APaNGO
Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in planning

advocacy, participation and NGOs in planning

interim report 1

First Interim Report of the INTERREG IIIB
Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in Planning Project

APaNGO is a transnational partnership project part-funded by the European Union's INTERREG IIIB programme for North West Europe (NWE). The INTERREG programme encourages closer co-operation and integration through transnational spatial development initiatives that promote sustainable development.

priorities and scope

INTERREG IIIB project areas must fall with in the scope of the following five priorities:

- A more attractive and coherent system of cities, towns and regions.
- Accessibility to transport, communication, infrastructure and knowledge.
- The sustainable management of water resources and the prevention of flood damage.
- Stronger ecological infrastructure and protection of cultural heritage.
- Enhancing maritime functions and promoting territorial integration across seas.

The APaNGO project was approved under the first priority, and its aim is to find ways of increasing community involvement in spatial planning processes, particularly at regional level.

objectives

The APaNGO project has six objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the techniques, systems and infrastructure that are available in different member states to help the general public and community groups to engage constructively in planning and development decision-making at regional level.
- To test and implement methods and processes for involving local people in regional planning.
- To set up a standing transnational forum between a variety of NGOs which provide community representation in forward planning and development processes at city, regional or (with the emergence of the European Spatial Development Perspective) European level.
- To enhance skills and resources for community involvement in planning.
- To produce a good practice guide aiming to disseminate best practice in community involvement in local and regional planning issues.
- To provide an enduring resource for community involvement in planning for Europe.

For further information on the APaNGO project, visit the APaNGO website, at www.apango.eu or e-mail: jonathan.rock@tcpa.org.uk

If you need a larger-text version visit www.apango.eu

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APaNGO project partners

There are five partners in the project, with the TCPA in the lead role:

The **Town and Country Planning Association** (TCPA) is an independent charity campaigning for decent homes in well-designed neighbourhoods, community empowerment and a sustainable future. It works to inspire government, industry and campaigners to put social justice and the environment at the heart of the debate about planning policy, housing and energy supply and use.

The **Brusselse Raad voor het Leefmilieu** (Brussels Environmental Association – BRAL) is a non-profit, independent network of residents' committees and active citizens interested in helping to shape their city.
Its members have a broad interest in the environment, mobility and urban renewal.

Planning Aid for London (PAL) is a registered charity that provides free and independent town planning related advice for individuals and groups unable to afford professional consultants. It assists people in drawing up their own planning applications or helps them to comment on other people's applications. It also offers advice on fund-raising strategies, community development, and consultation methods.

Spectacle Productions Ltd is an independent, London-based television production company specialising in documentary and community-led investigative journalism. The company distributes independent videotapes, provides facilities for independent producers, and runs training workshops on media studies, production and community-based media.

Stadsdeel Geuzenveld-Slotermeer (City District Geuzenveld-Slotermeer – SGS) is one of the 14 city district authorities in Amsterdam. Established in 1990, it has around 40,000 inhabitants and has recently initiated a large regeneration project. To address various problems and to meet new challenges for city life, it aims to improve the environment in which people live and work, create incentives to stimulate social and economic activities, and work together with housing corporations to provide a large variety of new homes.

APaNGO: Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in Planning – is an international project, supported by the British Government's Department for Communities and Local Government and the EU INTERREG IIIB funding programme, which aims to establish a North West European network of skills and resources to aid community engagement in regional planning processes. The three-year project began in April 2005.

Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in Planning
Interim Report 1
First Interim Report of the INTERREG IIIB Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in Planning Project

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introduction

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1.1 Introduction to the APaNGO project

The APaNGO[1] project was devised as one of the first European Union action research projects on community participation in planning and development. Its underlying philosophy is the importance of fostering constructive community engagement in order to help deliver sustainable development on the ground.

The project's central purpose is to provide a better understanding of the practice of community participation as it relates to planning and development. This then forms the basis for making recommendations on how practice can be improved. Although derived from the experience of North West Europe, it is expected that the findings of APaNGO will be of interest to all EU Member States and other countries.

Perhaps because development and its impact is by its nature local and place specific, there has been very little exchange between Member States about appropriate engagement techniques and services. These are being developed largely in isolation to deal with the same kinds of participation and advocacy challenges. Furthermore, because of pressure on funding for the NGO (non-governmental organisation) sector, the provision of information for local communities on how to engage with planning and development effectively is few and far between. APaNGO aims to help fill these gaps. One further important feature of the APaNGO project is its focus on planning and development of regional or city-wide significance. The larger and more significant a project or plan, the greater will be its impact on the community concerned. However, there is a common perception that, ironically, this is the scale at which it is hardest to engage local communities. In this respect the project builds on research conducted by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).[2]

The APaNGO project was launched in December 2005 by Brusselse Raad voor het Leefmilieu,[3] (Belgium); Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, City District of Amsterdam (the Netherlands); Planning Aid for London (UK); Spectacle Productions Ltd (UK); and the Town and Country Planning Association (UK). The TCPA serves as the lead partner accountable for the project to the main funding body, the European Commission's North West Europe INTERREG Secretariat.

This first Interim Report from the APaNGO project covers the findings from the first stage background research. This consisted of desk studies of the seven Member States in North West Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland, and the UK) and analysis of the responses to an extensive questionnaire survey.

Following an outline of the research methods used, the report provides a summary of the main challenges and trends in advocacy and participation in planning and development. The remainder of the report summarises the evidence base from the APaNGO research, from which the challenges and trends in Section 2 are drawn. Later reports will cover the findings from a series of demonstration projects and will make recommendations on good practice.

1.2 Methods

The background research for the APaNGO project involved desk research linked to a questionnaire survey, to examine the following:

- the existing planning systems, defined as the legal planning system;

[1] Advocacy, Participation and NGOs in Planning

[2] Baker, M., Roberts, P. and Shaw, R. (2003) *Stakeholder Involvement in Regional Planning. National report of the TCPA study.* Town and Country Planning Association, London

[3] BRAL, Brussels Environmental Association

- techniques for community involvement in planning, sometimes owned by someone or an organisation and often protected by copyright – examples are Planning for Real®, action planning and Enquiry by Design;
- infrastructure of support for community involvement in planning, defined as the non-physical structures of organisations and services available to those communities and individuals who want to participate (for example planning aid organisations in the UK, BRAL in Brussels etc.).

The research for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland was carried out by TCPA staff. Research on Germany, Luxembourg and the Republic of Ireland was carried out by independent planners, academics and government officials; in Belgium and the Netherlands the research was carried out in-house by BRAL and Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, City District of Amsterdam, respectively (APaNGO partners).

All research was carried out according to a brief prepared by the TCPA which required the following:

- **Outline of the planning system – setting the planning context.** The objective here was to gain a general overview of the planning system in the given country. Researchers were asked to give a description of national, regional and local level plans (including the functions of each), noting particularly the opportunities that exist for community involvement in their development and/or adoption, and any specific law, policy or guidance that provides for community involvement in spatial or environmental planning. In particular researchers were asked to cover:
  - planning laws/legislation;
  - policy or guidance;
  - different agencies/bodies (governments and non-governmental bodies) that have a role in the planning system.
- The infrastructure that exists for community involvement. The objective here was to provide a description of the main non-governmental community involvement organisations and services in the nation concerned, covering:
  - the main non-governmental organisations that offer help with community involvement in planning;
  - other agencies or bodies supported by local, regional or central government specifically tasked with supporting community involvement in spatial or environmental planning;
  - particularly those bodies operating across a national or regional level capable of offering local communities help to participate in major regional plans and/or significant-scale physical development/regeneration projects.
- **Community involvement techniques/tools.** The objective here was to gain an overview of the techniques/tools that can be used to involve communities in the planning process. The research was intended to cover:
  - techniques/tools predominantly used in the nation concerned which facilitate community involvement – making involvement happen (for example simulation and workshops);
  - the advantages and disadvantages of the main techniques, highlighting good practice that might be used at a regional level in other European countries (recognising that these may be the same techniques that are used at a local level).

Research reports have been completed for all the countries identified. For various logistical reasons, research was undertaken separately in the four countries of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), but not separately in the distinct regions of Germany and Belgium. The coverage and depth of the research is quite variable, but there is useful material in each research report. However, there are so many differences between the countries in terms of the local planning systems and infrastructure that direct, detailed comparisons are impossible. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common issues, as outlined throughout this report.

In addition, in 2006 the TCPA and partners sent questionnaires to NGOs and other organisations involved in community participation and spatial or environmental planning in the ten APaNGO countries[4] (owing to a low response rate to the French survey, France was omitted from the comparison of findings discussed in this report). The aim of the questionnaire was to explore further the current state of participation in planning in the nine countries, and the nature of the experience of those involved. In some countries (for example Germany) there was such a low return rate initially that a second mail out was undertaken, and in some cases (Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Scotland,

[4] The seven Member States listed earlier, but with the UK considered as four separate countries – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

Table 1
The International Association for Public Participation's five levels of public participation

increasing level of public impact

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	*Public participation goal:* To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	*Public participation goal:* To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	*Public participation goal:* To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	*Public participation goal:* To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public: We will keep you informed	*Promise to the public:* We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	*Promise to the public:* We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	*Promise to the public:* We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	*Promise to the public:* We will implement what you decide
Example techniques to consider: • fact sheets • web sites • open-houses	*Example techniques to consider:* • public comment • focus groups • surveys • public meetings	*Example techniques to consider:* • workshops • deliberative polling	*Example techniques to consider:* • citizen advisory committees • consensus building • participatory decision-making	*Example techniques to consider:* • citizens' juries • ballots • delegated decisions

Source: International Association for Public Participation. www.iap2.org

Wales, Northern Ireland and Belgium) follow-up phone calls and e-mails were used to gain more information. In England, follow-up work was carried out, which included group representatives being interviewed (and captured on video).

Approximately 1,000 questionnaires were distributed and 202 were returned. Of those respondents, 130 had been involved directly in planning issues. The detailed analysis of the responses (see Appendix 2) was based only on the 130 with direct experience of involvement in planning issues. Most of the groups responding (96) had a neighbourhood or other geographical focus – more than twice as many as had an issue focus (44); some had both. The findings from the questionnaire research are integrated into this report in the appropriate sections.

1.3 Levels of participation

Some of the individual APaNGO research reports refer to Arnstein's classic ladder of participation[5] as a way of defining levels of community involvement. However, the APaNGO project overall has to date used the four levels of involvement used in the TCPA report *Stakeholder Involvement in Regional Planning*.[6] These four levels are:[7]

- **Level one: education and information provision.** Methods that might be included here are seen as including leaflets/brochures,

[5] Arnstein, S. (1969) 'A ladder of citizen participation'. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35 (4): 216-244

[6] Baker, M., Roberts, P. and Shaw, R. (2003) *Stakeholder Involvement in Regional Planning. National report of the TCPA study.* Town and Country Planning Association, London

[7] These levels are taken from Petts, J. and Leach, B (2001) *Evaluating Methods for Public Participation. Literature review.* Environment Agency R & D Technical Report E2-030

newsletters, unstaffed exhibits/displays, advertising, local and national newspapers, videos and site visits.

- **Level two: information feedback.** Methods that might be included here are seen as including staffed exhibits/displays, telephone help lines, the internet, teleconferencing, public meetings, surveys, interviews and questionnaires and polls.
- **Level three: involvement and consultation.** Methods that might be included here are seen as including workshops, focus groups/forums and open-house (physical or virtual/internet).
- **Level four: extended involvement.** Methods that might be included here are seen as including community advisory committees/liaison groups, Planning for Real,® citizens' juries, consensus conferences and visioning (including on the internet).

Some of the APaNGO research reports refer to the concept of 'co-production', which is used to some extent in both the Netherlands and Belgium. In British social policy, this term has become associated with ideas of 'public value'[8] and the potential for citizens to 'co-produce' improved public service outcomes (e.g. better health) with public service agencies (e.g. the National Health Service). It is therefore assumed for the purposes of this report that 'co-production' is a form of partnership. This seems to go beyond any of the four levels identified in the TCPA's *Stakeholder Involvement in Regional Planning* report (as above).

We therefore propose that for this report, and subsequent APaNGO reports, the five levels of public participation developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) are used.[9] These are as shown in Table 1 on the preceding page.

[8] Kelly, G. and Muers, S. (2002) Creating Public Value. An analytical framework for public service reform. Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, London

[9] The IAP2 spectrum is available at www.iap2.org

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implications and challenges

2 implications and challenges

2.1 Introduction

The APaNGO research provides a picture of the current policy and practice of community and public involvement in planning across the ten North West European countries involved in the APaNGO project. It develops an overview of different planning systems and infrastructures providing support for community involvement in planning in the different countries, and provides some material on different tools and techniques used to achieve effective community involvement in practice.

The APaNGO project has sought to test rather than fully assess the effectiveness of the existing infrastructures of support or the techniques used, using the data available. However, it is possible to come to an initial view, as outlined in this section. Fuller details of the research findings that led to the conclusions below are provided in subsequent sections of this report, in the appendices, and in the original country research reports (available on the APaNGO website: www.apango.eu).

This section therefore reviews the research and analysis completed so far, and offers some initial conclusions on the implications and challenges of current policy. These feed into the later stages of the APaNGO project. The APaNGO demonstration projects will provide an enhanced and more precise perspective.

2.2 Emerging themes in involvement in planning

The systems, policy and practice of planning in the ten APaNGO countries vary enormously, and detailed comparisons would be difficult to evidence in full. However, some broad themes have become clear.

2.2.1 Period of change

It is clear from the review of existing planning systems across the ten countries that most have been through a major review over the last five or six years. In some cases, this has resulted in major new legislation and planning frameworks; in others, the structural changes have been less extensive. Overall, however, planning across North West Europe has been through a period of very significant change, and in some cases that change is continuing. The driving forces for these changes seem to be threefold:

- **To make the planning system simpler, faster, and more efficient.** This is in part to help ensure that development is actually delivered, and partly in a spirit of positive reform of a set of systems that have sometimes been characterised as overly bureaucratic.
- **To reinvigorate the purpose of planning.** The concept of sustainable development has made a major impact on planning policy, providing a 'qualitative' element to planning and development control. In this way, sustainable development has provided new meaning and dynamism to planning, reminding governments why planning is essential and thus reinforcing its place in national policy. To some extent, and in some places, specific environmental issues (e.g. climate change) are now becoming a higher priority than sustainable development overall, but sustainable development remains the overarching concept.
- **To extend public involvement.** Again, the motivation is to make it easier for the public and stakeholders to get involved in making plans and shaping development, and this has been almost universal across North West Europe.

2.2.2 Local focus

The responses from NGOs to the APaNGO questionnaires revealed that the main focus for involvement in planning issues is still at local level, with over four times as many respondents involved locally (81 out of 130) rather than regionally (19) or nationally (15) (see Section 3.3 for details). This may reflect the nature of the groups targeted in the initial circulation of questionnaires, but it appears to be nonetheless significant.

There are some signs of change. Belgium, Luxembourg, Scotland, Wales and the Republic

of Ireland have consulted on national spatial plans to varying degrees. In England, public participation in regional spatial planning is growing in importance. This may continue to change as regional planning takes on a greater role in those countries where it is still relatively new. However, at present, it is clear that NGOs continue primarily to 'act local' even if they are starting to 'think global'.

2.2.3 Depth of involvement

The findings (see Section 3.5) suggest that the great majority of public and community involvement in planning takes place at the 'lowest' levels of the participation spectrum (see Section 1.3) – information provision and minimal consultation.

This takes the form of government and planning authorities at various spatial levels simply providing information on developments or initiatives, or producing drafts of plans for formal comment. The methods tend to be the provision of printed information (leaflets, letters), formal consultations on written documents, and formal public meetings (often presentations with opportunities to ask questions).

Respondents made it clear that they consider these methods to be the least effective – unengaging and unlikely to attract new people and groups to become involved in planning issues. Workshops and other face-to-face methods are much preferred by respondents and are considered significantly more effective, both in terms of input to specific planning issues and to building longer-term relationships. It should probably be recognised, however, that where decision-making is firmly vested in elected representatives, participation in the process for other groups will consequently be restricted.

Although methods will only ever be one part of developing effective public participation in planning, the very limited approaches that are currently used most often do not engage the community deeply.

There are some significant differences between the countries, with the Netherlands having the highest number of respondents identifying a 'collaborative' approach, closely followed by Luxembourg. The term 'co-production' is increasingly used in the Netherlands and Belgium, and encompasses both collaboration and empowerment, but it is not yet widely used. Northern Ireland had the highest number of respondents identifying information-giving as the only level of participation used, with a similar picture from respondents in Germany.

2.2.4 Timing of involvement

Most public involvement in spatial planning takes place following publication of a draft plan (as identified above), to which the public is invited to respond within a given timescale. This raises several issues for effective participation:

- When opportunities for comment are restricted to making objections to an agreed set of proposals (the draft plan or specific planning applications), negative perceptions of community involvement can arise. Where citizens are able to be involved at an earlier stage, it may be possible for their input to be more positive.
- Consultation periods can be as little as one month. While even this is seen by some as delaying the planning process, it is an extremely short time for information to get out to many local people, who may not even know the draft plan is available until it is too late to comment, and is certainly too little time for NGOs that may want to consult their members.

It may, therefore, be useful to consider the following to enable community and public involvement to be more effective in terms of improving the quality of input to the planning process and making involvement more satisfying to participants:

- Involve citizens much earlier in the process. This may allow them to develop a sense of ownership over the proposals being created, as well as allowing them to actually influence those proposals. It may also help to create a sense of real and continuing involvement in the process of developing the plan and therefore increase knowledge and understanding of the whole planning process, as well as build a continuing sense of civic responsibility.
- Allow citizens to make proposals. Rather than just responding to proposals from elsewhere (from planners, local elected representatives etc.), this would enable citizens to be more positive, proactive and creative, and avoid negativity.
- Provide adequate timescales for involvement. This does not have to delay the plan-making process overall. If the public are involved earlier, the timescale for their involvement can run alongside other research and drafting processes, so the overall time taken is no longer but there is time for wider awareness of the plan to be developed, views to be formed and more effective involvement to be achieved. As experience in public and community participation grows (within planning but also

in many other fields), it seems to be the case that participation may be able to save time and money (by reducing conflict and protest, and increasing shared ownerships and responsibility), rather than be a net cost. More evidence is needed, but current trends seem to show this to be the case.[10]

2.2.5 Continuity of involvement

The respondents to the questionnaire survey called for longer-term involvement, and for better feedback on the decisions that are finally taken, as well as on the results of the consultation. At present, about 21 per cent of groups received no feedback at all on their involvement; even more (34 per cent) received no feedback at the end of the process they were involved in (see Section 3.6 for details).

Even *ad hoc* and one-off types of involvement have their role since the process of continuous engagement can lead to consultation fatigue as groups lose track of the process and thus lose interest. Governments and planning authorities themselves may lack continuity (perhaps through changes due to elections and staff turnover etc.), whereas NGOs often stay involved over much longer time periods.

NGOs responding to the research questionnaire were clear that they would prefer continuous relationships rather than being called in at the times that fit with the planning authorities' timetables – and then within very short timescales that make their own work of consulting their members almost impossible.

The particular challenge here is keeping relationships open and well maintained over the longer term without being hugely resource intensive for planning authorities, NGOs or community groups.

Yet public and community involvement is criticised as attracting the 'usual suspects', and there are complaints that the general public is 'not interested' and impossible to draw in to the process. This highlights the importance of involving 'hard to reach' groups and a wider cross-section of the community generally. This theme is considered further in the demonstration projects.

2.2.6 Lack of clarity

The questionnaire respondents pointed to a general lack of clarity for communities and NGOs about the purpose of the consultation they were involved in, about the extent to which they could influence proposals, and about who was or should be involved. Poor communications between those organising consultations and participants were identified as a particular problem. In particular, a lack of sufficient information provided to NGOs to support participation was noted (e.g. about planning processes, the issue for discussion, rules for the consultation and jargon etc.).

2.2.7 Who is involved?

Respondents were concerned about a lack of power equality among participants, and between those in formal involvement processes and other stakeholders. This had several aspects:

- **Domination by powerful stakeholders.** The strength in public consultations of the 'usual suspects', NIMBYs[11] and special interest groups (e.g. environmental and heritage conservation groups), potentially crowding out less experienced, confident and articulate members of the community, is often raised as an issue. However, it appears from some of the consultative mechanisms identified here that, in practice, there may equally be concerns about institutional and private sector stakeholders dominating planning processes. These interests may have a stronger voice in the final conclusions and decisions on planning than is available for community or public participants through the formal consultation mechanisms.

  It will be increasingly important that formal consultations on planning issues are seen to offer an input to the final decisions, and that decisions are not made behind closed doors with privileged stakeholders who would never be seen at a public event. Until such a change in the culture of NGO and public involvement happens, such that it is not just seen as simply a political necessity – a 'tick box' exercise of no value to the quality of the plan or development – it is unlikely that planning will attract any more or different participants.

  Seeking a participation balance or spread of stakeholders would ensure that no single powerful group has excessive influence in the planning and decision-making processes.

  Part of the answer to this problem is to deal with all input from stakeholders, the public and NGOs in a transparent and open way (e.g. ensuring that the process of integrating comments and other input from different sources is clear and transparent to all

[10] For example, Involve (2005) *People and Participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making.* Involve, London

[11] NIMBY: Not in my back yard

parties). That requires effective internal processes within the planning authority, effective ways of supporting and encouraging good quality input from the public and other participants, and good communications about the whole process to wider audiences.

- **Open access/exclusion.** There are some major challenges in designing public participation processes which are open to the wider community and also ensure that the most disadvantaged groups in society are not excluded. Many of the most public processes are more attractive and familiar to – and can therefore be dominated by – the more experienced and confident individuals and groups.

  There are risks that in creating involvement activities that separate excluded and 'hard to reach' groups from the mainstream processes, further exclusion and alienation (or even victimisation) could result. There is also little appreciation of the competing values and needs of different communities or recognition that these need to be balanced.

  This is linked to the issue of the formality of participation processes in planning. Much of the consultation around planning issues in some countries is very formalised and to a degree, therefore, exclusive of the less articulate and those with too few resources to respond appropriately and within the set timescale. In contrast, some level of structure can be very encouraging for participants, who recognise these processes as more official, and thus more important. Creating a balance between respecting and valuing the contribution of participants and having processes that are not 'excluding' in their style and design is a major challenge, which is likely to demand a convergence of participation activities.
- **Participation and democratic representation.** It is clear from the APaNGO research evidence that there are some strains between the role and power of elected representatives at various governance levels and the amount of influence of public and community participation in planning.

The existing systems of decision-making and participation in planning analysed in this research do not appear to have fully addressed the potential conflicts of these roles and relationships, but it is likely that further challenges will be revealed as participation becomes more widespread following the policy changes outlined elsewhere in this report.

2.3 Implications of existing infrastructures of support

The concept of infrastructures of support refers to the organisations offering expert advice, support, information and sometimes access to funding for public and community participation.

The degree to which this infrastructure links to formal planning processes and systems varies from country to country. However, this section refers primarily to those groups and organisations providing support for participation in planning other than central or local planning authorities.

There is a wide range of organisations providing support for participation in planning in the APaNGO countries (see Section 4 for details), almost all operating at local level, although some are linked to national federations or associations. These organisations fall into three main types:

- those specifically focused on planning (e.g. planning aid and community technical aid in the UK and the Republic of Ireland);
- those that have broader remits but specifically cover planning issues as well (e.g. environmental federations in Belgium and the Netherlands, urban planning agencies in France, An Taisce in the Republic of Ireland, civic trusts in the UK);
- those that provide general support to communities and the public on all sorts of issues (e.g. Amsterdam's Citizens' Initiative, Belgium's Platform Participation and Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) in England and Scotland).

The APaNGO evidence on the infrastructure of support for community involvement suggests that the strength and effectiveness of the support provided depends more on the capabilities of the NGO movement generally in the country concerned than on the structure of the planning system.

There is at present little quantitative data on the infrastructure organisations in the different countries, as there is no sense of the scale of operations or the number or size of organisations. Also, the bodies that have been identified vary in the extent to which they are quasi-governmental, are in the private sector, represent community interests, or are completely independent.

Overall, the feedback from respondents in NGOs is that most felt they were aware that assistance is available, almost half used that assistance, and almost all those who used assistance had found it useful (38 out of 53).

Although these figures initially seem positive, it means that key respondents, all of whom had been involved in planning issues, were not aware of the assistance available, and less than half had actually used that assistance. Where they did get help, it was often from other local bodies and not always those that were there to help specifically (or even tangentially) with planning issues. However, the support given through planning aid and community technical aid services was particularly identified by a number of respondents, and these services are highly valued where they exist.

2.4 Implications of current tools and techniques to encourage involvement

The APaNGO research identifies many tools and techniques that have been used to involve people and groups in planning. In summary, the analysis of all these methods (see Section 5.3) shows that by far the largest categories of tools are those that provide information and those that consult. As already noted, these are the 'lowest' levels of participation on the IAP2 spectrum. Some tools and techniques identified do go further and 'involve' people in planning, and although there are few that go as far as to enable authorities to 'collaborate with' or 'empower' people, these seem to indicate the new directions for the future. The Netherlands and the UK show the greatest experience of these deeper levels of involvement through, for example, collaborative workshops, referenda and citizens' juries.

There are some exciting innovations in methods to involve communities in planning (see Section 5.4), with some organisations developing new tools and techniques. Although these are not widespread at present, the research has revealed promising indications of energy and optimism for the future.

3

involvement in current spatial planning systems

3 involvement in current spatial planning systems

3.1 Introduction

This section analyses the main findings from individual research reports for the ten countries in the APaNGO project. There are some significant variations in the depth of information from each of the ten, but this information is essential in understanding the nature of community involvement in each country, as it depends so much on the systems within which it is working. A more detailed summary of the research reports is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 Spatial planning in the APaNGO countries

The common features of spatial planning in Europe are generally understood to be:

- identifying long- and medium-term objectives and strategies for territories;
- dealing with land use and physical development;
- co-ordinating sectoral policies such as transport, agriculture and environment.

The common elements of spatial planning processes in practice tend to be as follows:[12]

- **At national level.** All EU Member States, at the time of the study, had some responsibility for the production of a national spatial planning framework which provides a central reference for the formulation of lower tier policies, and which may co-ordinate inter-regional spatial development patterns for matters of national and international significance (except Belgium); this level is particularly important in Luxembourg and the Republic of Ireland.
- **At regional level.** Most Member States produce spatial planning policy which co-ordinates inter-regional spatial development patterns and provides a strategic reference for more local instruments. The Belgian regions and German *Lander* have considerable autonomy from central government; the regional level is also important in France and the Netherlands.
- **At local (local authority/municipal) level.** The production of local spatial framework documents which set out general criteria for the regulation of land use change; the preparation of land use instruments which define the type of physical development which will be permitted at particular locations; and procedures for the consideration of proposals to develop or change the use of land and property take place in all Member States. Local authorities have the primary responsibility for plan-making, within a framework set by national (and sometimes regional) government.
- **At various levels.** Most Member States also have special mechanisms to encourage the realisation/implementation of the objectives and policies expressed in spatial planning policies, both for development and for the protection of the environment. They also have other mechanisms of land use regulation which may include, for example, restricting land parcel sub-division, tax and other duties to deal with betterment and compensation, compulsory purchase, etc.

In spite of these apparent similarities in practice, the scope, political importance and strength of spatial planning differs greatly from country to country, and the extent and depth of community involvement is similarly varied. Even the terminology can present challenges; for example, 'regional' can mean a territory with a population of 5 million (as in the German *Lander* and regions in England), or a territory with a population of less than half a million (as in the Republic of Ireland). This makes understanding similarities and differences between systems, and their related community involvement processes, difficult – and direct comparisons problematic.

The political imperative to start spatial planning was often very similar: the need to manage

[12] European Commission (1997) *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Pages 26 and 40

development pressures (either to encourage positive development or simply control growing demand for development) linked to housing and health issues – and in ways designed to improve the social conditions of citizens.

Now, there is more focus in spatial planning policies on integrating and co-ordinating investment and development, and on economic development and environmental protection within the overarching concept of sustainable development. The goals of planning are thus more likely to focus around issues such as:

- promoting a system of meaningful and democratic governance that responds to the needs of localities;
- improving environmental performance;
- facilitating social cohesion and security;
- developing land and real estate markets and securing or protecting private rights in land.

Four main traditions of spatial planning across Europe can be identified:[13]

- **Regional economic planning approach.** Here, the purpose of planning is regional social and economic development, and central government plays a major role in managing development pressures across the country, and in undertaking public sector investment. The planning system of France reflects this approach (alongside 'urbanism', see below), as does that of the Republic of Ireland under its new legislation.
- **Comprehensive integrated approach.** This involves a systematic and formal hierarchy of plans from national to local level, with the focus more on spatial co-ordination than social and economic development. Public sector investment in delivery on the planning framework is the norm, and this system therefore requires considerable political commitment to the planning process. The Netherlands is associated most closely with this system, as is Germany (although in Germany, regional governments play a particularly important role).
- **Land use management.** Here, planning is associated with the narrower task of controlling the change of use of land at strategic and local levels. Local authorities do most planning, but central government (and increasingly the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales in the UK) supervises the system and sets planning policy objectives. England, Scotland and Wales are the main examples of this. Northern Ireland also focuses on land use, but all planning is implemented by the UK government at present. Belgium has a similar tradition.
- **Urbanism.** This tradition focuses on architecture, with concerns about urban design, townscape and building control. Regulation is undertaken through rigid zoning and codes but overall planning systems are less well established and do not have significant political support. Urbanism is a significant element in the French planning system, alongside the regional economic planning approach.

3.3 Community involvement in spatial planning in the APaNGO countries

Public participation has become a core component of the policy and practice of planning. In recent years, the range of 'interests' in planning (or perceived stakeholders) has broadened – with business and private sector investors and environmental lobbies both growing in importance. Spatial planning systems are seen as having to 'manage these often competing interests'.[14]

The nature of public participation varies as much as spatial planning systems, and is equally affected by the specific historical, cultural, geographical and governance issues in different countries. In particular, the rights and duties of citizens may be governed by the country's constitution or be established by law, as the APaNGO research shows:

- In Belgium, the right to a home was added to the constitution in 1994. However, protection of one's own property has a much bigger influence in the planning system than the right to a home for everyone. Land use regulations are regarded as a restriction on individual rights to private property.
- In France there has been a shift towards decentralisation, and the focus for participation in planning has moved towards the 'pays' level (very local). Although there is little participation at regional levels, there is significant involvement of NGOs in urban renewal at local level, and much closer integration of social, economic and environmental issues generally, with

[13] European Commission (1997) *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Page 36

[14] European Commission (1997) *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Page 33

planning part of that rather than being seen as a separate activity.

- In Germany, the constitutional principle of equal living conditions throughout the country is reflected in a specific mechanism for redistributing resources between the *Lander*.
- In the Netherlands, the constitution establishes the right to a decent home for all citizens, and requires local authorities to ensure good living conditions and protect the environment (although planning is shifting its priorities away from 'protecting' particular areas to focusing on economic development). Here, the planning system is closely embedded in the legal system and civic action is therefore often focused on rights and security.
- In the UK, where there is no written constitution, the rights and duties of citizens are established through law. This can also be the case in other countries where the constitution does not cover issues related to spatial planning.

These principles can also be clearly seen in the goals and mechanisms for spatial planning in the different countries. Planning systems, and participatory structures, are also deeply affected by the governance of states, and whether they are federal, regionalised or unitary (see Appendix 1 for more on the specific systems):

- **Federal systems** (e.g. Germany, Belgium) provide for shared or joint powers between the national government and the constituent governments of the federation (although each level may have autonomy on specific issues). In Germany, responsibility for spatial planning is shared between the national government and the Lander, with the national government leading on law-making and the Lander on administration. In Belgium, the three regions establish their own planning laws and their own planning frameworks; the federal government can only act when, in the Brussels region, national and international issues are at stake.
- **Regionalised systems** are not formally federated but have a strong regional tier of administration (these are not apparent in the APaNGO countries, but Spain and Italy fall into this category).
- **Unitary systems** vest power in the national government, although this may be exercised through regional or other offices, or may be delegated to regional, provincial or local government (e.g. France, the Republic of Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the UK). The degree of delegation varies enormously between countries, ranging from the highly centralised England to the highly decentralised Netherlands (and increasingly France).

There appears to be no simple correlation between structures of government and the real locus of power and responsibility within spatial planning in practice.[15] Rather, there is a complex interweaving of local, regional and national bodies. In some countries, such cross-local co-operation is formalised into structures that operate within the planning system (e.g. France and the Netherlands; France also formalises cross-regional co-operation).

Similarly, there is no simple correlation between structures of government at national, regional and local levels, spatial planning systems, and community and public participation in planning. However, while planning authorities consult with other tiers of administration and official agencies at all levels (i.e. stakeholder involvement) as a routine part of plan-making, community and public involvement tends to operate almost entirely at local levels.

Certainly, the APaNGO questionnaire survey of NGOs and community groups found that the vast majority of groups participated at the local level (81 out of 130), compared with 19 at regional level and 15 at national level. There are, however, major differences between the countries. For example, in Germany, as many groups participated at the regional as at the local level, whereas in England (which does have regional systems of governance and spatial planning, although these are relatively new and not yet fully established) 17 participated at the local level and only one at regional level (and one at national level).

There are some significant variations to these patterns, and there are moves in the policy of some countries to increase involvement at regional and national levels. For example:

- In Belgium and Luxembourg, the authorities have a duty to inform the public about national land use plans, through publicity in local newspapers and at least one public briefing – there is a 45-day time limit for comments; 30 days in Belgium.
- In Germany, regional marketing is being developed to research public views on local

[15] European Commission (1997) *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Page 41

'place' and culture. In addition, regional management is being developed to connect decision-makers and communities in thematic networks.

- In the Netherlands, there is public consultation on the National Spatial Plan and on Regional (Provincial) Spatial Plans; after the initial consultations, further drafts are then put out for further consultation.
- In the UK:
  - In England, the regional planning body must produce a statement of participation; participation must include the public. In principle, the process may include a one-day conference to brief people and allow them to comment; or there may be events and workshops around the region. There is then a formal written consultation on the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, and an examination-in-public, to which the public are invited if their original comments relate to the issues being presented for discussion. The process is quite lengthy (up to several years from start to finish), and community contacts in that time can be quite sporadic.
  - In Scotland, the public is consulted on first and second drafts of regional plans; six weeks is given for each consultation.
  - In Wales there was an extensive public consultation undertaken on the first Wales Spatial Plan (which took place in 2004). Eight fully participatory workshops were held across Wales to involve people; then a draft was put out for further public and stakeholder consultation. Two final conventions of those already involved were then held to consider the final draft plan.
- In the Republic of Ireland, there is statutory consultation on the regional planning guidelines, which are reviewed every six years. The consultation happens in two stages: first on the initial issues paper (eight weeks time limit) and second on the draft (ten weeks). There has also been consultation on the National Spatial Strategy where it affects the locality, and consultation on the Regional Development Strategy, including an examination-in-public.

All planning systems have some mechanisms for direct consultation with the public over and above the normal democratic political processes, but 'the existence of formal consultation requirements does not necessarily indicate the effectiveness of consultation, in terms of either awareness of the public or their ability to shape the plan'.[16]

This is illustrated by the system in the Brussels region in Belgium, where local deliberation committees have responsibility for community involvement but provide no support for community groups, and deliberation meetings are only for official partners and are not open to the public. Those meetings have two parts: the first is an open hearing and discussion, the second a deliberation which leads to official advice and takes place partly behind closed doors.

Actual participation activities vary enormously and are different for involvement in plan-making and in development control. Full details of the opportunities for public involvement in plan-making at local level, and in development control, are given in Appendix 1.

In general, most effort to gain public involvement is focused on the point in the planning process at which the authority publishes firm proposals, which are made available to the public and to which they are invited to respond. The APaNGO research in Germany found that 76 per cent of participatory activities took place at that stage. Overall, the APaNGO research found:

- **Initial consultation.** This is almost always limited to consultation with official organisations, not the public.
- **Consultation on a draft plan.** This is where most public involvement takes place, and it is almost always undertaken through the publication, advertisement and public display of a draft plan. The public is usually invited to respond to the draft within a given timescale (often one month).
- **Formal objections at hearings and inquiries.** Objectors may be allowed to put their concerns in person, although this is rare.
- **Challenging the plan after adoption.** This is generally limited to challenges on legal and/or procedural grounds (except in France and Germany, where those whose 'rights' are affected can appeal to the courts, and the Netherlands, where objections can be made after adoption, and appeals can be made to the Court of State).

The APaNGO questionnaire survey also found that more respondents were officially invited to participate (66 out of 130) than those (48) who found out about the consultation and responded on their own initiative. The levels of

[16] European Commission (1997) *The EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies.* Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Page 70

satisfaction among groups about their involvement in these processes were clearly directly related to how their first contact was made – in Luxembourg, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, all those who said they were 'satisfied' with their involvement had taken the initiative to get involved rather than being formally invited.

While it is difficult to be certain about the implications of this, in the light of other evidence the level of control over their involvement that these groups felt they had seems likely to have made a difference. Alternatively, it may be that groups who were willing and able to take the initiative to get involved were more likely to make sure they got out of the process what they were seeking.

3.4 Public and community involvement in development control

In terms of development control, all countries (except for the Republic of Ireland and the UK) have a single building permit, which combines planning permission for development and building quality control and regulates land use change, building construction and (sometimes) demolition. In Belgium, an additional environmental permit may be required. In the UK and the Republic of Ireland, planning permission is separate from building control regulations but comes within the concept of development control.

The public can object to planning applications in most countries and, in most cases, decisions are made on the basis of the local plan (the UK is the exception, where there is more flexibility). Once decisions are made, the main rights of appeal lie with the applicant. Third party rights of appeal are extremely limited (except in the Republic of Ireland), usually to procedural and technical/policy grounds. In Belgium, third parties can appeal against environmental permits.

As planning permission is usually given entirely or mainly based on the principles or details of the development plan, public and community involvement in those plans becomes essential in ensuring that local development is seen as appropriate to local people.

3.5 Levels of involvement

The APaNGO country research reports and questionnaire responses were analysed to assess the levels of community and public involvement in planning issues. The questionnaires also aimed to investigate the levels of involvement that NGOs and other community organisations had in planning issues. There are different ways of classifying levels of involvement (see Section 1.3).

The responses to the questionnaire were originally analysed in different ways (see Appendix 2), including by references to 'one-off', extended consultation, and 'co-production'; and on a different scale of information, by consultation, co-production and 'other' levels of involvement. As explained earlier, the crucial issue in assessing levels of participation is the extent of 'influence' rather than the methods used (e.g. leaflets or exhibitions) or the number of times a group was consulted (e.g. 'one-off' or extended).

The responses from the countries have therefore been analysed here according to the first four elements of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation: inform, consult, involve and collaborate (see Section 1.3 for the full spectrum); in this analysis, in addition, the 'involve' and 'consult' categories have been reduced to one as there is insufficient data to be more specific on these results. Nevertheless, this analysis clearly shows that the vast majority of public and community participation in spatial planning and development control is at the 'lower' end of the spectrum: information and consultation.

Although there is some good practice, and some processes seem to have had broad and deep engagement and to have maintained contact with participants beyond individual events (e.g. the Wales Spatial Plan consultation), this is very rarely the case. Indeed, the research suggests that, in some cases, consultation is neither wide nor deep, and is often undertaken as a chore, a tick-box exercise, rather than being seen as integral to ensuring high-quality planning policy and development outcomes.

There are some points of difference between the countries, with the Netherlands having the highest number of respondents identifying a 'collaborative' approach, followed closely by Luxembourg. Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of respondents identifying information-giving as the only level used, with a similar picture from respondents in Germany.

The level of community and public participation does not appear to be affected by the tradition of spatial planning (i.e. regional economic planning, a comprehensive integrated approach, land use management or urbanism). An analysis was undertaken for this report but

no noticeable differences between the systems were identified, so the results are not reported here.

Indeed, the level of public and community participation seems likely to be influenced much more by wider social and political trends, which have made the legitimacy and democratic accountability of spatial planning more important – and as central to spatial planning activity as technical information (e.g. demographic, ecological, economic and geographical data). Some possible future changes are outlined at the end of this section.

3.6 Satisfaction with current involvement

The questionnaire responses provided useful feedback on current challenges in public and community involvement in planning, and suggestions for improving the situation. In summary, the findings were as follows:

- There is a lack of sufficient appropriate information provided to the public and stakeholders to support participation (about planning processes, the issue for discussion, the boundaries and rules for the consultation, explanations of technical language/jargon used, what has been agreed, feedback on the final decisions etc.).
- There is a lack of clarity about the purpose of the consultation and who is/should be involved.
- There is a perceived lack of power equality among participants, and between those in formal involvement processes and other stakeholders.
- Communications between those organising consultations and participants are poor (although this can be partly overcome through experience and as relationships develop).
- Consultation does not happen early enough in the process, and stops too soon (it should continue throughout); timescales can sometimes be too short to achieve effective participation.
- The specific technique used is not as important as the way in which the process is run (attitudes, commitment, willingness to change etc. on the part of all those involved). Respect and trust are essential on all sides if people are to be prepared to listen to each other and accept the decisions that are made even if disagreements remain.
- Interactive and 'engaging' events are much more effective (and popular with the public and stakeholders) than presentations alone or information provision alone; more engaging events may attract more people and generate more effective comment.
- Resources need to be made available to some community groups to enable them to participate.

There was also useful data on how much feedback participants received after being involved. Most groups received feedback after their involvement, and almost half had received feedback at the end of the whole planning process. Such feedback is a key element of good practice in public involvement. However, the figures should be read with two important caveats:

- There was still a relatively high number of groups who received no feedback after their involvement (27 out of 130 – 21 per cent); providing no feedback is generally regarded as very poor practice. Even more received no feedback at the end of the process (44 out of 130 – 34 per cent).
- There is little data on the nature of the feedback received by groups. As one respondent from Germany pointed out, the feedback may only be a 'bureaucratic mechanism', such as letters from the mayor welcoming the participation or a copy of formal documents showing comments to be taken into account, rather than any details about the how the outcomes of the consultation have been used (or not) in the final decisions, or about the wider planning process.

In considering improvements to current policy and practice in public and community involvement in planning, it is useful to understand the motivations of those who are currently involved. In summary, the most common motivations among respondents to the APaNGO research survey were:

- a general belief in the needs and rights of communities to have a say in the decisions that affect their future, and the desire to support community engagement and ensure that it happens;
- to influence and shape developments locally, alongside a fear of the developments that may happen if they are not involved;
- to represent community views;
- to advance specific sectoral interests (e.g. specific demographic groups such as older people or people with disabilities, or specific interests such as cycling);
- to preserve or improve the neighbourhood (e.g. preserve wildlife or common land);
- to learn about planning processes or consultation;

- to find out about what is going on;
- to improve local amenities (e.g. shops, post office);
- it was a legal requirement or seen as a duty.

3.7 Conclusions

There is considerable variety among the APaNGO countries in the ways in which the public and communities are involved in planning at present. However, all planning systems reviewed here have some requirements for, at least, information to be provided and, usually, some level of feedback made possible (consultation). Involvement has taken place most often on a draft plan, within a relatively short timescale (often one month). In addition, most involvement currently takes place at local level.

The feedback from APaNGO questionnaire respondents is generally quite critical of current involvement practices. However, the motivations of those currently involved and the problems (and ways forward) identified suggest a continuing strong willingness of NGOs and community groups to be involved in planning issues and processes, but also some specific concerns with the way things work at present.

4

infrastructure of support for participation

4 infrastructure of support for participation

4.1 Introduction

The research reports gave details of investigations into the nature of the infrastructure of support for community involvement in planning in the ten countries. This section reports on those findings.

4.2 Analysis of infrastructures of support

The APaNGO research has identified some useful examples of national, regional and local bodies that provide support for local community involvement in planning. Appendix 3 gives details of the different organisations that provide support, operating in different planning systems and at local, regional and national levels.

In summary, the findings suggest the following:

- **Regional economic planning approach.** France is the main example of this tradition of planning, which focuses on regional social and economic development, but the Republic of Ireland also provides an example. It is worth noting that the infrastructure of support in France is focused mainly on bringing together business and economic development interests with other local community interests. There is also an extensive network of local agencies that bring together all relevant bodies to work on urban planning issues – a collaborative approach that is not necessarily as apparent in other planning traditions.
- **Comprehensive integrated approach.** This very formal, hierarchical tradition of planning, with a focus on spatial co-ordination and public sector delivery of plans. It requires significant local political commitment to succeed. The infrastructure of support for public participation in planning in the Netherlands (the country most associated with this tradition) is typified by a mix of *ad hoc* local bodies with a wide range of purposes (e.g. care and welfare, mobility studies and broad citizen participation) and general support at the different levels of government (local, regional and national) for citizen participation. While in the Netherlands there are bodies that specifically support community involvement in planning, no such bodies have been reported as existing in Germany (the other main example of this planning tradition).
- **Land use management.** In this planning tradition, the focus is on the change of use of land, and this system is mainly apparent in the UK and Belgium. In the UK, there has been some limited development of an infrastructure of support specifically for community involvement in planning, especially through technical and professional advice provided at low or no cost to community groups and others who would otherwise not be able to afford such support (planning aid and community technical aid are the usual forms of this support). In Belgium, the infrastructure is limited and is not provided by the government. In these countries there is also a broader infrastructure of support for general voluntary and community action (e.g. Councils for Voluntary Service and Rural Community Councils in England; Community Councils in Wales and Scotland), and broad environmental networks that do significant work on planning issues (e.g. in Belgium).
- **Urbanism.** This tradition focuses on architecture and urban design (mainly apparent in France, alongside the regional economic planning approach). Here, specific local agencies focus on involving local people in town management and urbanism.

Overall, the countries with a land use planning tradition (the UK and Belgium) tend to have more organisations providing support for community involvement in planning, and these countries also have the most local bodies and services that focus specifically on planning. In other countries the specific focus on planning is not anywhere near as widespread, with participation in planning being seen as one of many ways in which citizens become involved in local, regional and national politics.

In all countries there are community groups of citizens that get involved in planning issues from time to time, but it seems that it is only where there is a land use planning tradition, and where planning is a focus for citizen action, that specific support is available on planning. It is unclear at this stage how much this is due to the planning tradition, and how much it is due to wider forces (e.g. land ownership patterns, the extent of subsidiarity and local power to make decisions, democratic structures, wider political priorities). It is also unclear whether the widespread activities around community involvement in planning have created this situation and the development of infrastructures is a response to that demand, or whether the development of such an extensive infrastructure has created the level of activity.

Another point of interest here is to note that there is a difference in the culture and style of the various infrastructures of support in terms of being within or outside the state/government structures. In countries with regional economic planning, comprehensive integrated and urbanism approaches, there is a sense of overall common purpose and enterprise between citizens and state about social, economic and environmental outcomes – although there remain significant points of difference on detail. This is not the case in countries with a land use management planning tradition, where the emphasis in citizen action is oppositional and largely negative (i.e. opposing development). Again it is unclear at this stage how much this is due to the planning tradition, and how much it is due to wider forces (e.g. land ownership patterns, the extent of subsidiarity and local power to make decisions, democratic structures, wider political priorities).

4.3 Conclusions

The APaNGO questionnaire survey of NGOs and community groups involved in planning provides a useful grassroots perspective on the existence and usefulness of advice and support on planning issues (see Appendix 2 for details).

Overall, the great majority of respondents (88 out of 130) felt they were aware of the help that was available, although less than half had used that help. Of those that did, the great majority did find it useful: planning aid and community technical aid were identified particularly as being helpful, although various other local organisations were also mentioned.

The APaNGO research suggests that there is some support available to NGOs, community groups and the public to improve their involvement in planning. Some of this support is specific and highly valued by the users of these services (especially planning aid and community technical aid), but these services really only exist in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Elsewhere, planning seems to be seen as one of many issues for public and community involvement, and there are far fewer specific support structures available.

5

community involvement tools and techniques

5 community involvement tools and techniques

5.1 Introduction

APaNGO's research reports for each country provided varying degrees of detail about the tools and techniques for community involvement in planning used or promoted in the ten countries. This section outlines some of the main findings of the APaNGO research, particularly on the tools and techniques currently used.

5.2 The main community involvement tools and techniques

Most of the APaNGO country research reports and the questionnaire responses from NGOs and community groups covered similar tools and techniques, although often using different terminology to describe them (not just language differences). The main tools and techniques identified in the APaNGO countries are, in alphabetical order:[17]

- **Advisory/consultative councils.** These are groups that are usually established for a longer period than a one-off consultation; they may be set up for a specific planning project or programmes, or may be permanent so they can be called on for specific purposes.
- **Citizens' juries.** These are representative, and usually small (12-16 people), samples of the general population. A jury meets like a court jury to deliberate a particular issue over a number of days. The jurors hear evidence from expert and other witnesses and are able to challenge and question them. They then deliberate, discuss and debate among themselves, before putting forward recommendations and making their conclusions public.
- **Citizens' panels.** These are large, demographically representative groups of citizens/the electorate, consulted on a regular basis and over time (usually several years) as a sounding board on public opinion for issues of concern or importance. Panels may range in size from a few hundred to several thousand people.
- **Community visioning.** Community visioning usually involves a group of people coming together to develop ideas about what they would ideally want their community to be like. After the vision is agreed the group then work on looking at what needs to be done to bring about that vision and draw these requirements together in an action plan. Community visioning can involve a single conference or several workshop events over a period of months. Groups meet, and may be assisted by a trained facilitator.
- **Consensus conferences.** Similar to a citizens' jury, the consensus conference mechanism is designed to bring together a panel of ordinary people (usually 10-20 people) who are provided with information and question expert witnesses on a particular topic, consider the evidence, and then make recommendations that are published more widely. The difference is that citizens' juries usually meet in private, whereas a consensus conference is usually held in public.
- **Exhibitions and displays.** These may be one-off displays for one day, or may be used longer term to support more in-depth involvement processes. They may often be accompanied by some opportunities for public feedback (e.g. forms or cards for the public to fill in with their comments). There may also be staff available to answer questions.
- **Focus groups.** These bring together a small group of people (usually six to ten people) to discuss an issue in depth for between one and two hours, in an informal setting. A

[17] These definitions and descriptions are taken from APaNGO research reports, from Involve (2006) *People and Participation. How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making.* Involve, London; and from Graham Smith for the POWER Inquiry (2005) *Beyond the Ballot. 57 democratic innovations from around the world.* The POWER Inquiry, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, London

skilled facilitator is usually needed to encourage participants to discuss their thoughts, feelings and reactions openly. Focus groups differ from deliberative 'workshops' in that focus groups usually provide only very basic information and the emphasis is on gathering people's existing opinions, rather than providing in-depth opportunities for people to discuss their views with each other, review background information and come to a more considered view.

- **Opinion polls.** Opinion polls and other surveys and questionnaires are used to gain quantitative information on people's existing views, although they can be used as part of wider and more in-depth consultative exercises which use the polling and survey results as the baseline for further consultation. Deliberative polling is very different, and involves the public having a chance to consider new information and discuss the implications among themselves and with others before coming

Table 2
Levels of community involvement tools and techniques

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Exhibitions / displays (including road shows): • Belgium • France (tours by train as well as road) • Germany • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales	***Repas de quartier* (district meals, to encourage people to attend and encourage more informality for discussions):** • France	**Advisory / consultation councils (longer-term structures):** • Belgium • France (usually organised by local authorities) • Netherlands	**Collaborative workshops (to develop joint solutions):** • Netherlands	**Citizens' juries:** • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England
Public meetings (used to inform the public, including answering questions): • Belgium • France • Germany • Luxembourg • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales	**Surveys/ questionnaires:** • Belgium • France • Netherlands • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland (often sent out with 'issues papers' to provide background information) • Wales	**Workshops and round tables (to allow participants to talk among themselves as well as with authorities etc.):** • Belgium • France • Germany • Netherlands • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales		**Petitions:** • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • Wales
Site and field visits: • France • Netherlands	***Boîte à idées* (suggestion box):** • France	**Mediation:** • Germany • Netherlands		**Referenda:** • Netherlands (binding referenda)
Media (including press): • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales	**Debates:** • Belgium • France • Germany • Netherlands	**Consensus conferences:** • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland		**Community visioning:** • Netherlands • England • Scotland
Internet: • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England • Scotland				

(continued on following page)

to the conclusions they offer to the researchers.

- **Planning for Real®.** This is a structured 'hands-on' process of community consultation and participation. It essentially involves the involvement of the community in a workshop environment, with the output being the creation of a three-dimensional model of the neighbourhood. The model-making process starts by building a large-scale map on which a three-dimensional model is built, often by local people, to begin the process of looking at the area as a whole – finding where your house is, tracing your regular journeys, and considering what needs to be done to improve community well-being through physical planning.

- **Public meetings.** Public meetings are the most common form of meeting used by local planning authorities. They are intended to provide information, to stimulate debate, and to encourage the general public who are

Table 2 (continued)
Levels of community involvement tools and techniques

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Leaflets: • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales	**Hearings and canvassing:** • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland			
Videos and CD-ROMs: • Netherlands • England • Scotland	**Conferences:** • Belgium • Germany • Netherlands • England			
	Feedback via internet (digital debates/web discussions): • Germany • Netherlands (including digital citizens' panels)			
	Focus groups: • Netherlands			
	Scenarios: • Netherlands			
	Citizens' panels: • Belgium • Netherlands • England • Scotland			
	Planning for Real®: • England • Scotland • Wales			
	Written consultations: • Netherlands • Republic of Ireland • England • Northern Ireland • Scotland • Wales			

affected by proposals to air their views. However, the form of public meetings often involves presentations by developers, experts and the planning authority, sometimes supported by an exhibition or other visual display, after which the public are invited to ask questions. In traditional public meetings the main focus is to expose the programme or project to the public, rather than enter into a productive dialogue which may lead to change; and the format (presentations and questions) can often lead to disputes and conflict within and following the meeting.

- **Publicity and media.** These are used both simply to communicate information about plans and also to publicise opportunities for further involvement, and so the techniques used may range from press notices and press releases to sophisticated media and communications strategies designed to promote and support deeper involvement processes.
- **Workshops.** Sometimes called 'deliberative workshops', these are interactive events that allow participants to talk with each other, and possibly with experts and others providing detailed information, and then come to conclusions. Ideally, the workshop will produce conclusions that are summarised openly for the whole meeting so that all participants understand the nature of the ideas going forward to future stages in the planning process.

The extent to which the different APaNGO countries use each of these techniques varies enormously, and the research is clear that it is usually the 'way' the technique is used, rather than the technique itself, that determines how deep the community and public involvement is. In practice, this means that a public meeting, conducted in a spirit of openness and willingness to change, may be more positive and productive than a workshop conducted in a spirit of secrecy and exclusivity.

5.3 Levels of community involvement tools and techniques

It is possible to analyse the main tools and techniques using the spectrum of public involvement developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), which is described in more detail in Section 1.3 of this report. Table 2 shows the different levels of involvement of the different main tools and techniques outlined above (and some others), and identifies the countries that have used these techniques (according to the APaNGO research).

Table 2 is not comprehensive, but does provide an indication of the depth of community involvement associated with the different techniques and the countries that currently use (or have recently used) these techniques.

To supplement the information in Table 2, it is worth noting the following:

- In France, most community involvement techniques are those that are part of the formal planning system; the other tools and techniques are not widely used. Indeed, the APaNGO research suggests that none of these techniques is widely used in certain countries, particularly Luxembourg – where techniques for public involvement are very limited.
- There is a fairly extensive set of tools and techniques used at regional levels in Germany (although the focus is stakeholder rather than public or community involvement); elsewhere, the main focus for the use of techniques for public involvement is almost always at local level.
- In the Netherlands, there is a wide range of specific methods, tools and techniques for public involvement in planning, only a few of which are outlined here.

As can be seen from Table 2, by far the most extensive use of tools and techniques is within the categories of information provision and consultation (especially on written draft plans), with only a few examples of deeper and longer-term involvement and very few providing collaboration or empowerment.

This is not to say that there are no examples of such working, but it is clear from the APaNGO research that these deeper forms of involvement are the exception, and that by far the majority of public and community involvement in planning takes place in terms of information provision and limited consultation by planning authorities. Where there have been interactive exercises, and face-to-face communications (e.g. workshops), these are much more popular with groups than formal meetings, information provision (brochures, letters etc.) or information collection (e.g. questionnaires).

A more general point was made by a respondent to the questionnaire from Germany: that where challenges did arise, they were due much more to the way the consultation had been carried out, rather than the specific technique or method used. This supports findings in other research that the attitudes of those carrying out the consultation and their willingness to listen etc. are at least

as important as choosing any specific technique to consult the public, NGOs and other stakeholders.

5.4 Examples of innovative community involvement tools and techniques

The APaNGO research has identified some examples of the use of some the above techniques and others in specific circumstances. These examples provide some illustration of the range of ways that authorities are involving communities in planning processes, and are trying to build good practice:

- **Action planning.**[18] These sorts of events 'allow people to produce plans of action at carefully structured sessions at which all those affected work creatively together. They can be used at any stage of the development process and provide an alternative to reliance on bureaucratic planning'. Examples of action planning include an action-planning day; a community planning forum; a design fest; a design workshop; a future search conference; an open space workshop; and Planning for Real® sessions.
- ***Auto-évaluation,* Bordeaux, France.** Here, the local authority brought together a group to develop a tool to enable public involvement organisations to check the functioning and efficiency of their public consultation. Essentially this is a checklist on good public consultation.
- ***Carte démographique,* France.** With this card, used in one town in France, citizens can be consulted and enabled to vote on the internet. It was found to be especially useful for involving people with physical disabilities who may have found it hard to attend meetings.
- **Charettes.** These are not dissimilar in function to Planning for Real® type exercises. They mostly relate to high-energy design processes and usually involve professional interaction with the community during a time-limited exercise (usually one to two days), with opportunities to challenge emerging ideas and conceptions coming from both sides. Charettes are very 'end product' orientated and for planning matters can help bring together all sectors of the community, including local stakeholders, politicians and decision-makers. Accordingly, they may be more 'newsworthy' than other participation formats, but do not always result in unanimity. The main outcome of a successful charette is the attainment of an agreed goal and a sense of achievement by the non-professional participants.
- **The CLEAR Project, Scotland.** This is a training and capacity building project developed by Planning Aid Scotland. CLEAR (Community Local Environment Awareness Raising) provides training for local communities to enable them to have a greater say in the development of their area.
- **Electronic consultation methods, Germany.** Electronic consultation has been used increasingly in Germany following the development of integrated e-government strategies in the municipalities. Visualisation methods (e.g. geographic information systems, three-dimensional models and animations) have been used increasingly to display information, sometimes linked to forums and chat rooms, although this is still unusual and experimental.
- **Enquiry by Design, England.** This process challenges local stakeholders, planners and professionals to respond to the issues of a particular site through an intensive design process.[19] Enquiry by Design workshops are used to bring together major stakeholders at one time and place to discuss, develop and draw possible urban design and planning solutions to specific, place-based challenges. Through the workshop process, options are investigated interactively through design, debated, and illustrated to reach preferred outcomes.

  The actions needed to achieve the implementation of workshop outcomes are also identified in an implementation framework that can form the basis for ongoing action. Enquiry by Design workshops are typically non-binding, to encourage participants to think creatively, to step outside the (sometimes limiting) constraints of their formal roles, and to provide the flexibility to consider and debate a wide range of options.

  The Enquiry by Design process is one that is increasingly being used by local authorities to inform the preparation and submission of planning applications or masterplanning exercises upon which applications will be based. This intensive process can offer significant advantages. New opportunities and synergies emerge which add value and

[18] This technique is described in: Nick Wates (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook*. Earthscan Publications, London. Page 24

[19] 31 Jan. 2007. www.princes-foundation.org.uk/index.php?id=33

quality to developments, and consensus can be forged among previously implacable opponents. Although Enquiry by Design shares many similarities with other types of planning workshops, it differs in the degree of technical input, the length of the workshop and its strong focus on key stakeholder participation.[20]

- **Games, England and Scotland.** Games are a good way to help people understand the planning process and other people's viewpoints.[21] The games are devised to mirror real life planning scenarios or to teach specific skills. They are mostly played in groups, usually helped by a facilitator or someone who has played them before. There is usually no specific output other than increased awareness, but they may produce preliminary design proposals or an agenda for future initiatives needed.

  There are various game types:

  - board games – adaptations of popular board games to simulate planning and design scenarios;
  - picture analysis – getting people to say what they see in a picture and comparing notes;
  - role-play – acting as if you are in someone else's shoes;
  - storytelling – reciting real or imaginary tales as a way of exploring hidden perceptions;
  - theatre – performing plays to characterise real life and stimulate debate.

- **LENS-methode, Netherlands and Scotland**. This was developed in The Netherlands at the beginning of the 1990s. It offers an alternative approach to traditional survey methods which focus on the existing situation and give people a limited number of potential responses. LENS provides an alternative based on 'future analysis', finding out what people want to see happening in the future. It allows greater creativity in people's responses, thereby generating a wide range of ideas for community development.

  It works through a series of question and answer sessions between a researcher and a residents' panel. Residents are initially asked to respond to a series of set questions about living in their area. Respondents can then attend panel meetings where responses to the survey are discussed and priorities for action identified. The outcome of the method is a detailed plan setting out priorities, solutions, responsibilities and the resources required.

- **Participatory budgeting.** Very rarely used (used once or twice in England and the Netherlands since the first initiative in Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989) but of growing interest as this technique provides opportunities for significant empowerment of local citizens over the longer term. The process allows for citizens to have a high degree of agenda-setting power, and for their involvement in investment decision-making. It is seen as a particularly effective way of encouraging investment in poorer neighbourhoods as citizens decide on priorities and then agree action programmes to gain the investment. In Belgium, there is some local experience with this technique. Every year a few local authorities give a small budget to certain neighbourhood groups to invest in the public domain according to their own priorities.

- **Participatory village planning, Northern Ireland.** Promoted by the Rural Development Council in Northern Ireland through a practical workbook, the aim of this initiative is to provide practical assistance to rural community organisations starting strategic village planning. Communities develop a community led strategy for each village, which it is hoped will greatly assist in community ownership of the plan and therefore help the whole community feel far more engaged and affected by the process.

  The initiative encourages the development of a planning committee formed from a Village Development Association which can then undertake such activities as a 'decades brainstorm', to see how the village has evolved and changed, and the mapping of village assets. This can then be used to establish a village development plan and assess the built environment, the village setting and opportunities for new development.

  Newsletters feature heavily in this framework as providing an invaluable source of information for the local community. Newsletters and the local press feed into the Village Strategy, which informs the design and development of a particular settlement. Northern Ireland is characterised by a dispersed small-settlement pattern and so this method of consultation is vital in reaching some isolated communities and keeping them informed of progress or about

[20] ODPM (2004) *Statements of Community Involvement and Planning Applications*. ODPM, London. Page 15.

[21] This technique is described in: Nick Wates (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook*. Earthscan Publications, London. Page 68

developments that are due to occur in their village.

- **Planning committee input, Wales.** People in Wrexham County Borough who want to comment on planning applications or apply for planning permission have been invited to have their say at the Council's Planning Committee before decisions on major or controversial proposals are made. The new system started at the Planning Committee in July 2003, making Wrexham one of the first councils in Wales to adopt this nationally recognised good practice.
- **Planning for People™, Scotland.**[22] This is one of the training programmes run by Planning Aid for Scotland. It aims to engage local communities in 'areas of change' to help meet the development needs of those wishing to get involved in local environmental and regeneration work through the planning system. It aims to build community organisational skills, to give people the confidence to be more proactive and to help them engage more effectively in improving the quality of their local environment.
- **Workshops for real.** Derived from public meetings, workshops and Planning for Real® approaches, workshops for real are named as such because the consultees (a) actually have to work; and (b) are made to feel they really make a difference in a real-life issue – and that consultation is not simply a token gesture. They were developed by the former Gordon District Council and further refined by Aberdeenshire Council. Normally not more than two representatives from the council attend them.

  Groups of tables are arranged around room with some visual aid (e.g. a map of the local area) on each table, together with a bundle of coloured Post-it stickers. After an initial five-minute introduction each group spends 30-45 minutes discussing and debating among themselves; the colour-coded stickers are used to identify those options on which there is consensus, those that are thrown out and those where the group has identified a new proposal for the council to consider.

The examples given above are by no means the only examples of these ways of working in APaNGO countries or elsewhere, and are cited here simply to give some illustration of the variety of ways in which planning authorities and other organisations are working to involve communities and the public in planning processes

[22] For more information on Planning for People™, see www.planning-aid-scotland.org.uk/training.php

6

overall interim conclusions

6 overall interim conclusions

6.1 Modernisation of planning systems

Legislation and guidance on planning is being revised, in part for managerial reasons, across North West Europe. Community involvement procedures are new in most places and in some cases are still in preparation. It will take time for the political rhetoric of the changed planning systems to be translated into mainstream action on the ground. It will be important to review this and to examine the extent to which participation in planning feeds into wider democratic accountability and active citizenship.

6.2 Gap between policy and practice

The low level of the response rate to the survey initially experienced in most, and the nature of responses from some, Member States confirm that the field of community involvement in planning is less dynamic at the grassroots level than might be expected from the policy rhetoric. This may simply be an issue of timing, as identified above. Many of the radical changes proposed in the new planning regulations are only just beginning to be implemented. Nevertheless, in the responses to the APaNGO survey there is not the sense of excitement and enthusiasm from NGOs about planning issues that might be expected given the enormously enhanced role that quite a few governments in the North West Europe hope and expect them to play.

It is likely that, in some cases at least, the gap between policy and practice is not an issue of timing but rather masks entrenched attitudes and values – where involvement is seen merely as a hoop that has to be jumped through. An important challenge is therefore how to change attitudes in some planning authorities and some NGOs so that participation is seen as a way of enabling good planning and/or development outcomes. This suggests that existing approaches to training and capacity building may need to be supplemented in order to improve the situation. However, there have recently been significant moves (such as in England, Wales and Scotland) towards greater levels of community, public and stakeholder 'involvement' that go beyond consultation, implying longer-term, closer relationships and a more participative approach to planning and development.

6.3 A search for deeper involvement

Perhaps owing to the tension between representative democracy and participative processes, there is limited activity among local planning authorities as yet in 'collaboration' or 'empowerment' – for example working with citizens on projects or processes that they initiate or enabling citizens to take over responsibility for a project or process. However, there are various innovative techniques for community involvement already in operation in some countries – and some highly valued existing infrastructures of support – that can assist in the search for deeper and more meaningful forms of participation.

6.4 A shared commitment to involvement

The Member States of North West Europe, in their planning systems, share a commitment to community involvement in planning and development as part of a commitment to sustainable development principles. Consequently there is a willingness to change policy and priorities as a result of community involvement.

6.5 Evidence of innovation and creativity

The feedback from NGOs suggests that, in spite of a degree of frustration about current involvement practice, there is still enormous commitment to being involved – and to supporting involvement – in order to make a

positive contribution to the planning process. There is also interest in closer levels of joint working, collaboration and partnership (e.g. in the Netherlands, with growing interest in 'co-production'). The continuing pockets of innovation and creativity in increasing and deepening community involvement, alongside the good will that remains on all sides, are possibly the most important foundations on which to build improvements to public and community involvement in planning in future.

6.6 Support from the voluntary sector

The strength of the voluntary sector as a whole in Member States, which emerges to varying degrees across North West Europe, appears to be an important indicator of the strength of infrastructures provided for community involvement in planning and development.

6.7 Leading from the local

NGOs continue to 'act local' even if they are starting to 'think global', with the main focus for involvement in planning issues remaining at the local level (with over four times as many involved at local level rather than regionally or nationally), but there are some signs of change as regional planning takes on a larger role.

6.8 Conclusion

Overall, then, the research provides a mixed picture. The data are limited, but the issues above suggest some areas where initial conclusions can be drawn. In particular, it will be essential to keep this situation under review as the new legislative changes to planning systems become embedded in practice and the impacts of those changes can be better assessed.

appendices

appendix 1
planning systems and community involvement

This Appendix summarises the main features of the spatial planning systems in the ten APaNGO countries (counting the four nations of the UK separately), and their public involvement mechanisms. It serves as a summary of key points from the ten APaNGO country research reports – see Section 1 of the main report for the research brief and methodology.

Belgium

The legal framework for planning in Belgium remains inspired by an earlier national planning law of 1962, designed to manage post-War development, although this law no longer exists. In the 1980s, there was significant structural reform of Belgium into three regions (Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Capital), each of which now has its own planning framework; the federal government can act only in the Brussels region when national and international issues are at stake. The three regions are very different from each other: Brussels (officially bilingual) is a metropolitan area; Flanders (majority Flemish-speaking) has several urban areas, a lot of industrial zoning and some open space; and Wallonia (majority French-speaking) has a lot more open space, smaller cities and fewer industrial activities. The different language communities have autonomy on some issues (for example education and some aspects of welfare).

Walloon region

Within the Walloon region planning operates at regional, provincial and municipal level. Le Code wallon de l'aménagement du territoire, de l'urbanisme et du patrimoine (CWATUP) is the regional law for spatial planning, urban planning and heritage. It describes the different plans and their relationship to each other.

At the regional level there is one overall development plan *(le schéma de développement de l'espace régional)*. This is a cross-sectoral, evolving document based on three principles: the common heritage of the residents, sustainable development, and social and economic cohesion. The CWATUP provides the framework for 23 statutory regional land use and infrastructure plans (*plans du secteur*), which provide the guidelines for more detailed planning measures.

Development plans at municipal level (*les schémas directeurs communaux*) cover the whole municipality. There are also local land use plans (*les plans communaux d'aménagement*), which usually cover only part of a municipality and provide more detail than the regional land use plans – and may also alter them.

Public participation is growing, and the main arrangements are currently as follows:

- **Regional level:** A Regional Commission for Urban Planning is required by law to give advice on major projects, regional plans etc. The Commission is made up of experts from civil society (for example unions, professional groups).
- **Municipal level:** Some municipalities have local commissions, with members drawn from local organisations (for example professional and socio-cultural organisations). They give advice on local projects and plans. Some municipalities also organise information meetings, public hearings, and consultation meetings on some projects.

Flanders region

Within the Flanders region planning operates at regional, provincial and municipal levels. The umbrella law for spatial planning is the 'Decreet houdende organisatie van de ruimtelijke ordening', covering both development plans and land use plans. There is one overall plan for the whole region (Ruimtelijk structuurplan Vlaanderen), which provides a vision of how to ensure quality development in the region's limited space. The current plan was agreed in 1997 and will be replaced in 2007 by a new plan, which will last for the next ten years. The overall aim is to protect open space and regenerate cities to provide a good quality of life. The 308 cities and municipalities in the region should also draw up their own development plans, but as yet only a third have done so.

The regional plan is made operational by regional and local operational plans (*ruimtelijke uitvoeringsplannen*). The overall structure of these land use plans is the same as in the Walloon region, although the meaning of the different developments (for example a residential area) may be slightly different.

Planning commissions (similar to those in the Walloon region) operate at all three levels. The composition of the commissions is fixed by law, and the government is obliged to ask for its advice on regional and operational plans.

In addition, individual neighbours and others who can prove an interest must be consulted on some important projects and can submit a written list of complaints. Beyond this, some authorities organise more public participation, although this is voluntary – the legal requirements for participation are very limited.

Brussels Capital region

The Brussels Capital region is relatively small: 161 square kilometres with just over 1 million population. Planning here operates at regional and municipal levels. Urban planning has always been very important, because of the limited space in the capital and the development demands it faces; planning has often been the responsibility of the regional prime minister.

Since 2004, the main planning legislation for the region has been the Brussels Wetboek Ruimtelijke Ordening (BWRO)/le Code Bruxellois d'aménagement du territoire (COBAT). This identifies the development plan and land use plan as the two main plans at regional level.

The regional development plan (*gewestelijk ontwikkelingsplan/plan régional de développement – GewOP/PRD*) covers the whole region and sets out the political priorities and the means to achieve them. The BWRO/COBAT stipulates that after each election of the Brussels council the new government has to formulate its own development plan. Each new government has the option to confirm the existing development plan, to decide on some changes, or to make a complete new version. The current government has decided to work with the existing plan. The development plan has no binding value on private persons. The government commits itself to make this an operational plan, and municipalities can only receive financial aid for programmes that correspond with the development plan.

The regional land use plan (*gewestelijk bestemmingsplan/plan régional d'affectation du sol* – GBP/PRAS) also covers the entire region. It is very detailed, down to each single property, and it is binding on both the public and private sectors. As well as normal zoning regulations, the plan covers office development in extensive detail. The regional land use plan has no renewal date and will be statutory until it is replaced partially or entirely by a new plan.

The link between the development plan and the land use plan has weakened as the planning law has changed. Originally, the Brussels land use plan was the operational plan of the development plan; now the law (BWRO/COBAT) says that the regional land use plan should only be 'inspired' by the development plan.

For the 19 municipalities, the BWRO/COBAT sets a municipal development plan (*gemeentelijk ontwikkelingplan/plan communal de développement* – GemOP/PCD) and local land use plans. Such plans should cover the entire municipality and reflect local goals and priorities.

Again, after each election the alderman and the mayor are expected to make their own municipal development plan for the next six years, although, even now, not all the municipalities have finished and approved their first plan. The plan is not statutory and is intended to complete the regional by giving more detail.

Municipalities can also make local land use plans that are legally binding for all parties (*bijzondere bestemmingsplannen/plans particuliers d'aménagement* – BBP/PPA). These land use plans are very detailed; they indicate the zoning for every building and can even stipulate the materials to be used and the gradients of the roofs. Since the regional land use plan is already fairly detailed, local land use plans are usually made for a specific project.

In Brussels there are two official mechanisms for public involvement:

- **The Regional Development Commission (Gewestelijke Ontwikkelingscommissie/ Commission Regional de Développement – GOC/CRD):** Before final endorsement by the government, all regional and local plans are submitted to the Regional Development Commission for advice.

  The GOC/CRD represents a wide range of groups and organisations in Brussels. Its composition is sanctioned by the government and is drawn from three main groups: experts, representatives of the municipalities (with a careful political balance), and members of the sectoral

advice committees (for example environment, transport, heritage and economy). In this last group, again a careful balance is pursued so that unions, professional organisations and local residents' federations are represented. The linguistic balance is also respected.

The Regional Development Commission provides the formal mandatory democratic evaluation required by planning law, in which different organisations can democratically take part. As a result of its careful composition, the very rigid time frame in which it has to give its advice, the highly technical nature of its dossiers and legal pressure to reach a consensus, the GOC/CRD rarely brings any surprises planning discussions and tends to produce quite predictable outcomes.

- **The local deliberation commission (*gemeentelijke overlegcommissie/ commission de concertation*):** The planning law from 1962 made no distinction between cities and countryside. Even before the structural reform of the state it was clear that Brussels needed a different approach than other parts of Belgium. Therefore, during the 1970s a detailed, multi-functional and controllable land use plan was proposed for Brussels. This plan stated that each zone should have one main function and several secondary functions. These secondary functions were only permissible within certain limits (for example in a highly residential area housing is the main function; shops or small offices are secondary functions and are limited in number and size). These limits could be altered subject to consideration of individual circumstances by the local deliberation commission. This system made it possible to give very precise and detailed building permits. Members of the commissions are local and regional administrations and politicians. Their decision is not final, but serves as advice to the final decisions makers (stipulated by planning law).

  The deliberation commission's second role is to organise community involvement in planning. The public have the opportunity to view each dossier that needs an individual decision and can comment on it. The municipalities organise this consultation, which is announced using posters. The general rule is that the public are given the opportunity to view the complete dossier at the town hall and provide comments, written or oral, during a two-week period. It is a rather passive system, as all the initiative has to come from the community. No information meetings are organised, and there is no official body that provides assistance or help.

  The system still exists but does not have the same value as was originally intended. The reason for this is that there are no clear guidelines for the deliberation committee. Currently the system can appear to be a way to approve individual exceptions to the general rule and can lead to abuse.

  The decision on whether an application or a project will be submitted to the deliberation commission, and whether there will be a public enquiry, is stipulated in the land use plan GBP/PRAS. Consequently, community involvement is dictated by the planning regulations more than by the importance or the impact of the project. There is no real differentiation between local or regional projects (for example the procedure for the expansion of the European Parliament may be the same as for individuals who want to expand their kitchens).

  For important projects consultation through the local deliberation commission comes far too late in the process: nobody wants to make further changes when a project is submitted for final approval. Furthermore, the timescale is very short: two weeks of consultation (one month for infrastructure) is insufficient for important and complicated projects. There is no official technical or logistical support for community groups to help them understand documents, mobilise neighbours or to formulate sensible comments. The discussion by the local deliberation commission itself is not open to comment from the public, for whom it is no more than a hearing.

France

France is governed by 25 administrative regions, 102 departments (subdivisions of regions, run by elected councils) and over 36,000 communes (with elected councils chaired by a mayor). Development control was introduced in the 1950s; spatial planning in the 1970s.

The main instruments of planning are as follows:

- **La Loi Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain (SRU)** reformed the planning system (in 2000) by requiring it to promote 'solidarity' (for example through social mix in housing developments).
- **La Loi Urbanisme et Habitat (town planning and housing law)** was passed in 2003 and aimed to simplify the planning system to deal with a perceived housing and

land shortage, and to promote sustainable development. Beneath this are the SCOTs and PLUs:

- **SCOTs (*schémas de cohérence territoriale*)** aim to establish the medium- and long-term objectives of strategic and spatial planning; they operate at an inter-communal level (partnerships between groups of neighbouring communes). They need to be publicised so local people are aware of them. Consultation takes place with the communes involved, as well as with other official bodies, over a three-month period. Public consultation follows within a one-month timescale, after which the plan may be amended before final approval.
- The **PLU (*plan locaux d'urbanisme*)** is the document articulating each commune's planning and sustainable development objectives (*projet d'aménagement et de développement durable*). This local plan is a binding document, which means that decisions regarding development within an area covered by a PLU are taken with regards to conformity with the plan; therefore the only stage at which stakeholders and citizens can influence the outcomes governed by the plan is prior to final approval. Public consultation takes place at the early stages of developing the PLU, prior to a three-month consultation with other public bodies. This feeds into the drafting of the PLU. The draft PLU is then made available to the public (for example, through copies in libraries). The public are involved through the 'public inquiry' and 'public debate':
  - The **public inquiry (*enquête publique*)** is a compulsory step that has to be undertaken by the local authority prior to/during any major project (for example urban development, railways, roads, airports) that will affect property or the environment. The PLU is also subject to a public inquiry. The inquiry may take different forms, depending on the circumstances. It is supervised by a *'commissaire enquêteur'*, who provides a report summarising conclusions from the inquiry. The final decision is not bound by the views put to the inquiry or by those of the *commissaire*. The public inquiry is widely used in planning issues.
  - A **public debate (*débat public*)** is organised by the Commission Nationale du Débat Public (CNDP), which has a secretariat provided by the Ministry for the Environment. These debates are organised on the major planning operations of the state (nationally and locally) and other public bodies. The debate considers the objectives of the project, the social and economic implications, and the main impacts on the environment.
- **Le Code de l'Urbanisme (town planning code)** is the set of laws and regulations that govern urban development. This law is regularly updated. Article L300-2 of the Code de l'urbanisme (and also articles L122-1-1 and L123-3) sets out requirements for public involvement and requires a local council to liaise with local populations, associations and any other person or organisation, including agricultural bodies, during any process related to:
  - the modification or revision of a local plan (PLU);
  - the creation of a *zone d'action concertée*; or
  - any planning activity initiated by or on behalf of the *commune* that is believed will significantly alter the environment or economic activities in the area and which takes place in an area not covered by the first two points above.

  The outcome of this consultation is presented by the mayor to the local council, which then deliberates. The final project draft is then made available to the public. Typically, copies of the document will be on display in town halls and/or public libraries. Legislation includes a requirement for a 'public inquiry' (see above).

Germany

Germany operates three general levels of administration: federal (national), the states (regional) and the municipalities (local). The system is highly decentralised, with a statutory division of responsibilities between the different levels. These are cross-cut by supra-local planning, local (spatial) planning, and planning for individual building projects.

- **Regional level:** The main focus of spatial planning is the 16 States or *Lander* (regions), operating within the national Spatial Planning Act 1998. The States decide the goals for spatial plans and manage the planning process, with more local plans in place at municipality level.

  At the State level, spatial plans go through three main stages of preparation:
  - drafting/internal procedures within the State planning department;
  - participation by public planning authorities (especially the federal and local

governments, social, cultural and business organisations, and spatial planning advisory committees); and

- formal adoption to become legally binding on public planning authorities.

Most States are divided into regions that produce their own plans. These plans are designed to realise/implement plans and are less static than other formal planning instruments. This level of planning is done by different agencies including regional planning authorities and regional assemblies working through 'regional planning associations' (municipalities and counties formed specifically into these associations for regional planning purposes), or State planning authorities. The regional level in Germany thus forms a link between the State planning function and municipal planning, with a difficult role balancing the national interest and the planning autonomy of local authorities.

- **Local level:** At local level, municipalities have the responsibility for land use planning. The central purpose of municipal development planning is to prepare and organise the use of plots located within the municipality for building and other types of use in accordance with the Federal Building Code.

  In the first stage of the local planning process, a single land use plan is drawn up by the planning authority, which is binding on public authorities but on no-one else. This is followed by a local development plan, which is legally binding on everyone. These land use plans must be in harmony with the aims of comprehensive spatial planning.

  These two plans are approved in parallel processes with community involvement at two stages:

  - early public information and opportunities to comment on the initial designation of the geographical area under consideration; and
  - a public display of the draft plans (for one month) with community involvement processes designed to produce suggestions/amendments which *must* be taken into consideration if received before or during the consultation period.

A recent review of public participation[22] was based on feedback from and research undertaken with 13 of the 16 States and 24 regional areas. This research examined their practical experience of participation in planning and found that the point at which most public involvement took place in planning was after the production of the draft plan (76 per cent of participatory activities took place then), although there was also significant involvement at earlier stages:

- 22 per cent of respondents involved the public before the formal updating process for plans started;
- 30 per cent involved the public from the beginning of the updating process;
- 14 per cent involved the public from before the production of the draft;
- 24 per cent involved the public while the draft was being produced;
- 76 per cent involved the public after the draft had been produced; and
- 16 per cent involved the public during implementation.

New developments in planning policy relevant to community involvement (although mainly involving stakeholders) include:

- **regional conferences**, at which the state/region brings important decision-makers/stakeholder together to plan the medium-term future on the basis of 'regional development concepts' – the results of such a conference should be fixed as projects and activities in a greater 'regional action programme';
- **regional management**, which promotes co-operation to define projects and share problems, and aims to connect political decision-makers with communities in thematic networks;
- **regional marketing**, concerning regional identity and culture, especially around improving the economic image of a given region to external audiences – fairs, public discussions and questionnaires have been used to research what the public love/miss about a place;
- **city-networks**, which bring together municipalities in a region to work together to solve common problems; and
- ***'Teilraumgutachten'***, which bring stakeholders together to focus on specific issues that cross other boundaries/political borders (issues such as environment and ecology, settlement structure and traffic) – reports are produced on these issues, with recommendations for measures and projects that contribute to solving problems.

[23] German Ministry of Transportation, Building and Housing (2003) *Public Participation in Programmes and Plans of Spatial Planning*. Federal Ministry of Transportation, Building and Housing, Berlin

Luxembourg

The administrative structure of Luxembourg comprises only two levels: the government at the national level and the municipalities at the local level. Spatial planning takes place at both levels. All planning laws have been under revision between 1999 and 2005:

- **National level.** Under the process of developing spatial plans at the national level, the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning informs the authorities of local communities affected about the purpose of the national land use plan. Only local communities that are affected by the national land use plan have the right to submit a statement on the plan, which they have to hand over to the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning within three months of being informed about the plan.

  The Ministry of the Interior and Spatial Planning is responsible for setting the spatial objectives and principles which are implemented through instruments such as Guiding Sector and Guiding Regional Plans. Guiding sector plans provide direction and national level co-ordination on individual sectors such as waste deposits, transport, industrial areas. They are elaborated in cooperation with the respective sector ministries and are legally binding. Guiding regional plans work at a cross-regional level and are developed by the government in partnership with the municipalities of a region. Land use plans may be developed in those areas where there are particular conflicts of interest. In contrast to the Guiding Sector Plan or the Guiding Regional Plan the Land Use Plan has direct impact on the use of different parcels of land and is legally binding on third parties.

  The local authorities concerned have a duty to inform their local population about the national land use plan. The opportunity to examine the plan is announced publicly (for example through daily newspapers and placards at the community centre). The local authorities organise at least one public briefing on the plan. The Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning or his/her representative is present at this briefing. The involvement of associations and organisations is limited to making statements during the briefing and making written objections.

  For 45 days, citizens, entrepreneurs, defenders of the public interest, non-governmental associations and organisations etc. can comment on the plan and bring forward their suggestions and arguments. The written comments have to be delivered to the local authorities, who hand them over, with the statement of the local council, to the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning. The Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning transmits the whole dossier with his/her own recommendations to the council of the government. If the council of the government has no objections to make, the plan is approved.

- **Local level.** Under a new system introduced in 2004, municipal authorities develop land use plans and development plans, which must be approved by the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning. The preparation process is that local authorities commission an expert – authorised by law – to draw up the land use plan. The first draft has to be approved by a national commission for land use planning. If the local authorities accept the ruling of the commission, the draft of the land use plan is laid out at the community centre. As for the national land use plan, the opportunity to examine the plan, over a 30-day period, is announced publicly (for example through daily newspapers and placards) and local authorities have to organise at least one public briefing on the Plan. During this 30-day period, the public and interested bodies can address their comments and suggestions in writing to the local authorities, who hand them over to the national commission for land use planning.

  After the 30 days have expired, the local authorities invite those people or organisations who have commented on the plan to a discussion. Problems are discussed and resolutions are worked out together. After this hearing, the local authorities hand over the comments and the result of the discussion to the local council.

  If the council votes in favour of the plan, its decision is announced at the community centre and posted to those who have participated at the discussion. Those people or organisations who have already commented on the plan during the first public involvement have a second opportunity to make more comments or suggestions during the following 30 days. Their comments have to be addressed to the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning, who hands them over to the commission for land use planning.

  If the commission has no objections to make, the plan is sent to the local council that has to approve the plan. After approval, the plan is binding on all parties.

Netherlands

The first spatial planning act in the Netherlands took effect in 1965 and is still largely valid, although it is under comprehensive review. Planning operates at three administrative levels:

- **National level:** By parliament (De Staten-Generaal) and central government (De regering).
- **Provincial or regional level:** By the provincial council (Provinciale Staten) and the provincial executive (Gedeputeerde Staten).
- **Local level:** By the municipal council (Gemeenteraad) and the municipal executive (College van Burgemeester en Wethouders).

These levels are considered in detail below:

- **National level.** There is a *National Spatial Planning Policy* document (*Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening*), which sets out the main principles and guidelines for national spatial planning policy for the medium and long term; a national structure plan for specific policy sectors (*structuurschema*), covering major projects (for example roads and airports); and general planning principles to be followed at local and regional level.

  The Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment produces the first draft of a national paper on spatial planning policy, in agreement with other members of the cabinet. In this phase the minister conducts informal consultations with other government bodies and various social and business organisations. After publication of the first draft, more formal consultations are carried out, on which the general public can also provide comments.

  At the end of the second phase, the minister gives an account of formal consultations and reactions from the public, followed by the publication – in a third phase – of an adjusted draft. Finally in the fourth phase, parliament discusses the draft and approves it, usually after having made some adjustments. The paper then becomes final and receives legal status on publication.

- **Regional level.** The provincial authority is responsible for the regional plan (*streekplan*), which outlines the main aspects of future spatial development for the whole or part of the province. The provincial executive produces a first draft, which is discussed with many interested parties (including representatives of various ministries, co-ordinated by the Spatial Planning Inspector). The draft is then finalised, and all interested parties, including residents, are given the opportunity to make formal objections if they are not satisfied with the final draft.

  Then the executive sends the final draft, the objections that have been made, and its recommendations on how to deal with the objections to the provincial council for agreement. When this process is concluded, the provincial council discusses the proposals of the executive board and finally decides on the plan and on the objections. The plan is published in this final version.

  Those parties that made objections that have not been accepted (and only these, as new objections will not be accepted in this stage) have recourse to the administrative section of a district court, with a right of appeal to the administrative section of the Council of State. Once the plan is approved, the province is largely (but not entirely) bound to the plan.

- **Local level.** There are two types of plans at the municipal or local level which the authorities can use to present their spatial planning policy: the structure plan (*structuurplan*) and the local land use plan (*bestemmingsplan*). In the structure plan the municipal council designates in broad outline the future development of the entire municipality or a part of it. Alternatively, neighbouring municipalities may combine to draw up a joint structure plan for their areas. The local land use plan is very different: it is directly binding on citizens and government bodies, and is the basic instrument on which the planning system rests. The land use plan has to be approved by provincial authorities, who check these plans against their own regional zoning plans.

  Land use plans are prepared by the municipal executive, with support of either its own civil servants or external consultants. The first stage of the preparations produces a first draft of the land use plan that serves as the basis for discussing the content of the plan with all interested parties, including individual citizens. Taking account of the outcome of these discussions, the municipal executive then publishes the final draft of the plan, to give all interested parties the opportunity to make formal objections if they are not satisfied with the final draft. The executive then sends the final draft, the objections that have been made, and its recommendations on how to deal with the objections to the municipal council for agreement. The municipal council discusses this material and finally decides on the plan and on the objections. The plan is then published again.

Those parties that made objections that have not been accepted (and only these, as new objections are not accepted in this stage) have the right to repeat these objections to the provincial executive (which has to approve the land use plan as agreed by the municipal council). The provincial executive makes a decision on the plan and on these objections. If during this stage no objections have been made, the provincial approval is the end of the procedure, giving the land use plan final legal status. However, when objections have been addressed to the provincial executive and these have not been dealt with, the parties that made the objectives and repeated them (and again only these) may then appeal to the administrative section of the Council of State (which serves as a high court for administrative matters).

The same course of appeal is open to the municipality in the case of objections having been accepted either by the province or by one of the courts, if the municipality feels the decision negatively affects its interests.

Republic of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland has existed as an independent sovereign state since 1949. Planning is in the hands of a Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, but other departments are also involved. Below the state level, the planning system in Ireland is run by eight regional authorities (there are also two regional assemblies that cover the whole country; these are indirectly-elected bodies, with councillors serving on them being nominated by local authorities within their area from among their own elected members) and 88 local planning authorities (29 county councils, five county borough corporations, five borough corporations and 49 town councils).

Some of the terminology used may sound similar to that used in the United Kingdom, but its meaning in statutory and planning terms is often very different, and the new system in Ireland bears little resemblance to that in the UK.

The planning system in Ireland can be said to have begun with the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963; but a review of the system and a new Planning and Development Act in 2000 changed the system radically – to become more strategic and integrated, and to promote sustainable development and protect against non-sustainable development. A set of regulations was issued in 2001, which were updated in 2005. In Dublin, public participation is perhaps more developed in its techniques than elsewhere in the country, but nevertheless the opportunity of participation of some sort is widespread.

- **National level:** There are two main plans: the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). These feed into regional guidelines and downwards to development plans at local level.
  - **National Development Plan 2000-06:**[24] The making of the NDP received considerable publicity in the press and elsewhere in Ireland, but most consultation appears to have taken place at political and official level (although this did include meeting with 'social partners', including the voluntary and community sectors).
  - **The National Spatial Strategy:**[25] The stated aim of the National Spatial Strategy is to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development over the next 20 years (especially to correct the over-strong role of Dublin in the national spatial picture). The plan itself defines the approach to consultation and citizen participation as being *'consultative across a wide spectrum, cross departmental and analytical'*.

    There were four key stages in the development of the NSS:

    - Stage 1 – Scoping report (January to May 2000): An initial discussion paper asked 'What are the issues?', and invited public comment.
    - Stage 2 – Research trends (June to December 2000): A number of reports identified the planning issues to be addressed as a result of trends identified.
    - Stage 3 – Public consultation: This began with a national conference in Limerick on 1 December 2000 and was followed in early 2001 with eight regional roadshows. This led to the publication in September 2001 of an NSS public consultation paper, with a consultation period running until November 2001. The consultation paper was addressed to a wide range of organisations and the general public.

[24] www.ndp.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/homepage.asp

[25] www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/

Five consultative fora were set up for specialist bodies to engage at appropriate stages, and the public were also invited to respond to policy papers etc.

- Stage 4 – Final drafting: This was undertaken in the light of the outcomes from previous stages, in November 2002.

- **Regional level.** All regional authorities have to prepare regional planning guidelines (RPG),26 currently to cover the period up to 2020 (with reviews after six years). The regulations make it clear that part of the process of production must include statutory public participation and inclusion of all those with relevant interests. The indicative timescale for production set out in the regulations is as follows:
  - Step 1 – Process initiation (6 weeks)
  - Step 2 – Initial issues paper (2-4 weeks) and Public consultation (8 weeks)
  - Step 3 – Goal-setting and research (10 weeks)
  - Step 4 – Development of a regional strategy (4 weeks)
  - Step 5 – Identification and evaluation of RPG options (8 weeks)
  - Step 6 – Public consultation on draft RPG (10 weeks)
  - Step 7 – Consideration of submissions (6-8 weeks)
  - Step 8 – Implementing and monitoring

    End of process
- **Local level.** Local planning authorities have to make a development plan every six years, covering the whole administrative area of that authority and consistent with the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines and the plans of adjoining authorities.

  The local authority is required to publish notice of its intention to renew its plan review no later than four years after the previous plan is made, and this notice must allow for submissions on the review to be made by the public and others during a period of at least eight weeks. It is for the local authority to take *'what steps it considers necessary to consult with the general public and other interested bodies'*,[27] and within 16 weeks of giving notice of review the planning manager must prepare a report for the planning authority detailing the submissions made and giving his/her opinion and recommendations on them. The manager must then prepare the draft plan within 12 weeks of the committee meeting that considered his/her report, and take into account any comments made by the committee.

  Once a draft plan is prepared, notice of its publication is given and public comment is invited for a minimum of ten weeks. Within 22 weeks of the issue of the notice, the planning manager must report to committee, giving details of who commented and a summary of the representations received along with his/her response to them. The members of the planning authority then have 12 weeks to consider the draft plan and manager's report. They can accept or amend the plan. If amended, notice of the amendment must be given and time must be made for comments to be received and considered. Once a plan is accepted by the planning authority it is deemed to be made. A local authority can review and amend its plan as it sees fit, but it must make time available for the public and others to comment on proposals.

  In 2000 the government set up 34 county/city development boards, which lie between regional and local levels. They are multi-agency bodies in which the local authority is a lead organisation. Boards consist of representatives from the state and its agencies, local government, and community and voluntary organisations. The boards' aim is to create a strategy for social, economic and cultural development and to implement the strategy. Community involvement is seen as a vital ingredient in drawing up such strategies.

  Local planning authorities are also allowed to prepare local area plans for those areas that an authority deems relevant for the purpose of the plan. The 2000 Act states that: *'A planning authority may enter into an arrangement with any suitably qualified person or local community group for the preparation, or the carrying out of any aspect of the preparation, of a local area plan.'*

  Such plans are obligatory in areas designated as towns and with a population of over 2,000 situated in areas and where the planning authority is a county council; in most other areas they are not obligatory. Where obligatory, they must be made every six years.

[26] www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/

[27] Section 11 (3) (a)

Section 20 of the Act requires a planning authority to: *'take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public before preparing, amending or revoking a local area plan including consultations with any local residents, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups, and commercial and business interests with the area'*.

- **Development control.** In making a decision on an application for planning permission, a planning authority is restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, regard being had to the provisions of the development plan, among other things. This allows the authority to make a decision contrary to the development plan, but there is a set procedure of notification to go through before that can be done.

  One of the 'other things' that an authority must consider are submissions made by interested persons (including the public). Interested persons (including the public) are allowed to make comments on an application within five weeks of it being received by the planning authority. Any submissions must be paid for, and comments made must be receipted by the planning authority in writing. Only the applicant or those paying to make a submission can appeal the decision of a planning authority. This does allow third-party appeals (see below).

  In Ireland the functions of a local authority are divided between executive functions (carried out by the manager or his/her officials) and reserved functions (carried out by councillors). Determining planning applications is an executive function. Elected members can direct an officer to take a particular decision but this power is hardly ever used.

  Ireland is somewhat unique in having a third-party system of appeals in a relatively flexible planning decision-making system. Either the applicant or a third party who has demonstrated prior interest in the application before a decision was made can appeal. A prior interest can be demonstrated by making submissions on the planning application and paying the fee to register a submission. Anyone who did not demonstrate prior interest can also ask for leave to appeal, and if granted must appeal within two weeks.

  Appeals must be made to the independent An Bord Pleanála within four weeks of a decision being made on an application. Rules on time are strict, and the onus is on the applicant to submit a valid appeal in time. Once an appeal is submitted, the appellant cannot add material to it. Appeals are normally dealt with in writing, but an oral hearing can be requested. It is at the discretion of An Bord Pleanála if one will be held. Fees are charged for all appeals and submissions.

  Once an appeal is made, a copy is sent to the planning authority and, if it is a third-party appeal, to the developer. Each party has four weeks to make observations. A copy of the appeal is made available at the planning authority's office. Anyone not already involved can make comment on it by becoming an 'observer' and paying the relevant fee. Observations must be made within four weeks.

  Once an appeal decision is made, that decision is notified to those concerned and An Bord Pleanála's file is made available for public inspection.

England

The planning system in England and Wales has followed a local plan based system throughout the post-War period. There was a recent major review leading to amendment of the existing legislation (the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.. The aim of the 2004 Act is primarily to introduce a simpler and more flexible plan-making system and increase the effectiveness and quality of community involvement.

In terms of community involvement, the government refers to community as *'all those who have an interest in and a contribution to make to* [the planning system]*. This includes individuals as well as local authorities and bodies representing various interest groups.'*[28] Community involvement has grown to be a key component of England's planning system, and the emphasis in government guidance has shifted from a process of consultation to one of engagement and active participation in the planning process, involving the community from the very beginning and seeking input through a variety of methods, rather than simply asking for their comments. However, the extent to which this policy guidance is followed in spirit and in practice remains to be fully examined.

[28] ODPM (2005) Planning Policy Statement 11: *Regional Spatial Strategies*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

- **National level.** The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is (since 2006) responsible for local and regional government, planning, housing, regeneration, social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal. The Planning Directorate of the DCLG issues planning policy statements (PPSs) that set out the government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England under the overall objective of achieving sustainable communities. PPS1: *Delivering Sustainable Development* sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Together, PPS11: *Regional Spatial Strategies* and PPS12: *Local Development Frameworks* provide guidance on the new planning framework that was legislated for in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

  PPS1 is accompanied by a supplement on *Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives*. The government believes that opportunities should be made for the community to get involved in the planning system at the earliest opportunity. This is referred to as 'front-loading'. It is recommended that the methods of community involvement should be appropriate to the community concerned, fit for purpose, and transparent and accessible.

  As well as influencing and directing policy through PPSs, national government issues planning circulars, the purpose of which is to provide revised guidance to local authorities in England on a range of planning topics.

- **Regional level.** The regional level is overseen by nine regional assemblies, which are the regional planning bodies (RPBs) responsible for preparing a regional spatial strategy (RSS) for their region. The RSS is a statutory document that sets a broad development strategy for the region concerned, seeking to achieve sustainable development. Any planning decisions and policy-making must be carried out in accordance with the objectives in the RSS, which covers the priorities for the environment, transport, economic development, infrastructure etc. When preparing the RSS the RPB should take into account national policies as well as incorporate views from the local level.

  The RPB has a statutory duty under section 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare and publish a statement of public participation. This should set out how the body intends to involve the community in its planning activities and who it will involve, with particular reference to the production of the RSS. This statement should be kept under review and revised accordingly. PPS11 states that: *'It is essential that the public is able to be involved throughout the RSS revision process and this should include broad public consultation rather than relying on targeted consultation with particular groups. The statement of public participation should set out how the RPB intends to achieve this…'*

  RSSs sit alongside other regional strategies, the most important of which is the regional economic strategy, which is the responsibility of a separate regional government body: the regional development agency. A third regional government body also has a role: the regional government office, which represents central government at regional level.

  The process for the preparation of the RSS is as follows:

  - **Pre-production:** The RPB first drafts a list of issues it thinks should be included in the RSS and consults the public on these issues. The method for consultation must be in accordance with the statement of public participation; the chosen method(s) will depend on who/what constitutes the community and the number of people to be involved. For example, a one-day conference may give people an opportunity to comment in person, or alternatively a series of events or workshops around the region may be more appropriate.

    The RPB is also be responsible for consulting a wide range of bodies and organisations and seeking their feedback on the draft list of issues. These bodies may include, for example, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, neighbouring RPBs and the government regional Office.

  - **Production:** On receiving comments from this exercise the RPB is responsible for drafting the strategy's policies. The RPB must involve the community and relevant organisations, giving them the opportunity to help shape the strategy.

    As comments are considered and the RSS is re-drafted accordingly, the community should be kept up to date with proposed changes. Before submitting the final copy of the RSS to the Secretary of State (SoS) for approval, the RPB must have consulted specific bodies listed in the regulations. When submitting the RSS to the SoS, a 'pre-submission consultation statement' should also be submitted, demonstrating

how and which groups have been involved in the drafting process. Once the SoS receives the draft, there is a formal process of consultation where anyone wishing to comment on the draft may do so in writing. This is known as making a 'representation'. The draft RSS must be advertised as widely as possible and through many different means (for example the media, leafleting, interviews, mail-outs etc).

- **Examination:** Following the SoS's examination of the draft, the RSS is subject to an examination in public. The purpose of this exercise is to assess how 'sound' the strategy is (i.e. how robust its policies are). Members of the community and specific organisations/bodies are invited to the examination, subject to the relevance of their original representations to the issues presented for discussion.
- **Adoption:** The final stage of the RSS process involves the SoS proposing changes to the strategy in light of the representations made and the results of the examination. The regulations provide for a period of eight weeks in which the community can be consulted on these changes and is invited to make any comments, before the strategy is finally published.

The publication of the RSS is not seen as the end of the process. The RPB must maintain a continuous dialogue with the community through the implementation and review stages.

- **Local level.** The new planning framework at the local level is now called the local development framework (LDF), which is made up of the following elements:
  - **The development plan:** This constitutes the RSS and the development plan document.
  - **The development plan document (DPD):** This is effectively the local development plan, containing policies against which proposed development is assessed. Each local planning authority (LPA) is responsible for producing a DPD. The local planning authority must adhere to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination before the plan can be formally adopted.
  - **A statement of community involvement (SCI):** An SCI must also be produced. The statement should *'set out the LPA's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of local development documents and planning applications'*.[29] It is worth noting here that the preparation and adoption of the SCI undergoes a similar process of preparation, examination and adoption as the RSS.

The preparation and adoption of a DPD can be divided into four stages. Each stage is discussed below, emphasising the role of community involvement:

- **Pre-production – development of the evidence base:** The LPA must first assess the needs, opportunities and constraints of their area and gather evidence on which it will base its policies. LPAs should involve relevant groups and organisations to assist them in this process.
- **Production – preparation of preferred options:** PPS12 states that *'it is essential that anyone who has an interest in the planning of an area actively seeks to assist the local planning authority to shape the future of that area from the earliest stage'*. The government encourages 'front-loading', which means facilitating the early involvement of the community and key stakeholders in the development process. The LPA lists those issues that it thinks should be included, in collaboration with the community, and these are published for people to comment on. The community is given a statutory six weeks to make any representations on the issues identified.

  In light of the options and the comments received, the LPA then drafts the DPD before submitting it to the SoS, with a statement of compliance, detailing how the LPA has involved the community and therefore to what degree it has complied with its SCI.
- **Examination:** The DPD is submitted to the SoS for independent examination. Representations are invited for a period of six weeks from the time the SoS receives the DPD. The purpose of the examination is to test how 'sound' the document is, but also to assess to what extent it complies with the RSS. The examination can take on a variety of forms, from written representations to formal hearings; the methodology is decided by the inspector undertaking the examination, in light of the issues for discussion.

[29] ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 12: *Local Development Frameworks*. London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

- **Adoption:** After the examination, the inspector issues a report recommending changes. The LPA must adopt the DPD once in receipt of this report. As with the RSS, the DPD should be a flexible document that is updated and reviewed, during which the community should be continually involved.

  As well as involving the community when it produces its DPD, the LPA must also involve them when producing other planning documents (for example supplementary planning documents – SPDs). SPDs supplement the policies in the DPD, providing further detail and often supported with illustrations as appropriate. The process for engaging the community is a simplified version of the process for a DPD; there is no requirement to produce a list of issues/options, but the community should be engaged throughout the process.

- **Development control.** The aim of development control is to ensure that all development complies with the policies in the DPD and follows central government legislation and guidance as set out at national and regional levels.

The planning system in England is a democratic one. In summary, planning officers consider a planning application in light of the development plan document and recommend a decision to a council committee of elected members, who make a final decision on the application (although in practice, much decision-making is delegated to officers). The Planning Inspectorate is responsible for overseeing this system including dealing with planning appeals and holding examinations into development plan documents.

The exact method of consulting local interests for each council is set out in its statement of community involvement. However, the public also have an opportunity to comment on any planning applications (a weekly list is available). A statutory period of 21 days is given in which the community, local bodies, organisations and others submit their comments on the proposal in writing to the local planning authority. The authority consults in writing those people who are within the close proximity to the proposed development (for example neighbours and local businesses).

The local planning authority must demonstrate that all comments have been considered when making a recommendation on the planning application.

Northern Ireland

Specific local legislation to control the development of land in Northern Ireland was first introduced in the early 1930s, and until 1972 local government administered the planning system. In 1991, responsibility for planning was transferred to the UK Department of the Environment (now the Department for Communities and Local Government – DCLG), and planning became the responsibility of the UK government.

In August 2004, *Reforming Planning – Proposals to Amend Primary Planning Legislation in Northern Ireland* was published for consultation. The document informed the publication of an implementation plan that sets out a three-year programme to modernise and reform planning processes. With respect to consultation, the implementation plan intends to improve methods of consultation, particularly with statutory consultees and local councils.

- **National level.** The DCLG has a duty to formulate and co-ordinate policy on planning in Northern Ireland, and has powers over the granting of planning permission, the preparation of development plans and the enforcement of development control. It does this through an executive agency, the Planning Service, which was established in 1973, with the core function of controlling the development and use of land in the public interest throughout Northern Ireland. The Planning Service is responsible for developing, and implementing, government planning policies and development plans in Northern Ireland. This work is done through a central headquarters and six divisional planning offices located throughout Northern Ireland. The Planning Service has responsibility for three main areas of the planning system: planning policy (through planning policy statements – PPSs; and development control advice notes – DCANs), development plans (area plans, local plans and subject plans – for example tourism) and development control.

  The public are given an opportunity to comment on proposed planning policies for their area each time the Planning Service prepares, revises or replaces a plan. All opportunities for public involvement are widely advertised in the local press. The purpose of the consultation is:

  - To provide information about the plan.
  - To gather the views of the public on a wide range of subjects.
  - To allow public views to be considered throughout the preparation process.

In terms of development control, all planning applications are published on a register which is available for public viewing. The Planning Service publicises applications in the local press and notifies immediate neighbours of proposals. Local people are normally given 14 days in which to comment on a planning application.

Certain major applications (for example those which are of significance to a substantial part of Northern Ireland) are not dealt with under this normal consultation process. They involve a special procedure which usually requires a public local inquiry by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).[30] The PAC appoints a commissioner to conduct the public inquiry and submits the report plus a corporate recommendation.

- **Regional level.** The Department for Regional Development was set up in 1999 and is responsible for strategic regional planning issues in Northern Ireland. In 2002 a Regional Transport and Planning Division was created to oversee land use and transport planning at the strategic level. This division is responsible for producing a Regional Development Strategy and a Regional Transportation Strategy:
  - Regional Development Strategy: The Regional Development Strategy offers a strategic and long-term perspective on the future development of Northern Ireland up to the year 2025. This strategy was produced in close consultation with the community through a series of consultation exercises. A public examination was held in 2006 to give interested parties an opportunity to comment. All planning policy and plans prepared by the Planning Service must be 'in general conformity' with the Regional Development Strategy.[31]
  - Regional Transport Strategy: The Regional Transport Strategy identifies strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources and the affordability of planned initiatives over the ten-year period 2002-2012. Extensive consultation was undertaken on the strategy before publication.

Scotland

The planning system in Scotland is overseen by the Planning and Building Division of the Scottish Executive, part of the devolved government for Scotland. The Executive has a similar role to the DCLG in England and the Welsh Assembly in Wales, publishing planning guidance and advice, issuing technical advice for government departments and relevant bodies, and maintaining and developing Scottish planning law.

The planning system in Scotland is governed by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and is supported by circulars that elaborate on and make amendments to the Act.

- **National level.** Scotland has a National Planning Framework (NPF), a non-statutory planning document that acts as a guide to planning and development in Scotland up to 2025. Other planning plans and programmes should be produced in line with the NPF. It sets a vision for the country, outlining the development priorities, and it is a material planning consideration in planning decisions.

  Extensive stakeholder involvement took place during the preparation of the NPF and will again when it is reviewed (in 2010). In the interim, the Scottish Executive intends that it should provide the context for further engagement and debate. The NPF is to be implemented by the planning system, supported by community (i.e. local) planning.

  The Scottish Executive publishes national planning policy guidelines (NPPGs), similar to the PPSs in England. NPPGs are currently being updated, with the revised guidelines being known as Scottish planning policies (SPPs).

  SPP1: *The Planning System* was published in 2002 and identifies the key priorities in the planning system. The document recommends that community involvement be integral to the planning system, giving local people the opportunity to influence change in their local area, through development policy and planning applications. The policy does not set out how this will be achieved.

  The Scottish Executive has also published a White Paper on *Modernising the Planning System* (2006). This sets out, among a wide range of objectives, how the government intends to improve the planning system in Scotland and make the process more

[30] The PAC is an independent body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

[31] www.drdni.gov.uk/DRDwww_regionalplanning/

inclusive. The Executive is keen to make sure that the public have confidence in the planning system and feel confident that their views have been properly taken into account. The White Paper therefore proposes that the Executive will:

- introduce new statutory requirements for pre-application consultations;
- introduce new procedures to ensure wide public participation in the formulation of development plans; and
- introduce new procedures to assess whether local people have been engaged effectively in the development plan process and in the processing of applications.

Further information has been published in a planning advice note (PAN – an instrument designed to promote good practice) that identifies best practice in involving people in planning decisions. This PAN (PAN 81: *Community Engagement: Planning with People*) is a material planning consideration in the planning permission application process and when preparing local development plans. Local planning authorities (LPAs) will need to demonstrate that they have met all statutory requirements for community engagement.

The Scottish Executive itself normally consults via written consultations, asking consultees specific questions about the proposed material or alternatively inviting people to submit more general comments in writing. The Executive has launched an e-mail alert system whereby people can be notified of the latest documents published for consultation by registering on-line and receiving an e-mail alert once there is an opportunity to comment.

Scotland currently operates a two-tier planning system: with structure plan areas and, below this level, a series of local plans containing policies that are more relevant to planning and development issues within smaller geographical areas. A structure plan and a local plan together form what is called a statutory development plan. The procedures for drafting and adopting structure and local plans are very similar and are described below.

- **Regional level.** Scotland is divided into 17 regions, each of which has its own structure plan and therefore its own authority to oversee the production of the plan. The first part of the process is the consultative stage, during which key stakeholders and members of the community are consulted on the revised structure plan. Anyone wishing to make a comment on the plan can do so in writing within a period of six weeks. After the six week deadline, the structure plan joint committee revises the plan according to the comments received and submits a final copy of the plan to Scottish minister for approval. At this point, interested parties can submit any further comments in writing to the minister. These comments are considered before the final plan is approved and adopted.

- **Local level.** Draft local plans should be made available for comment: the local authority should advertise the draft plan in the local press and consult directly with other local authorities, bodies and organisations. Planning Advice Note 49: Local Planning, published in 1996, provides guidance for LPAs, including encouragement to consult and keep the public informed of the local plan process at all stages. Anyone with an interest in the plan should be given an opportunity to comment and therefore the council should be sure to make information accessible to all.

  It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to first publish a notice of the intention to prepare a local plan. The draft plan should be accompanied by a publicity and consultation statement, setting out how the local authority intends to publicise the draft plan. Those people with a key interest in the local plan (for example local environmental bodies, societies and councillors) should be identified by the council as soon as possible. The main phase of publicity takes place when the draft proposals and policies are published.

  Six weeks are given for people to comment on or raise an objection to the draft; any comments are submitted to the LPA using a form from the council. The LPA may hold a local inquiry or a hearing to investigate in more depth the objections made (this is usually held if an objector requests such action). Following this period of consultation, in light of the comments/objections received, the LPA proposes modifications to the local plan before finally adopting it. Once a draft plan has been completed, the authority must send two copies to the Secretary of State, together with a brief account of how the authority has publicised the draft plan.

  As part of the consultation process, LPAs should ensure that they consult the local community council. A community council is a voluntary organisation, created by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to *'ascertain, co-ordinate and express the views of the local community to local authorities*

and other public bodies operating in their area'. Community councils are key stakeholders in the planning policy and application process and should therefore be closely involved, working with the LPA from the earliest possible stage.

Further reforms are being developed for the planning system in Scotland (following the publication of the White Paper on planning in June 2005), with the aim of ensuring that development plans are more relevant and up to date and that local people are more involved. Furthermore, it is hoped that by engaging local people to participate more in the planning process and when local plans are drafted, the number of objections to the draft plan will be reduced. In the White Paper, the Scottish Executive indicates that *'we are determined to ensure that the views of local people are given greater and more consistent consideration in the future'*.

- **Development control.** As in England and Wales, Scotland operates a development control system whereby planning applications are submitted to the planning department for a decision. Before an application is submitted, LPAs encourage the applicant to liaise with the council and the local community through pre-application discussions to resolve as many issues as possible in advance of submission.

  Once an application is submitted to the planning authority, there is a statutory period during which anyone can comment on or raise an objection to the proposal. The application should be available for viewing at the local planning authority. Once all representations have been considered and the planning authority has completed all necessary work, a planning officer will make a 'recommended decision' on the application, followed by a final decision made by elected members.

  The Planning etc Act 2006 Paper aims to make the development control process more inclusive. The Scottish Executive first intends to undertake a major campaign to advertise people's existing and future rights in the planning process.

  At the pre-application stage, the Scottish Executive is set to make it a statutory requirement for the LPA and the applicant to engage with the local community, involving local people from the very start. The applicant will be required to submit a report with the application, setting out what pre-application discussions have been carried out and their outcome. It will be up to the LPA to decide if appropriate consultation has been carried out.

  The Executive will produce best practice guidance on involving local people in the planning process, including advice on the most appropriate methods of consultation for the type of application being proposed. This will be a material planning consideration in the decision-making process. Once a planning application has been submitted, the emphasis shifts to the LPA (rather than the applicant) to undertake appropriate consultations. The time for people to comment on the application has been extended from 14 to 21 days. Where substantial objections have been raised against a planning application, the Executive recommends that it becomes a statutory requirement for the LPA to hold a hearing to assess in more detail the objections raised.

  To reward good practice, a new category has been added to the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. 'Community involvement' will recognise outstanding examples where the local community have been effectively engaged throughout the planning process.

Wales

The management of planning in Wales follows the same rules as England, although the planning system in Wales is overseen by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The Assembly maintains close contacts with organisations in the rest of the United Kingdom (for example the Department for Communities and Local Government) to maintain consistency across the country. The Assembly's planning department is responsible for the development and implementation of the planning system in Wales and for ensuring that it meets the needs of the people of Wales. The Assembly works with other agents to deliver the planning system and achieve the vision for Wales for the next 20 years, as set out in the document *People, Places, Futures – the Wales Spatial Plan*, adopted in 2004.

- **National level:** WAG is responsible for producing the Wales Spatial Plan. This provides the context for the planning system in Wales, against which planning decisions and the allocation of resources are decided. It takes into account other documents at the national level (for example the Sustainable Development Scheme, the National Economic Development Strategy, the Transport Framework and the Rural Development Plan), as well as a process of extensive consultation. The spatial plan is supplemented by planning policy guidance

known as technical advice notes (TANs) and planning circulars (as in England).

The consultation process on the Wales Spatial Plan was as follows. The draft spatial plan was first launched at two events in Wales, followed by a pilot event to test the proposed methods of consultation before embarking on the programme across the country. After refining the consultation methods, the Welsh Assembly, in collaboration with a private consultancy, ran eight workshops across Wales. Each workshop ran for a day. Participants formed small groups to discuss the themes of the plan (in the morning) and its potential delivery (in the afternoon). Each workshop was followed by a report summarising the findings.

The spatial plan was also made available for people to comment on in writing. A questionnaire was offered to people to respond to the proposed plan, but many wrote in with more issues than the questionnaire covered.

The consultation process ended with two conventions, each running for one day. Presentations were given in the morning, followed by a session for questions and answers; in the afternoon, participants were divided into groups to explore two key themes running through the plan. The consultation process culminated in a spatial plan being published in 2004.[32]

- **Local level:** Although the Welsh local development plan system was reformed by the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (see England), the changes are not so widespread. The aim is that plans in Wales will be simpler and more concise, the plan-making procedures will be simplified, and public participation increased.

  Local planning authorities (LPAs) are required to prepare development plans called local development plans (LDPs), taking into account the policies in the national spatial strategy. The method for producing these plans is much simpler than the system for England. The LPA has responsibility for drafting the LDP. Once drafted, the LDP must be submitted to the Assembly for an independent examination. The purpose of the examination, as in England, is to test the soundness of the plan. Any persons who wish to comment on the development plan have an opportunity to do so by making a request to the person carrying out the examination to be 'heard.' Once the examiner is satisfied that appropriate tests have been applied to the plan and those people who wanted to be 'heard' have been heard, the examiner issues recommendations, which must be adopted and incorporated into the LDP for adoption. Once adopted, the plan is subject to revision upon the request of the Assembly.

  In an attempt to increase public participation in the planning system, each LPA is also required to produce a community involvement scheme in accordance with a timetable agreed by the Assembly. The community involvement scheme should set out measures to ensure that the community is involved as early as possible in the planning system and throughout the preparation of the LDP.

  As in England, under the 2004 Act, each local development document must include a statement of community involvement (SCI), explaining who the local planning authority is going to engage with and how that it to be done, through various different methods. Draft SCIs also make reference to how to engage 'difficult-to-reach' sections of the community that currently are not active participants in the plan-making and decision-making processes. Each LPA is encouraged to be rigorous in its approach to community involvement and ensure that the development plan is seen by all in the community.

- **Development control:** The development control system operates in the same way as that in England. The aim of the system is to regulate the development of land in the interests of the public and ensure that development meets the council's plans and policies.

A1.1 Analysis of current opportunities for public involvement in plan-making and development control

Analysis of current opportunities for public involvement in plan-making and development control are presented in Tables A1.1 and A1.2, on the following pages.

[32] Further details on the consultation process can be found at http://walesspatialplan.typepad.com/

Table A1.1
Opportunities for public involvement at different stages of plan-making at local level

Before proposals are confirmed	After publication of firm proposals	Hearings and inquiries	After formal adoption	Other mechanisms
Belgium (each region has its own planning network)				
Some plans are subject to pre-draft consultation	• **Walloon region:** Some municipalities have local urban planning commissions that include local groups to give advice on local projects and plans • **Flanders region:** Commissions exist at regional, provincial and municipal levels; following on their advice on plans is mandatory • **Brussels Capital region:** The Regional Development Commission (GOC/CRD) provides democratic evaluation of plans as prescribed by planning law, and includes residents' groups as well as other bodies Amendments proposed by the GOC/CRD must be taken into consideration The local deliberation committee organises local community involvement All regions allow 30 days' consultation on all draft plans; citizens have a right to file objections	• **Walloon region:** Some local urban planning commissions organise information meetings, public hearings, and consultation meetings on some projects • **Also, in other Belgian regions:** Information meetings, consultation and hearings are more and more commonly used, but are not mandatory by law	Only on legal/ procedural grounds is the general rule Those with a recognised 'interest' may appeal to the administrative court	Interest groups are represented on commissions at regional and local level • **In Brussels:** Every individual or group can voice their opinion at the local deliberation committee without having to prove any interest or involvement in the particular case or project
France				
Public consultation takes place in the early stages of developing the PLU (local plan), prior to three-month consultation with public bodies	Consultation for one month on the draft strategic and inter-communal plans (SCOTs) after approval by public bodies, with opportunities to object Draft PLUs are made available to the public (for example copies in libraries)	Plans for specific major projects are often subject to public inquiries; projects of national significance may have a 'public debate'	Those with a recognised 'interest' may appeal to the administrative court	

(Table continued on following page)

Table A1.1 (continued)
Opportunities for public involvement at different stages of plan-making at local level

Before proposals are confirmed	After publication of firm proposals	Hearings and inquiries	After formal adoption	Other mechanisms
Germany				
Information is provided, and the public may contribute to setting aims and the geographical area being set for the plan	Public display and consultation for one month during which time objections can be made; timescale reduced to two weeks for projects to meet 'urgent housing need'; amendments proposed *must* be taken into consideration	Public hearings are held for projects such as motorways	Those whose rights are affected can appeal to the courts	Interest groups are represented on advisory boards which participate in the preparation of some plans
Luxembourg				
	Consultation on the draft plan for 30 days, with an opportunity to object Local authorities have to organise at least one public briefing	After initial, consultation, the local planning authority invites all those who commented to a discussion at which agreement is reached; these invitees have a second opportunity to comment over another 30 days. The comments have to be addressed to the Minister, who passes them to the national commission for land use planning	Observations can be addressed to central government within three months of the plan being approved	Local communal councils represent local interests in the plan process. Any physical or corporate entity can represent their own interest
Netherlands				
The public may be informed, but this is not mandatory A first draft of the plan is discussed with all interested parties, including individual citizens	Consultation for 30 days on the first draft of the plan, with an opportunity to comment The next draft of plan is put to the municipality, with the comments/ objections A further draft is published. Those whose objections have not been accepted(no new objections are allowed) can repeat their objections	Objectors may request a hearing to explain their objection in person to the municipality	Once adopted by the municipality, the plan is displayed for four weeks, during which time limited objections can be made. After approval the plan is displayed for a further four weeks, during which time appeals to the Council of State are possible	

(Table continued on following page)

Table A1.1 (continued)
Opportunities for public involvement at different stages of plan-making at local level

Before proposals are confirmed	After publication of firm proposals	Hearings and inquiries	After formal adoption	Other mechanisms
Republic of Ireland				
The local planning authority must publish a notice that it is going to review the plan, and allow for submissions from the public during at least an eight-week period	Consultation for minimum of ten weeks on the draft plan, with opportunity to comment; all representations must be reported along with response to that input	Local property tax payers may request a hearing of their objection	Development plans can be legally challenged by judicial review	
England				
Local planning authorities (LPAs) should involve relevant groups and organisations in developing the evidence base for the plan The LPA lists the issues it feels should be included, and these are published for people to comment. Six weeks are given for comment The LPA then drafts the plan, including details of how it has involved the community	At the same time as the plan is submitted to the minister for independent examination (to test if plan is 'sound'), public comments are invited for a six-week period After the inquiry (see the next column), a further six weeks are given for further objections if major changes are made at the inquiry	An inquiry is held unless all objectors agree that it is not needed The inquiry is held before an independent official, but the final decision is made by the plan-making authority	Challenge is only possible on procedural grounds	LPAs have to produce a statement of community involvement, which specifies how they will involve the community in the plan process
Scotland				
The LPA must publish a notice of its intention to prepare a local plan, and identify those who may have an interest The LPA has to publish a publicity and consultation plan	Six weeks are given for people to comment on or object to the draft plan	The LPA may hold an inquiry to investigate objections in more depth (usually only if an objector requests one) The LPA then proposes modifications to the plan based on the findings of the inquiry		Community councils are key stakeholders in the planning process and are usually closely involved throughout the process
Wales				
As for England	As for England, except the plan is put to the Welsh Assembly Government. Members of the community can be 'heard' at the examination			LPAs have to produce a statement of community involvement, as in England

(Table continued on following page)

Table A1.1 (continued)
Opportunities for public involvement at different stages of plan-making at local level

Before proposals are confirmed	After publication of firm proposals	Hearings and inquiries	After formal adoption	Other mechanisms
Northern Ireland				
	Although the planning process is not local, the public do have an opportunity to comment on proposed national planning policies affecting their area. Opportunities are advertised in the local press			

Table A1.2
Opportunities for public involvement in development control

Public consultation	Links to other plans	Exceptions to the plans allowed
Belgium		
None except where there is a substantial proposal or an exception to the plan Neighbours and others that can prove an interest must be consulted on some projects. This is the case in Wallonia and Flanders In Brussels a lot of the building permits are subject to the formal advice of the local deliberation committee and then the general public (interested parties or not) can voice their objections and opinions on the project	Application must be in compliance with binding plans and regulations	Departures from the plan may be allowed only when they are not in conflict with plan principles Exceptions allowed in some circumstances; special procedure required
France		
On any development that significantly affects the environment or economic activities in the area	Application must comply with plan	Very limited flexibility to vary from the plan
Germany		
Not usually; different in different *Lander* (States)	Application must conform to the plan	Exemptions may be allowed in certain circumstances
Luxembourg		
Any individual or organisation affected can object	Application must be in compliance with binding plans and regulations	No exceptions to the plan
Netherlands		
Interested parties can object	Application must be in compliance with binding plans and regulations	Exceptions allowed in some circumstances
Republic of Ireland		
Interested parties, including the public, can comment/object within five weeks of the application being received by the throughout Third-party appeals are allowed if a prior interest can be demonstrated	Application must conform to the plan	A set procedure allows variation from the plan on grounds of 'proper planning and sustainable development of the area'; so fairly flexible
England		
Weekly list of applications published; all applications available for public view Any individual can object; statutory period of 21 days for objections in writing The local planning authority (LPA) must consult all those in close proximity (for example neighbours and local businesses) The LPA must demonstrate all comments considered when making a recommendation to the elected committee that makes the decision on the application	Plans are not binding but are the primary consideration in determining an application. Each application considered on its own merit	Exceptions are allowed if other material considerations justify it; special procedure required

(Table continued on following page)

Table A1.2 (continued)
Opportunities for public involvement in development control

Public consultation	Links to other plans	Exceptions to the plans allowed
Northern Ireland		
Planning applications on register available for viewing by the public Applications publicised in local press; local people have 14 days to object Some applications are not subject to the above process but have a public local inquiry conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission, which appoints an independent commissioner	As for England	As for England
Scotland		
As for England. Time limit of 14 days for objections has recently been extended to 21 days	As for England	As for England
Wales		
As for England	As for England	As for England

appendix 2
Findings from questionnaire responses

Methodology

During 2006, questionnaires were sent to NGOs and other organisations involved in community participation and spatial or environmental planning in nine of the ten APaNGO countries (counting the four nations of the UK separately). Owing to a low response rate to the French survey, France was omitted from the findings presented here.

The aim of the questionnaire was to explore further the current state of participation in planning in the nine countries, and the nature of the experience of those involved.

Table A2.1 summarises the initial process.

In some countries (for example Germany) there was such a low return rate initially that a second mail out was undertaken, and in most cases (Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) follow-up phone calls and emails were used to gain more information. In England, follow-up work included group representatives being interviewed (and captured on video).

Not all those returning completed responses had been involved in planning issues, so the analysis that follows in most of the remainder of this Appendix is based on the smaller number that did have that experience.

Given the low response rate, and resulting small number of responses that could be analysed, the findings from the questionnaire survey can only be seen as indicative rather than comprehensive.

In terms of the types of groups that responded to the questionnaire, the findings were as shown in Table A2.2 (on the following page), based on the group's self-definition. Some covered more than one category, and some did not answer the question, so the information is not absolutely complete.

As can be seen from Table A2.2, more than twice as many of the groups returning questionnaires were neighbourhood/ territorial groups (96) than were based on a common interest (44). It is also worth noting that in every case, except Luxembourg, more groups with a geographical focus responded than those with an 'issue' focus.

How and where groups were involved

The questionnaires included questions about whether the group's involvement had been as a result of being approached or invited to take part in a consultation on a

Table A2.1

Country	Number of questionnaires sent	Number of responses	Number that had been involved in planning issues
Belgium	Nearly 100	16	15
Germany	Nearly 100	23	15
Luxembourg	Nearly 100	40	18
Netherlands	unknown	21	17
Republic of Ireland	Over 100	11	8
England	Nearly 200	27	21
Scotland	Nearly 125	29	17
Wales	Nearly 100	21	9
Northern Ireland	Over 100	14	10
Total	**Approx. 1,000**	**202**	**130**

planning issue, or whether their involvement was as a result of their own initiative (or both). In addition, there were questions about whether public participation was required by law, and also about how satisfied the respondents were with the opportunity to communicate their own view satisfactorily. The findings were as shown in Table A2.3.

It is worth noting here that:

- In Luxembourg, groups were not very clear about whether their involvement was required by law: four groups did not know and three did not answer at all (seven out of 18); seven said their involvement was not required by law.
- The figures in the 'satisfied' column for Luxembourg, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland were all those who had found out about the consultation and responded on their own initiative, rather than being invited officially.
- In England, seven additional respondents did not distinguish between the options as to whether they responded on their own initiative or were officially invited.

It is clear from these figures that more groups were officially invited to participate than responded to a planning issue or problem on their own initiative overall, although there were significant differences between different countries:

- In Belgium and the Netherlands, more groups responded on their own initiative than were officially invited to become involved.
- In Luxembourg, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, more were officially invited than were only included on their own initiative.
- In Germany, there were equal numbers.

Taken together with the analysis of the existing planning systems, these findings suggest that there is a correlation between the ways in which groups start to become involved in planning issues and the extent to which the

Table A2.2

Country	Returns / returns with involvement in planning	Neighb'rh'd / other territorial focus	Common interest (for example environm'nt)	Both	Other
Belgium	16 / 15	13	3	3	–
Germany	23 / 15	12	2	–	4
Luxembourg	40 / 18	2	21	–	5
Netherlands	21 / 17	8	7	–	2
Republic of Ireland	11 / 8	4	–	–	3
England	27 / 21	15	5	–	–
Scotland	29 / 17	17	1	1	4
Wales	21 / 9	15	3	–	3
Northern Ireland	14 / 10	10	2	–	–
Total	**202 / 130**	**96**	**44**	**4**	**21**

Table A2.3

Country	Total analysed	Own initiative	Officially invited	Both	Involved as required by law	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Belgium	15	19	5	–	8	7	3
Germany	15	6	6	3	10	7	4
Luxembourg	18	5	13	–	1	5	–
Netherlands	17	13	4	–	8	10	–
Republic of Ireland	8	1	6	1	3	2	–
England	21	4	10	–	7	–	–
Scotland	17	5	11	–	4	5	–
Wales	9	3	4	2	4	3	–
Northern Ireland	10	2	7	–	–	1	–
Total	**130**	**48**	**66**	**6**	**45**	**40**	**7**

existing planning system in the country formally incorporates participation – with systems where there is formal public participation generating more formal invitations to NGOs to participate.

The questionnaire tested the *spatial levels* at which groups participated, as shown in Table A2.4

It should be noted that:

- In Belgium, there is no national planning but there are differences between regional and local levels. Here, therefore, the feedback is more complex, with no groups working at local level alone, three working at local and supra-local levels, three at the supra-local level, and three at all those levels. Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that seven did work at local level.
- The figures for Germany are that six groups worked at both local and regional levels (not six groups working at each level).

Again, these findings reflect the differences in the planning systems in the different countries. Where the countries are not divided in local, regional and national administrative territories, there are no divisions between local, regional and national planning or participation.

It is clear from the figures, however, that the vast majority of groups participate at the local level (81 out of 130), even where regional systems of governance and planning are relatively firmly established (for example England). The figures for England certainly suggest that participation in planning at regional level remains unusual (only one out of 21 respondents).

Levels of involvement

The questionnaires also aimed to investigate the levels of involvement that NGOs and other community organisations had in planning issues. There are different ways of classifying levels of involvement (see Section 1.3 of the main report). The responses to the questionnaire have been analysed in different ways, including references to 'one-off' and extended consultation, and 'co-production'; and on a different scale of information, consultation and co-production. As explained earlier, the crucial issue in assessing levels of participation includes the extent of 'influence' rather than methods (for example leaflets or exhibitions) or the number of times a group was consulted (for example 'one-off' or extended).

The responses from the countries have therefore been analysed here according to the first four elements of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation: inform, consult, involve and collaborate (see Section 1.3 of the main report for the full spectrum); in this analysis, in addition, the 'involve' and 'consult' categories have been reduced to one as there is insufficient data to be more specific on these results.

In reviewing these results (see Table A2.5), it is worth noting that some respondents identified that their processes operated at more than one level.

As can be seen from these figures, rather more groups felt they were involved at those levels seen as having least public influence: information and consultation. Also, It should be noted that the analysis of questionnaires includes classifying certain techniques into the chosen categories, sometimes in ways that could be confusing: for example, Planning for Real® was classified in the initial analysis as 'co-production', although it can also often be used for the less influential 'consultation'.

However, the extent and depth of the 'consultation' and 'involvement' did vary;

Table A2.4

Country	Total responses analysed	Local	Regional	National
Belgium	15	7	–	–
Germany	15	6	6	–
Luxembourg	18	6	1	7
Netherlands	17	13	5	4
Republic of Ireland	8	7	3	2
England	21	17	1	1
Scotland	17	13	2	1
Wales	9	6	1	–
Northern Ireland	10	6	–	–
Total	**130**	**81**	**19**	**15**

although unfortunately there is insufficient data to be able to come to any clearer conclusions on this issue.

Information provision and language

Groups were also asked about how and when they were provided with information about the processes they were involved in. The findings were as shown in Table A2.6.

As can be seen from the figures in Table A2.6, most groups received feedback after their involvement, and almost half had received feedback at the end of the whole planning process. Such feedback is a key element of good practice in public involvement. However, the figures should be read with two important caveats:

- There was still a relatively high number of groups who received no feedback after their involvement (27 out of 130); providing no feedback is generally regarded as very poor practice. Even more received no feedback at the end of the process (44 out of 130).
- There is little data on the nature of the feedback received from groups. As one respondent from Germany pointed out, the feedback may only be a *'bureaucratic mechanism'*, such as letters from the mayor welcoming the participation, rather than any details about the outcome of the consultation or of the wider planning process.

Questions were also asked about the language (jargon) used in consultations, and whether it caused any problems. The feedback from respondents was as follows:

- **Belgium:** About half the respondents had no problems with the language, and felt that efforts had been made by organisers not to use jargon.
- **Germany:** Only two groups (of the 15) had no problems with the language used; ten

Table A2.5

Country	Total responses analysed	Inform	Consult / Involve	Collaborate	Other
Belgium	15	5	10	2	–
Germany	15	9	4	1	–
Luxembourg	18	–	6	7	–
Netherlands	17	2	11	8	–
Republic of Ireland	8	4	4	1	–
England	21	9	7	4	–
Scotland	17	8	5	1	–
Wales	9	3	4	–	–
Northern Ireland	10	8	1	–	–
Total	**130**	**48**	**52**	**24**	**–**

Table A2.6

Country	Total resp'ns's analysed	Info. after being involved	No info. after being involved	Info. at end of planning process	No info. at end of planning process	Oppor'ty to be involved further	No opp'y to be involved further
Belgium	15	14	–	6	–	7	5
Germany	15	9	5	5	8	2	12
Luxembourg	18	15	–	13	–	10	8
Netherlands	17	15	1	6	9	n/a	n/a
Republic of Ireland	8	6	1	5	2	n/a	n/a
England	21	13	4	8	11	n/a	n/a
Scotland	17	7	9	8	9	8	7
Wales	9	6	3	5	3	n/a	n/a
Northern Ireland	10	5	4	6	2	n/a	n/a
Total	**130**	**90**	**27**	**62**	**44**	**27**	**32**

Some countries were not asked (or their responses were not analysed) in terms of being given opportunities to be involved further, so these are marked as n/a

did, especially around the use of specialised and technical terms and leaving the groups in the dark as to their rights and powers.

- **Luxembourg:** None of the groups had any problems with language.
- **Netherlands:** Seven of the 17 groups had no problems; two said they had learned each others' terminology; and two said they had done training to help them understand the consultation process and language. Only two said specifically they found the process used too much jargon.
- **Republic of Ireland:** Most respondents had no problems. Where there had been positive experiences, the use of visualisation was mentioned (for example easy-to-follow maps etc.), avoiding technical terminology, and experience of working together.
- **England:** 11 of the 21 had complaints about the language used, mentioning too much jargon which reduced groups' ability to participate. Three said there were no problems.
- **Northern Ireland:** Responses were almost equally divided between no problems and problems with jargon.
- **Scotland:** There was significant criticism among respondents about jargon and technical language that excluded people and generally made participation by the public difficult. However, one respondent felt that the council planning department had worked to increase understanding.
- **Wales:** The majority of respondents were positive about the language used (although one described it as 'developer-friendly' rather than 'community-friendly'). Respondents suggested that documents should be kept short, and that experience over time of talking to each other (planners and public) helped improve understanding and communications.

Although this is a mixed picture, there are clearly some overall problems with language, especially jargon and technical terminology limiting the effectiveness of public participation – by excluding those who do not understand what is going on. There are clear messages from respondents that it is important to avoid technical terminology to improve the quality of participation, and that understanding grows (and communications improve) as people get used to working together.

Techniques/methods

Quite a few groups were not aware of any specific 'technique' being used in the consultation initiatives they were involved in, although they were able to describe the form of involvement in sufficient detail for the approaches used to be clear. The findings for each country were as follows:

- **Belgium:** The responses were not quantified under each technique. In summary, however, the techniques used were:
  - meetings/public hearing;
  - information and consultation campaigns;
  - questionnaires;
  - debate sessions/panel discussions/workshops; and
  - petitions/referenda.
- **Germany:** These responses were also not quantified, although the techniques implied in the descriptions of the involvement were:
  - presentations by officials/consultation papers;
  - debate sessions/panel discussions/workshops;
  - public hearings;
  - local information stands; and
  - a petition.
- **Luxembourg:** Here again, there are no detailed figures on the different techniques, but the most common techniques were said to be:
  - public meetings;
  - workshops and working groups; and
  - video (one group).
- **Netherlands:** The techniques used here were:
  - 'working together' with the council or a developer (six groups);
  - workshops (three groups);
  - meetings (two groups);
  - group discussions (two groups);
  - setting up a project group (one group); and
  - doing a tour (one group).
- **Republic of Ireland:** The techniques used here were:
  - consultation on draft document or plan (two groups)
  - exhibition (one group)

  Generally, there was very little feedback on techniques used.
- **England:** The techniques used here were:
  - public meetings (four groups);
  - information provision through letters or brochures (three groups);
  - questionnaires (three groups);
  - copies of papers for comment (three groups); and
  - workshops (two groups).

  Where groups had been involved in workshops, interactive exercises or interviews, the respondents found the

experience useful; they did not recommend the use of brochures, letters, questionnaires or public meetings.

- **Northern Ireland:** The techniques used here were (no figures available):
  - questionnaires;
  - responding to draft plans; and
  - formal consultation requests.
- **Scotland:** The techniques used here were:
  - information provision (reported as the biggest single category of techniques used, but no figures available);
  - public meetings (four groups);
  - workshops (two groups); and
  - exhibitions (two groups).

  Here, too, there was enthusiasm for 'workshops' as the most popular approach.
- **Wales:** The techniques used here were:
  - information provision (tow groups);
  - petitions (two groups);
  - workshops (one group); and
  - forum (one group).

  There were no reports from Wales of the use of workshops, forums, working groups or exhibitions.

Overall, there was not an enormous amount of feedback on techniques used, and almost no reports of any specific 'branded' techniques (beyond one mention of Planning for Real® in England).

However, there is a clear impression from the data that are available that the majority of groups are involved through the techniques that involve least interaction and provide least influence on the final outcomes: information provision, requests for comments on draft plans or other documents, and public meetings (which tend to be presentations followed by questions).

Where there have been interactive exercises, and face-to-face communications (for example workshops), these are much more popular with groups than formal meetings, information provision (brochures, letters etc.) or information collection (for example questionnaires).

A more general point was made by a respondent from Germany: that where problems did arise, it was due much more to the way the consultation had been carried out, rather than the specific technique or method used. This supports findings in other research that the attitudes of those carrying out the consultation and their willingness to listen (etc.) are at least as important as choosing any specific technique to consult the public, NGOs and other stakeholders.

Problems and suggestions

The following summarises the problems respondents identified, and the suggestions they made for improving the current situation:

- **Belgium:** The problems identified were:
  - difficulties with finding people who are willing to commit themselves to the consultative process;
  - lack of initiative in getting involved and taking responsibility;
  - not enough communication;
  - lack of power equality within the consultation process (between those commissioning the process and the public); and
  - co-ordinators not available on a regular basis.

  The ways forward identified were:
  - Clarify the topic being consulted upon.
  - Put more effort into stimulating people to participate.
  - Establish a relationship in order to work efficiently.
  - Bring all sectors of the neighbourhood together in a permanent discussion forum.
  - Motivate and mobilise.
  - Prolong the period of participation throughout the whole development/ planning process, to remove time pressures.
  - Ensure better follow-up and feedback to residents.
  - Festivities can provide publicity.
  - Improve communication.
  - Include more stakeholders.
  - Ensure political support.
- **Germany:** The criticisms from groups included comments on:
  - limited or difficult access to the consultation process;
  - the framework for the involvement process, including techniques; and
  - the way in which suggestions and comments are handled.

  One group described the process they were involved in as *'a farce and a political process'*; another described a process as *'an obstacle and a burden required by law'* that authorities had to undertake. Another group mentioned that *'many rather unqualified comments of interested but uninformed citizens, hinder the consultation process'*.
- **Luxembourg:** Respondents suggested the following ways to improve participation:
  - Produce a list of associations and create an online consultation platform which everybody can access and where

everyone can put their name down.
- In the initial phase of a consultation project, unite all actors around the common values defined in the programme.
- Involvement should take place in a systematic way from the beginning of the project.
- Participation should not end after one phase; organisations should have the opportunity to continue their involvement throughout the planning process.
- Public awareness campaigns should aim higher as they do not always achieve their objectives (constraints are generally of a professional and personal nature – a social problem).

- **Netherlands:** Suggestions for improvement from these respondents were:
  - Use more 'normal' language and listen to what people have to say.
  - Involve people at an earlier stage in the process.
  - Provide an explanation of the 'rules' for the involvement (frames within which suggestions can be made).
  - Prevent the feeling of a 'top-down' approach.
  - Stimulate an interactive process.
- **Republic of Ireland:** Respondents identified two main problems:
  - Questions asked in consultation processes were not always relevant or specific to the subject/topic.
  - Although events may be widely advertised, not all members of the community are necessarily aware that it is going to take place.
- **England:** Respondents identified the following problems with current systems and methods for participation in planning:
  - Local consultation seems to cover decisions that have already been made.
  - There is often insufficient information and feedback available to enable high levels of involvement; this includes information about the planning system.
  - Involvement should take place from the early stages in the planning process, to help a dialogue develop between all stakeholders (planners, developers and users).
  - There is a lack of communication, information provision and/or feedback.
  - The timescales for consultation are often not realistic.
  - Community involvement is still a matter of 'lip service' for planners (i.e. something they must do – they do it to be seen engaging in it, but they are not committed or interested in it).

  Improvements suggested were:
  - Involve a third party (for example a local community development organisation) to provide assistance to stakeholders (planners, developers, government, local authorities and users).
  - Make the events more engaging for the public.
  - Provide summary sheets covering the main points of the consultation and provide brief explanations (i.e. more and better information provision).
  - Increase the communications between all stakeholders and use less jargon.
  - Offer higher levels of involvement (for example door-to-door consultation, opportunities to suggest alternatives to those proposed, use the Charette method, i.e. intensive workshops over a limited period).
- **Northern Ireland:** The suggestions for improving consultation from these respondents were:
  - Provide glossaries that people can access easily to aid understanding.
  - Keep the whole process realistic and achievable.
- **Scotland:** Respondents suggested two improvements to current approaches:
  - Greater resources should be made available to groups to allow them to prepare for consultation.
  - More involvement is needed at the early stages of the process.
- **Wales:** The suggestions for improvements made by respondents were:
  - Keep documents short, as lengthy documents can reduce willingness to participate.
  - Experience has a positive influence on the process; when both organisers of consultation and participants become accustomed to planning language and/or have learned to deal with and improve their communications, the engagement process is more comfortable for both parties.

In summary, therefore, the problems seem to be around (and suggestions for improvement focus on) the following:

- There is a lack of sufficient appropriate information provided to the public and stakeholders to support participation (about planning processes, the issue for discussion, the boundaries and rules for the

consultation, explanations of technical language/jargon used, what has been agreed, feedback on the final decisions etc.).

- There is a lack of clarity about the purpose of the consultation and who is/should be involved.
- There is a lack of power equality among participants, and between those in formal involvement processes and other stakeholders.
- Communications between those organising consultations and participants are poor (although this can be overcome through experience and as relationships develop).
- Consultation does not happen early enough in the process, and stops too soon (should continue throughout); timescales can sometimes be too short to achieve good participation.
- the specific technique used is not as important as the way in which the process is run (attitudes, commitment, willingness to change etc. on the part of all those involved).
- Interactive and 'engaging' events are much more effective (and popular with the public and stakeholders) than presentations alone or information provision alone; more engaging events may attract more people.
- Resources need to be made available to some community groups to enable them to participate.

Reasons for involvement

The questionnaire asked respondents about their motivations for getting involved in planning processes – which is useful for understanding how to keep those organisations involved and potentially how to attract others:

- **Belgium:**
  - To support community engagement.
  - To 'change things'.
  - To influence and shape the developments in their own area of interest – for example to promote the case of bicycles and campaign for cyclists' rights and infrastructure.
  - To improve the neighbourhood.
- **Germany:**
  - To support community engagement.
  - To influence and shape the developments in their area.
  - Participation was requested by the local planning authority.
  - To protect people and the environment from 'bad' development.
  - Public demand/representation of the public interest.
  - To protect landscape, historic monuments and parks.
- **Luxembourg:**
  - Involvement was a legal requirement.
  - To promote a professional interest.
  - To promote organisational or personal interests.
  - To represent a group of people/organisations.
- **Netherlands:**
  - To guard the quality of developments.
  - An opportunity to campaign for the group's own objectives (for example accessibility, cyclists' interests, preservation of an area).
  - A way to gain experience.
  - Personal interest.
  - A way to gain information.
- **Republic of Ireland:**
  - To secure the future lives of people in the area.
  - To promote an interest in consultation.
  - As a duty.
- **England:**
  - In support of the belief that communities should have a say in local planning and to help them express their view as part of the decision-making process.
  - To promote an interest (for example specific age group, sports club, tenants and residents).
  - To protect common land and wildlife.
  - To have provision of affordable amenities (local shops, post office, local pub etc.).
- **Northern Ireland:**
  - A fear of potential impact, changes that are going on in communities with planning/development, and ongoing development pressures.
  - In support of the belief that *'we owed ourselves and our community the chance to have our view taken into consideration'*.
  - To represent the community and/or support the community's needs.
- **Scotland:**
  - To promote an interest (for example specific age group, sports club, tenants and residents).
  - To support community engagement.
  - To gain insight into the planning process and to exercise more control over the process.
- **Wales:**
  - To support community engagement.
  - To promote an interest (for example needs of disabled people and for community facilities).
  - A fear of new developments.

Table A2.7

Country	Total responses analysed	Aware of help available	Used help	Found help useful
Belgium	15	11	8	7
Germany	15	9	6	4
Luxembourg	18	13	8	7
Netherlands	17	15	10	10
Republic of Ireland	8	4	2	2
England	21	14	8	n/a
Scotland	17	13	4	4
Wales	9	4	3	n/a
Northern Ireland	10	5	4	4
Total	**130**	**88**	**53**	**38**

Some countries were not asked (or their responses were not analysed) in terms of being given opportunities to be involved further, so these are marked as n/a

The most common motivations were thus, in summary:

- A general belief in the needs and rights of communities to have a say in the decisions that affect their future, and the desire to support community engagement and ensure that it happens.
- To influence and shape the developments locally, alongside a fear of the developments that may happen if they are not involved.
- To represent community views.
- To advance specific sectoral interests (for example specific demographic groups such as older people or people with disabilities, or specific interests such as cycling).
- To preserve or improve the neighbourhood (for example preserve wildlife or common land).
- To learn about planning processes or consultation.
- To find out about what is going on.
- To improve local amenities (for example shops, post office).
- It was a legal requirement/seen as a duty.

Awareness and use of assistance

Groups were asked about whether they were aware of any organisations or services that could help them in their involvement in planning issues, whether they had used those services, and whether those services had been useful. The findings were as shown in Table A2.7.

As can be seen, the great majority of respondents did feel they were aware of the help that was available, although less than half had used that help. Of those that did, the great majority did find it useful: planning aid and community technical aid were identified particularly as being helpful, although various other local organisations were also mentioned.

appendix 3
infrastructure of support for participation

Introduction

This Appendix provides a full analysis of the findings from the APaNGO country research reports on the nature of support infrastructure for community involvement in planning in the ten APaNGO countries (counting the four nations of the UK separately).

Belgium

In Belgium, NGOs do not have any formal role in assisting groups or individuals on planning issues. However, in the three regions in Belgium there are many NGOs, voluntary organisations and neighbourhood groups that are much involved in spatial and urban planning. Some groups have professional staff, mostly because of the subsidised projects that they are running. There is, however, no guarantee that these groups cover the entire region or every important local issue. In most of the debates they have to defend their positions and interests like any other citizen, at regional level as well as at the local level.

Organisations are working increasingly together in networks (for example Platform Participation) and are learning through mutual experience and strengthening their efforts.

The key organisations are as follows:

- There are four regional environmental federations:
  - in the Flemish region, Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen;
  - the Walloon region, Inter-Environnement Wallonie; and
  - in the Brussels region, Brussels Raad voor het Leefmilieu (Flemish), and Inter-Environnement Bruxelles (French)

  Although the four federations do have a very strong emphasis on environment (*leefmilieu/environnement*), they are strongly involved in urban planning.
- The Flemish region has a lot more organised infrastructure to support local community organisations, both on a regional and on a provincial or town level. An example is the Vlaams Instituut voor Samenlevingsopbouw. Again, spatial planning is not its core business, but since many of its 'clients' do encounter problems related to planning, it has made it one of its main concerns.
- In Wallonia, efforts are not structured in the same way. Inter-Environnement Wallonie is an important organisation and there are many other relevant initiatives. Some have a link with the universities (for example Habitat et Participation, or Habitat et Rénovation). Others exist on their own (for example Periferia). In some places, privately-funded *Les Maisons d'Urbanisme* provides information and advice to the public.

France

The main organisations that offer help in planning are governmental, and they support community involvement because it is a national directive. However, there are some non-governmental bodies:

- ***Agence d'urbanisme:*** *Agences d'urbanism* were created under the Loi d'Orientation Foncière 1967. They are voluntary bodies that link the state and local authorities. They operate at the level of urban conurbations, and provide studies necessary to implement public policy, such as the preparation of urban planning documents (*schéma direceur*, *plan d'occupation des sols*) and inter-commune charters. They also act as an arena to debate future planning policies. Typically, an *agence d'urbanisme* works in partnership with communes, regions, departments, universities etc.

  Their status is referred to as *'loi 1901'* – they are non-governmental bodies, but they only exist within a public sector led process and with public money. However, this status is rather misleading since it stems from the legal context in place when they were set up. At that time, it was easier for their staff

to be paid under NGO status rather than having them employed as civil servants.

Numbering 40 in 1999, they are grouped within the Fédération Nationale des Agences d'Urbanisme (FNAU).[33] Paris has two agencies: the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR) and the Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France (IAURIF).

- ***Société d'economie mixte:*** A *société d'economie mixte* (SEM) is a private company with the public sector as its main shareholder. The aim to ensure that the company's objectives comply with the public interest and bring together local communities and economical partners. They are controlled by the law 07/07/1983 (modified by the law 02/01/02).
- ***Comité d'habitant:*** A *comité d'habitant* is a committee of residents similar to the *'atelier public'*; it is a structure that involves people in their town management.
- ***Association foncière urbaine:*** An *association foncière urbaine* (AFU) is a specific form of syndicated owners' association, established on a temporary basis to have specific work carried out. AFUs, which were established by the Loi d'Orientation Foncière 1967, can set up for four types of undertakings:
  - plot *remembrement* (land assembly) and whatever fitting out and arrangement work is necessary;
  - regrouping of plots either to entrust them to a third party for use, especially under a construction lease, or to donate or sell them to a public establishment, a construction or land planning company;
  - building, maintaining and managing infrastructures for public use (roads, parking lots, parklands etc.); and
  - conserving, restoring and enhancing protected areas, as well as restoring real estate.

  The Urban Development Code governs their operating methods and duties. The law sets out three types of AFUs:
  - independent, where the owners have reached an unanimous agreement;
  - approved by the Prefect, following a request by a majority of the owners; and
  - established outright by the Prefect, where attempts to set up an independent or approved association have failed – in this situation, the AFU may not vote to regroup plots for the use by a third party.
- ***Association pour débattre de l'urbanisme:*** People interested in their town planning can create associations in order to be involved; the aim of an *association pour débattre de l'urbanisme* is to make people aware of what happens in their town.

Germany

The number of NGOs in Germany is growing constantly, as is their range of tasks. Most NGOs work on environmental or political issues, but there are also those that work on social issues. In terms of engagement in planning issues, involvement includes participation in local planning projects, supporting regional conferences, and providing services. There are no organisations specifically tasked with supporting community involvement in spatial or environmental planning.

NGOs relevant to planning can be categorised into two broad sectors:

- **Research and consulting groups:** This is the larger of the two sectors and includes independent research institutes and companies that deliver spatial research and development services. They are staffed by students, academic staff and volunteers, as well as technical experts in various aspects of planning. They provide information, consultancy and knowledge exchange, co-ordinate activities, manage participation-related events, and archive documents. They are generally supported by charitable foundations and state institutions.
- **Stakeholder groups and clubs:** This sector includes all those groups, clubs, associations etc. that are focused on any aspect of planning. They observe planning processes, take part in meetings, set up their own consultation meetings, and organise demonstrations and similar activities to disseminate and explain their concerns.

Luxembourg

Non-governmental organisations do not exist in Luxembourg in the same form as elsewhere. They are prevented from involvement in planning processes by law; they can only defend their interests like any citizen at the beginning of the planning process, as much at national level as at municipal level. If some individual citizens need assistance or help they

[33] www.fnau.org/index.asp

can join an independent organisation or align with other citizens to form an action group.

Netherlands

In addition to the 'formal' possibilities of participation by law, the government in the Netherlands increasingly invests in planning with communities in several ways. In 2002, at the request of Parliament the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) initiated a programme called 'Policy with Citizens' (*Beleid met Burgers*). The programme has two goals:

- to involve citizens in policy-making; and
- to increase VROM's focus on the interest and wishes of citizens.

Citizens and their organisations are invited to participate in debates, draw up solutions, start up their own research, enable pilot projects and develop innovations. The programme encourages VROM staff to take more account of the ideas, expectations and views of citizens, to examine how policy measures affect daily life and to draft policies in collaboration with citizens. The programme also aims to strengthen the connection between NGO initiatives and citizens. A team of civil servants from VROM and other advisers implement the programme and provide knowledge, skills and funding support for citizen-oriented projects.

In 2004 VROM carried out three projects following an evaluation of 'Policy with Citizens' programme:

- **'Experiment VROM-citizen platform' (*Experiment VROM-burgerplatform*):** VROM experimented with citizen participation (community involvement) through two citizen-panels. These are groups of interested citizens/residents that are consulted (in several meetings) on several planning questions.
- **'Public agenda and citizen participation' (*Publieksagenda en Burgerparticipatie*):** Citizens considered, together with the policy advisors, solutions to important VROM-related issues.
- **'Citizen initiatives as inspiration for policy programs' (*Burgerinitiatieven als inspiratiebron voor beleidsprogrammas*):** VROM examined whether citizen initiatives concerning sustainability in rural policy could be converted for wider application.

'In addition to the above, NGOs can apply for a subsidy (financial support) from Government through *Subsidieregel Maatschappelike organisaties en milieu (SMOM)*. In 2004 VROM supplied about €1 million to civil projects undertaken by NGOs.[34] They were given the opportunity to take responsibility and initiative, which gave government a chance to see what initiatives and developments were taking place. The projects supported are divided into three categories:

- 'VROM with citizens' (*VROM met burgers*), covering projects in all areas of VROM policy;
- 'Transitions and durable strength with citizens' (Transities en duurzame daadkracht met burgers) – projects with citizens carried out by VROM or other departments by means of the government's 'Sustainable development action programme' (*Actieprogramma Duurzame Ontwikkeling*); and
- 'NGOs with citizens' (*NGOs met burgers*) – projects with citizens carried out by NGOs and supported by the SMOM.

Local government is also investing in community involvement. For example:

- Since October 2004 the City of Amsterdam has operated a 'Citizens initiative' (*Burgerinitiatief*) and Referendum. Under the Citizens Initiative any citizen can add a topic to the political agenda providing he or she has a minimum of 1,100 signatures in support. A referendum is held on the topic once there are 25,000 supporting signatures. The result is decided on a majority of the total number of votes, providing at least 20 per cent of all the votes cast are valid.
- Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, City District of Amsterdam has adopted a 'Specific neighbourhood approach' (*de Buurtgerichte Aanpak*), with three main goals: strengthening relationships through a citizen-governing board (*versterken relatie burger-bestuur*), increasing liveability (*vergroten van de leefbaarheid*); and increasing safety (*vergroten van de veiligheid*).

All these forms of community involvement are informal and are not stipulated by law. Local government believes that this kind of participation contributes to the acceptance of plans by citizens and other parties: there are fewer objections and the risk of delays in the planning process is consequently reduced.

Besides the government, many NGOs are also concerned with community involvement in spatial planning processes. There are two types of NGOs, firstly those that are themselves active parties in participation processes and,

[34] www.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=16575#projectenoverzicht

secondly, those that have an 'umbrella function', uniting several NGOs with coinciding interests, and sometimes acting as 'ambassadors' for other NGOs. Many NGOs operate within extensive networks of social organisations.[35] Other examples of organisations that operate as network organisations and play an important role in organising community involvement in planning include:

- Knowledege Centre City Renewal (KEI Kenniscentrum Stedelijke Vernieuwing);[36]
- The Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare (NIZW Sociaal Beleid);[37]
- Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies (Onderzoeksinstituut OTB);[38] and
- Verwey-Jonker Instituut.[39]

These network organisations bring together parties working on social policy issues. As a result, contacts are established between parties within the social sector, but new connections between actors within the development and economic sectors are often made too. These organisations are in the public as well as the private sector.

Republic of Ireland

At the national level, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has the task of developing links between the state, the community and the voluntary sector.[40] A White Paper was produced in 2000 and funding mechanisms were put in place to administer and support programmes that enable local communities to be active in identifying their development needs.

There is no planning aid service in the Republic of Ireland, but there are hundreds of community groups throughout the country, and some are the focus for environmental and planning issues in their community. The main relevant organisations are:

- **An Taisce:** An Taisce is a nationwide, independent, non-governmental charity organisation that runs seminars, conferences and workshops, and has planning resources. The organisation's stated aims are:
  - to educate, inform and lead public opinion on the environment; and
  - to help people plan their community, working with them to promote positive local initiatives, stop 'bad' planning and protect the environment – for them and for their children.[41]
- **Chambers of Commerce Ireland:**[42] Chambers of Commerce Ireland is a nationwide business-based organisation with branches throughout the country that take an active part in the planning of their areas. They can be a good source of information and help to support public involvement.
- **Community Technical Aid:**[43] Community Technical Aid is a Dublin-based organisation that offers technical help to groups within Dublin. It provides help with understanding development proposals and offers technical support and training to community groups.
- **Civic trusts:** Most large towns have an active civic trust engaged in work to preserve and enhance the town from a conservation and historical viewpoint.

England

The main elements of the infrastructure supporting community involvement in planning in England are as follows:

- **Government support:** The UK government is providing support for community involvement in planning in two ways:
  - supplying £350 million across England in the form of Planning Delivery Grant to local planning authorities to increase their resources for capacity-building to develop skills, including for community involvement initiatives; and
  - funding for Planning Aid, which offers a free planning service (for example of legal and planning advice) to local communities (see below).

[35] An inventory of these type organisations is listed at http://www.x-s2.nl

[36] www.kei-centrum.nl

[37] www.lokaalsociaalbeleid.nl

[38] www.otb.tudelft.nl

[39] www.verwey-jonker.nl

[40] www.pobail.ie

[41] www.antaisce.org

[42] www.chambers.ie

[43] www.cta.ie

- **Planning Aid:** Planning Aid is a voluntary service, devised by the Town and Country Planning Association and now run by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), to give free, independent and professional planning advice to community groups and individuals who may not be able to afford planning consultancy fees and who may otherwise be excluded from participation in planning issues. Over 500 RTPI members volunteer their time to Planning Aid in offices across England, Scotland and Wales.
- **Civic Societies:** Under the umbrella of the national Civic Trust (which works with the local community to promote thriving towns and villages), civic societies act as 'community watchdogs,' commenting on development proposals in the interests of conservation areas and historic buildings. The local societies are voluntary organisations *'promoting high standards of planning, conservation and regeneration for the benefit of [the] local community'*.
- **Environmental Law Foundation:** The Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) is a national UK charity linking communities and individuals to legal and technical expertise to prevent damage to the environment and to improve the quality of life for all. It aims to provide a voice for communities and individuals. Through its network of members, ELF provides people with information and advice on how the law can help resolve environmental problems such as pollution, development and health. ELF also provides education and training, promotes lectures, conferences and seminars, produces publications and encourages policy development.
- **Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation:** The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF) is a UK charity based in Telford, Shropshire, specialising in community participation, training and development. NIF works with local authorities, housing associations, voluntary agencies and community groups, and aims to offer an independent, quality service to improve the well-being of communities.

  NIF initiated the Planning for Real® process. This begins by contacting local community networks, to inform them how Planning for Real works and to plan how the process should be used in their locality (venues, particular issues of relevance locally etc. Then a three-dimensional model is made, starting from a large-scale map (usually around 1:300), a model is built, preferably with or by local people or the local school. This allows the participants to look at the area as a whole – finding where their house is, tracing their regular journeys, and considering what needs to be done to improve community well-being. Sometimes an event is arranged for a specific group, perhaps young people, or Asian women. At the events, the model is laid out with cards placed around it (these are standard cards plus any reflecting specific issues identified in the early planning discussions). These cards show about 300 options, which people put on the model to show what they want, and where they want it. There are also blank cards for people to write their own suggestions. Following on from this, all the options placed on the model are prioritised into 'now', 'soon', or 'later', action categories, again using visual hands-on techniques. This can then be developed into a full-scale action plan.
- **Groundwork:** Groundwork UK is a federation of local groundwork trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each working with their partners to improve the quality of the local environment, the lives of local people and the success of local businesses in areas in need of investment and support.

  Groundwork's purpose is to build sustainable communities in areas of need through joint environmental action. Groundwork's vision is of a society made up of sustainable communities which are vibrant, healthy and safe, which respect the local and global environment and in which individuals and enterprise prosper. Groundwork works through independent local trusts that develop and implement partnership programmes and projects that deliver benefits equally for:

  - people – creating opportunities for people to learn new skills and become more active citizens;
  - places – delivering environmental improvements that create cleaner, safer, greener neighborhoods; and
  - prosperity – helping businesses and individuals fulfill their potential.

- **Development trusts:** Development trusts are independent, community owned and led organisations that cultivate enterprise, build assets and secure community prosperity. There are currently over 350 development trusts across the UK. The Development Trust Association (DTA) has a team of skilled and experienced staff to support them in each country and region through sharing skills and experience and attracting investment. The DTA also helps communities set up their own development trust.

- **Councils for Voluntary Service:** Councils for voluntary service (CSVs) act as umbrella bodies for voluntary and community action (most often on social issues but sometimes on planning issues) in their localities (there is one in every major urban area in England). Rural community councils (RCCs) have the same role in rural counties in England. The national body for CVSs is the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action; and for RCCs it is ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

Northern Ireland

There are three main organisations providing support for community involvement on planning-related issues in Northern Ireland:

- **Community Technical Aid:** Community Technical Aid (CTA) is the only organisation in Northern Ireland that provides planning, architecture and development services to community groups in areas of disadvantage. CTA's community planning work includes:
  - enabling groups to better understand land use planning proposals and influence proposals affecting their areas;
  - facilitating community consultation on land use planning proposals; and
  - informing the development of planning policies, including lobbying for greater community involvement in planning processes.
- **Planning Aid in Northern Ireland:** Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay fees to a planning consultant. The service is currently run by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Irish Branch (Northern Section).
- **Rural Community Network:** The Rural Community Network (RCN) is a voluntary organisation established by local community organisations in 1991. Its purpose is to help people living in rural areas to voice their opinions and concerns on issues such as poverty, disadvantage and community development. Much of this work is done through policy and research. The majority of its funding comes from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, supported with money from membership fees, charitable trusts and project funding.

Scotland

Community councils are important local bodies in supporting public and community involvement in planning; they are independent voluntary bodies but are also part of the formal governance structures. The other main organisations in Scotland are as follows:

- **Planning Aid for Scotland:** As in England and Wales, Planning Aid for Scotland is a voluntary organisation run by qualified and experienced planners. The organisation offers free advice on the planning system for those members of the public who cannot afford to pay for private consultations. Planning Aid for Scotland is an officially recognised charity, supported by the RTPI and the Scottish Office. To help engage local people in the planning process, the Scottish Executive has provided funding for Planning Aid for Scotland of up to £100,000 for each of 2006/07 and 2007/2008.
- **Citizens Environmental Defence Advocacy (CEDA):** The Scottish Executive has also given £150,000 over three years to Friends of the Earth Scotland for its Citizens Environmental Defence Advocacy programme. This programme aims to provide advice and support to the local community to help them get more involved in the planning process.
- **Community Planning:** Community Planning was given legislative backing by the Local Government in Scotland Act in 2003. Community Planning in this context[44] does not refer specifically to the planning process but more to the need to deliver better services across the whole of the public service network, primarily to improve the linkages between national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels (the equivalent of Local Strategy Partnerships and Community Strategies in England and Wales).

Wales

Community involvement in planning in Wales is at a much more embryonic stage than in England. The infrastructure for community involvement is limited despite the following structures:

- **Planning Aid for Wales:** As in England and Scotland, Planning Aid for Wales offers free planning advice for the public on the planning system. To help local people to get involved in the planning process, the Welsh Assembly Government has provided core

[44] www.communityplanning.org.uk/index.html

funding for Planning Aid for Wales of up to £100,000 for 2006 and 2007.

- **Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA):** WCVA is the umbrella body for the voluntary/NGO sector in Wales. It is running a project called 'Participation Cymru', which is being run independently of the planning agenda although its services are on offer to planners, developers and others working in the planning field. Participation Cymru aims to provide support, information and training on issues around participation, consultation and facilitation to the public, private and voluntary sector in Wales, and runs a range of training courses on this subject.
- **Active Communities Initiative:** The aim of the Welsh Assembly Government's Active Communities initiative is *'to rebuild a sense of community throughout Wales'*. The Welsh Assembly Government wishes to support all projects in Wales that raise the profile of – and stimulate more – volunteering and community involvement.

A strong base for volunteering activity already exists in Wales, and this initiative is supporting projects that complement initiatives at the UK level. These projects need to meet at least one of the initiative's four main themes:

- improving the infrastructure;
- capacity-building;
- media and promotion; and
- research.

Analysis of infrastructures of support

Table A3.1, on the following page, shows some examples of the infrastructure of support for community participation in planning within the four different traditions of planning (see Section 3.2 of the main report for an explanation of the four traditions).

Table A3.1
Examples of infrastructures of support

Type of planning system	Local infrastructure	Regional infrastructure	National infrastructure
Regional economic planning approaches	**France:** • There are 40 local urban planning agencies (two in Paris) – voluntary bodies that debate planning policies. They usually work in partnership with communes, regions, departments, universities etc. • *Sociétés d'economic mixte* (SEMs) are companies governed by statute which work to bring together community and economic partners, with the public sector as main shareholder **Republic of Ireland:** • An Taisce – a nationwide NGO providing community groups with seminars, workshops, training etc. on planning and environmental protection • Community Technical Aid Dublin – provides professional advice (for example on planning and architecture) for community groups within Dublin • Civic trusts (similar to civic societies in England, with similar focus on heritage and conservation)		**France:** • National federation of urban planning agencies (see local column)

Comprehensive integrated approaches	**Netherlands:**
	• Amsterdam's 'Citizens Initiative' aims to increase the influence of citizens, for example by calling for a referendum
	• Umbrella groups that provide support on planning issues:
	  • Knowledge Centre City Renewal
	  • Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare
	  • Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies
	  • Verwey-Jonker Instituut
			Netherlands:
			• Ministry (VROM) runs a 'Policy with Citizens' programme which stimulates public participation in government and NGO programmes, and supports citizen-oriented programmes with knowledge, skills and funding

Land use management approaches	**Belgium, Flanders region:** • Vlaams Instituut voor Samenlevingsopbouw	**Belgium, Flanders region:** • Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen (environmental federation) **Belgium, Wallonia region:** • Inter-Environnement Wallonie (environmental federation) • Habitat et Participation; Habitat et Rénovation (linked to universities) • Periferia **Belgium, Flanders region:** • Brussels Raad voor Let Leefmilieu (Flemish) and Inter-Environnement Bruxelles (French); both environmental federations	**Belgium:** • Platform Participation (national network of organisations) **Belgium, Wallonia region:** • Les Maisons d'Urbanism (privately funded) give information and advice to the public in some places

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Table A3.1 (continued)
Examples of infrastructures of support

Type of planning system	Local infrastructure	Regional infrastructure	National infrastructure
Land use management approaches (continued)	**England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:** • Planning Aid – a voluntary service providing free and independent advice on planning issues to community groups and individuals who could not otherwise afford professional advice. Provides access (in England alone) to over 500 professional planners volunteering under the scheme **England:** • Civic societies are local charities that focus on protecting and enhancing local heritage. They aim to promote high standards of planning, conservation and regeneration for the benefit of the local community • Development trusts involve local people and groups in projects to develop land and buildings for community benefit • Councils for voluntary service (CVSs) (one in every major urban area) act as umbrella bodies for voluntary and community action in the localities (most often on social issues but sometimes on planning issues). Rural community councils (RCCs) have the same role in rural counties • Groundwork trusts provide advice on environmental work, including help with development and environmental improvement projects by local groups **Northern Ireland:** • Community Technical Aid provides planning, architecture and development services to community groups in areas of disadvantage **Scotland:** • Citizens Environmental Defence Advocacy (CEDA) provides advice and support to local communities to help them get more involved in the planning process		**England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:** • Government provides funds for Planning Aid (UK Government, National Assembly of Wales and the Scottish Executive). Planning Aid is a national organisation that works locally– run by the Royal Town Planning Institute, RTPI members are the volunteers providing advice **England:** • National body for civic societies is the Civic Trust (see local column) • National body for development trusts is the Development Trusts Association (see local column) • National body for CVSs is the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action; and for RCCs it is ACRE (see local column) • Groundwork UK is the national federation of the Groundwork trusts (see local column) • Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF), which invented the Planning for Real® model, runs events using the model with local communities; also provides training and other support • Environmental Law Foundation provides access to legal and technical expertise to prevent damage to the environment and to improve the quality of life for all **Northern Ireland:** • Community Technical Aid – national body working locally (see local column) • Rural Community Network undertakes policy and research work to support local community groups in rural areas to influence policy **Scotland:** • CEDA (see local column) is supported nationally by Friends of the Earth Scotland

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Table A3.1 (continued)
Examples of infrastructures of support

Type of planning system	Local infrastructure	Regional infrastructure	National infrastructure
Land use management approaches (continued)	**Scotland and Wales:** • Community councils are statutory bodies operating at a more local level than local planning authorities with specific duties and a role in involving citizens in local policy issues, including planning and development		**Wales:** • Wales Council for Voluntary Action is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in Wales. It runs Participation Cymru, which supports participation generally, including on planning)
Urbanism	**France:** • *Comité d'habitant* – a structure for involving people in town management • *Association pour débattre de l'urbanisme* – town planning debating association		

appendix 4
community involvement tools and techniques

Introduction

The individual research reports went into varying degrees of detail about the tools and techniques used or promoted in the ten countries (counting the four nations of the UK separately), as outlined in this Appendix.

Belgium

The main techniques for community involvement in planning in Belgium are the formal consultation mechanisms closely linked to the planning system (see Appendix 1 for details). These are, in summary:

- **Walloon region:** The Regional Commission for Urban Planning (CRAT) and local commissions at municipal level (CCATs). These commissions are made up of experts from civil society (for example unions, professional groups, socio-cultural organisations). Some municipalities organise information meetings, public hearings and consultation meetings on some projects.
- **Flanders region:** Planning commissions (as in Wallonia), operating at regional, provincial and municipal levels. Membership of the commissions is fixed by law and their advice is statutory. Some authorities organise additional public participation.
- **Brussels Capital region:** Regional development commissions and local deliberation commissions. The latter have responsibility for organising community involvement in planning.

A variety of specific techniques is used by the different voluntary or professional organisations. In many cases classic techniques are used as an inspiration, and the actual method is the result of an adaptation to the specific circumstances, the public, the resources and the time frame.

Vlaams Instituut voor Samenlevingsopbouw has listed several often-used techniques in a toolkit accompanied by details of local experiences:

- www.samenlevingsopbouw.be/info/communicatie/pdf/methodes.pdf gives an overview of ten methods with very practical guidelines on how to use them.
- www.samenlevingsopbouw.be/info/communicatie/pdf/handvatten.pdf is part II of the toolkit and describes over 20 smaller initiatives.

The general methods and the smaller initiatives are illustrated with real-life experiences and an evaluation using several parameters.

The Koning Boudewijnstichting has published a more general overview on its website, in three languages (Dutch, French and English): *Participatory Methods Toolkit. A Practitioner's Manual* (new edition) (seewww.kbs-frb.be/files/db/EN/ PUB%5F1540%5FParticipatoty%5Ftoolkit%5FNew%5Fedition.pdf and www.kbs-frb.be/files/db/nl/PUB%5F1599%5FParticipatieve%5FMethoden.pdf).

This provides a resource which is described as follows: *'To facilitate practical knowledge sharing, the King Baudouin Foundation and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment (viWTA), both based in Brussels and actively involved in participatory methods, decided to edit a publication with the ambition to create a hands-on toolkit for starting up and managing participatory projects. For each method there is a description of when to use the different steps, best practices and budget. All these are accompanied by different hints and tips. A chapter with general guidelines for using participatory methods includes a comparative chart of the methods discussed and a brief overview of 50 methods and techniques.'*

France

The main techniques used for community involvement in France are the official mechanisms outlined in Appendix 1. Other tools exist, although they are not widely used. They include:

- ***Conseil consultatif:*** Consultation council, enabling local authorities to directly take the initiative for undertaking public consultation (for example in a meeting).

Advantage: Authorities involve people in planning to test opinions.

- ***Rencontres publiques:*** Public meetings, which are organised in order to bring together all the actors – politicians, professionals, inhabitants. These meetings are sometimes called 'democratic meetings'. *Advantage:* A good way for inhabitants to be informed about planning projects and see the point of view of professionals and politicians.
- ***Atelier public:*** Public workshop, which allows people to discuss social and planning issues relevant to their town. It is also the name of a tool used to involve people.
- ***Atelier de travail urbain:*** Urban workshop, which brings together all the parties involved in urban land use. It is also the name of a tool used to involve people.
- ***Enquête:*** Surveys or questionnaires, used by the relevant authority or NGOs to ask residents questions about planning for their town. Surveys may be completed in the street, during events, on the internet, in local authority offices, or by mail. *Advantages:* A good way to gather the opinions of a wide range of people, and a good way to communicate information.
- ***Conférence:*** Symposium or conference, at which professionals inform people on planning and the role they can play. *Advantage:* People are informed.
- ***Exposition (sur place ou itinérante):*** Exhibition (sometimes touring) of pictures, comments and documents. The exhibition can be run in different places showing posters, pictures etc. at venues and events where passers-by are welcome; even sometimes on small trains visiting the district.
- ***Conseil de quartier:*** District council (there are several districts in a town), organised by committees of residents or in the form of urban workshops held with residents to talk about projects in the district. People are free to ask questions and comment on projects. Committees and workshops make links between citizens and authorities. *Advantage:* The public is involved in a planning project and can give their opinion. *Disadvantage:* The authorities are not obliged to take public opinion into account.
- ***Auto-évaluation:*** In Bordeaux[45] the local authority brought people together in order to think about a tool that could help public involvement organisations to monitor their role and efficiency in public consultation. The resulting tool – for voluntary use – is in the form of list of questions that each organisation can use to check their performance in more. The tool has only been used in this single case. *Advantage:* A good way for public involvement organisations to take a new look at themselves, with the aim of improving the efficiency of public consultation. *Disadvantage:* A lot of work to do.
- ***Boîte à idées:*** Suggestion boxes may be put in local authority offices or in other organisations where people can drop in their ideas on planning. *Advantage:* A good way to collect ideas and keep an open mind.
- ***Repas de quartier:*** District meals may be organised by organisations as a means of meeting residents and providing an opportunity to talk about the district. *Advantage:* A good way to encourage people to attend. The residents may prefer informal meetings, like meals, to public conferences.
- ***Formation:*** Education – people can be informed and educated by professionals, in order to take part in planning debates.
- ***Visites collectives sur le terrain:*** Field visits may be organised for all the actors involved in planning. Residents can see new developments in the town and give their views to elected representatives. Sometimes, visits can lead to a new project – a map is drawn and the project debated.
- ***Débat:*** Debates are organised to share ideas and points of view; they generally take place during exhibitions or conferences.
- ***Conversation avec maquette* (Conversation with a model):** Meetings are organised featuring a model of a project, in order to gather people's opinions.
- ***Carte démocratique:*** Citizens use a 'democratic card' to vote on consultations over the internet. It is a new tool, currently used in just one town. *Advantages:* Disabled people can vote from home (over the internet) and everyone can be consulted. *Disadvantage:* It is expensive and complicated to set up.
- ***Activité pédagogique:*** Teaching activities are held during exhibitions or at school for children to teach about citizenship and to help them participate in planning debates.
- ***Maison des projets:*** A 'project house' provides a venue for meeting and sharing ideas on planning projects. At the end of any event, the main ideas and key words are written up on posters which are hung on

[45] www.arpenteurs.fr/Bordeaux/index.htm

street walls, to remind people what was said.

Germany

A review of public participation in Germany, published in 2003,[46] investigated the methods of community involvement in spatial structure plans and regional area plans, and found the following the tools and techniques were used:

- **Methods of community involvement in spatial structure plans:** (Answers from 13 of the 16 *Lander*)
  - *Information:*
    - press – used by 13 (12 regularly);
    - lecture/discussion – used by eight (five regularly);
    - information on the internet – used by five (all regularly);
    - print media – used by five (four regularly); and
    - exhibition – used by one (regularly).
  - *Participation:*
    - planning councillors and committees – used by eight (regularly);
    - working circle/working group – used by six (three regularly);
    - hearings and canvassing – used by five (all regularly);
    - forum/conference – used by four (two regularly);
    - target group participation – used by three (all regularly);
    - public display – used by three (all regularly);
    - participation via internet – used by one (regularly); and
    - public expert opinion – used by one.
  - *Co-operation:*
    - co-operative workshop – used by two;
    - mediation procedure – used by one; and
    - round table – used by one.

- **Methods of community involvement in regional area plans:** (Answers from 24 regional areas)
  - *Information:*
    - press – used by 24 (14 regularly);
    - lecture/discussion – used by 22 (16 regularly);
    - information on the internet – used by 19 (13 regularly);
    - print media – used by 16 (five regularly);
    - exhibition – used by 14 (two regularly); and
    - citizen meetings – used by seven.
  - *Participation:*
    - planning councillors and committees – used by 22 (19 regularly);
    - working circle/working group – used by 21 (all regularly);
    - hearings and canvassing – used by 21 (all regularly);
    - forum/conference – used by 20 (14 regularly);
    - target group participation – used by 14 (seven regularly);
    - public display – used by 13 (four regularly);
    - participation via internet – used by six (one regularly); and
    - public expert opinion – used by one.
  - *Co-operation:*
    - co-operative workshop – used by eight (two regularly);
    - mediation procedure – used by three and;
    - round table – used by three.

Electronic methods are used increasingly, especially following the development of integrated e-government strategies in German municipalities. Although these electronic methods of involvement remain controversial, the use of tools for visualisation (such as geographical information systems (GIS), three-dimensional models and animations) and other ways of collecting and displaying data electronically is increasing, sometimes linked to forums and chat rooms (although this is still very experimental and unusual).

Luxembourg

Experience with public involvement techniques is very limited in Luxembourg. At the national, regional and local level a few different tools and techniques have been used as outlined below:

- **Briefings (regulated by law):** The purpose of briefings is to inform the public about new plans and their impact. Briefings are required by law and are part of the planning process. Participation in the briefing is voluntary, but it is an opportunity for everybody to get detailed information about the plan.

  At the municipal level at least one briefing has to be organised by the local authority to inform local citizens, entrepreneurs, defenders of the public interest, NGOs etc.

  At the national level only the local authorities of the communities that are affected by the national land use plan have to organise at least one briefing for citizens, entrepreneurs,

[46] German Ministry of Transportation, Building and Housing (2003) *Public Participation in Programmes and Plans of Spatial Planning*. Federal Ministry of Transportation, Building and Housing, Berlin

defenders of the public interest, NGOs etc. The Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning or his/her delegate attends these presentations.

Advantages:

- Important sources of information for the public.
- Opportunity to raise own interests.
- Dialogue and exchange between politicians, experts, citizens, entrepreneurs, NGOs etc.
- Unrestricted number of participants.

Disadvantages:

- Only information and discussion – no opportunity to modify planning intentions.
- Risk of having an 'endless' discussion if many people with different points of view want to defend their interests.
- No personal invitation to the briefing; only a public announcement at a community centre or in a newspaper – so there is a risk that some people could miss the event.

- **Written statements (regulated by law):** At the beginning of the planning process the (local or national) land use plan is laid out at the community centre. During a set period citizens, entrepreneurs, (non-governmental) organisations and associations have the opportunity to study the plan and – if they want to make any comments or suggestions for improvement – to submit a written statement. The statements are handed over to the local council (in the case of the local land use plan) or the Council of the Government (in the case of the national land use plan), who consider the statements in coming to a decision and decide whether the plan has to be altered.

  Advantage: The only effective opportunity for citizens, entrepreneurs and NGOs to defend their interests.

  Disadvantage: Only those who have assisted at the briefing and are well informed about the plan will be able to defend their interests with valid arguments.

- **Regional conferences (informal, not regulated by law):** There are as yet no regional plans in Luxembourg, the Minister of the Interior and Spatial Planning has recently initiated a regional planning process in some regions. But experience with community involvement within the regional planning process is naturally very limited at the moment.

  The first step in informing the public about the plan and involving the region in the planning process is to convene a regional conference, to which the Minister invites the local authorities of the communities concerned, the inter-communal syndicates and the main regional lobbies. The purpose of the regional conference is to outline and agree future development objectives for the region. In various work groups conference participants discuss the problems and potential of the region and work out some methods of resolution.

  Advantages:

  - Problem and practice orientated.
  - Bottom-up approach.
  - Dialogue and exchange between national and regional politicians, associations, organisations and experts.
  - Without a code of practice, many variations are possible.

  Disadvantages:

  - Without a legal basis, there is limited capacity to resolve difficult land use conflicts.
  - Holding the conference is based on voluntary participation.
  - A high level of individual engagement is necessary.

- **Regional workshops (informal, not regulated by law):** The result of the regional conference(s) (above) has to be discussed in small workshops of selected local politicians and experts (planners, members of the Ministry and of the main regional syndicates and organisations), organised by the Ministry of the Interior and Spatial Planning. In these workshops solutions are worked out and the objectives for the region are defined.

  Advantages:

  - Without a code of practice, many variations are possible.
  - Problem and practice orientated.
  - Restricted number of participants, so it is possible to have focused discussions in small groups.
  - High chance of success in developing resolutions and projects that satisfy everyone.

  Disadvantages:

  - Selection of the 'right' participants can be very challenging.
  - A high level of individual (voluntary) engagement is necessary.

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, a great number of techniques that can be used to involve communities in the planning process can be identified, and there has been much research into community involvement and the techniques that have been used. An extensive list of methods, tools and techniques for helping people to get involved in physical planning and design can be found on the following websites:

- www.instrumentenwijzer.nl/instrumentenlijst.php

- www.participatiewijzer.nl/index.asp?nmoduleid=5&wgid=7&spt=1
- www.publiek-politiek.nl/thema_s/participatie/burgerparticipatie/instrumenten

Several methods and instruments are regularly used at each level of participation:

- **Consulting (*Raadplegen*):** Debating contest (*Debatwestrijd*), Digital debates (*Digitale debatten*) and web discussions (*webdiscussies*), City debate (*Stadsdebat*), (Olympiade conference (*Olympiade conferentie*), Opinion indicator (*Opiniewijzer*), Hearing (*Hoorzitting*), Deliberative polling, Citizen panels (*Burgerpanels*), Digital citizen panels (*Digitale burgerpanels*), Focus groups (*Focusgroepen*), Scenario method (*Scenariomethode*), Questionnaires (*Enquêtes*), and Consulting corrective referendum (*Raadgevend correctief referendum*).
- **Advising (*Adviseren*):** Citizen initiative (*Burgerinitiatief*), Sticking points tour (*Schouw of knelpuntentour*), Advice councils (*Adviesraden*), Citizen platform (*Burgerplatform*), Consensus conference (*Consensus conferentie*), Citizen jury (*Burgerjury*), Formal participation (*Inspraak*), and Lens-methode.
- **Co-producing (*Coproduceren*):** Citizen initiative (*Burgerinitiatief*), Workshops (*Werkateliers*), Infra-lab, and IPP-methode.
- **Deciding (*Meebeslissen*):** Binding referendum (*Bindend referendum*), and participatory budget (*Participatieve begroting*)

Regularly-used instruments are evaluated on the following websites:

- www.ons-nederland.nl/media/ONS2005/pdf/burgers_betrekken.pdf
- www.vrom.nl/get.asp?file=Docs/Burgerplatform_Burgerparticipatiemilieubeleid.pdf

Republic of Ireland

Recent research[47] on public involvement in environmental decision-making in the Republic of Ireland use the terms 'participation' and 'consultation' interchangeably, to mean: *'processes and procedures generally employed to bring people together to discuss and articulate public will on a particular issues'*. Methods mentioned are given below:

- **Public hearing:** This is the most commonly-used mechanism in environmental decision-making in Ireland, allowing a panel of experts or officials to address an audience and to field questions so as to explain a proposal and gather information and opinion from the audience. Such hearings are often preceded by discussion documents.

  Advantages:
  - It allows a wide range of people to participate.
  - It brings the relevant people in front of citizens.
  - Answers can be given instantly and followed up.
  - It is open and public.
  - It is relatively cheap.

  Disadvantages:
  - The most vocal are most readily heard.
  - There is a need to 'do homework' before participating.
  - There is a need to be articulate to get a point across.
  - It is a 'them' and 'us' forum, rather than truly participatory.
  - There is no real output.
- **Planning oral hearing:** Similar to the public hearing, this is a specific model based on legal procedure and held in front of a planning inspector. It has been used in Ireland for a number of proposals (particularly those decided by appeal or of great controversy) and in the development plan-making process.

  Advantages:
  - The formality allows for fairness, not just to happen but be seen to happen.
  - An 'expert' directs events.
  - Anyone can participate.
  - It allows all issues to be aired.
  - It allows a 'weighing up' of evidence.
  - It tends to avoid heated argument.

  Disadvantages:
  - Legal procedures are intimidating and off-putting.
  - It is not particularly creative.
  - It can be time consuming.
  - It can be expensive.
- **Consensus conference:** This involves a panel of 'lay persons' considering an issue. To help it do so, it sets an agenda and calls witnesses. The event is held in public.

  Advantages:
  - It really allows the public to feel part of the decision-making process.
  - The public's concerns will be those most likely to be addressed.
  - Expert witnesses can help public understanding.

[47] B. Motherway (undated) *Public Involvement in Environmental Decision-Making in Ireland*. Working Paper No. 3, Dublin: The Policy Institute, Trinity College Dublin

Disadvantages:
- Not all issues will be addressed.
- The public might not be aware of important issues to address and may therefore set the wrong agenda.
- It is difficult to organise and in particular it is difficult to decide who will be on the panel.
- It is not clear how it eventually feeds in to the decision-making process.

- **Citizens' jury:** This is similar to consensus conferencing, but more specific to a single issue and is held in private with the findings being reported.

Advantages:
- The private nature of the discussion allows people to say what they think.
- It allows citizens to form an opinion separate from any state or government involvement.
- It is not constrained by legal/administrative process.

Disadvantages:
- By being held in private, motivation and method might be questioned.
- Results might not be taken too seriously if proceedings are 'in camera'.
- It is not clear who might be invited.
- It is not likely to get much publicity (local press etc.).

Other tools and techniques used in the Republic of Ireland include the following:

- **Exhibitions:** The exhibition is a fairly common approach that is often used at the draft stage of plan production. It can involve either a simple or elaborate display in the planning authority office or in public buildings in the area.

Advantages:
- Exhibitions are relatively cheap.
- Graphic material can be easily displayed.
- Access is relatively easy for all interested.
- They are easy to set up.

Disadvantages:
- They can be impersonal.
- They can be difficult to understand.
- They can be superficial.
- They don't allow for an issue to be explored in any depth.

- **Road shows:** Road shows have become more common. They involve taking an exhibition and often relevant staff around an area, displaying and explaining a proposed plan to interested parties. They can either be simple mobile exhibitions or they can involve greater interaction with the public.

Advantages:
- They can reach a wider audience than static exhibitions.
- They allow a human face to reach out to the affected public.
- They allow for views from outside the main administrative town to be expressed.

Disadvantages:
- They can be seen as the administrative centre telling local areas what will happen to them, *'fait accompli'* fashion.
- They are difficult to organise with to a high degree of professionalism.
- They require staff who know an area intimately if they not to be caught out by questioning.

- **Public consultation in writing:** This approach is most common in development control, but it also occurs in plan production. It is widespread throughout Ireland.

Advantages:
- It brings the message into a home.
- It can be recorded easily.
- It allows people to reflect before expressing an opinion.

Disadvantages:
- It appears bureaucratic.
- It often needs to be followed up by a visit to the council offices to examine a proposal.
- It needs respondents to have good written communication skills.

- **Community meetings:** These can take place as one-off meetings about a particular proposal, organised either formally by an existing group or more informally. They can also take place regularly to discuss new matters arising.

Advantages:
- Meetings allow the community (or its representatives) to state its view.
- They can allow discussion.
- They can provide a community (not individual) view.

Disadvantages:
- They can be dominated by certain individuals.

- **Newspapers:** Used frequently by planning authorities as a means of communicating with the public.

Advantages:
- They can reach a local audience.
- They are relatively cheap.
- Most people have access.

Disadvantages:
- They tend to give a legalistic look to notices.
- They require an interest in the subject before people become engaged with it.
- They do not necessarily produce a view – they simply report facts.

- **Web:** Now used more and more, with proposed plans, planning applications etc. being accessible on line.

  Advantages:
  - It brings access to most homes.
  - It is relatively cheap.
  - It is easy to use.
  - It can display much material easily.

  Disadvantages:
  - It relies on people logging on and visiting web site.
  - Material can be slow to download.
  - It does not guarantee feedback.

England

As with the rest of the UK, the main techniques used to involve the general public and community groups are open meetings, closed meetings, general publicity, media, workshops, conferences, questionnaires and surveys. The advantages and disadvantages of these generic techniques are given at the end of this Appendix.

Specific examples of community engagement techniques to involve the public in planning processes that are regularly used in England by local authorities are described in more detail below:

- **'Enquiry by Design':** This process challenges local stakeholders, planners and professionals to respond to the issues of a particular site through an intensive design process.[48]

  Enquiry by Design workshops are used to bring together major stakeholders at one time and place to discuss, develop and draw possible urban design and planning solutions to specific, place-based problems. The workshops investigate options interactively through design, debate, and illustration to reach preferred outcomes. The actions needed to achieve the implementation of workshop outcomes are also identified in an implementation framework that can form the basis for ongoing action. Enquiry by Design workshops are typically non-binding, to encourage participants to think creatively, to step outside the (sometimes limiting) constraints of their formal roles, and to provide the flexibility to consider and debate a wide range of options.[49]

  The Enquiry by Design process is one that is increasingly being used by local authorities to inform the preparation and submission of planning applications or masterplanning exercises upon which applications will be based. This intensive process can offer significant advantages. New opportunities and synergies emerge which add value and quality to developments, and consensus can be forged among previously implacable opponents. Although Enquiry by Design shares many similarities with other types of planning workshops, it differs in the degree of technical input, the length of the workshop and its strong focus on key stakeholder participation.[50]

- **Games:** Games can provide a good way to help people understand the planning process and other people's viewpoints,[51] and are devised to mirror real-life planning scenarios or to teach specific skills. They are mostly played in groups, usually helped by a facilitator or someone who has played them before. There is usually no specific output other than increased awareness, but they may produce preliminary design proposals or an agenda for future initiatives.

  There are various game types:
  - board games – adaptations of popular board games to simulate planning and design scenarios;
  - picture analysis – getting people to say what they see in a picture and comparing notes;
  - role play – acting as if you are in someone else's shoes;
  - story-telling – reciting real or imaginary tales as a way of exploring hidden perceptions; and
  - theatre – performing plays to characterise real life and stimulate debate.

- **Action planning:**[52] These sorts of events allow people to produce plans of action at carefully structured sessions in which all those affected work creatively together. They can be used at any stage of the development process and provide an alternative to reliance on bureaucratic planning. Examples of action planning include an action planning day, a community planning forum, design fest, a design workshop, a future search conference, an

[48] www.princes-foundation.org/projects.html

[49] www.wapc.wa.gov.au/Initiatives/Place+planning+existing+areas/351.aspx

[50] ODPM (2004) *Statements of Community Involvement and Planning Applications*. London: ODPM, p.15

[51] This technique is described in Nick Wates (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook*. London: Earthscan Publications, p.68

[52] This technique is described in Nick Wates (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook*. London: Earthscan Publications, p.24

open space workshop, and Planning for Real sessions.

- **Community visioning:** This involves the development and expression of a shared vision of the future and is achieved by bringing together a broad representative group of individuals to develop a consensus on future policy. Government recommends this approach as other methods may not always be able to build consensus when either the community's views are felt to be suppressed, or difficulties are found in coping with the sheer volume diverse views.[53]

- **Planning for Real®:**[54] This is a structured 'hands-on' process of community consultation and participation. It essentially involves the involvement of the community in a workshop environment with the output being the creation of a three-dimensional model of the neighbourhood. The model-making process involves building a three-dimensional model on a large-scale map (usually around 1:300). It helps the local ownership of the project if this is done locally, either by adults, or more commonly in the local school. This begins the process of looking at the area as a whole – finding where your house is, tracing your regular journeys, and considering what needs to be done to improve community well-being.

  Planning for Real® exercises are recognised as being a successful way in which to engage local communities on planning proposals of significance, and can provide a whole process for consulting the community. The process begins with contacting local community networks and reaches a conclusion with the formation of an action plan for taking forward the decisions made during the process. The process can, of course, be revisited at any point as models are often kept and used many times.

- **Community planning charettes:** These are not dissimilar in function to Planning for Real® exercises (see above), but are more high-energy design processes that usually involve professional interaction with the community during a time-limited exercise (usually one-two days), with opportunities to challenge emerging ideas and conceptions coming from both sides.

  Charettes are very 'end product' orientated and for planning matters can help bring together all sectors of the community for this purpose, including local stakeholders, politicians and decision-makers. Accordingly, they may be more 'newsworthy' than other participation formats, but do not always result in unanimity. The main outcome of a successful charette is the attainment of an agreed goal and a sense of achievement by the non-professional participants.

- **Techniques used at a regional level:** Techniques that are being used to involve the public at a regional level are very similar to the main techniques used at different levels in England: open and closed meetings, general publicity, the use of media, workshops, events, and questionnaires/surveys. However, there has been a greater emphasis on the use of neutral but knowledgeable and locally-based facilitators for the events and workshops and to conduct some or all of the research and convene and report on the various consultation meetings.[55]

  In order to ensure the involvement of hard-to-reach groups,[56] many regional assemblies have tried attending those groups' individual meetings to present and discuss issues, forming specific focus groups to be involved in discussions at events and workshops,[57] translating (a summary of) the information in various minority languages, and holding workshops for these specific groups.

Northern Ireland

As with the rest of the UK, the main techniques used to involve the general public and community groups are open meetings, closed meetings, general publicity, media, workshops, conferences, questionnaires and surveys. The advantages and disadvantages of these generic techniques are given at the end of this Appendix.

[53] Christine Sylvest Larsen (2004) *Facilitating Community Involvement: Practical Guidance for Practitioners and Policy Makers.* Development and Practice Report 27. London: Home Office. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr27.pdf

[54] Planning for Real® is a registered trademark of The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation

[55] This information was gathered both from the regional assemblies' websites and from informal telephone interviews with assembly members that had been involved in consultation exercises for the development/review of their region's regional spatial strategy

[56] 'Hard to reach groups' are community groups and individuals who are, for example, not mobile, people that have a disability, people whose first language is not English, or those who do not have ready access to a computer

[57] A focus group is a small group selected from a wider population and chosen to represent a specific target group (for example woman, elderly and youth)

Specific examples of community engagement techniques to involve the public in planning processes and that are regularly used in Northern Ireland by local authorities are described in more detail below.

- **Participatory village planning:** This has been developed by the Rural Development Council in Northern Ireland[58] to allow communities to develop a community-led strategy for their village. The aim is to gain maximum community ownership of the plan and therefore to enable the whole community to feel far more engaged with and affected by the process.

  It is recommended that a planning committee is formed from a village development association which can then undertake such activities as a 'decades brainstorm' to see how the village has evolved and changed, and a mapping of village assets. This can then be used to establish a village development plan and assess the built environment, the village setting and opportunities for new development.

  Newsletters and the local press feed into the village strategy. Northern Ireland is characterised by a dispersed, small settlement pattern, and so this method of consultation is vital in reaching some isolated communities and keeping them informed of progress or of what developments are due to occur in their village.

- **Structured discussion and debate:** Structured discussions and debates can usefully bring together what can be a dispersed community in rural Northern Ireland to debate a particular topic. A specific topic can engage the community in a way that can otherwise be hard to achieve, and planning evokes a variety of responses that can bring communities closer together.

- **Documentary consultation:** The use of documentary consultation is standard in Northern Ireland. However, the danger is that many sections of the community are not reached or that the document, once received, is discarded and not looked at. The particular use of this method in Northern Ireland ensures that a specific proposal can be circulated to a wide audience in a context which is dominated by dispersed rural communities that cannot always be brought together in one physical place. However, the response rate is often limited.

- **Mail surveys:** In Northern Ireland this method is used in conjunction with other methods, including exhibitions and public meetings, to overcome the usually low response rate to surveys alone.

Scotland

Community engagement is defined in Scotland as a process *'to develop and sustain a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences'*.[59]

In Scotland, the planning system provides a range of opportunities for people and communities to participate. The following are the main ways in which people can get involved in planning:

- contributing to and influencing national planning policy reviews and consultations conducted by the Scottish Executive;
- contributing to policies, advice and guidance being drawn up for their area by the local authority (for example by participating in local workshops at the start of the development planning process);
- commenting on structure and local plans for their area, including participating in local plan inquiries where necessary;
- commenting on or objecting to planning applications likely to affect them;
- participating in appeals by applicants against determinations of planning applications;
- asking the council to investigate apparent breaches of planning controls;
- raising planning issues with their Member of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Ministers or Parliamentary Committees (through petitions etc.); and
- participating through the Community Planning process.[60]

In 2002, a new COSLA guide[61] encouraged councils and other public bodies to look at new ways of involving the public, having regard to

[58] M. Murray and J. Greer (2001) *Participatory Village Planning – A Practice Guidelines Workbook*. Crookstown, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland: Rural Development Council

[59] Scottish Exective (undated) *National Standards for Community Engagement*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/lccs_008411.pdf. p. 4

[60] Scottish Executive (2003) *Your Place, Your Plan. A White Paper on Public Involvement in Planning*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/planning/ypyp.pdf. p. 9

[61] Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the representative voice of Scottish local government and also acts as the employers' association on behalf of all Scottish councils. The guide is *Focusing on Citizens: A Guide to Approaches and Methods*

best value, community planning and democratic renewal. The guide drew on current practice and covered a number of techniques, including the following.

- **Group work:** The various forms of group work include focus groups and workshops for real:
  - **Focus groups:** Focus groups bring together a small group, generally not more than six to ten people, to discuss in an informal setting a particular issue in depth for between one and two hours. A good focus group session is characterised by frank and probing discussions which produce creative and spontaneous ideas. A skilled facilitator is therefore needed to encourage participants to discuss their thoughts, feelings and reactions openly.

    Advantages:
    - Focus groups can identify what people really think and what is of importance to them.
    - They can help build a long-term relationship with the community.
    - They can be a productive source of ideas for later questionnaires.
    - They are likely to generate spontaneous and creative thinking as people spark off ideas from one another.
    - They allow people who may feel more uncomfortable in a formal situation to speak more freely.

    Disadvantages:
    - Because the views expressed (in the focus group) may tend towards the norm, it may have the effect of inhibiting other people's views.
    - Some members of the group may dominate the issues brought up – the use of a skilled and trained facilitator is important to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their say.
    - Focus groups may not work well owing to lack of experience, lack of skills and other problems in the group.
    - Certain sections of the community may be excluded because of pre-selection processes or because the approach does not suit everyone.
    - As the membership of the focus groups is not, in a statistical sense, representative of the population, due weightings cannot be given to the issues raised.

  - **Workshops for real:** Derived from public meetings, workshops and Planning for Real® approaches, workshops for real are named as such because (*a*) the consultees actually have to *work*; and (*b*) they are made to feel they *really* make a difference in a *real-life* issue – and that consultation is not simply a token gesture. They were developed by the former Gordon District Council and further refined by Aberdeenshire Council. Normally not more than two representatives from the council attend.

    Groups of tables are arranged around the room with some visual aid (for example a map of the local area) on each table, together with a bundle of coloured stickers. After an initial five minute introduction, each group spends 30-45 minutes discussing and debating among themselves, and then the colour-coded stickers are used to identify those options on which there is consensus, those that are thrown out, and those where the group has identified a new proposal for the council to consider.

    Advantages:
    - As complicated issues are made simple, participants feel less intimidated and are more likely to comment openly.
    - Participants are made to feel they really can make a difference, thus helping to raise the profile of the council.
    - They are relatively inexpensive to set up and fairly easy to organise (and can be delegated to a community group, therefore empowering the community and giving it a sense of ownership).
    - Displaying the output shows the participants what they have achieved, and much useful feedback is achieved in a short space of time.

    Disadvantages:
    - Materials are sometimes difficult/costly to prepare.
    - Some participants do not like working in groups.
    - Problems can arise if council officers feel possessive or precious about their own pet theories.
    - Groups can have dominant/vocal people in them, leading to distortion of the feedback.
    - Participants are not really informed of the 'fruits of their labour', unless the council makes a genuine effort to say how the output has been, or will be, used.

- **Surveys:** Surveys constitute the main approach to the collection and analysis of information from the public on planning. They range in size, scope and character and mainly involve the use of questionnaires and interviews.

Advantages:
- They generally involve the collection and analysis of information in a very systematic and rigorous way.
- They usually allow quantitative assessments to be reached.
- They usually produce findings that can be generalised and compared (over time and place).

Disadvantages:
- They are expensive as they require a lot of time and effort to plan and organise, a lot of staff to administer, and a lot of checks to be carried out (before, during and after the survey).

- **Panels and polls:** Examples are citizens' panels and citizens' juries:
  - **Citizens' panels:** Citizens' panels act as a sounding board for issues of concern or importance and are meant to be representative of the electorate. The panel is weighted for gender, age, ethnic group and other relevant background factors.

    Advantages:
    - Panel members are representative of the population.
    - They are useful as a sounding board for new ideas or plans.
    - They are a useful way of establishing a two-way dialogue with customers/ citizens.
    - They are statistically representative.
    - Time and money are saved by not having to draw a fresh sample for subsequent surveys (when surveys are used to consult).
    - Continuity of membership is more likely to foster public awareness/interest in the issues at hand.

    Disadvantages:
    - The database of names, addresses and other particulars requires constant updating.
    - By using survey methods, the panel may not engage people actively in the issues at hand.
    - The results may not be reliable if the representative nature of the standing citizens' panel is not maintained.
  - **Citizens' juries:** A representative, and usually small, sample of the population meet like a court jury to deliberate on a particular issue over a number of days. The jurors hear evidence from expert and other witnesses and are able to challenge and question them. They then deliberate, discuss and debate among themselves, before putting forward recommendations and making their conclusions public. The jury usually comprises around 16-20 local residents.

    Advantages:
    - They promote a culture of citizenship and public participation.
    - They provide a range of informed views on a particular issue.
    - They can help identify actual solutions to local problems.
    - They reflect genuine commitment to community consultation.

    Disadvantages:
    - They are quite expensive and time consuming to set up.
    - They rely on the ability of jurors to make critical and responsible use of the information provided
    - Jurors do not necessarily reach a unanimous view.
    - There is a danger of media distortion of jury proceedings.
    - There is a possibility of biased recommendations if all-round evidence not presented.
- **Public meetings:** This is a generic term for any gathering of people brought together by an issue of common interest or concern.

  Advantages:
  - They are often a good rough and ready way of gauging community concern about an issue.
  - They can potentially bring diverse sections of the community together, possibly at short notice.
  - Participative techniques can be built into proceedings.
  - There is potential media interest.

  Disadvantages:
  - There is a danger of poor attendance or domination of proceedings by unrepresentative sections of the community.
  - There is a danger of possible lack of clear focus or outcome if meetings are not properly planned for or conducted.
  - There is a risk of meetings becoming polarised or collapsing altogether as a result of failure to reach common understanding or agreement on key issues.
- **Combined approaches:** At any stage, different involvement techniques might be appropriate to achieve results. An example is community needs assessment:
  - **Community needs assessment:** This is systematic approach to gathering information about an area and the needs of its communities, facilitating discussion, analysing both the information and the

discussion, and disseminating the results for group work activities.

Advantages:

- Evidence based.
- Facilitates forward service planning.
- Helps inform allocation of area budgets.
- Bottom-up approach.

Disadvantage:

- Unless the process is well managed and facilitated, the need of some sectors of the community may be overlooked or under-represented.

In 2002, the Scottish Executive published research which included a review of current practice in public involvement in planning.[62] It found that:

- Many authorities had had negative experiences with traditional public meetings and were tending to favour more deliberative techniques that were less confrontational, encouraged people to consider issues, and provided feedback of a positive nature. These essentially consisted of displays and interactive workshops. In particular Planning for Real® exercises were becoming increasingly popular.[63]
- There were examples of external facilitation to provide more openness and transparency and targeted workshops for specific interests (for example for business).
- Some authorities produced 'issues papers', which were delivered to all households, along with a questionnaire. One of the respondent authorities set up an 'issues forum' which involved about 40 organisations, with prior training for participants provided by Planning Aid Scotland.
- Methods of getting plan information to people included the use of a wide range of media types. As well as notices in the press and public buildings, easy-read booklets, videos and CD ROMs had been used. In addition, a growing number of authorities had their development plan on the internet.
- One council had used a prize draw to try to generate more public interest and involvement.
- Training and capacity-building were recognised as increasingly important if participation was to be more effective. Some authorities had organised training sessions for planning officers to prepare them for the consultation process, while others had worked with community groups using Planning Aid Scotland's CLEAR project.[64] Some authorities took matters even further as they encouraged community councils to take ownership of the consultation process by involving them in the organisation and facilitation of meetings within their local areas.
- There had been some attempts to increase pupils' understanding of the planning system by working with schools.
- Authorities had used consumer surveys and focus groups as part of their reviews.
- Listening and responding to the community were found to be key components of the current local government agenda, and a range of corporate initiatives geared towards facilitating involvement were identified as potentially relevant to planning. These were area forums, service points, contact centres, help lines, citizens' panels and citizens' juries.
- Particular targeting of areas or groups was also part of the current approach through Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas, youth forums to get the views of young people, and specific initiatives that focused on the elderly and ethnic minorities.

In 2005, research published by the Scottish Executive Development Department (SEDD)[65] found that:

- If local authorities were prepared to try to engage local communities in a more transparent and timely manner, then local people, particularly those judged to be hard-to-reach groups, would be more inclined to get involved.
- Groups preferred more traditional types of activities (leaflets, letters, meetings, media etc.), rather than the use of the Internet and e-mail, and wanted methods of consultation that allow interaction in small groups (focus groups or small meetings).

[62] Scottish Executive (2002) *Getting Involved in Planning. Summary of Evidence*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/planning/gips.pdf. Most of what is discussed and mentioned in this paragraph can be found in this document under paragraph: 'Methods of involvement: a review of current practice'

[63] Planning for Real® exercises are described as using simple 'hands on' models as a focus for people to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved'

[64] The CLEAR (Community Local Environment Awareness Raising) project is a training and capacity-building project developed by Planning Aid Scotland. It provides training for local communities to enable them to have a greater say in the development of their areas

[65] Scottish Executive Development Department (2004) *Planning and Community Involvement in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/planning/pcis.pdf

Table A4.1
Communities Scotland techniques to support community involvement

Discussion group techniques	Public event techniques	Survey techniques	Regular involvement techniques	Capacity building and support
Focus group	Community conferences and seminars	Opinion surveys	Citizen's juries	Community animateurs
Priority search	Open house event	The LENS method	Citizen's panels	Community visioning
Appreciative inquiry	Open space event	Participatory rapid appraisal	Community forums	Partnership working
Scenario planning	Interactive displays			Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD)
Conflict resolution	Future search			Learning Evaluation and Planning (LEAP)
	Public scrutiny			
	Community auditing and profiling			
	Planning for Real®			

Communities Scotland is a Scottish Executive agency that works to ensure decent housing and strong communities across Scotland. Its website shows practical techniques that can be used to support the process of community engagement in partnership activity[66] in different ways.

ABCD, the LENS method, LEAP and Community visioning are described in more detail below.

- **Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD):**[67] This provides a framework for planning and learning from community development interventions. It encourages those involved in community development – whether as funders, policy-makers, managers, practitioners, volunteers or community members – to be clear about what they are trying to achieve, how they should go about it, and how they can change things in light of experience. It is essentially a framework which is flexible enough to be applicable at policy, programme or project level, and sufficiently adaptable to reflect the particular priorities of community development activity at different times, different places and with different people. This flexibility of application is counterbalanced by rigour in setting out what is, and what is not, community development.

  ABCD emphasises the crucial importance of involving communities centrally in all aspects of community development work, and provides an additional tool for communities to set their own agenda for change, and to hold other partners to account.

- **The LENS method:**[68] This was developed in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 1990s. It offers an alternative approach to traditional survey methods.

  Usual survey approaches focus on the existing situation and offer people a limited number of potential responses. LENS provides an alternative based on 'future analysis' – finding out what people want to see happening in the future. It allows greater creativity in people's responses, thereby generating a wide range of ideas for community development.

  It works through a series of question and answer sessions between a researcher and a residents' panel. Residents are initially asked to respond to a series of set questions about living in their area. Respondents can then attend panel meetings where responses to the survey are discussed and priorities for action identified. The outcome of the method is a detailed plan setting out priorities, solutions, responsibilities and the resources required.

[66] www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_016002.hcsp#TopOfPage
[67] Further information about this method can be found at www.scdc.org.uk/abcd_summary.htm
[68] This description was found at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/scrcs_006714.hcsp#TopOfPage

- **Learning Evaluation and Planning (LEAP):**[69] LEAP is a practical approach to effective evaluation and planning of community activities, developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC).

  Participants consider key questions:
  - What needs to change?
  - How will we know it has changed?
  - How will we change it?
  - How will we monitor what we do?
  - How will we learn from our experience?

  The answers to these questions are used to devise a framework against which activity is planned, monitored and evaluated.
- **Community visioning:**[70] Community visioning involves a group of people coming together to develop ideas about what they would like their community ideally to be like. After the vision is agreed, the group then work on looking at what needs to be done to bring about that vision and put this together in an action plan.

  Community visioning can involve conference or workshop events, usually over a period of months. Groups meet and are assisted by a trained facilitator to agree on a vision for their area and look at ways of achieving this goal. Alternatively, creating the vision can be tied into other events.
- **Planning for People™:**[71] This is one of the training programmes run by Planning Aid for Scotland. It aims to engage local communities in 'areas of change' to help meet the development needs of those wishing to get involved in local environmental and regeneration work through the planning system. It aims to build community organisational skills and to give people the confidence to be more proactive and engage more effectively in improving the quality of their local environment.

Wales

As with the rest of the UK, the main techniques used to involve the general public and community groups are open (public) meetings, closed meetings, general publicity, media, workshops, conferences, questionnaires and surveys. The advantages and disadvantages of these generic techniques are given at the end of this Appendix.

Specific examples of community engagement techniques to involve the public in planning processes that are regularly used in Wales by local authorities are described in more detail below. Far less used in Wales are telephone surveys, focus groups, stakeholder meetings and conferences/seminars.

One particularly innovative development in Wales involves inviting people in Wrexham County Borough who want to comment on planning applications or apply for planning permission to have their say at the council's planning committee before decisions on major or controversial proposals are made. This new system began in July 2003, making Wrexham one of the first councils in Wales to adopt this nationally-recognised good practice.

- **Documentary consultation:** This technique is a good way of delivering information about a specific policy or project and ensures that all the facts are laid out correctly in documentary evidence for the public to digest at their leisure. However, there are many pitfalls to this type of consultation as it sometimes does not reach those that the consultation is aimed at, is reliant on the general public having a grasp of planning language and terminology, and can sometimes be seen as exclusive to those who can read.

  There are various types of documentary consultation:
  - leaflets, on a specific aspect of a new development plan, or a break-down of a masterplan for an area;
  - statutory consultation notices, which simply inform nearby and neighbouring residents that a development proposal has been submitted to the local planning authority; and
  - site notices, which again inform nearby and neighbouring properties of the intent to develop or alter a building or buildings (this is a statutory task which the local planning authority must undertake).
- **Mail surveys:** Mail surveys are a popular way of engaging the public in Wales, but their success is somewhat limited in terms of who they can reach. Such mailings allow people to express their views on paper, but there is then the problem of bringing together everyone's views and opinions at the end of the survey.

[69] This description was found at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/scrcs_006728.hcsp#TopOfPage

[70] This description was found at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/scrcs_006712.hcsp#TopOfPage

[71] For more information on Planning for People™, see www.planning-aid-scotland.org.uk/training.php

- **Feedback forms:** These can be used so that people can express their thoughts after an event (a meeting, exhibition etc.). Feedback forms can be anonymous and so may encourage people to fill them in and express their views in a more forthright manner. However, feedback forms only engage those who are already locked into the planning process and therefore do not encourage people who are outside the system and process. Very often views expressed in feedback forms are valuable in determining new policy outcomes and measures which real people believe are important and which matter to them.
- **Public exhibitions:** Public exhibitions are a valuable way of engaging the public in the planning process and, dependent on where they are held, can engage a wider cross-section of the community than traditional methods of public consultation. Such exhibitions can take place in the local library, shopping centres, town halls or leisure centres and can be very interactive, with professionals on hand to discuss and answer questions about a specific scheme or plan.
- **Planning for Real®:** See the 'England' section of this Appendix.

Advantages and disadvantages of some widely used tools and techniques for community involvement in planning

Open (public) meetings

These are meetings that are open to the general public, which has been given notice of the time, place and subject matter of the meeting. Information and documents have been made public in advance.

Public meetings are used extensively by local planning authorities to stimulate debate, and to encourage the general public who are affected by proposals to air their views. If, for example, a large development scheme is proposed and the local planning authority has received outline plans, a public meeting or exhibition might be held to give the general public an opportunity to view the proposals and then ask the developer and planning officers from the local planning authority questions about the development. This process challenges local stakeholders, planners and professionals to respond to the issues of a particular site through intensive questioning and debate.

Advantages:

- People are given a sense that decision-makers value them sufficiently to take time to talk to them directly and respond to their questions or feedback.
- Decision-makers gain first-hand access to the public who will probably express not only their own concerns but also issues raised by service users.

Disadvantages:

- Some people are reluctant to ask questions in large-scale open meetings.
- Questions that are being asked at such a meeting might be unrelated to the topic being discussed.
- Planning and organisational effort are required.

Closed meetings

These are meeting for which participants have specifically been selected. The general public and often the news media are not allowed to attend closed sessions.

Advantages:

- Organisers have a good estimate of the number of people that will attend.
- Costs are reduced.
- The size of the workspace that is needed is known in advance.
- Leads to working with one specified group of people.

Disadvantages:

- Some groups might feel excluded because they have not been invited to such a meeting.
- Some groups'/individuals' views are not being considered/discussed.

General publicity

Examples are the development of a specific website and the publication of related documents, newsletters and e-mails. This kind of information allows the general public to comment on the documents by written response.

Advantages:

- Reach larger numbers of people more quickly than through organising face-to-face meetings.
- All people will receive the same message.
- E-communication channels can also improve response time.
- Increased flexibility.
- Allows for detailed information, such as figures, diagrams, maps etc. to be disseminated more cheaply.
- Written and/or e-communication can add credibility to the message.

Disadvantages:

- Cannot guarantee that messages will be read or understood.

- Individual questions cannot be answered as effectively.
- To make sure that nobody is excluded, the information will need to be available in different formats and languages.
- E-communication also has some problems of accessibility, such as the technology and skills available to the recipient.

Media

Media are specifically conceived and designed to reach a very large audience (typically at least as large as the whole region, or the population of a nation state). Examples are advertising and marketing, audio-visual, film, TV, radio, photography, photographic libraries, the use of press releases and newspaper supplements.

Advantages:

- Reach and engage the wider community
- Often free (for example press releases and radio coverage).
- Reach local, national and specialist audiences.
- High impact.
- Can be used to showcase case studies, third party endorsements, quotes, background, contact details, research findings etc.

Disadvantages:

- Cannot control how the story will be reported.
- Time sensitive (i.e. subject to the news agenda).
- Only appropriate for 'news' announcements.
- Inappropriate use can damage relationship with media.

Workshops

A workshop usually takes place in the shape of an educational seminar or series of meetings, emphasising interaction and exchange of information among a usually small number of participants. At a workshop, the general public and/or community groups are stimulated to participate. Examples include:

- model building/visualising (for example Planning for Real®,[72] briefing workshop);
- simulation;
- discussions (for example prioritising);
- interactive displays/maps (for example street stalls); and
- competitions/games

Advantages:

- Users are usually very motivated.
- Attendants easily take ownership of what is achieved.
- Flexibility over length and frequency of sessions.
- Can offer a series of workshops that build on one another.
- Can ask questions that are hard to ask in other ways.
- One-on-one meetings.
- No loud advertising distractions.
- Opportunity to hold out-of-house meetings.
- It is likely that all visitors are registered, which will make follow up less difficult.
- A full list of all visitors enables effective follow-ups even to people that could not be met individually.

Disadvantages:

- Users attending may have a broad range of skills (computer and language).
- May be hard to fit everything to be covered into a single workshop.
- Handling large classes for hands-on practice may be difficult.
- A lot of work to develop a good workshop.
- Depends on instructor resources (transparencies, presentation software, live online etc.).
- Ideal to include hands-on practice for online searching workshops. but may be hard for a one hour session.
- Too many/few attendees.
- Costs are generally quite high, particularly if the presenter has to travel to attend.

Conferences

These are usually large-scale events held to contact the general public and community groups. Examples include:

- **Future search** conferences are highly-structured events, usually lasting two-and-a-half days, at which a cross-section of community members or 'stakeholders' creates a shared vision for the future. They are more suited for dealing with general issues than proposals for specific sites.
- **Community planning forums** are open, multi-purpose events lasting several hours. The format combines interactive displays, an open forum, workshop groups and informal networking. The three-stage format is designed to secure information, generate ideas and create interaction between interest groups with a minimum of advance planning. Community planning forums can be organised at any time but are particularly useful at an early stage in a participation or development process
- **Presentations**, often described as *'the act of presenting something'*, are large or small

[72] Planning for Real® is a structured 'hands-on' process of community consultation and participation. A further description can be found in the 'England' section of this Appendix

events at which (often) a specialist presents information to the attendees.

Advantages:
- Reach a large proportion of the public.
- People have the opportunity to 'get to know' one another.
- Possibility to provide a large amount of information to people who are interested in the topics that are being discussed.
- A conference allows people to discover new facts and to hear new arguments that might otherwise have remained unknown.

Disadvantages:
- People might become uninterested as there is not always active involvement.
- Conferences have the tendency to be too technical, which excludes certain groups.
- A large venue is needed.
- It is hard to build consensus when either the community's views are felt to be suppressed or difficulties are found in coping with the sheer volume of diversity of views.

Questionnaires and surveys

A questionnaire is a form containing a set of questions and is submitted to people to gain information on a specific topic.

Advantages:
- The responses are gathered in a standardised way, so questionnaires are more objective.
- Generally, it is relatively quick to collect information using a questionnaire.
- Potentially, information can be collected from a large proportion of a group.
- A large sample of the given population can be contacted at relatively low cost.
- Simple to administer.
- The format is familiar to most respondents.
- Simple and quick for the respondent to complete.
- Straightforward to analyse.
- Can be used for sensitive topics which users may feel uncomfortable speaking about at an event/workshop.
- Respondents have time to think about about their answers; they are not usually required to reply immediately.

Disadvantages:
- Questionnaires are standardised, so it is not possible to explain any points in the questions that participants might misinterpret.
- Open-ended questions can generate large amounts of data that can take a long time to process and analyse.
- They can take a long time not only to design but also to apply and analyse.
- Respondents may answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete.
- People may not be willing to answer the questions. They might not wish to reveal the information or they might think that they will not benefit from responding. (People should be told why the information is being collected and how the results will be beneficial. They should be asked to reply honestly and told that if their response is negative this is just as useful as a more positive opinion. If possible, the questionnaire should be completed anonymously)
- Returns from questionnaires are usually low.
- If you forget to ask a question, you cannot usually go back to respondents, especially if they are anonymous.
- Those who have an interest in the subject may be more likely to respond, skewing the sample.
- Respondents may ignore certain questions.
- Questionnaires may appear impersonal.
- Questions may be incorrectly completed.
- Not suitable to investigate long, complex issues.
- Respondents may misunderstand questions because of poor design and ambiguous language.
- Questionnaires are unsuitable for some kinds of respondents, for example the visually impaired.
- There is a danger of questionnaire fatigue if surveys are carried out too frequently.
- They may require follow up research to investigate issues in greater depth and identify ways to solve the problems highlighted.

appendix 5 glossary

Community

The APaNGO project does not formally or narrowly define the concept of 'community', although, given that the focus of the project is on community involvement in planning, there is an assumption that community is generally geographical. The APaNGO project materials take the term 'community' to include the private and voluntary sectors, as well as the more usual residential community.

Community groups

The APaNGO project has defined 'community groups' as follows:

- On whatever scale (national, regional or local), a community group is a group of people with some shared interest.
- The diversity of the group may vary from residents concerned with the area in which they live and work, to a group with specific interests, principles and/or values (for example disability groups, youth groups, trusts, tenants groups etc.).
- The shared element can vary from an interest in a proposed local development to concerns for global climate change.
- Some of these community groups will be well-established and representative (for example non-governmental organisations).
- In other cases, community groups may be formed only to discuss one specific issue relating to the area in which the group lives.

Community planning

The generic idea of 'community planning' has come to mean anything from formal land use planning for a given community (often a local authority area) to planning much smaller areas (for example rural villages, specific neighbourhoods or housing estates); or it can mean planning by communities for their own future, in varying degrees of co-operation with local governments.

In Scotland it has a specific meaning, with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) putting together and implementing the Community Strategy, the plan for all services for the public in the locality. Given the complexity of different understandings of community planning, the term is not used in this document except in the context of planning in Scotland.

Infrastructure of support

'Infrastructure of support' is defined as the non-physical structures of organisations and services available to those communities and individuals who want to participate (for example planning aid organisations in the UK, Bral in Brussels etc.).

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

NGOs include an enormous range of organisations, from major national charities with professional staff and large budgets to small, local, informal community groups with few resources beyond the volunteers involved. These organisations play a variety of roles in planning processes, either as direct participants in discussions on specific issues (from local to national, and international, levels), or in providing support to others who wish to engage (information, training, funding etc.).

Public and stakeholders

Although not as contested as the concept of community, it is important to address the meaning of the terms 'public' and 'stakeholder'. Generally speaking, the term 'public' tends to be used for forms of participation that are designed to reach individuals in their role as citizens or residents (rather than as representing any particular interest). The term 'stakeholders' means those individuals and organisations that have a 'stake' in the issue; how the issue is defined, and therefore who is deemed to have a stake, is a key issue too often ignored.

Good stakeholder analysis would clearly define the issue and then identify and involve those sectors of society and/or organisations that are likely to be affected by, or to affect, the outcome of the decision under review. A similar process can be undertaken to develop a demographically-representative sample of the

'public' to represent public opinion (for example to use as the basis for opinion polls etc.). More often, processes may simply be publicised to reach either:

- 'a wide public' (without that being very clearly defined), or
- 'stakeholders', either defined by statute/regulation according to the specific process (usually a fairly narrow definition of relevant stakeholders) or defined as those with whom the organisation seeking involvement is most used to working.

As the APaNGO project is focused on 'community' involvement, the definitions for 'public' and 'stakeholder' are less central to the research findings, but, for ease of understanding, where the term 'public' is used in this report it refers to individual citizens, and 'stakeholders' is used to refer to those individuals or organisations representing a more general sectoral interest in the process.

Spatial planning

'Spatial planning' is concerned with formulating policies for a selected area which can then be used to co-ordinate and where necessary modify the territorial impacts of sectoral policies and actions. Spatial planning is therefore a key process in sustainable development.[73] For example, it can contribute to more stable and predictable conditions for investment and development (of land and buildings), secure community benefits from development, provide a vehicle for public participation and community involvement, and promote the prudent use of land and other natural resources.

[73] *'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'* World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*. Brundtland Report. Oxford: Oxford University Press

For more information on the APaNGO project see

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