, the aim is to **make each session fun, empowering and relevant to that target group**. As well as conventional workshops and discussions, respondents suggested a combination of innovation and flexibility can be achieved through evening, weekend or drop-in sessions, exhibitions, face-to face contact, questionnaires, mini-interviews, film making, working with models, social media and online forums.

#### On tools and activities:

- Responses from both the survey and the workshop indicated that facilitators employ a wide variety of tools and activities (e.g. Brainstorming, Place Standard Tool, Small Group Work and Reporting, Ice-Breakers, Model Making, Story Telling etc.). All these methods, and more, were useful if used appropriately, however their perceived usefulness was very much dependent on 'specific circumstance'. A key skill of the facilitator is to draw on their experience and knowledge during the design of the engagement process in order to select those tools most appropriate to the context and expected demographic.





*Figure 13: Different tools and techniques are used to facilitate discussions such as large scale models to small group discussion.  
Photo Credit: Make your Mark Charrette, Collective Architecture; Kevin Murray Associates.*



*Figure 14: The use of tools such as Place Standard can enable participants to see clearly how their input plays a role in decisions made in the design process. Also, the Place Standard Tool is useful as a starting point for evaluating place related issues and stimulating discussion. Photo credits: both Husam AlWaer*

- The **'social skills' of the facilitation team** have a part to play in making participants feel comfortable. Simple acts like welcoming people at the door, using plain English and being able to build rapport with participants are equally important to the tools and techniques used. Easing participants into the process gently, by starting with easy questions or initially getting people to work in pairs to build confidence are also useful. Further, providing clear information builds



confidence and helps break down psychological barriers to engagement with the process.

- An **appropriately selected tool or technique can be very useful** in helping participants to think about their environment, place and future in a structured way. It may also help participants to approach topics from a different perspective and express themselves in a variety of ways. **Whatever the tool employed it should promote meaningful participation** and afford the opportunity for the facilitation team to delve into and challenge opinion, to fully understand why certain opinions are held and share this understanding with both the participants and organisers.



Figure 15: Whatever the tool employed it should help participants to think about their environment, place and future in a structured way. Photo credits: Kevin Murray Associates; Nick Wright.

- An important consideration in the facilitator's selection of specific tools and techniques is that the participants should be engaged and comfortable with the process. This calls for both **creativity and practicality**. For some respondents, having structured workshop exercises was seen as a means of providing clarity to participants, as they would know what to expect whilst enabling icebreakers and story-telling exercises to be designed to focus on the purpose and outcome of the event. Other respondents highlighted that it was essential that sufficient time was taken to explain the tools and techniques clearly and that participants were given 'time . . . to learn, do and understand.'
- Facilitators must be willing to **create trust and negotiate mutually desirable outcomes** for participants. The notion of constructive participation to exert influence is thus crucial.

**On the structure and purpose of community design processes:**

- **Community design processes are not all about the built environment.** Place, people, and planning – There is a need to reconcile place-making with stakeholders' needs (to achieve social, environmental and economic sustainability).



*Figure 16: Community design processes are not all about the built environment, but also about the people and activities that use these places.*

*Photo credit: Callander Charrette, 7N Architects; Dr. Joe Ravetz, Manchester University.*

- The process should not necessarily be viewed as linear from start to finish, but rather as **iterative with a series of feedback loops**. These may involve different stakeholder groups that help refine the process and outputs over time (see figure 18).
- Community design processes need to be seen as capturing the **'authentic' expression of the aspirations and concerns of the stakeholders** who take part in them. In practice, participation may range from one-way consultation through token engagement to citizen-led initiatives. Authentic (rather than cynically deployed) participation can enable a 'bottom up' decision-making process that is genuinely democratic.

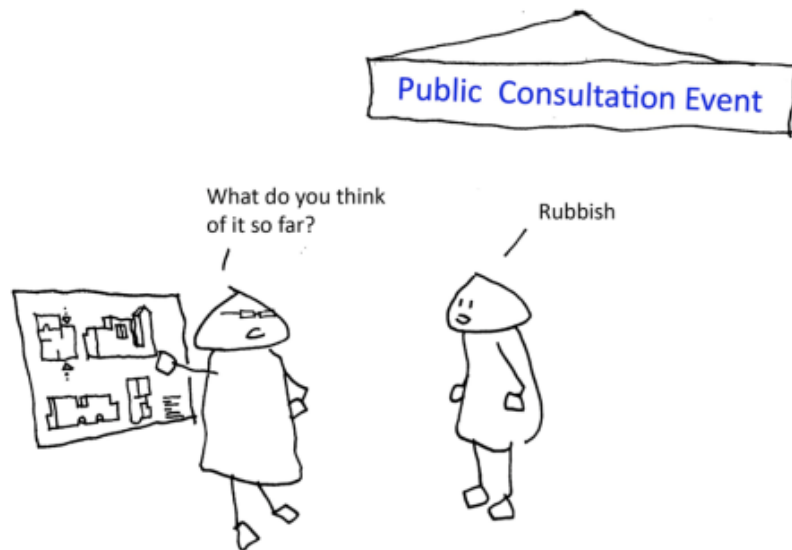


Figure 17: Community design processes can help move beyond previous models of “show and tell” one directional consultation to more genuine and authentic co-production between designers and communities.

Photo credit: Sandy Robinson, Scottish Government.

- Facilitators, and the professional specialists (i.e. members of design and stakeholder management teams) involved in community design-led events need to be **provided with clear expectations about their role** in terms of the specific skills and competencies required. This could help improve their performance, positively enhancing the outputs of design-led events and the broader engagement processes in which they are embedded.

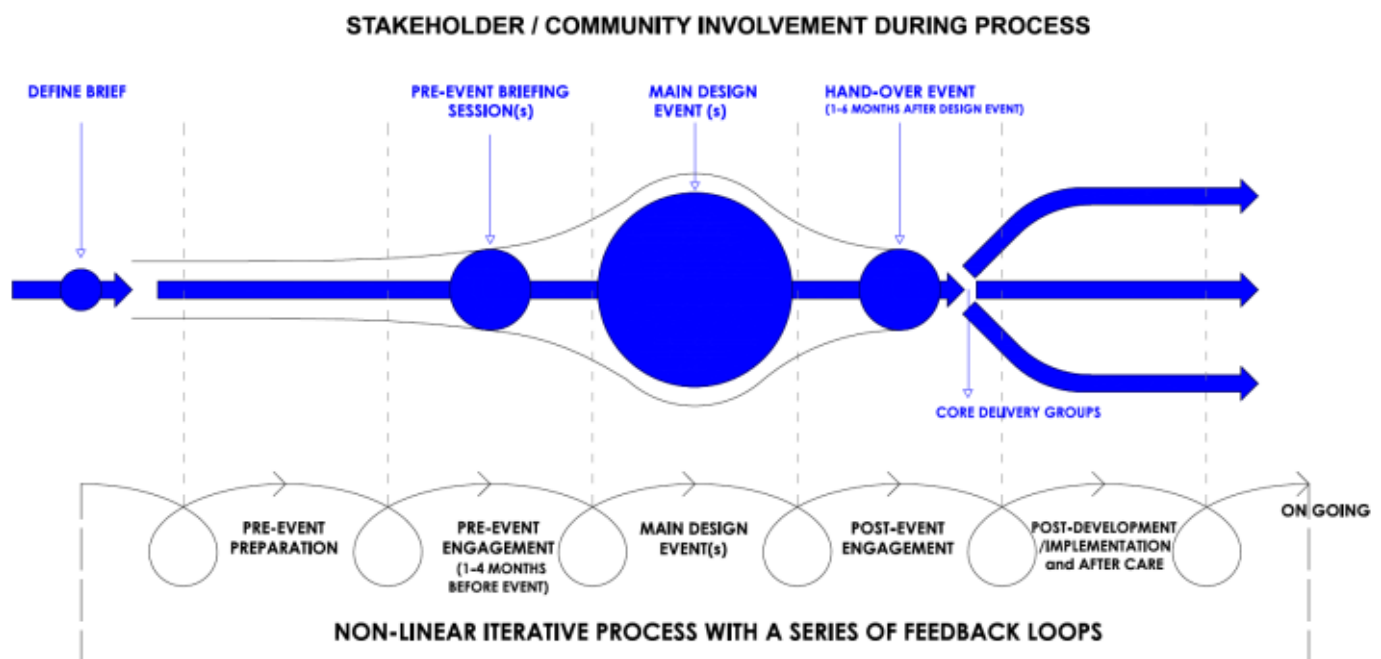


Figure 18: Different levels of engagement at different stages of the community design process, with the stakeholder group swelling to participate in the main event, and ‘waning’ to a core group leading on delivery.

Photo Credit: After Kevin Murray Associates.

- **Pre-event and post-event sessions are vital components of ongoing engagement.** But both stages need sufficient resources which are often limited and therefore defaults to the stakeholder management team.
- As far as pre and post-event activities are concerned, it was noted that the timescales for funding in the current Government supported arrangements sometimes leave less scope to support these than is deemed desirable. As a result, a **local authority can be left with much of the pre-engagement work** and organisation.
- There is also a **risk that design-led events become disagreement ‘mediation’**: losing touch with the wider issues and quality of development and instead negotiating the minutiae of one controversial site such as housing unit numbers, increased traffic etc.
- The study identified a concern that design-led events, like the charrette, can be **too short term and intensive for some communities**, particularly those with economic deprivation issues. Here a more prolonged form of engagement, gradually building trust is necessary, through “setting up shop” in the area, working with and through local organisations etc.
- **Some groups are more empowered than others in design-led events.** Some may come to the event with a particular ‘wish list’ and can rapidly become disengaged if this is not addressed. Even a good facilitator cannot overcome the asymmetrical distribution of power that may exist at the start of an event, and it may be unrealistic to pretend that they can. However, they can affect a better balance, and more openness.
- When a facilitated event and its reporting has concluded, problems may begin 6-9 months later, especially where it is the event promoters who are responsible for turning outputs into outcomes. **Problems may arise if no governance structure, feedback mechanisms, or strategic link between projects have been put in place.** Without this degree of formalisation, there can be loss of trust, follow through, or simply cynicism, even where things are happening. **Therefore a governance structure and monitoring system to hold progress together are absolutely critical elements** if trust, capacity and confidence is to be built up and maintained.

## Six key stages

Integrating the insights drawn from ‘the literature review, the survey, and the workshop’ suggests that community design processes are highly likely to follow six key stages, see Figure 19:

### 0. Brief and Purpose:

These activities prior to Stage 1 are required to instigate the community engagement process, from identifying the issues to be addressed, deciding on the type of process to be used to addressing the issues and developing the funding and resourcing proposal. This stage is ideally organised with a stakeholder/management team (possibly including local authority/public agency, independent consultants, community representatives or third sector).



### **1. Pre-event preparation**

This stage is ideally organised with a stakeholder/management team (possibly including members of the facilitation team) and a representative of all key stakeholders - not least the client/sponsors/local authorities. These collaborate to identify the scope and issue(s) and to establish the purpose and objectives of the event (including understanding any boundaries/limits), structuring its component parts and agreeing agenda.

### **2. Pre-event engagement and briefing session(s)**

Here the facilitators should be involved in agreeing with relevant stakeholders - such as local community groups - the intended aims, objectives and outcomes of the community design event, along with establishing the terms of reference, general and detailed approach to publicity, engagement, notably any practical issues surrounding what may be anticipated within follow-on next steps. The purpose here is to strengthen the capacity of non-professional stakeholders to contribute to the design-led event effectively.

### **3. The community design-led event(s)**

At this stage, it is essential that the facilitator/ the facilitation team create a 'safe space' which can support conflict-free relationships within clear boundaries, within which people can freely share their ideas, aspirations and concerns by jointly working through potentially difficult issues.

### **4. Post-event engagement (follow up events)**

This stage ideally should be organised by a stakeholder management team (keeping the facilitator on board might be helpful, but is not seen as essential) to keep momentum going on the actions and desired outcomes agreed at the participatory design-led event. To maintain stakeholders' confidence and trust, it is important to report progress and explain any impediments/delays to implementing what the community requested. Achieving this may require the stakeholder management team to work with and through delivery groups that lie beyond the planning system.

### **5. After care post-development/ implementation of the outcomes**

This stage should ideally be organised by a stakeholder management team (the presence of the facilitator might be helpful, but is not essential). This can help maintain representation from all key stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the agreed outputs from the facilitated event, including design interventions and any other community-led social projects.

A facilitator role can be, and often is, restricted solely to the 'during the event' stage. Sometimes, they are involved, to a lesser extent, in the 'before' and 'after' stages. But this study points to facilitation having a contribution to make to all five stages, particularly in terms of providing the soft, people management skills required. Whether this is necessary, strongly depends on the extent to which these skills can effectively be delivered by the client and/or other professionals involved.

## Community Design Event(s) (intensive period)

It is essential that the facilitator/ the facilitation team create a 'safe space' which can support conflict-free relationships within clear boundaries, within which people can freely share their ideas, aspirations and concerns by jointly working through potentially difficult issues.

### Pre-event Engagement and Briefing Session(s)

The facilitators should be involved in agreeing with relevant stakeholders - such as local community groups - the intended aims, objectives and outcomes of the community design event, along with establishing the terms of reference, general and detailed approach to publicity, engagement, notably any practical issues surrounding what may be anticipated within follow-on next steps.

### Pre-event Preparation

Stakeholder management team collaborate to identify the scope and issue(s) and to establish the purpose and objectives of the event (including understanding any boundaries/ limits), structuring its component parts and agreeing agenda.

### Post-event engagement (Follow-up events)

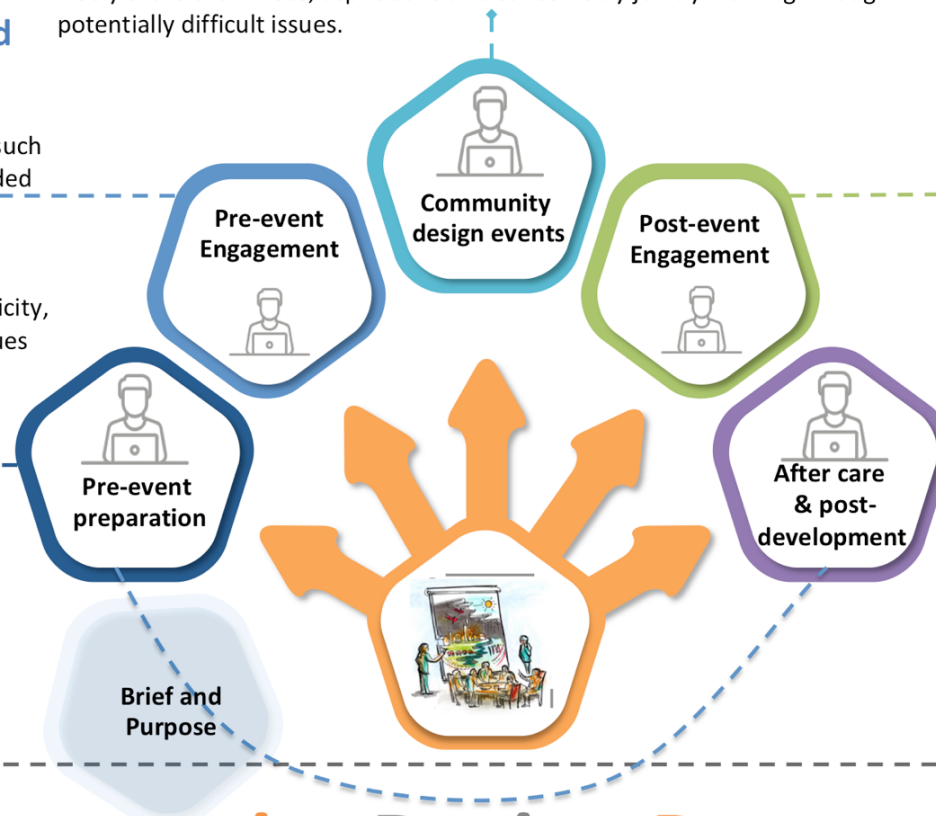
Stakeholder management team organise follow-up events which allow momentum to be sustained and a clear Action Plan developed and implemented; maintain confidence and trust; and explain any impediments/ delays to implementing what the community requested.

### Aftercare and post development/implementation of the outcomes

Stakeholder management team to keep a representation from all key stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving of the goals and targets for the design intervention agreed at the facilitated event.

# Community Design Processes

Figure 19: Integrating the insights drawn from 'the literature review, the survey, and the workshop' suggests that community design processes are highly likely to follow six key stages.



## **The role of facilitation in the five key stages**

### **1. Pre-event preparation - some facilitator input required**

There is a need for facilitator input early on, especially where:

- the stakeholder/management team does not have a neutral role (i.e. they may be promoting the plan/solution/special agenda);
- the client or community sector is not used to this role – so a facilitator could be helpful in building trust in the process and methods,
- there is a need to establish the principles of the approach, including in event management, and how material will be dealt with.

It is essential to try to avoid the criticisms levelled at the early charrettes that the facilitators were 'parachuted in', then left the community once the event was over.

### **2. Pre-event engagement and briefing session(s) - some facilitator input required, but not essential**

The facilitator could attend the main Community Briefing event - to be visible, build awareness and trust in proposed event. Otherwise expectations could be mismatched. Facilitated engagement could support effective decision making about the overall structure of the event and who with appropriate authority and responsibility should be invited to attend; factors which could dramatically impact on the success of the engagement process. It is important for facilitators to come across as neutral and listening - even before it all starts. They do not need to be at all preparatory meetings - but there are benefits in doing so – as this may result in fewer gaps in method or process.

### **3. Design-led event(s) - facilitator input essential**

The input of the facilitator here is essential. A facilitator directs the whole event. But the rest of the facilitation/design team need to be synchronised and aligned in order to manage and deliver a smooth event. The expectations of the facilitator role and that of specialists, client and community, should all be known and stated at the beginning of the event in order to effectively manage a 'live' process. It is important that the facilitator brings out the ideas of all the stakeholders assembled, and draws on the knowledge, expertise and creativity of the design team.

### **4. Post engagement event(s) - facilitator helpful, not essential**

Involvement at this stage is desirable, but not essential unless the facilitator has acted as the main front-person during the previous stages and then it is best for them to continue if they remain valued and trusted.

### **5. Aftercare post-development / implementation of the outcomes - facilitator input helpful, not essential**

Again, it would be better if the facilitator is present at this stage but this may be less crucial the community, in the form of trusts, partnerships or networks, is taking ownership and leadership of delivery phase 6, 9, or 12 months after the design-led event.

## **A framework for effectively embedding and following through on facilitated design-led events**

Drawing on the results from all three elements of the research (the literature review, the survey, and the interactive workshop), it is possible to lay out a clear set of imperatives about actions required before, during and after design-led events.

## Pre-event imperatives

1-	Activities need to begin before the appointment of a facilitator or design team. <i>Creating Places</i> , a Scottish Government policy statement, notes that placemaking begins with decision makers (local authority/public agency, independent consultants, community representatives and third sector) – the policy statement recognises the need to work collectively across disciplines/sectors.
2-	Refine the brief with the client, stakeholder management team and design team to ensure buy-in across a wider group of service providers, group delivery and community representatives.
3-	Those in charge of commissioning the design-led events (funders, local authority, community council) need to be very clear about the constraints and limitations affecting any event, and make these explicit to all those who are being invited to participate. This should be done at both the ' <i>preparation and briefing stages</i> ', providing clarity and realism about what can and cannot be influenced within the process.
4-	The design and stakeholder management teams must develop and/or draw in enough local knowledge and expertise to successfully guide the whole Participatory Design Process. This knowledge should as far as possible be assembled by teams ahead of events.
5-	It is essential to engage the facilitation team as early as possible to build up trust and relationships with the community. This is essential to avoid criticism levelled at some charrettes that facilitators were 'parachuted in' and then simply left the community after the event.
6-	In the Pre-Event Briefing Sessions, there is a need to explain any legal, policy, procedural or other elements - as well as understanding the status of any recent consultation/aspirations and relevant data about the area (some of which the community may not be aware of). Everyone needs equal access to the information at the start of the design-led event. This point goes back to the earlier issue of everyone having an equal level of knowledge and therefore is equally empowered to participate.
7-	Use the briefing sessions as a key stage to bring on board any relevant community groups (such as a community council) who may have a views based on previous experience of participative events. Earlier issues that have not been addressed may need clear identification ahead of the event, in order to make fresh progress with the minimum of 'pre-conceived positions'.
8-	Early engagement with different user groups is normally required to draw them successfully into the community design events. Part of the success of such early/separate 'conversations' depends on meeting these groups in surroundings that they are comfortable in – so got out to them.
9-	Identify where possible the likely areas of difficulty/conflict (identifying blockages: show stoppers/blockers) and prepare either possible solutions or ways of addressing.
10-	Publicise the event and make it as inclusive as possible (i.e. widely circulated advance notification), and determining who should be the main participants beyond the wider public (eg policy experts and specialists).
11-	Treat the Place Standard as a useful tool in enabling communities to inform the process; either during the pre-event engagement to build briefs, identify key issues and priorities, or in the early stages of the event design to broaden the understanding of the context and range of themes and ideas.



## Event imperatives

1-	The purpose of the engagement proposed at the event needs to be explicit from the very beginning, and the activities and tools chosen should both support collaborative decision making and be relevant to pursuing outcomes. It is important that the tools are supportive and do not become a distraction from the objective of the engagement.
2-	Boundaries need to be drawn at the outset with 'red lines' marked around what is and is not possible to influence through the event.
3-	Facilitators need to be able to 'hit the ground running' when it comes to the actual event, given the time limits imposed on most participatory design initiatives
4-	Facilitators have to make clear from the outset how people's contribution can make a difference and, by the end of the event, indicate clearly how their contributions can be carried forward..
5-	Community design processes should include specific activities, tools and proposals for <b>increasing diversity in engagement and reaching seldom-heard groups</b> .
6-	Get buy-in from as much of the community as possible, not just the usual suspects from within the community who 'attend everything'. This highlights the need to try and reach seldom heard groups, and to be adaptable in the methods used to engage people, recognising that 'community' is not a homogenous mass, but comprised of individuals with differing levels of knowledge and differing needs.
7-	It is essential that facilitators at design-led events take a neutral stance and are not afraid to put a 'sense check' on the aspirations of the community or any other stakeholder group, partly to ensure aspirations are realistic and are aligned with what can be influenced or delivered.
8-	'Managing expectations' and clarifying the purpose of the event is key in facilitation. This means that ensuring the terms of reference for the event are aligned with what can be influenced or delivered is crucial.
9-	Ensure there is a range of methods/activities used to allow people to contribute and that everything is in place from: maps, pictures, pens and paper, as well as support to ensure the desired level of meaningful collaboration.
10-	The use of technology is welcome in design-led events, but low tech methods like hand sketching, Place Standard tool, writing on flip charts etc. are considerably more personable and can help make discussion flow more easily.
11-	During an event, facilitators should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- inclusive, ensuring everyone of all ages and abilities, are welcome and catered for</li> <li>- flexible - not everything will go to plan; that's okay, so know how to work around it</li> <li>- true to the process - facilitators must value the input of the participants – and ensure it is not a token gesture</li> <li>- promote fair, inclusive and meaningful participation from all sections of the community</li> <li>- organised - have a plan for the event and outputs generated</li> <li>- clear about their own role - this will stop things falling apart</li> <li>- keep on top of time keeping – for instance, not letting sessions run late - everyone hates not getting away on time</li> <li>- go to stakeholders, rather than expect them to come to you.</li> <li>- skillful in steering things positively if things go off course or there is conflict of interest - setting guidelines from the outset can help</li> <li>- friendly, welcoming and approachable to all participants before, during and after the event.</li> <li>- 'Lead the process without directing the outcomes', highlighting that this rule pertains</li> </ul>

to how the facilitators should conduct themselves before, during or after charrettes - act as 'enablers', helping the participants achieve their own goals, rather than as providers of services and solutions.
12- A good event will have left the community and authorities with a clear idea of who is responsible for taking which actions forward and will hopefully have increased the capacity of the community to work for change. This implies the facilitators need some knowledge of processes (e.g. funding bids) and potential outcomes, to assist a community in constructing their way forward.

### Post-event imperatives

1- People need to know what is going to happen with the outcomes, that there is a clear sense of direction, there are routes to delivery that have been considered and that it isn't all going to be set aside and something else delivered in its place.
2- Having the facilitator available for the 'post engagement' and 'after care' stages can be useful, especially if they were particularly instrumental in delivering the outcomes of the event itself.
3- Post-event engagement plan needs to be clear – and should ideally be agreed between all those taking part before the end of design-led event. Where this can't happen, the plan should be circulated for agreement as soon as possible afterwards.
4- A post-event session is good to demonstrate progression and explanation of decision making, and to demonstrate participants' contributions have made a difference. Also, post-event involvement is important to guide implementation, particularly with public body stakeholders.
5- Follow-up events are essential to build on any <i>trust</i> that the community design-led event may have generated. To miss out this step risks losing goodwill and failure to capture additional knowledge. Follow-up events allow momentum to be sustained and a clear Action Plan to be refined and then implemented. In this way, the outputs from the design-led event can be further developed and moved towards implementation.
6- Post-event support is important to maintain the <i>energy</i> and <i>enthusiasm</i> amongst stakeholders that can be generated by community design-led events. And these can provide practical support on how to achieve next steps - such as by establishing a town team, development trust or professional support group to set out priorities and the approach for tackling these.
7- Feedback sessions, often long after the community design-led event, can be essential in order to report progress and any impediments to implementing what the community asked for. They can be used to seek opinions on any subsequently arising points of development, or detail, or to manage emergent conflicts.
8- In running follow-up sessions, the aim is to transfer ownership of the process to the community in a more genuine way. This is about building sustainable capacity and putting in place a governance structure in partnership with the local community so that they can take some of the identified steps forward themselves.

## Conclusions

The precise format and outcomes of any community design event will vary, not only because of its given situation and context; it will also be dependent upon its purpose and objectives and whether it is embedded in wider, longer running processes. If the overall goal is to create places that are 'liveable' and environmentally responsible, economically productive and resilient, able to react to changing contexts and timescales, then the **stewardship of the process and outcomes of the design-led events cannot rest with a 'single hand'**, however 'responsible'. A wider network of shapers and contributing stakeholders is required, including members of the local residential and business communities.

Community design-led events may be less concerned with the precise detail of format than with providing a **positive and proactive place-shaping process that can bring 'tangible and intangible' outcomes and benefits**, such as a sense of place and ownership/stewardship, a healthy environment and a good quality of life. Thus, tangible delivery and real follow-up change/action are key. Even events that are successful on the day may risk a negative effect if non-delivery leads to disillusion, fatigue and even growing distrust. In other words, the follow through is ultimately the key to success, and that success cannot be gauged simply from what occurs on the day, but is manifest across a longer time horizon.

The **collaborative process needs to create integration and synergy across professional disciplines and process stages**, building trust and common purpose between team members and local stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds and constituencies. Ideally the aim is to engender a deep, collective understanding of the places where interventions are planned through developing dialogue and deliberative participation. Enabling such important collaborative dialogue is an important skill required of the facilitation team, if we hope to develop robust approaches to delivering better places and sustainability.

Facilitation is commonly based on democratic principles. No matter how large the differences (of power, status, education, social capital) between stakeholders outside of the community design event, within the event facilitators are expected to construct a safe space where, for instance, 'truth can be spoken to power', and where professionals' expertise and lay people's lived experience are both treated as valid currency. To achieve this, facilitators are called upon to give all participants an equal voice and equal air-time during the discussions that underpin decision making in community design events. Facilitators should ensure that they discharge their role in a manner that supports this aspiration. However, they also have a duty to signal where their own experience suggests that a proposed course of action is unrealistic or likely to result in failure. Balancing these two aspects of their role – impartial inclusivity against offering (experience-based) advice - can be difficult for facilitators, especially those operating in a domain where they themselves have specialist skills or expert knowledge – when, for instance, they are themselves built environment professionals or community development officers. No hard and fast rules can be offered for how to choose between these two positions. Facilitators will need to use their own judgement about how best to operate. Whichever they choose, some participants are unlikely to be satisfied. As a result, facilitators have to be transparent whenever they depart from impartiality to offer advice and be explicit about why they have done so.

Facilitators have to develop 'soft', interpersonal people management skills that enable them to reach out and draw people into the decision-making in a comfortable way. This may not always be a part of the mainstream skills set of built environment

professionals. Further competencies can become more important in particular situations or local contexts. Impartiality is important – and whereas **built environment specialists are often trained to pursue their discipline-based 'professional' agendas**, these may not coincide with those of other stakeholder groups. When a team's role is to be impartial and the approach is deliberately open ended, the facilitator has an explicit role in building consensus while showing evident awareness of the constraints within which the event is framed.

Further, professional facilitators are being asked to act 'ethically' by encouraging and supporting collective practices through managing community co-design and delivery of services. They are being called upon to embrace and enable an expanded sense of civic responsibility. They are being asked to do so in a way that adds value with limited resource - often only between £3k and £8k of total design process budget of £30-£50k.

**Facilitators are being asked to move beyond their comfort zones, broadening their views and being responsive to context** through attention to detail. Better community design will be achieved by 'new thinking' which is purposeful, visionary and committed to the improvement of processes, based on knowledge of what actually works in practice, along with an appreciation of what has not worked and what needs to be improved or abandoned.

At the outset of this project, the research team were aware that there were **many different interpretations of the role of facilitators within Community Design Processes** and no general consensus. The different respondents/ contributors have given their own insights into this exciting and evolving area of practice. We knew that the research was unlikely to reveal singularly definitive answers or solutions to all the challenges of reconceptualising Community Design Processes. Nor was it our remit to specify a set of authoritative mores for the practice of **Community Design Processes**. Rather, this study has offered a chance to explore the meaning of a critical dimension of contemporary design processes in a manner that is directly informed by the experience, aspiration and concerns of those active in this field.

By highlighting current thinking on the subject, it is hoped that this research-based study will **help those involved in Community Design Processes** to identify key questions, confront underlying assumptions, break down barriers between professionals and stakeholders, and assist placemaking through more reflective practice. Given the complexity of processes identified in the research - in terms of context, governance, outcomes of design deliberation and sense of community ownership - it is evident that much more work is needed to better understand and improve the facilitation and community design roles.

We therefore conclude by highlighting what we see as key research questions arising from this research, that are relevant across both academic disciplines and practice domains.



## **Questions for future research**

### ***On the role of facilitators***

- 1- What constitutes effective best practice for clarifying the level of substantive planning and design expertise a facilitator requires, if any, at any given community design event?
- 2- How, when and where do facilitators acquire and mature the skill set identified as necessary for supporting such design-led events?
- 3- How best can the 'soft' skills required for facilitating design-led activity be inculcated in the initial and mid-career training of professionals such as architects and planners, for instance by hands on role play training?
- 4- Does the skill set identified need to be developed across all the members of the facilitation team and not just in the lead facilitator?

### ***On the community design processes***

- 1- How can the results arising from community design-led events be more effectively linked to post-event decision-making and delivery?
- 2- What transitional support can be afforded to enable community stakeholders to take ownership of subsequent stages of community design processes?
- 3- How can the critical pre- and post-event activities, on which the efficacy of community design-led events clearly depends, be more robust through appropriate resourcing?
- 4- What legal status (legitimation) can be given within the planning system to the agreed decisions/outputs (actions arising) from design-led events, bearing in mind the proposal to abolish Supplementary Guidance.
- 5- What monitoring practices, including KPIs, are necessary for assessing the measurable impact of agreed design goals and objectives?

## Appendix 1: Survey Results

**An online survey was devised** as a means to capture relevant experience from both event **participants** and **facilitators**. The survey related, for example, to the key themes within the recent consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System (Places, People and Planning), **launched in January 2017**. The survey was exploratory; its aim was to develop an analytic framework for more robust and systematic enquiry. Hence, no attempt was made in this step to generalise statistically the outcomes from the survey and instead the data represents the responses of those who replied in the sample targeted.

A principle of 'inclusion' has been adopted. This requires respecting all the completed survey responses 'equally' without bias. This principle has informed our analysis throughout and it has been reported. Frequent discussion held within the team enable identification of whether there were occasions where over-emphasis of an issue or sector was introducing bias or distorting reporting. Where identified, steps were taken to correct this.

The first survey was composed of two threads: one for 'participants' those who had taken part in a community design event. This version of the survey predominantly used quantitative questions as opposed to open ended ones. It was designed as a means to illustrate the spread of such stakeholders interests, concerns and aspirations. The second thread was directed at 'facilitators and those who had acted as part of a facilitation team. This version mainly used opened ended questions designed to capture relevant experience, aspirations, ideas and arguments presented, rather than simply being concerned with their frequency of occurrence. The dual focus of the survey helped to highlight overlaps and differences in aspirations and concerns around the facilitation of design-led processes held by professionals and lay participants. The outcomes of the survey, refined through an experts workshop, will be used to help set an agenda for improving future practice, as well as preparing the ground for more detailed research in the next step.

The questions asked in the survey required a wide range of response, from simple completion of yes/no, to more qualified yes/no responses, to multi choices responses, to open ended and more detailed responses. Determining the broad sectors from which the responses came was an important step in identifying the different points of view being expressed through the survey. There are a good number of types of respondents, from individuals and members of public, to policy makers and professional bodies, practising architects, planners, and developers, land owners, and their advisers.

An online questionnaire link using Bristol Online Survey (BOS) was emailed to just over 600 identified respondents in Scotland between March and May 2017, canvassing broadly equally views of 'professional facilitators and participants' who have had previous experience of attending community design. The process used for inviting respondents sought to include the views of members of the public and civic groups who have had experience of attending community events and hence of experiencing facilitation; those who have taken part in collaborative, community

design based approaches from the perspective of operators or shapers of the planning system, those from a development and land value perspective, and those who organise, manage and implement facilitation. 115 completed survey were returned, 57 (50%) from the lay participant category and 58 (50%) from facilitators or members of a facilitation/design team.

## Identifying sectoral responses

The survey responses have been segmented into two main groups namely; 'professional facilitators and participants'. The term 'professional facilitators' is used to include the Lead Facilitator of the Participatory Design-Led Event and members of the Team who act as Facilitators during Participatory Group Work. The Team may often be 'built environment professionals with expertise in facilitation' or they can sometimes be 'professional facilitators with no built environment expertise'.

Meanwhile the term 'participants' is used to include four sectoral groups, each one comprised of groups or individuals with a particular relationship to the community engagement and participation, namely:

### A. Community and Civic Groups

Respondents who are concerned as members of the public and or of civic groups who have taken part in collaborative community design based approaches.

### B. Authorities, Planners and Policy Makers

Respondents who are concerned as those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches from the perspective of operators or shapers of the planning system, its plans and policies, e.g. local authorities, national government bodies and key agencies)

### C. Developers, Landowners and Agents

Respondents who are concerned as those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches primarily from a development and land value perspective, e.g. landowners, investors, development surveyors, developers, housing associations and housebuilders.

### D. Design or Planning Practice/Consultant

Respondents who are concerned as those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches primarily operating in practice/consultancy for both private and public sector clients.

The following is a breakdown of the submissions by Main group (participant versus the facilitator)



**This section begins with an analysis of how all the 'participants' at community design event classified themselves:**

Out of 57 'participants', more than half of the responses (34 in total) received came from community and civic groups and around the third of responses (15 in total) were returned from authorities, planners and policy makers. Only 3 of the responses received came from developers, landowners and design/planning

practice/consultant. However, some of the responded declared that the filled in the survey in different capacities (i.e. some of them participated as part of the members of the public and the same time they were part of the developers team). As these figures reveal, this survey has not managed to engage with those who are often hard to reach (i.e. developers and landowners). It has predominantly been responded to by those who have either taken part in the design events or from the perspective of operators or shapers of the planning systems, its plans and policies, e.g. local authorities, national governments bodies and key agencies.

Please tick the description that best applies to you in response to your involvement/interest in Participatory and Community Design Processes in Scotland.

Rank value	Option	Count
1	Community and Civic Groups : (Members of the public and civic groups who have taken part in collaborative community design based approaches)	34
2	Authorities, Planners and Policy Makers : (Those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches from the perspective of operators or shapers of the planning system, its plans and policies, e.g. local authorities, national government bodies and key agencies)	15
3	Developers, Landowners and Agents : Those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches primarily from a development and land value perspective, e.g. landowners, investors, development surveyors, developers, housing associations and housebuilders.	2
4	Design or Planning Practice/Consultant: Those who have taken part in collaborative, community design based approaches primarily operating in practice/consultancy for both private and public sector clients.	1
5	Other	5

## Geographical Responses

The majority of responses had clear geographical data attached, therefore we were able to give a regional breakdown of respondents. 115 responses for both the facilitators and participants representing 25 local authorities areas out of 32 in Scotland, representing around 78% of total. As these figures indicate, this survey has successfully managed to engage with either members of the public or professional facilitators who have taken part in collaborative community design based approaches across Scotland.

*Graphic representing the geographical data on the map would streamline this section*





Local Authority Area	Frequency
Edinburgh	17
Glasgow	17
West Dunbartonshire	10
Argyll and Bute	10
Angus	8
Perth and Kinross	8
South Ayrshire	7
Fife	6
North Ayrshire	4
Stirling	3
Renfrewshire	3
East Dunbartonshire	2
Dundee	2
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	2
West Lothian	2
East Lothian	2
aberdeenshire	1
North Lanarkshire	1
Clackmannanshire	1
South Lanarkshire	1
Highland	1
Midlothian	1
North Lanarkshire	1
Ross-shire	1
Inverclyde	1
Do not wish to disclose	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>

## Gender

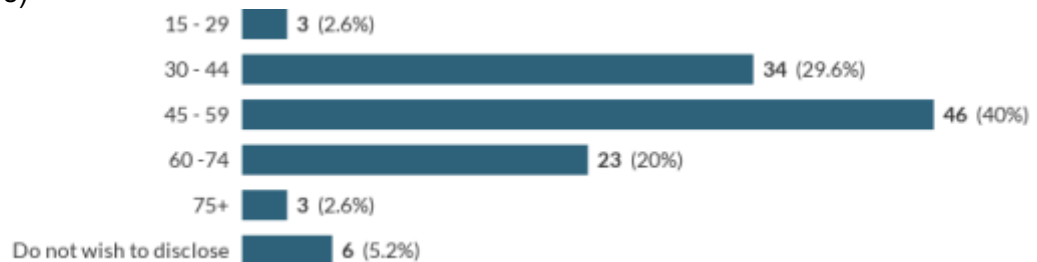
The following is a breakdown of the submissions by gender (participants and the facilitators)



Only 42 responses were returned from female as opposed to 69 from male and only 4 responses received did not wish to disclose their gender. As these figures show, this survey has been relatively successful in managing to engage with female participants and facilitators.

## Age

The following is a breakdown of the submissions by age (participants and the facilitators)



Only 3 of the responses received came from young age/adult (15-29 years old). The same figure was received from older people (75+). Only 6 of those who responded to the survey did not wish to disclose their age. As these figures reveal, this survey has not managed to engage with those who are hard to reach. It has predominantly been responded to by those who age is likely to make them economically active and who are more likely to be in good health (in particular those between 30-74 years).

## Key Messages from questionnaire research:

The survey followed key themes, for both the 'participant and facilitator' surveys. These key themes were ordered broadly around activities and actions that take place prior, take place as part of the event and activities and actions that take place following the participatory community design event. The key themes are as follows:

### ➤ Prior activities and actions

#### 1) Basic Facilitation Skills

- *Was the Role of the Facilitator(s) clearly explained at the outset of the participatory community design event? (participants)*
- *Which of the following competencies, skills and qualities do you consider to be the most essential for successful facilitation? Please tick your top 6 Priorities (see appendix2), (responses from both participants and facilitators)*
- *Was the Facilitation Team flexible and adaptable enough to respond to issues and situations as they developed; or did they stick rigidly to their pre-determined programme? (participants)*
- *From your experience, do you consider it is important that the Lead Facilitator is (facilitator):*

- *a Built Environment Professional by training*
- *a Non Built Environment Expert by training*
- *a Facilitator/Mediator by training*
- *a member of the Design/Planning Team*
- *independent from the Design/Planning Team*
- *has experience of dealing with difficult social situations*

## **2) Practical Preparation & Event Organisation**

- *Did you receive Pre-Event Publicity about the Aims and Objectives of the participatory community design event?-(participants)*
- *To what extent did the Facilitation Team appear to have enough 'local knowledge and expertise' to successfully guide the Participatory Design Process? (participants)*
- *Did the Facilitation Team appear to have any (conscious or unconscious) pre-conceptions about the community or issues being discussed? (participants)*

## **3) Meaningful Participation**

- *To what extent was an effort made to use simple and plain English? (participants)*
- *To what extent did you feel that you were listened to? (participants)*
- *To what extent did the Facilitation Team encourage honest, informal, open conversation between different stakeholders? (participants)*
- *To what extent did you feel that the Facilitation Team effectively managed specific groups who tried to dominate or avoid meaningful discussions? (participants)*
- *How could participation of 'young people' 'seldom heard' and 'hard to reach' sections of society have been improved? (responses from both participants and facilitators)*
- *To what extent do you feel that the Facilitation Team did enough to encourage participation from all sections of the community, including 'young people' 'seldom heard' and 'hard to reach' groups? (participants)*
- *Were any conflicting opinions aired during the engagement process effectively explored and resolved with the help of the Facilitation Team? (participants)*

## **➤ Event activities and actions**

### **1) Tools and Activities**

- *Were the Support Materials provided at the event suitable to provide context information and support the range and degree of collaborative activities required by the participatory design process? (participants)*

- *What Support Materials / Activities do you think would have improved your experience of the participatory design process? (Participants + facilitators)*
- *What tools and activities do you find most useful (e.g. Brainstorming, Place Standard Tool, Small Group Work and Reporting, Ice-Breakers, Model Making, Story Telling etc.)? Why are they effective? (facilitators + participants)*
- *Did you feel the activities you were asked to undertake promoted meaningful engagement or detracted from it? (participants)*
- *Was Place Standard used? If so, did you find this tool a useful starting point for evaluating place related issues and stimulating discussion? (Participants + facilitators)*

## **2) Inclusive Decision Making**

- *Do you feel that practical constraints (e.g. money, time, resources etc.) were clearly explained at the outset, to enable you to realistically engage in the design and decision process? (participants)*
- *To what extent did you find working in 'small groups' encouraged active participation? (participants)*
- *To what extent did you find the reporting back from individual working groups to the whole assembly sufficient to allow all participants to understand the main issues? (participants)*
- *Did the Facilitation Team subsequently provide and circulate a Final Report written in a style that was accessible to all members of the community (concise, easy to understand, plain English, clear diagrams and photos)? (participants)*
- *Were all the key decisions accurately represented in the Final Report (including a clear summary of ideas and a plan of action to take these forward)? (participants)*
- *In light of the Final Report, to what extent did you feel that your contribution to the process was meaningful? (participants)*

## **➤ Following activities and actions**

### **1) Reflection on the Process & Outcomes**

- *What, in your experience, can undermine the success of a participatory design-led event? (facilitators)*
- *On reflection, how might you adapt the preparation process to overcome these potential problems? (facilitators)*
- *To what extent do you feel that greater involvement of the Lead Facilitator in early discussions would be beneficial in tailoring the proposed participatory design process to the specific needs of the community? (participants)*



- *To what extent do you feel that the continued involvement of the Lead Facilitator in follow-up events would be beneficial to the community (Build Momentum, Kick-start a stalled Action Plan, Create Active community Groups)? (participants)*
- *To what extent did you feel that the 'overall community' input into the participatory design process was meaningful? (participants)*

## **2) Aspirations for the Future**

- *In what ways might access to a Facilitator / Facilitation Team be beneficial to a community in preparing their own Local Place Plan? (Participants + Facilitators)*
- *In this situation do you think that members of the Facilitation Team should be drawn from the local area to tap into local expert knowledge, or should they be from another area to reduce the risk of undisclosed vested interests? (participants)*

## **Prior activities and actions**

### **Basic Facilitation Skills:**

- 74% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that the role of the facilitator was explained sufficiently at the outset of the design event. However 26% of participants either were not clear or expressed some ambiguity in their understanding of the role.
- Being organised, an effective communicator and a good listener were considered the most essential traits required of a successful facilitator.
- There were some distinct differences in the relative importance ascribed to basic facilitation skills by facilitators and participants (non-facilitators), which suggest that facilitators are primarily focussed on the facilitation process per se, whilst the participants are more concerned that potential outcomes accurately reflect their opinion and could be practically implemented.
- Participants (non-facilitators) considered that a good facilitator should empower others (49%), seek inclusive solutions (47%) and be practical (37%). Facilitators tend to rate these attributes lower at 45%, 26% and 28% respectively. Conversely facilitators rated challenges assumptions (50%), be inclusive/fair (48%), be flexible/adaptable (36%) and builds consensus (29%) much higher than participants (non-facilitators), who rated these at 37%, 35%, 26% and 19% respectively.
- 68% of participants (non-facilitators) thought it important that facilitators should be perceived as impartial, as opposed to only 43% of facilitators. Similarly, 30% of participants (non-facilitators) considered it crucial that facilitators were perceived as honest and trustworthy, as opposed to only 14% of facilitators.
- The interpersonal skills, attitude and life experience of the individual who undertakes the role of lead facilitator were considered as important as any professional experience and training in either the built environment or facilitation.
- 54% of facilitators thought it essential that the lead facilitator have experience of dealing with difficult social situations, whilst the remainder thought it desirable. 60% of facilitators thought it desirable that the lead facilitator was a trained facilitator/mediator and a further 31% thought it essential. Similarly 61% thought it desirable that the lead facilitator was a built environment professional, with a further 27% considering it essential.

- The majority of facilitators felt that for purely practical reasons it was essential that there were members of the facilitations team who had specialist knowledge and training in the built environment professions. However as the facilitation process was generally viewed as a team effort, many facilitators did not consider it essential that the lead facilitator were themselves a built design professional.

### **Practical Preparation & Event Organisation**

- Facilitators identified that an in-depth understanding of the brief, context, community/ stakeholder priorities and a continued focus on the intended outcome were the key to designing a successful participatory design event.
- A holistic approach to the design of the engagement process and participatory design event is essential. Each element needs to be conceived as a means of furthering the objective of delivering a positive and practical outcome for the community.
- Much of the real work, on which the successful outcome of a participatory design event is based, takes place prior to the event. Three elements; Pre-Event Preparation, Briefing and Community Engagement form the basis of a iterative process through which the facilitation team can tailor the design of the participatory event to the specific context and needs of the community and thereby obtain the best outcome from the engagement process.
- Pre-Event Preparation involves pulling together essential contextual data to inform the design and development of a clear and appropriate plan of action and engagement strategy; bringing together a multidisciplinary team with the appropriate skills, knowledge and social competences to accomplish this plan; and the logistical organisation of the event itself, e.g. venue, equipment, materials, budget, advertising and ensuring key decision makers are in attendance.
- The aim of Pre-Event Briefing is to break down barriers to engagement by providing clarity to all prospective participants about the purpose of the event and how participants can contribute constructively to the process. It also offers the facilitation team the opportunity to explain and set realistic parameters from the outset, which helps to manage expectations later in the process. By introducing issues to the community prior to the event, participants are given the time to think about the issues and begin to formulate ideas which can be built on at the event.
- Pre-Event Engagement deepens the facilitation team's appreciation of the specific context and helps identify key issues prior to the event. The information gathered is used to inform and refine the design of the event and engagement strategies. It is also an effective means of involving the community in the co-design of the process, which helps build a relationship of trust between the community and the facilitation team. It builds community capacity and encourages community/ stakeholder buy-in and attendance of the event. These pre-event engagement opportunities also allow the facilitation team to approach and target hard to reach groups, so that their opinions might be included in the engagement process.
- There are many factors that can disrupt the smooth running of an event, so it is essential that the facilitation team are organised, well prepared, adaptable and able to implement pre-determined strategies for coping with difficult social circumstances and disruptive influences. Maintaining a positive atmosphere is crucial. The effect social niceties and good interpersonal skills on the part of the facilitators should not be underestimated in making participants feel comfortable, their opinions valued and defusing potentially difficult situations.

- Whilst the majority of participants (non-facilitators) were clear about the objectives of the participatory design event, a sizable minority felt that these stated objectives did not address the real issues and concerns affecting their community.
- 91% of participants (non-facilitators) did receive pre-event publicity outlining the aims and objectives of the event, however only 78% thought this information was clear. 69% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that the stated objectives of the event reflected the main issues and concerns of their community; however a sizable minority of 31% felt that to a large degree the major issues had not been recognised by the facilitation team or included in the objectives. Further, 16% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that the facilitation team had inadequate 'local knowledge and expertise' to successfully guide the participatory design process.
- Only 38% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that facilitators approached the event with few or no preconceived notions about the community and issues under discussion. This is perhaps worrying considering the emphasis participants (non-facilitators) placed on 'impartiality' and facilitators placed on 'challenging assumptions' – just perhaps not their own! However 84% of participants felt that the facilitation team were flexible enough to respond to issues and situations as they developed during the process rather than sticking rigidly to a pre-determined programme.

### **Meaningful Participation**

- Facilitators suggest that to encourage meaningful participation the engagement process should be as simple, open and transparent as possible, with plain English used at all times. Clear guidelines should be set to empower participants and they should be encouraged to see the issues from the perspective of other stakeholders. The community should be given leeway to guide the issues discussed to some degree and the facilitator should ensure everyone is given the opportunity to contribute, by encouraging the less confident to speak up whilst managing more vocal individuals and groups.
- Participants should be able to clearly understand and follow how their comments, opinions and ideas contribute to the process and outcome. Good communication skills were considered essential, but the priority is that the facilitators take the time and effort to truly listen to the participants and understand their concerns.
- The majority of participants (non-facilitators) thought that facilitators made an effort to use plain English and 82% felt that the facilitation team encouraged honest, informal, open conversation between different stakeholders. However 21% did not feel that they were really listened too and whilst most participants (non-facilitators) felt that facilitators managed specific groups who tried to dominate or avoid meaningful discussions fairly well, there was room for improvement.
- When considering whether conflicting opinions aired during the engagement process effectively explored and resolved with the help of the Facilitation Team, only 48% of participants (non-facilitators) said they were, 12 % said they weren't and the remainder were ambivalent in their response. This would suggest, given the emphasis participants (non-facilitators) placed on 'seeks inclusive solutions' as an essential facilitation skill, that this is potentially an area in need of greater attention.
- Facilitators recognised that designing and delivering a process that affords all sections of the community the opportunity to get involved and engage in the

discussion in a meaningful manner was extremely difficult to achieve in a single event.

- Facilitators considered the key to achieving this level of community involvement was through targeted early engagement with the community. For event organisers, creating a range of different early engagement opportunities with the community fulfils a number of crucial objectives, which can promote fair, inclusive and meaningful participation from all sections of the community. These objectives include creating community interest, promoting the event, briefing the community about the process, obtaining contextual information, achieving wider community buy-in and recording opinions from those sections of the community who might be unwilling or unable to attend the event itself.
- In designing these pre-event engagement opportunities it is incumbent on the team to think clearly about what their objectives are, what information they need, who can provide this information, where will they be found, when they are available, and how they are best approached. To ensure that all sections of the community are encouraged to participate in the process, it is considered essential to be innovative in approach and tailor the form of this initial engagement to needs of each target group. Longer lead-in times may be required to devise appropriate targeted engagement strategies.
- 73% of participants (non-facilitators) considered that facilitators made a good effort to engage with 'young people' 'seldom heard' and 'hard to reach' sections of society. In general they welcomed the current practice of pre-event engagement which takes the message out into the community and employs innovative methods to connect with different sections of society in their environment and on their terms.

## **Event activities and actions**

### **Tools and Activities**

- Many facilitators stressed that the focus should always be purpose and outcome of the event, not on tools and techniques used to get there. The purpose of the engagement needs to be explicit from the very beginning, and the tools chosen should both support collaborative decision making and be relevant to pursuing the outcome. It is important that the tools do not become the objective of the engagement.
- The lack of action after participatory design events leads to public cynicism about the process. To avoid this, workshops need to focus on the detail and practicality of the outcomes.
- A key skill of the facilitator is to draw on their experience and knowledge during the design of the engagement process in order to select those tools most appropriate to the context and expected demographic.
- An appropriately selected tool or technique can be very useful in helping participants to think about their environment, place and future in a structured way. It may also help participants approach topics from a different perspective and express themselves in a variety of ways. Whatever the tool employed it should promote meaningful participation and afford the opportunity for the facilitation team to delve into and challenge opinion, to fully understand why certain opinions are held and share this understanding with both the participants and organisers.
- Facilitators utilised a wide range of techniques including (in no particular order): Conversations, Presentations, Pecha Kucha, Small Work Groups & Reporting, Opera, World Café, De Bono 6 Hats, Brainstorming, Mind Mapping, Suggestion Walls, Movable Object Ideation, Walk & Talk/Site Visit,

Large Scale Maps/Aerial Photography, Place Mapping, User Journey Maps, Place Standard Tool, Future Visioning, Scenario Planning, Model Making, Drawing And Arts Based Activities, Digital Media, Storytelling, Shared Heritage, Historical Data, Personas, Monopoly Money, Icebreakers, Fun Activities, Enquiry By Design, Dot Mapping for SWOT Analysis, Models, BRE Place Standard Tool.

- Participants (non-facilitators) primarily indicated that they found Small Work Groups & Reporting, Brainstorming, Place Standard Tool, Large Scale Maps, Plans or Aerial Photography and Walk & Talk/Site Visits the most useful tools. However it should be noted that many of the other tools mentioned are less frequently used and not as many participants might have experienced them.
- Small Work Groups and Reporting
- Working within a small facilitated group affords the opportunity for participants to discuss issue quite intimately with others who may hold different views on the topic. The size of the group encourages everyone to engage with the process and builds confidence.
- Small Groups allows better interaction between the facilitation team and participants and by reducing the ability of vocal individuals or groups to dominate proceedings; it reduces conflict and ensures that everyone's opinion is heard.
- The process and format of reporting back to the assembly should be made clear at the outset and should allow accurate reflection of the issues discussed.
- A typical reporting process will take the form of a show and tell, followed by comments and questions from other participants and a brief summary of the main points by the lead facilitator.
- It is important that participants from other groups present can easily comprehend the issues raised in each discussion whatever the exact form the feedback takes. It was suggested that the feedback process should be kept simple, light and fun and should recognise that people process information in different ways.
- Many facilitators preferred participants to report back to the assembly themselves as they considered it empowering that the community expresses itself in their own words, so their views are not being interpreted or misinterpreted by professional. Some facilitators however felt that the group facilitator should report back as they were seen as being more accurate and impartial.
- Throughout Small Group Work & Reporting it is important that the facilitator constantly summarizes, contextualises and synthesizes the information the assembly is receiving. In performing this function, the facilitator checks his understanding and summing up of the issues raised by each group is an accurate reflection, provides clarity for the other attendee and links the information directly back to the context and purpose of the event to keep everyone focussed.
- Whatever the exact form of the reporting process, it is vital that accurate records are kept, so that there is the possibility to review and reflect on what has been said and after the event disseminate this information to the wider community.
- 91% of participants (non-facilitators) thought that working in small groups encouraged active participation, however only 65% were satisfied that the reporting back from individual working groups to the whole assembly was sufficient to allow all participants to understand the main issues, whilst a further 25% were ambivalent in their response.



### **Place Standard Tool**

- 44% of participants (non-facilitators) had experience of using the Place Standard Tool, of these 65% had found it a useful starting point for evaluating place related issues and stimulating discussion whilst a further 28% recorded a neutral response.
- 68% of facilitators indicated that they had used the Place Standard Tool. As an element of the Charrette Process it was considered that the Place Standard Tool was best used to inform the process; either during the pre-event engagement to identify key issues and priorities or in the early stages of the event to broaden the understanding of the context and the range of themes and ideas discussed.
- The wide and diverse range of responses as to how exactly facilitators had employed the Place Standard Tool, would seem to suggest that it is generally thought both a useful and versatile tool.
- Used both to explore and understand the context and as an aid in creating a future vision for a place, it has also been varyingly employed as a questionnaire, an agenda setting tool, an icebreaker, a structured prompt, a guide to discussions and even a benchmark.
- By focusing on the various contributory factors influencing the perception of place, the Place Standard Tool is considered particularly valuable in getting participants to reflect on these issues and think about their area in a structured way. It can be especially effective in establishing an overall grassroots perspective of how people feel about their location, highlighting the good and bad points, the major issues that need attention and what the opportunities for improvement are.
- There were however a few facilitators who had reservations about the widespread adoption of the tool. They pointed to the limitations of the Place Standard Tool that should be borne in mind when employing it or made suggestions as to how its current form might be refined.

### **Support Material**

- 79% of participants (non-facilitators) indicated that the Support Materials provided at the event were suitable to provide context information and support the range and degree of collaborative activities required by the participatory design process, a further 20% were neutral in their response.
- Participants (non-facilitators) specified that the following support materials/activities might have improved their experience of the participatory design process (in order of preference): Computer Generated 3D Visualisations, Exploring Ideas through Art and Digital Media, Physical Models, Social Media, Place Standard. They also suggested utilising Large Scale Maps and Photographs.
- Facilitators specified that they found the following support materials/activities the most useful (in order of preference): Exploring Ideas through Art and Digital Media, Physical Models, Social Media, Place Standard, Computer Generated 3D Visualisations. They also suggested employing Visual Data such as large scale maps, photographs, plans, sketches, diagrams and post-it notes to develop ideas, using Exemplars in the form of visual references or actual site visits, Walk & Talk/Site Visit, Storytelling, Template, Visual Summary Boards and Fun Activities.
- No consideration as to the cost of each of these support materials in terms of time or money, was made by either group.

## **Inclusive Decision Making**

- To participate and fully engage with the decision making process it is essential that everyone - facilitators and participants (non-facilitators) - are clear on the aims and objectives of the event and have a realistic view of parameters, what can and cannot be influenced and what is achievable in the time frame.
- The facilitation team must actively seek opportunities for all sections of the community to fully engage with and contribute to the participatory process.
- Facilitators must create a respectful and non-threatening environment in which participants (non-facilitators) feel they can speak openly and their views and ideas are listened to, valued and taken on board. Getting this right requires well thought out practical organisation of the engagement process, good people management skills and an ability to put people at ease.
- It is essential that the facilitation team truly listen and respond to the issues and concerns raised by participants. Whilst they might steer the conversation to ensure all aspects of an issue are discussed, they must allow participants to lead the conversation.
- To build consensus in the decision making process, facilitators must not shy away from fielding difficult questions. The point of the engagement process is to share ideas, build mutual understanding and deal with conflicts of interest through compromise by seeking practical and pragmatic ideas that can lead to a positive outcome for all parties.
- Accurate recording and reporting is essential. The process has to be transparent. The community must be able to follow the development of ideas, understand the decision process and appreciate why some ideas are taken forward and others are not.
- 53% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that the practical constraints (e.g. money, time, resources etc.) were clearly explained at the outset, enabling them to realistically engage in the design and decision process. However 33% thought these constraints weren't clearly explained and a further 14% were ambivalent in their views. This would suggest that much more needs to be done to explain to participants what can be realistically achieved by the event and thereby manage community expectations.
- There was some concern expressed by participants (non-facilitators) that there were pre-determined agendas being pursued by Local Authority planning departments, their consultants or other stakeholder groups and a perception that the process was dominated by professionals.
- 72% of participants (non-facilitators) indicated that a Final Report had been circulated and that it was written in a style that was accessible to all members of the community (concise, easy to understand, plain English, clear diagrams and photos).
- 69% of participants (non-facilitators) considered that all the key decisions were accurately represented in the Final Report (including a clear summary of ideas and a plan of action to take these forward), with some 19% ambivalent and 13% unsatisfied with the content of the Final Report
- Whilst the discussions themselves were generally perceived as open and inclusive by participants (non-facilitators), there was concern that the reporting did not reflect the full spectrum of views shared or take on board the concerns raised by stakeholders/decision makers where these ideas ran contrary to national policy.
- In light of the Final Report, 69% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that their contribution to the process was meaningful, 18% were non-committal and 12% that their involvement in the process had not been meaningful. The results were slightly worse when participants were asked to consider the

meaningfulness of the input from the community as a whole. Only 57% considered the input meaningful, 30% were conflicted in their opinion and 12% considered the community's input was not meaningful.

- Serious consideration needs to be given to practicality of managing community expectations. Building trust by treating the community as equals through listening and demonstrating that you have done so by explaining clearly why some of their ideas have emerged as preferred solutions whilst others don't work as well or cost too much, is vital.
- The results and comments made by participants (non-facilitators) suggest that there are issues about the compilation and content of the Final Report and the transparency with which decisions are made to determine which ideas will be taken forward. This lack of openness could potentially undermine the entire process, particularly as 'seeks inclusive solutions' was highlighted by participants (non-facilitators) as being of importance to them.

## **Following activities and actions**

### **Reflection on the Process & Outcomes**

- 59% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that a greater involvement of the Lead Facilitator in early discussions would be beneficial in tailoring the proposed participatory design process to the specific needs of the community, 35% ambivalent and 6% against. However, 75% of participants (non-facilitators) felt that the continued involvement of the Lead Facilitator in follow-up events would be beneficial to the community (Build Momentum, Kick-start a stalled Action Plan, Create Active Community Groups), 19% unsure and 6% against.
- Most facilitators shared the opinion that facilitated engagement out with the core participatory design event, was at the very least beneficial if not absolutely essential in obtaining the maximum value in terms of successful community outcomes.
- Several facilitators emphasised that these participatory design events should never be viewed as one-off events but as part of a more long-term community based approach to place.
- A few facilitators did however interject some degree of uncertainty as to whether protracting the event process itself was the necessarily the best approach to take suggesting that we should not lose sight of other opportunities for people to influence local place-based decision making out with events.
- Pre-event and post-event engagement with the community provides a transitional period of support which enables the community to take ownership of the process and outcomes.

### **Pre-Event Engagement & Briefing Sessions**

- Pre-event engagement appears to be perceived by most facilitators as a scoping and sense checking exercise in which there is an informal two way exchange of information, thoughts and ideas between the team and the community before the event. It is the point at which the dialogue with the community begins and relationships and trust can start to be forged.
- From the perspective of the facilitation team; pre-event engagement can offer real insight into the context and issues affecting the community and identify possible pitfalls to avoid. The information gathered at this stage can be used

to check the appropriateness of the proposed approach methodology and allow modification of the design of the event accordingly.

- Familiarising participants with the process by clearly explaining the basics of what will happen and running 'warm-up events' is one way to make them feel more comfortable with the process. It also helps get them in the right mind-set, introduces the main issues and helps them develop the skills they need to fully engage with the process.
- Facilitators suggested that 'warm-up events' should be held at least a week before the main event to allow participants time to fully absorb information, think in depth about the issues and begin to form ideas of their own, because the main objective of this pre-event dialogue is to get the community to bring to a charrette an agenda which isn't the Scottish Government's, the Design Team's or the Local Planning Authority's.

### **Feedback Sessions & Aftercare**

- If the aim of the event is to not just inform decision makers, but to encourage ongoing community involvement in place making decisions, then facilitated feedback sessions were considered by most respondents as essential to the process.
- Follow-up events allow a respectful rounding-up of the event and a transfer of ownership to the community. As well as providing a summary of what was learnt through the process and what the resultant proposals are, follow-up sessions can be used to maintain momentum, identify issues likely to arise during the next steps and communicate practical advice on how these might be tackled.
- If the community can see that their concerns have been listened to and that their ideas are present in the proposals being taken forward then they are more likely to trust in the process and believe that they can make a difference by being engaged with future discussions.
- Participants expect to see tangible outcomes, and if these are not delivered, frustration and disillusionment may follow. Feedback Sessions therefore offer an opportunity to explain the decision process involved in determining which actions will be taken forward, including the strategic priorities for the area and any impediments to implementing any of the community proposals. They are vital in keeping the community informed about the progress of implementation and can help develop a more realistic assessment of which design proposals will be delivered in what time frame.
- Maintaining energy and momentum is essential. Follow-up events which offer practical support to the community in establishing steering groups and building sustainable governance and delivery structures also help build sustainable capacity within the community so that they have the confidence to take action themselves in the future.
- Facilitators clearly felt that facilitated follow-up and aftercare were beneficial in supporting communities through the implementation stages of the process and were important in developing a more long-term community based approach to place planning. However this approach would inevitably increase the work expected of facilitators and would need to be funded properly.
- There was a suggestion from a few facilitators that each community should perhaps have a dedicated Local Authority Officer trained to specifically offer long-term community support and ensure that the outcomes of participatory design events are implemented.

### **Aspirations for the Future**

- Facilitators expressed some serious practical concerns about whether enough real thought had been put into the level of support that would be needed to help guide, train and nurture community groups and communities through the process of developing their own Local Place Plan.
- The majority of facilitators considered that their involvement in the process could be beneficial to a community preparing their own Local Place Plan. The specific skills and knowledge facilitators felt they could bring to the process were: general process knowledge (76%), neutrality/detachment (74%), future scenario exploration (76%), consensus building (71%), strategy and project conceptualisation (76%), visualisation of community ideas and options (78%) and helping to build new community visions (67%).
- It was considered that if a facilitator or facilitation team was to undertake this task, then it would be essential that they have good understanding of the built environment, statutory processes, key issues and opportunities, development economics and what in financial terms is realistically achievable.
- The majority of participants (non-facilitators) also considered that access to a facilitator or facilitation team might be beneficial to a community preparing their own Local Place Plan. The specific skills and knowledge they felt facilitators could bring to the process were: general process knowledge (73%), neutrality/detachment (64%), future scenario exploration (42%), consensus building (52%), strategy and project conceptualisation (51%), visualisation of community ideas and options (61%) and helping to build new community visions (57%).
- It was felt by some participants (non-facilitators) that communities are currently forced into responding to initiatives made by the Local Authority and others without being given enough time and space to consider the issues in depth. This type of facilitated support could help communities develop their own ideas and plans independently and allow the necessary time and space for the 'thinking' to be done in advance of events.
- Facilitated support could help to resolve conflict, build consensus and manage expectations. By allowing time to develop and explore different proposals more fully, the advantages and disadvantages of each option could be better appreciated.
- Participants (non-facilitators) suggested that what was needed was a dedicated individual, willing to take an inclusive and wide ranging approach to issues, working over the long term with the community to provide professional guidance, technical support and project management skills.
- Participants (non-facilitators) were split on whether members of the facilitation team should be drawn from the local area to tap into local expert knowledge, or should they be from another area to reduce the risk of undisclosed vested interests. 41% showed a preference for members of the facilitation team to be drawn from other areas, 27% for local community members and 32% were ambivalent.
- When considering whether the members of the facilitation team should be drawn from the local area or be from elsewhere the majority of participants (non-facilitators) felt there merits in both scenarios. As this is envisioned as a team situation, it was suggested that it might be preferable to have a mix of individuals drawn from the local area and elsewhere to deliver a balance of neutrality and in-depth local knowledge.
- Real understanding of the local context and an in-depth local knowledge was seen by participants (non-facilitators) as essential. Concern was expressed that if the facilitation team was made up solely of people drawn from elsewhere, then this essential understanding might be lacking. For example a team of professionals from a major urban centre may have no empathy with



and hold totally inaccurate pre-conceptions about a deprived rural area, its inhabitants and the real issues affecting them on a daily basis.

## Appendix 2: Basic Facilitation Skills

**According to the literature, a facilitator has to have a wide range set of skills that including being** (After, Rodger, 2016; Wates, 2014; Condon, 2008; Kaner, et al., 2007):

1- <b>Organised (properly prepared):</b> The most successful activities are invariably those on which sufficient time and effort have been given to preliminary organisation and to engaging those who have an interest that needs to be represented, in order to ensure the smooth running of the event (Wates, 2014, p. 21).
2- <b>Impartial:</b> The literature stressed the need for the facilitator to be 'unbiased and non-manipulative' (Cameron, 2005), to remain neutral and impartial. This is because, according to Bond and Thomson, 2007, a facilitator is in a position where there is potential for manipulating the public and their viewpoints.
3- <b>Flexible and adaptable:</b> The literature highlighted the need for a facilitator to be flexible and adaptable, capable of modifying an event's structure and activities as circumstances dictate, dependent who is in the room. This requires avoiding inflexible methods and strategies. However, such flexibility must be employed to help the facilitation teamwork towards common objectives, agreed during the pre-event preparation.
4- <b>Open-Minded (supportive of different agendas and views):</b> Participants may want to be involved in the community design event for a variety of reasons. This need not be a problem. Indeed diversity of perspectives can assist in developing novel or innovative design interventions. But this means that facilitator has to be accommodated and enroll people with very different, often competing agendas and views and this has to be done in an open and inclusive manner.
5- <b>Approachable:</b> A facilitator has to be approachable because this can have a positive and rewarding impact on those taking part. When a facilitator is open and friendly, this will be communicated to participants. People can feed off such friendliness. When people feel they can talk in open manner, they are more likely give valuable feedback both about the decisions under discussion and about how good they think the facilitation is. Being approachable, across a variety of setting and different context in which a facilitator may work means showing respect for the perceptions, choices and abilities of all participants in order to help them to contribute setting the goals and strategies required (Wates, 2014, p. 22).
6- <b>Honest and Trustworthy:</b> The literature highlighted the importance of facilitators being open, clear about the parameters (the rules of engagement) operating in a community design event. They need to be straight forward about the nature of any activity during the event. This means managing participants' expectations and avoiding raising unrealistic aspiration, avoiding hidden agendas, and instead inspiring innovative discussions and novel ideas. Wates pointed out (2014, p. 15) that people will participate more enthusiastically if they know that something can be achieved through their involvement. This means allowing discussions (negotiations) to flow freely and be creative, and ensuring that the public are exploring their own ideas as opposed to conforming to a pre-determined agenda, But facilitators must also manage expectations and make sure that stakeholders are made aware that some of their suggestions may not be practical, beneficial or financially viable (Rodger, 2016).
7- <b>Humble:</b> Condon (2008) stressed that a facilitator must 'lead without Leading', highlighting that this rule pertains to how the facilitators should conduct themselves before, during or after charrettes. Here an important element of leading a community design process is 'silence'. In this case, if the participants are clearly engaged and working collaboratively, a facilitator should remain silent. Yet a facilitator must also

<p>ensure that nobody is disrupting a conversation or being left out. Facilitators should thus see themselves as 'enablers', helping the participants achieve their own goals, rather than as providers of services and solutions (Wates, 2014, p. 21).</p>
<p><b>8- Self-aware:</b> Self-reflection, during the running of an event, is important because this can alert a facilitator to the signs that indicate what they are feeling, which they can then use as a continuing guide to how effectively they are discharging their role.</p>
<p><b>9- Empathetic:</b> Facilitators need to be able to sense and understand the feelings and concerns of others. This is important because it helps facilitators to identify effective means of developing the contribution, learning and performance of individuals and groups taking part in the event.</p>
<p><b>10- Empowering:</b> Participants of different ages, gender, backgrounds, and faiths inevitably have not only different perspectives but also varying levels of skill in contributing and collaborating. To ensure that the full spectrum of the community is being empowered, feeling strong and comfortable enough to challenge others (especially those with more power or status) is crucial. Involving all affected parties as early as possible, preferably in the outset of the event, can contribute to achieving this. As participants become more engaged, they will then not need so much encouragement to participate effectively.</p>
<p><b>11- Consensus building:</b> A facilitator's job is to 'support everyone to do their best thinking' (Kaner, et al., 2007, p. 32). By supporting all participants in this way, a facilitator can enable group members to search for inclusive solutions, and this, in turn, builds consensus. Managing expectations and avoiding raising unrealistic aspirations is critical here as is surfacing any hidden agenda.</p>
<p><b>12- Mediating:</b> Often facilitators can find themselves called upon to mediate between either participants whose views clash or ideas that can't be reconciled. It is not a facilitator's role to choose between or promote one side or another. Instead they should seek (in a mini-SWOT analysis) to present participants with the pros and cons of the positions being disputed, leaving participants to make their own decisions about them.</p>
<p><b>13- Communicating clearly:</b> Facilitators need to be careful to express themselves clearly and give instructions (or advice) that are unambiguous so that the resources of the community design event are not squander through indecisive activities or by misunderstandings. Wherever possible, such communications should be given to participants in written form so that individually and jointly they can refer to them when taking part in interactive exercises and activities.</p>
<p><b>14- Listening attentively:</b> One of the most critical skills that a facilitator should practice is listening attentively, sometime called 'active listening'. This requires facilitators to listen carefully to what participants are saying, not letting pre-conceptions cloud their understanding, and also giving careful attention to what isn't being said and, where necessary, reading between the lines about what is.</p>
<p><b>15- Challenging assumptions:</b> Another important role for facilitators is to challenge assumptions, regardless of by whom these are expressed. Innovative and novel decision-making is more likely to occur if it is not trammel by engrained preferences and prejudices. So they need to be recognised and unpacked but in a manner that respect the integrity of those who hold them so that they do not become alienate and cease to engage in the dialogue and collaboration required.</p>
<p><b>16- Seeking Inclusive Solutions:</b> Community design events are often tasked with, and predicated on the basis of, achieving inclusive solutions. This is because it is assumed that decisions made from a diversity of inputs are more likely to be sustained by stakeholder buy-in. Facilitators should ensure that they discharge their role in a manner that supports this aspiration. However, they also have a duty to signal where their own experience suggests that a proposed course of action is unrealistic or likely to result in</p>

failure. Balancing these two aspects of their role – impartial inclusivity against offering (experience-based) advice - can be difficult for facilitators, especially those operating in a domain where they themselves have specialist skills or expert knowledge – when, for instance, they are themselves built environment professionals or community development officers. No hard and fast rules can be offered for how to choose between these two positions. Facilitators will need to use their own judgement about how best to operate. Whichever they choose, some participants are unlikely to be satisfied. As a result, facilitators have to be transparent whenever they depart from impartiality to offer advice and explicit about why they have done so.

**17- Inclusive/ Fair:** Facilitation is commonly based on democratic principles. No matter how large the differences (of power, status, education, social capital) between stakeholders outside of the community design event, within the event facilitators are expected to construct a safe space where, for instance, ‘truth can be spoken to power’, and where professionals’ expertise and lay people’s lived experience are both treated as valid negotiating currency. To achieve this, facilitators are called upon to give all participants an equal voice and equal air-time during the discussions that underpin decision making in community design events.

### Appendix 3: Interactive Workshop

#### The Role of the Facilitator in Participatory Community Design Processes Collated outputs from the 5/6/17workshop

##### *What do you see as the priority issues raised by the survey results?*

##### **Workshop participants’ priorities noted on their individual aide memoire sheets**

That this is not a duplicate approach

Post-event engagement plan needs to be clear – should be in agreement with stakeholder management team and facilitator – before end of design event

Publicity – high % vote Yes but ask those who didn’t attend why they didn’t attend –did they know?

Preconceptions and knowledge of facilitators

Caveat responses – impact on survey results

Consultation fatigue

Go where the people are – this shouldn’t be another process

Is the lack of response from under 30s a reflection of lack of interest or experience of charrettes? Or just a reflection of the democratic split of the survey participants?

Community representative groups not always representative of the whole community. Tied to unease over dominant voices and how facilitators handle them.

Management of expectation – ambitious but realistic, not a wish list.

Ongoing role of lead facilitator seems important. Is this particularly so for community groups? Trust placed in that role.

List of skills required for facilitators – some consensus on what they are.

The research is very important and useful as there is a lack of research in this area.

Pre-event preparation – who does this, what is the role of the facilitators?

Importance of pre-briefing sessions – who to include, making sure the right people are included (community reps)

Post-event engagement – what happens next? Who does this? Importance of lead facilitator involvement

After-care post-development – who is involved? Does it happen?

Reaching the hard to reach – go to them. 15-29 and 75+. Don’t assume community rep really represents

Practical constraints – importance of explaining at start. Would it limit ideas?

Pre-conception – danger of influencing outcomes

Achieving true representation – hard to reach groups are often disadvantaged or marginalised in communities. They have crucial information that is valuable to increase impact
Role of client
Co-design makes vulnerable people powerful and powerful people vulnerable
Set up / preparation is crucial. Roles must be clear at the start; expectations of both commissioner and facilitator must be clear
Pre-event – commissioners and facilitator winning trust of participants through engagement, possibility of change. Managing expectations
Event – set up a safe, bounded space for discussion; include seldom heard groups
Post-event – keep follow ups to maintain momentum
After-care: monitoring and evaluation of where delivery has taken place. Clients as cross-generational custodians
Is the charrette process flexible enough to facilitate different circumstances?
Budget is an issue in retaining facilitator post-event
Survey results reflect difficulty in reaching diverse or hard to reach groups
Impartiality is dependent on the relationship between the facilitator and client
Facilitator is usually part of the design team
Who is the facilitator – is this also the stakeholder management team .... clarify. This comes back to ownership
Pre-event briefing and post-event sessions are vital but both stages need sufficient resource which is often limited and therefore defaults to the stakeholder management team. Think there is a lack of understanding of this within the survey results. Define
Facilitator knowledge is good in pre-event planning – knowledge and experience from elsewhere
Long-term stewardship – key question
Survey results not representative of all groups – not representative of all participants, or desired participants
Caveats would be interesting to see within your report
What do you mean by facilitator – is this lead facilitator, or the approach?
How did you put the survey out – I never heard of it ... so a lot of other people will be in the same situation. Were you overly selective?
No mention of children (especially as a distinct group from young people) and the opportunities and challenges of engaging with them in planning
How facilitation of activities differs when engaging with various groups, especially those who are more difficult to engage
Adapting approach of facilitation/ engagement to meet the needs of the community and how people are made aware of the opportunity to get involved/ have voice heard (helping to inform people of opportunities)
Closing the feedback loop – following up with community about what has/ will happen as a result of their engagement
Clarification of roles – facilitator / stakeholder group – at various stages of engagement
Key issue – obtaining and maintaining community trust in 1) event, 2) process, 3) delivery of outcomes. Facilitator will be primary in 1) and 2) and client in 3) but vital also in 1) and 2).
Trust in process. Ownership of process.
Skills and training for event
A facilitator can manage the action plan defining stewards and actors for each individual action . Thereafter need for definition of overall owner of the event for evaluation of it in the long-term.
Post-charrette involvement of facilitator is suggested as they are perhaps trusted neutral brokers with local knowledge - that will be interesting to procure
Management of groups and tensions and dominance is important issue that community

responses were not high-marking – training need? for built environment professionals who are not trained mediators and based on notion that domain expertise is essential
Training and accreditation of facilitation skills – are we doing well enough?
Event stakeholders vs facilitators (owners) Who does what? Roles need to be set out
Facilitation vs facilitative role and design expertise. What role for true impartial facilitation?
Post-event ownership and action – key part of process
Preconceptions of facilitation team – this is negative and perhaps highlights bias and lack of true facilitation process
Pre-event briefing is known as scoping in Enquiry by Design, including a 1 or 2 day event 6 weeks before the charrette
Charrette is a broad term. Enquiry by Design is a variant (Prince's Foundation) but still a charrette
Facilitation skills – should also include practice skills and experience of team working with design consultants. Urban design skills
Inclusiveness: the process rather than the facilitation team is more important, though the facilitators must be good listeners
Facilitator should be involved throughout, alongside project manager
Pre-event information needs to be clear and set out the role of the facilitator and stakeholder management team post-event
Stakeholder management team in place – this has not always happened – puts doubt into process
Post-event engagement – needs to be set out and planned during the implementation stage – links to stakeholder management
Facilitators must be impartial
Limitations, resources, etc – need to be clear at the very beginning
Need to manage people/ groups that dominate the event or discussion – sometimes puts others off having a say
Post-charrette – following up. Who, when?
Timing of involvement of design team/ facilitators (motivation / incentive? – particularly before and after the event – who involved and who pays?
Who is the stakeholder management team – what are their motivations, incentives, roles?
Ownership of the plan / vision/ action
Survey vs events. How to reach the 15-29 ages and other hard to reach groups in these participatory processes and research
Communicating practical constraints – managing expectations
Theme – meaningful and inclusive decision-making – implementation of decisions
Facilitator – background / skills – what about local expert
Equality in terms of facilitation over different sessions and places
Mismatched priorities / expectations for facilitator / community participants
The community and stakeholders are permanent while facilitator is transient (often commissioned). There is a question as to how the facilitator can build trust between these actors so that they are not needed when their contract ends? 75% of participants would seek the facilitator to be there longer throughout
Clarity of constraints and expectation management
Post-event – a long-term task – funding?
Big issue is the scope of design – generally lead by built environment professionals – but needs to understand needs of the community
Reaching all the community – a wider societal problem – look at young persons voting record
How to form a representative community view?
Preconceptions – a real concern in trust
Management of influencing stakeholders



Facilitators see themselves as shapers of the community
How to reach sceptical / negative people – other than the usual suspects? Community participants
How to get rigid mindset of policy makers (e.g. highway engineers) to take an open, flexible approach (i.e. co-design)
How to politicians to attend and listen to the process and outcomes
How we know / understand / exhibit impartiality as facilitators
How do we reach / contact / study / understand the non-joining and under-represented community (i.e. out of the room)
How do we ensure there are clear routes, mechanisms by which to ensure / enable / check delivery
How standardised should the process (es) be? Is there scope for variation of approach?
Is the Place Standard the correct (or only) place evaluation model/ tool/ mechanism?
The post-charrette and delivery seems important. Do we put enough emphasis on this?
Much depends on who is in the room and their dynamic. Issue of how to get to more people, as a cross-section of the community
Interactive rationality vs linear, deductive logic
Issue of who – involved or excluded
Charrette as capacity building

**Workshop participants' aggregated priorities by frequency of mention in aide memoires**

action (4) approach (5) charrette (6) clear (6) client (4)  
community (20) delivery (4) design (9)  
engagement (10) event (10) expectations (6)  
facilitator (45) following (3) groups (12)  
happen (4) hard (4) impartial (4) important (8) include (5)  
information (3) interesting (3) involved (8) issue (6) knowledge (4)  
lack (5) lead (4) management (16) needs (7)  
opportunities (3) ownership (4) participants (7) people (11)  
plan (6) post-event (9) pre-event (6)  
process (12) reach (10) reflection (3)  
representative (6) results (5) role (11) sessions (3) skills (7)  
stakeholder (11) survey (7) team (11) training (4)  
trust (7) understand (4) vs (4)

***Group Discussion 1: What are the priority issues raised for you by the survey results?***

**Group 2 Discussion Notes**

**Role and purpose**

- There needs to be a clear definition of the facilitator, their role and purpose.
- Others who are involved in the process need to clearly understand their role and purpose too

**Trust and Confidence**

- Building trust and confidence is a key component to the charrette or community design process
- People need to know they are being treated fairly, without hidden agenda
- People need to know what is going to happen with the outcomes, that there is a clear sense of direction, there are routes to delivery that have been considered and that it isn't all going to be set aside for something else to be delivered.

**Group 3 Discussion Notes** (listed by individual group member's contributions)

- Not a duplicative approach – not one-size-fits all
- Post-event engagement plan needs to be clear, integrated from the event itself, as they leave, what are the next few steps (even just short term) but know that it is long term for change.
- Publicity – respondents were at the event, bring together from different groups. Should be part of their day job, shouldn't need a charrette to do this.
- Consultation fatigue – people becoming more disengaged.
- Pre-conceptions about the knowledge of the facilitators.
- Local experts learning to be expert and impartial facilitators.
- Who to take post-event actions forward.
- Make charrettes part of a bigger process – continuous thread to link things together.
- Joined up conversations, what are people going to do and what is going to change.
- What will be delivered vs. how and who
- Survey was not best to target young people: maybe focus group or other approach would have been a better approach for them.
- Facilitator to understand the client but also listening to and staying open to the stakeholders.
- Pre-event timing and clear about objectives.
- Differences in priorities for facilitator skills, different expectations. Impartial, or clear about why/how they aren't. Clear about limitations and prejudice. Clear framing and managing expectations.
- Wanting facilitators to stay on and take actions forward – often commissioned/transient. Trust between permanent actors needs to be built so that the facilitator is not needed afterwards.
- Us vs them barriers to overcome: should there be a space to develop relationships/trust and connections. Start of conversations and it will be the stakeholders' role to take things forward.
- Expectation management feeds into a lot of this.
- Community representative groups not being representative of the wider community: how dominant voices are heard.
- Ambitious let realistic: what is achievable. Fine balance.
- Lack of responses from under 30s: gap of interest/experience.
- School vs. young people.

- Facilitators using passed experience – not good to compare to other processes/places.
- Pre-event sessions: making sure the right people are involved in the first place.

#### **Group 4 Discussion Notes**

##### **Facilitator's Neutrality and Techniques:**

- It is essential that facilitators at design events take a neutral stance and are not afraid to put a 'sense check' on the aspirations of the community.
- A good facilitator will encourage others to have their say, not go-on or become high on their own style.
- The use of technology is welcome in design events, but low tech methods like hand sketching, writing on flip charts etc. are considerably more personable and can help make discussion flow more easily.

##### **Setting Boundaries:**

- For design events to be effective, boundaries need to be drawn at the outset and 'red lines' marked around what is and is not open to discussion or change.
- There is also a risk that design events become 'mediation': losing touch with the wider issues and quality of development instead negotiating the minutiae of one controversial site: housing unit numbers, increased traffic etc.

##### **Power Relations:**

- Some groups are more empowered than others in design events: it was noted that councillors in particular can come to the event with a particular 'wish list' and can rapidly become disengaged if this is not addressed.
- It was noted with community organisation led design events, the commissioning organisations are challenged to disengage from the process and ensure that it is only the wider community's, not their own aspirations coming through.

##### **Timescales:**

- A concern was raised that design events, like the charrette can be too short term and intensive for some communities, particularly those with economic deprivation issues. Here a more prolonged form of engagement, gradually building trust is necessary, through setting up shop in the area, working with local organisations etc.

## ***Thematic clustering of priority issues identified during Feedback Session 1***

### **Group 1-2: Joint clusterings**

Clustered priority issues.

#### **Clarity of roles**

- Clarification of roles of facilitator, promoter, leader, local authority contact
- Definition of facilitation team
- How do the roles change through the process – is there clarity over this?
- Facilitator v facilitation process – tension over steering/neutrality
- Facilitators must be impartial
- The research appears to suggest that facilitators see themselves as ‘shapers’ – not sure if this is what is needed.

#### **Impartiality**

- Impartial and seek inclusive solutions (participant and facilitator)
- How do we demonstrate impartiality

#### **People in the room**

- Management of influential stakeholders
- How to get a wide range of people ‘in the room’
- Children as distinct from young people – adapt styles to allow engagement
- How to get beyond the ‘usual suspects’

#### **Trust in the process and the people involved in the process**

- Local authority culture – negative, ‘not invented here’
- Importance of co-production - it should carry on through the process
- Trust and skills for co-production – process and outcomes
- Building trust through clarity of roles and their implications
- Expertise and how this gives direction to process and how it is facilitated
- Closing the feedback loop – how have inputs been taken forward?

#### **Ownership and process management**

- Who owns each stage of process – client, facilitator?
- Who owns process and at which stage?
- Relationship between facilitator and stakeholder management
- Resources and constraints over how long a facilitator is involved

#### **Delivery**

- Charrette as vehicle for capacity building
- Resourcing – funding for follow-up event 6-12 months later
- Trust in the system to deliver
- Agree scope of expectation, limitations and boundaries

### **Group 3-4: Joint clusterings**

Clustered priority issues separated by fuzzy lines.

#### **Management process**

- Timing
- Who is engaged?
- Setting boundaries
- Managing expectations

#### **Continuity**

- Maintaining momentum
- Who to speak to?
- Building willingness to engage

#### **Capacities and trust**

- Coming through from pre-event and post-event
- Capacity of facilitator, neutral, mediation
- Knowledge and pre-conceptions
- Ability to engage, social capital



**Representation**

- Who is being engaged?
- Who is standing up for the 'community'?
- Younger and older age gap
- How to reach out

**Group Discussion Session 2: When should a facilitators/ facilitations team's contribution start and finish?**

**Group 2 Discussion Notes**

- The process starts prior to the currently defined stage 1. There are stages that take place that instigate the process, from identifying the issue that needs to be addressed, deciding on a process to be used to address that issue, developing the idea (potentially for a funding bid)
- The three stages suggested are 1. Identification of purpose, 2. Setting a brief and 3. Appointment of a design team.
- The stages appear to be related to the current funded charrette/big event consultant led process – who will do this post-government funding? There may be the need to develop some capacity in LA or community councils for 'in house' expertise.
- If community led the start of the process can be more fluid with cycles of testing and refining ideas before pursuing further.
- Place Standard could be a useful tool in enabling communities to build briefs.
- Process needs to begin before the appointment of a facilitator or design team – *Creating Great Places*, Scottish Government policy doc, notes that placemaking begins with decision makers.
- In terms of an appointed facilitator, direct involvement from Stage 2, Community and Stakeholder briefing is a point from which it is necessary.
- For the 5 Stages the group were in agreement with what was proposed in the stages document with **red type**. Facilitation runs to stage 4 ideally, but this relies on good funding and capacity etc.

**Group 3 Discussion Notes** (listed by individual group member's contributions)

- They need to be more involved to questions, query, scoping.
- Lacking funding for the other stages, this needs to be addressed.
- Co-facilitator who is the 'right person for the job'
- Scoping can take 6 months or more.
- Resources.
- Trust – do them and disappear repeatedly.
- Like a circus that comes to town.
- You cut your cloth accordingly.
- You have your more charismatic/desirable facilitators.
- Project management role, builds relationships, maintains them, stewards the process forward, is contactable.
- Two people or one person.
- Resources don't allow for the design detail that was enabled through Enquiry by Design
- Brief for future design, rather than detail.
- Future commission is needed, do you still need a facilitator.
- Stakeholders are there, facilitator comes and does their tricks, then there is an exit.
- Steps 2/3 are essential and almost given.
- If they have done a good job, they have built up the rapport and trust and relationships to take the ideas forward
- Context dependent.
- Resources, priorities.
- If only we could do charrettes everywhere.

- Seems to be where development potential is high...observation.

#### **Group 4 Discussion Notes**

This breakout discussion was the one that the group found most challenging.

- It was generally agreed that it is essential to engage the facilitation team as early as possible to build up trust in the community. This is essential at avoiding some of the criticisms levelled at the early charrettes that the facilitators' were 'parachuted in' and then left the community once the event was over. Facilitators need to be able to 'hit the ground running' when it comes to the actual event, given the time limits imposed on most participatory design initiatives.
- However, it was noted that the timescales for funding in the current Government supported arrangements sometimes leave less scope to do this than is desirable. As a result, the local authority can be left with much of the pre-engagement work and organisation.
- A good event will have left the community and authorities with a clear idea of who is responsible for taking which actions forward and will hopefully have increased the capacity of the community to work for change. However, having the facilitator available for the 'post engagement' and 'after care' stages can be useful, especially if they were particularly instrumental in delivering the outcomes of the event itself.

### Aggregated groups' template responses

	Pro's	Con's	Comments
<b>STAGES</b>			All this is cyclical
			Communities and stakeholders involved in all stages
			Each charrette is different. No one size fits all – local context sets requirements
			In an ideal world right through to stage 4. In practice, 1-3.
			Relies on good funding, good relationship building, capacity building
			Right people co-facilitating (project management/facilitator) to see process through
<b>Pre-event preparation</b>	Potentially the most important stage for the facilitator to be involved	Costs associated with consultant	Who takes forward
	Build up capacity in local communities to support		
	Experience		Do we need alternative models for facilitation team leads
	The Local Authority may/will have long term involvement – are they best placed to do this?		
<b>Pre-event briefing session</b>	Establish credentials and trust with community	The personality of the facilitator can make or break the event	
	Essential to have facilitator involved in order to properly understand community dynamic		
	Using different skills to suit circumstances		
<b>Community design event</b>	Impartiality		Having a consistent relationship in stages 1-3 can build trust in advance of design event
<b>Post-event engagement during implementation</b>	Handover point		
<b>After care post-development</b>			Less important stage but still useful

***Individual groups' template responses***

	<b>Preferred start</b>	<b>Preferred finish</b>
<b>Group 1</b>	From initial pre-event preparation	Handover/final report
<b>Group 2</b>	-	-
<b>Group 3</b>	Pre-event	After post-event engagement
<b>Group 4</b>	Pre-event preparation	Community design event – as minimum

***Feedback of preferred start and end stages of facilitator/team engagement reporting back from all groups***

**Group 1:** handover.

Difficulties: due to roles and team – producer, consumer. Clear roles but links/joined – difficult.

**Group 2:** three stages prior to the five stages.

Difficulties: bias towards charrettes and big events with consultant teams, who could take forward these events post government funded participation, different teams, community councils, developing these skills. Process (start and finish) can be fluid, if communities are engaged in designing the purpose, process, outcomes. Circular process, not linear.

**Group 3:** someone needs to see the process through. Co-facilitator. Through to stage 4. Ideal world vs. real world.

Difficulties: each process and place is different. No one size fits all. Not sure that a facilitator is separate from the design team. Who is paying.

**Group 4:** Stages 1-3 essential. Level of understanding (aware of the community and level of engagement), familiarity, part of the process. Consistency with the community, key characters, what will happen along the way.



### **Group Discussion Session 3: When should stakeholder engagement occur?**

#### **Group 2 Notes**

The group thought this question should be reworded to something like: *what stakeholders should be engaged and when?*

- A stage that is specifically committed to identifying stakeholders. There needs to be effort put into a robust stakeholder analysis, identifying who needs to be involved from start to finish, who needs to be involved in the design events, who needs to be involved a little longer etc.
- This stage might not need a Facilitator – but some degree of facilitation is required throughout the whole process.
- Who will be conducting the stakeholder analysis? Seems to be important question.
- Review and assessment – facilitation pervades the whole process and is not held by an external group alone. The client group needs to operate with a degree of facilitation.
- The number of those engaged in the process should swell to the event, but the involvement of a large group is not necessary beyond those who are involved in implementing change
- The process should not necessarily be viewed as linear, start to finish, but a series of feedback loops with different stakeholder groups that refine the process and outputs (see group 3 diagram on sheet).

#### **Group 3 Discussion Notes** (listed by individual group member's contributions)

NB: Stakeholders of: (i) place; (ii) practice; and (iii) interest. Think widely.

- Know the groups.
- Core group.
- Key interests.
- Local authority.
- Secondary team.
- Tertiary = public. Wide net.
- After care – go back to core interest and make sure the core is still there.
- Core stakeholders, across interests, bring in people from each group.
- Getting to hear different peoples perspectives (housing, transport, as part of the public briefing).
- Line up the key groups in advance based upon the key issues.
- Key threat – not having the right people at the event. Identifying them and lining it up in advance.
- It needs to start to happen at stage one and then continues throughout.
- Different roles and timing for different groups, again context specific.
- Identify hard to reach groups and ways in which to engage with them.

Concentric rings. Ongoing conversation. Inclusiveness. Self-selecting interest parties.

#### **Group 4 Discussion Notes**

The group thought this question should be reworded to something like: *what stakeholders should be engaged and when?*

- Much of the discussion centred on the power relations between the various groups of stakeholders. The Community of Professionals for example, can be seen to control access to participatory event funding for the Communities of Place and Interest.
- There is also a more strategic context in that the recent round of planning reform is seen to 'hollow out' the role of the local authority, divesting power upwards to the national planning level and downwards to communities. Given the experience of local authorities, there are concerns over how this situation could impact on the delivery of participatory design outcomes.
- Equally, there is a need to 'never give up' with those communities who consistently do not engage: this is a duty for the public authorities at all levels of government. In these settings, it is better to target 'issues' rather than groups or individuals. Charrettes in particular, even though they seek to engage with the traditional 'hard to reach' groups may in some places still miss those who are disengaged from community, social or economic life.
- It was acknowledged that there is a 'waxing and waning' of who participates in design initiatives at various points in the life of the process. A council might choose to engage with a range of figures from the community through a charrette or other event, but these those involved then self-select as to whether to continue with trying to implement the vision and projects.

### ***Aggregated groups' template responses***

	<b>Pro's</b>	<b>Con's</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>STAGES</b>		Identification of stakeholders	Better question: what type of stakeholder engagement should occur at what stage?
			Different stakeholders at different times
			Facilitation skills pervade all stages
			Cyclical process
			How do we prioritise stakeholders? They have different interests/timescales
			Define stakeholder engagement plan at outset of project and review as project progresses. Again this is dependent on context
<b>Pre-event preparation</b>	Involving the 3 stakeholder groups	Right people involved	
	Building a partnership approach can help identify priorities and opportunities		
<b>Pre-event briefing session</b>	You have to keep at it – simply thinking that communities don't want to engage, or that it is already known what they think is not good enough. Innovative and appropriate approaches are required		
<b>Community design event</b>		Everyone clear on roles	
		Engagement techniques need to suit community – too many Post-It notes	
<b>Post-event engagement during implementation</b>	Review and assessment		
	This is essential a feedback loop is required if communities are to understand processes, achievements and maintain buy-in		
<b>After care post-development</b>			

***Individual groups' template responses***

	<b>Preferred start</b>	<b>Preferred finish</b>
<b>Group 1</b>	From initial pre-event preparation	Handover/final report
<b>Group 2</b>	-	-
<b>Group 3</b>	Pre-event	After post-event engagement
<b>Group 4</b>	Pre-event preparation	Community design event – as minimum

***Feedback of preferred start and end stages of stakeholder engagement: reporting back from all groups***

- **Group 1:** Bell curve, different people at different stages (place, interest, practice). Small group initially. Looking at who to involve and different stages in the process. Builds towards the event and then back to quite small. At the beginning they are selected and at the end they are self-selected.
- **Group 2:** New diagram. What is the purpose stage? Setting the brief and direction. At that point a robust analysis of who are the stakeholders that you want to see through all the stages and to take the ideas forward, involved in the commissioning of the facilitators/design team. You want people who are invested in that place.
- Where does the responsibility for the stakeholder analysis lie? Client. They might need outside help, community to identify. If they don't recognise the importance of this, then it is hard to move forward.
- **Group 3:** Pre-event = scoping. Core stakeholders, secondary, tertiary. Design event = cast net most widely. When should stakeholder engagement occur. Allow enough time, ensuring they come to the event. 6 months at least before event. Pre-event – briefing – 6 weeks. Full circle – route for further feedback after the event. Return to the core and keep lines of communication open.
- **Group 4:** Wrong question. What type of stakeholder engagement at what stages is what should be asked. Change and adapt over time. Feedback loop. Make sure you are covering all the ground, what achievements are there after the event. Keep at it. Who, when, why and how.
- Waxing and waning of who is involved over time. At different stages, maybe iterative and cyclical. Thematic cluster is continuity...what is the glue that holds this all together? Who has responsibility from start to finish?

**Plenary discussion**

- The buck stops with the authority or whoever sought out the funding.
- Champion/partnership to steer it forward. There is overlap, champions with particular issues.
- Need to get the relationships right first.
- Attempting to build a long running partnership, might morph over time.
- Champions often up and leave.
- Needs to be embedded in the structure/neighbourhood.
- Other consultations on other things – needs to fit in.
- Embed it with other process timing.
- There is a falseness to continuity – people come and go – communities/neighbourhoods are dynamic and changing.
- 3-4 year lead in time.
- About relationships not urgent issues that we demand urgent answers for.

- Local place plans, 'new planning' in the new act. Some kind of accountable mechanisms, need connectivity. Public transport, health, community plan, local development plan.
- What kind of governance structures.
- Accountability of paper trail.
- Allocate a local manager from the local authority to take this forward.
- Glasgow cooperative: delivery agents, community voices, process of moving that forward is happening, housing associations.
- Delivery angle are partnership model moving forward, shared interest moving forward, accountability for success measures, chosen together.



**Group Discussion Session 4: How can the facilitator/ facilitations team acquire the skill set the survey has identified?**

**Group 2 Notes**

- There was discussion about formal facilitation training and the current situation in Scotland – at the moment it is likely that the majority of people involved in facilitation have not had formal training and are therefore highly dependent on their own personality and character traits and instinct. This was acknowledged to be a weakness in the current way things operate.
- On review, all the skills listed are useful. Key skills within the set are: Preparation (as an adaptation of Organisation), consensus building and inclusive solution seeking.
- Many of the skills can be learnt and honed through experience.
- Some of the skills are more character/personality traits, therefore difficult to learn.
- However, self-awareness should be a key area of development as this builds an ability to understand what areas you are weak in and need to build learning and skills in this area.
- Another way of covering areas of weakness is through the development of a set of team skills that cover all the areas – this may be necessary anyway as it is unlikely that a single person would have a high level of ability in all areas.
- Planning and built environment education does not have an emphasis on some of these soft skills – therefore incorporation in training would be valuable.

**Group 3 Discussion Notes**

- Some of these can't be taught
- Missing key practical skills – all rounder (design knowledge), processes, urban design, landscape, roads, place,
- Design skills specialists.
- Risk of appearing superficial – if they don't understand the nitty gritty.
- Expert design skills in the room.
- If you are looking for design outcomes, coaxing ideas out of people, needs to be framed in design solution element.
- Reach consensus.
- Is impartiality a skill?
- The process should flush out much of this.
- We chose to identify qualities vs. things that can be learned.
- Authority/leadership.
- How to apply them, experience through doing.
- Some can be taught and some can't.

#### **Group 4 Discussion Notes**

Our group felt that the one skill which was missing from the list identified in the survey, but which cut across all aspects, was leadership. At the same time, facilitator's must be willing to create trust and negotiate mutually desirable outcomes for participants. The notion of 'consent to gain' is thus crucial.

- Discussion focussed on how planning education can contribute to a facilitator's skillset. Planning needs to be promoted as a cross cutting discipline and mediation needs to be added to the list of subjects which planners study.
- At the same time, it was conceded that the academic route is not the only one: there was much interest in vocational training and the possibility of 'planning apprenticeships'. The older career paths for planners to work into the discipline through local authority admin and technician support were also seen as valuable.
- In this respect, considering the cuts to public finances, the idea of sending planning student's or apprentices on placement to a community organisation instead of a council was discussed. This was seen as one way to engage the drive and interest of young people coming into the profession. Harnessing this kind of energy was seen as crucial to the success of participatory design in planning in the long term.
- Fundamentally, the facilitation skill set is not something that can be taught all in one. It must be learned through action. Confidence and reflexivity on behalf of facilitators are thus key personal traits, as is the ability to handle difficult social and interpersonal situations.

#### **Group flipchart sheets showing priority issues**

- Facilitator's No. 1 skill: leadership
- Engage young people and planners
- Concede to gain
- Vocational over academic learning
- Learning by experience
- Have honesty and trust
  
- Knowing when to switch on/off
- Some of these skills are actually qualities or behaviours – empathy, humility -can they be taught or learned?
- Others can be taught or learned – mediation, leadership, authority, consensus building, urban design.
- A well-structured process will encourage these skills – leads to listening and communicating
- Team + experience will help cover all of these different skills.
- a
- Getting team with range of skills
- Understanding of these skills within team
- Some can learn – others more personal, about what you feel comfortable with as an individual
- Whole different approach to life
- Challenge professionals out of established views
- Limit 'own' views for whole (as part of team) – impartiality
- Trust and respect – have to earn through deeds

### **Feedback about acquiring facilitator skills: reporting back from all groups**

#### **Group 1:**

- Need a team with a range of skills that are needed.
- Not everyone will have all the skills.
- Members of the team should understand the value of the skills.
- Some can be learned, others are interpersonal.
- Persons character and what they feel comfortable with.
- Learn how to limit your own input and listen to what other people are saying.
- Difficult to do this, especially for designers.
- Prove many of these through the process. Prove it through your deeds.

#### **Group 2:**

- Reviewed the skill set, all useful.
- Being properly prepared for the job and impartiality.
- Many you can learn through experience.
- Others are traits, get better at them when you are aware of them. Self-awareness is essential. There are facilitation and mediation training can give you confidence.
- The education for architects, planners etc...don't give you this training/skills.

#### **Group 3:**

- Also leadership was missing.
- Some things can be taught/learned and others can't.
- There are some that are qualities/behaviours: can you learn to switch them on or off.
- Read the situation and know when to you them.
- Some can be taught: organisation etc...
- A well-structured process can help to bring out some of these skills and qualities.
- Experience is valuable and team can help you cover all your bases.
- Ability to learn from each other.

#### **Group 4:**

- Leadership was missing. A good leader would have all of these qualities, not in a dictatorial way.
- Engaging young people and young people.
- Young facilitator? Would that work?
- Technology.
- Location: on the street or in a specific place. Different skills.
- Potential for vocational learning in the planning profession vs. academic training. Planning based apprenticeships.
- Learning by experience.
- Getting in there and having confidence, people will bring up contentious issues.
- Being able to handle difficult situations.

### ***Plenary discussion***

- Agree that most facilitators are not trained as facilitators.
- Experiential learning.
- Tacit knowledge.
- Find it difficult to put into words what they do and how they do it.
- Training trainers.
- The best predictor – humility.
- A good facilitator leaves a group thinking that they didn't need a facilitator and that they could have done it without you.
- Difficult position to find yourself in.
- Undervalued and questioned.
- Get people in a room, produce something that didn't exist before we walked .
- Design professionals are trained to be advocates not humble.
- They like to lead from the front, facilitators need to lead from behind, need to be seen not to be leading.
- And also focus on attentive listening: active listening.
- Actively invest in what other people are saying to them.
- Need to be prepared to let go of the structure...
- Some are qualities/traits.
- Difficult to facilitate when you are a domain expert.
- "Concede to gain".
- Hard concept to get across to people.
- Ken Harvey Institute – Glasgow – provides training for facilitators.

### ***What have we missed? What haven't we discussed?***

- Interface between facilitation and design process – alignment
- Facilitating discussions vs. the design/spatial/social outcomes.
- Listen, give technical information/support – right time application
- Facilitator/designer.
- Good partnership.
- Sequencing.
- Calling on the expert at the right point.
- Quasi judicial roles – weighing up the arguments for/against.
- Judge meets independent journalist.
- Difficult people and situations.
- Unbalanced, mental illness, blockers, one issue lobbyist, closed minded professionals.
- How to handle those sensibly to carry the momentum forward.
- Is the charrette the right way to do this?
- Is there another model?
- Alternative vehicles beyond charrettes – parachuting – loss of continuity of commitment
- Sustained engagement with communities – has this been lost?
- Charrettes all about built environment not. place and people –need to reconcile the former with the latter's needs (social and economic sustainability)..
- Top-down requirements (housing) no relationship to community need.
- The right kind of houses.
- What are the important things to most people.
- Community capacity building that needs to be evenly spread.
- How to transfer successful processes to other places.
- Diversity and expertise within local councils.
- Cyclical vs. big events.

### **Action plan? What next?**

- Design codes for areas/key sites, early pre-app engagement.
- Pro-active early community engagement with developer
- Coordinated response to provide a clear steer.
- Development framework (SPG) from the council to take design code further.
- Embedding charrettes in wider planning process
- One side of A4 – duties.
- Network of communities (with experience of charrettes) for capacity building for new comers
- Good practice examples of charrettes (for community development officers)
- Capacity building – networks – information coordination.
- Where should charrettes take place – seeing the bids as part of a network.
- Positive outputs and outcomes – part of learning/knowledge hub
- Getting better and better all the time.
- Knowledge hub, share, disperse, underpin
- Proper training in facilitation skills.
- Champions, stewards, and leaders for each process – cohesion around these processes.
- Ring fenced funding for ‘after care’.
- Separate fund.
- We need to help this continue to work...make sure it carries weight...
- This is part of a much wider process, if it does not deliver, it will wither away.
- Ambiguity: who is the facilitator and lead facilitator and design team.
- Complex relationships, planning and urban realm to the community realm.
- Planners can feel marginalised, this is a powerful tool, potentially very positive thing.
- Where the voices/pathways are...
- More partnership working, positioning planning.
- Against local place plans.
- 5 years to get through a local development plan process. Interim tool – pathways and vehicles to get people through the process.
- How to cope with schemes that get approved on appeal – leads to charrettes being seen as incapable of carrying the weight of local community priorities within the planning system
- Governance - if community commits, what does developer have to commit?
- Ambiguity: who is the (lead) facilitator, the design team, the community?
- All stakeholders should come open-minded.
- Change and investment – planners are intermediaries between different aspirations.
- Planners need to build alliances and partnerships
- Does the Place Plan add value – is this the best way to capture ‘voices’ and ‘echoes’
- Power going up the way and down the way.



- Top down and bottom up – there is a middle ground for stewarding/shepherding (by planners0.
- Look at what would be good briefing for communities coming to these events.
- Funding to empower communities before running the charrette.
- A few free courses on this; however, how do you persuade the community to acquire these skills before the charrette?
- The charrette seems to be the only show in town
- What skill set does the community need to take part?

***Workshop participants' most frequently mentioned issues throughout workshop outputs***



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**For more information contact:**

Dr. Husam AlWaer (B.Arch, MRTPI, Ph.D, BREEAM AP, AoU, Recognised Practitioner in Urban Design RPUD, SuBETool Founder),

Senior Lecturer, and Place Making Promoter  
Associate Director for the Centre for Environmental Change and Human Resilience (CECHR)

The University of Dundee

School of Social Sciences, Architecture + Urban Planning

Matthew Building, 13 Perth Road, Dundee DD1 4HT, UK

Office: +44(0) 1382348805

Mob: +44(0) 7732857727

Email: [h.alwaer@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:h.alwaer@dundee.ac.uk)

