

Evaluation of Defra's public engagement process on climate change

Final report

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1 Introduction

Climate change has become an enormously contentious and politically important issue over recent years. National UK Government policy has been developing in three major areas over that time: national legislation; a 'three way contract' between Government, business and consumers; and an environmental behaviour change strategy.

On 13 March 2007, the Government published a draft Climate Change Bill and launched a formal consultation on the Bill which ran for three months, closing on 12 June 2007. To support that consultation, Defra, on behalf of Government, was keen to explore the consumer environmental contract, and to explore some of the high level aspects of public behaviour change. An initiative was launched in March 2007 to explore these three areas through a brief programme of public engagement.

This report presents an evaluation of the public engagement programme. In particular, the evaluation focuses on the concluding Summit, which brought together participants from earlier regional workshops. The Summit was the main focus for the engagement activities and therefore potentially had the most lessons for future Defra public engagement work around climate change issues.

The report summarises the methodology of the evaluation, the purpose and objectives of the engagement programme, and feedback on the main activities within the engagement programme. It also considers the extent to which the objectives have been achieved, identifies the elements of the process that worked particularly well and less well, and identifies some lessons for future practice in the light of these findings. The final section concludes the report by identifying the particular value the process provided for public participants, stakeholders and Government policy makers.

2 The evaluation study

2.1 Introduction

Defra has undertaken many public consultations in the past, but this consultation used various methods that they had not used before, especially the deliberative work with the public at the Summit. Defra was therefore particularly interested in identifying lessons from this process to inform future consultations.

The evaluation was designed to focus on the public engagement programme, making only brief reference to the formal written consultation on the Climate Change Bill. In particular, the evaluation research focused on the deliberative public engagement elements of the programme at the Summit, but with reference to the regional workshops and work by participants between the two events. The other elements of the public consultation programme, such as the work with the media and online are covered briefly.

The evaluation does not assess the policy outputs or implications from the initiative in any detail; it focuses on the engagement processes and assesses the extent to which the activities met the objectives set. Policy issues are touched on throughout this report, but only where relevant to assessing the effectiveness of the engagement.

The evaluation was commissioned in April 2007, and was completed in June 2008. Details of the methodology are given in section 2.4 below.

2.2 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

There were no formally agreed objectives for the evaluation other than to assess the engagement programme by considering the extent to which it met its objectives and provided lessons for the future. However, initial discussions identified that Defra had some further questions that they hoped the evaluation would address, including:

- the extent to which the public engagement process could 'model' the environmental contract, to create a living version of that contract
- to understand the 'customer journey' in terms of behaviour change to tackle climate change
- whether the process provided an opportunity for democratic engagement, and
- whether the process created an event that stimulated further interest and action by participants.

Together with the formal objectives of the engagement process, these issues were used to structure the evaluation research. All these questions are tackled explicitly in section 6 of this report, as well as being addressed by the analysis throughout.

There was also interest within Defra on assessing how the public engagement process contributed to policy development, so the evaluation considered the value of the engagement programme to policy makers as well as the effectiveness and value of the process overall.

2.3 Approach to the evaluation

Evaluations of engagement can range in approach from a mechanistic 'audit' approach, focusing on quantitative assessment of achievement against formal targets or goals, to approaches that focus much more on 'learning' from the experience, focusing on qualitative description and interpretation of more 'subjective' data (e.g. from interviews, stories, observation etc) to explain why and how certain outcomes were achieved.

The audit approach can be summarised as asking questions such as:

- have we done what we said we were going to do?
- have we met our targets (e.g. numbers of participants; reaching a representative sample of the population)?

The learning approach is more likely to ask questions such as:

- were the methods and design appropriate to the objectives, and were the objectives relevant?
- what have the impacts been (e.g. on the participants, participant satisfaction, policy outcomes, decision-making processes, etc?)
- what are the lessons for the future?

The approach to this evaluation has used elements of both approaches. It focuses on a qualitative learning approach, while ensuring that the quantitative and audit elements required were also delivered (e.g. whether objectives were met). The approach therefore required the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data.

The qualitative and quantitative data has been analysed against the stated objectives of the engagement process, as well as considering issues raised in the feedback from participants and those delivering the process. This approach was designed to enable clear lessons to be distilled from the evaluation research as well as measuring the effectiveness and the overall achievements of the process.

The style Shared Practice adopts for evaluation is collaborative. However, the evaluator still has responsibility for ensuring the independence and rigour of the evaluation process, and to reporting findings openly and honestly to appropriate audiences at appropriate times.

2.4 Methodology for the evaluation

The evaluation methodology was made up of the following elements:

- **Detailed design and planning of the evaluation.** This involved work with Defra and COI to agree the detailed parameters of the evaluation and the programme of work, especially the main themes and questions for the evaluation.
- **Evaluation research.** This included the following:
 - **Observation** of the Summit event. Evaluators attended, observed and conducted informal interviews with the public at the Summit. It was not possible to attend earlier workshops as the evaluation had not been commissioned at that stage.

- **Development and use of questionnaires at the Summit.** Questionnaires were distributed to all participants at the Summit, with a response rate of 95%. Detailed analyses of all the questionnaire has been undertaken and can be found in Annex 1.
- **Interviews.** Interviews were used to complement the data gained from questionnaires, and provide deeper and richer data on some of the key issues. Interviews were carried out with:
 - **Public participants.** It was important to interview public participants to gain qualitative data which would allow the evaluation to assess their satisfaction with the quality of the process as well as the impacts the process had on them. These interviews were undertaken a couple of months after the Summit, to complement the questionnaire data that gained immediate responses and provided largely quantitative data. Interviews were carried out in July and August 2007 with 15 public participants from the Summit. The sampling for interview ensured a mix of men and women, age range, and representation from all six regional workshops.
 - **Policy-makers.** It was important to test the value of the outputs from the public engagement process with policy-makers, and how they used those outputs in coming to their conclusions. Interviews were conducted with four staff from the relevant Defra policy teams. Interviews were carried out in September and October 2007, so that policy makers had largely completed their work on the Climate Change Bill, which was formally published in October 2007.
 - **Observers and speakers.** The Summit process was attended by observers from national NGOs, and addressed by expert speakers. The observers attended the event to provide advice if needed. Interviews were carried out with representatives of three NGOs and one of the expert speakers, to gain their perspectives on the value and effectiveness of the event, and their views on any lessons emerging from the experience for future public engagement on climate change.
- **Analysis of data.** Quantitative and qualitative analysis of questionnaires and interview transcripts has been undertaken to provide statistics, overall qualitative feedback and illustrative quotes from those involved.
- **Reports.** An initial quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data was provided to Defra and the COI in June 2007, and then a fuller analysis in July 2007 which included quantitative and qualitative analysis of answers to tick box and open questions. The full final evaluation report was presented to Defra and the COI in draft form in June 2008, and finalised for publication in November 2008.

2.5 Background and context

Climate change has become a major national policy priority for the UK government in recent years. National UK Government policy has been developing in three major areas over that time:

- National legislation, primarily through the Climate Change Bill which was published for consultation in March 2007; one main focus of this Bill was to set a legally enforceable target for reductions in CO₂ emissions over a given period;

- 'The environmental contract' between Government, business and consumers to promote a sense of reciprocal action across all three sectors; and
- A citizens and public engagement programme based on in depth research on consumer behaviours and a consumer segmentation model for environmental behaviours, with tools to help reduce the carbon impact of individuals lifestyles, with the aim of encouraging actual behaviour change, beyond changing awareness and attitudes.

Specific campaigns and initiatives to take these three approaches forward were launched during 2007, including:

- The independent Climate Group's *We're In This Together* Campaign was launched on 23 April 2007 to bring businesses, Government and communities together and provide practical ideas for how individuals can reduce their CO₂ footprint. This was based on the idea of the 'environmental contract' between these three sectors, and was formally supported at the launch by the Prime Minister and Environment Secretary.
- The *Act on CO₂* campaign was launched by Defra in July 2007, to help make individuals more CO₂ literate.
- A new CO₂ calculator was launched by Defra in June 2007 to enable individuals to calculate their CO₂ footprint and provide suggestions for action needed to reduce it.
- Government grants were made available for home improvements to increase energy efficiency, and access to energy audits.
- Plans were established for greater Government energy efficiency in the buildings for which it had responsibility.

All this activity took place within a context which suggested that the basic argument that climate change was influenced by human behaviour, and that it would have major impacts in the immediate future, had not been accepted by the public. For example:

- An Ipsos Mori poll, researched in June 2007 and published in July 2007¹ showed that there was still significant public scepticism about the extent of the problem. For example, while 68% believed we are seeing climate change, only 38% thought it would have an impact and more than half (51%) thought it would have little or no effect; although 90% agreed it would have a significant impact on future generations.
- Slightly earlier research by Defra (carried out by ICM Research in March 2007²) suggested that although 94% of British people think the world's climate is changing, few knew much about what action they could take to limit climate change.
- The Ipsos Mori poll found that 70% agreed that Government should take the lead in combating climate change, even if it meant using the law to change people's behaviour, and that consumers were looking to business to take greater action on climate change.

¹ Results of Ipsos Mori poll published 4 July 2007: www.ipsos-mori.com/content/polls-07/climate-change-survey.ashx; and results summarised on www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/6263690.stm

² Announced in Defra Press Release 207/07 on 9 July 2007

- The Ipsos Mori poll found that 37% said they were doing nothing about climate change (which suggests that 63% were doing something) is closely matched by the ICM poll which found that 66% said they were personally taking action to limit climate change. The Ipsos Mori poll found that this action was primarily through recycling: 23% said they did their main effort was through recycling.

From this background, it can be seen that the public engagement programme on climate change being evaluated in this report was one element in a major set of initiatives, research (particularly into behaviour change) and legislation by Government around climate change issues - and also within the context of some scepticism from the public about how important and urgent climate change was at that time as an issue for individual action.

It should also be noted that all these initiatives, polls, planned legislation etc resulted in fairly constant media coverage on issues of climate change during the period of the public engagement process. However, the media coverage tended to be constant rather than particularly high profile or contentious. It may be fairly safe to assume, therefore, that although media coverage may have influenced the broad level of awareness of public participants of the general issue of climate change (and that it was topical), it is unlikely that public participants will have been particularly strongly influenced by any extremes of views from those sources. Where media coverage has been an element of the feedback from participants, this has been noted in the analysis below.

3 Aims, objectives and summary of activities

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a brief overview of the aims and objectives of Defra's public engagement programme on climate change, and an overall picture of the activities that took place. Subsequent sections analyse the public engagement activities in more detail.

3.2 Aims and objectives of the engagement process

The engagement was a key element in Defra's overall programme of work on climate change. It was intended to feed into the future development of the work on behaviour change, and to contribute to understanding of ways forward on all elements of Government work on climate change.

The formal objectives of the public engagement programme were as follows:

As part of the draft Climate Change Bill consultation process, to:

- help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change
- to drive awareness, information and debate on climate change.

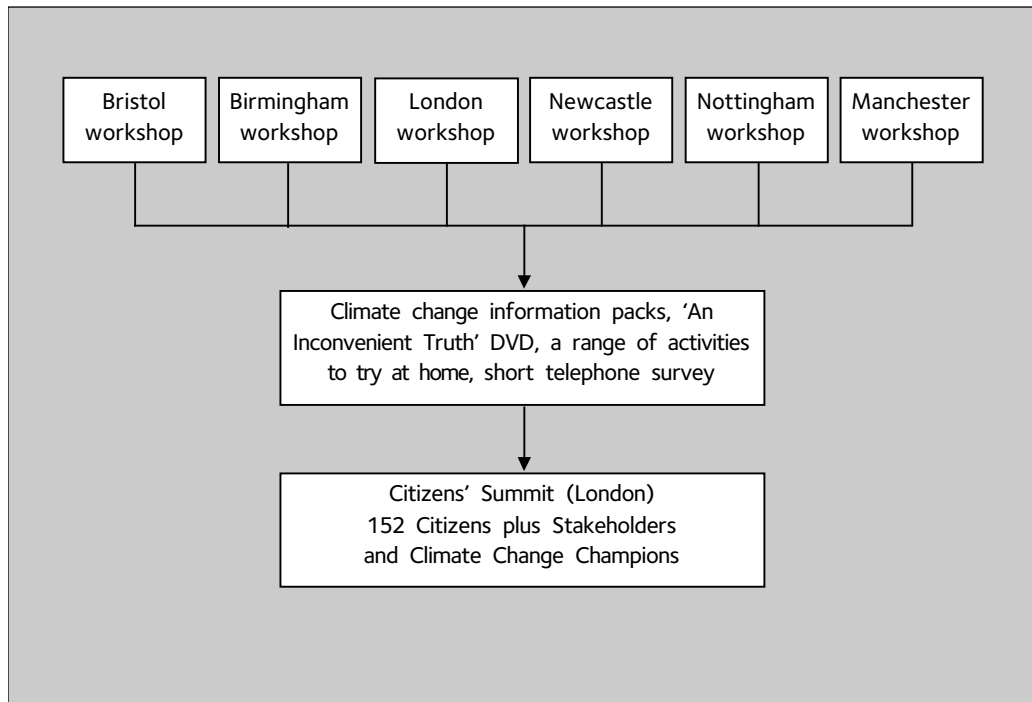
In early discussions on the evaluation research, underlying assumptions about the engagement programme were tested by evaluators, and it emerged that there were also several other implicit objectives, including consideration of:

- the extent to which the public engagement process could 'model' the environmental contract, to create a living version of that contract
- to understand the 'customer journey' in terms of behaviour change to tackle climate change
- to provide an opportunity for democratic engagement, and
- to create an event that stimulated further interest and action by participants.

It would not be appropriate to use these implicit objectives to formally assess the engagement programme, as they had not been articulated at the stage of designing and delivering the programme. However, as with many evaluations, the implicit objectives are often the crucial factor for the commissioning body (in this case, Defra) in considering whether the process had been successful. For that reason, a brief assessment of the process against these implicit objectives is undertaken in section 6.

3.3 The main activities of the public engagement programme

The engagement process overall was, in summary, as follows:



The public engagement programme comprised:

- Six regional workshops held during in late March and early April 2007. The workshops were designed to reach 28 - 29 people each from a range of urban and rural locations: a maximum total of 174 participants. Participants were recruited to provide a demographically representative sample of the region in terms of age, gender, black and minority ethnic and socio-economic status, and a range of consumer typologies based on attitudes and behaviour on climate change. The workshops were held in Bristol, Birmingham, London, Newcastle, Nottingham and Manchester. Each workshop ran for three hours in the evening (6.30pm to 9.30pm).
- Circulation of two climate change information packs to all public participants providing facts and figures on climate change and its implications, the Al Gore DVD 'An Inconvenient Truth', and a range of activities to think about and try before the Summit. A feedback form was also circulated, for participants to complete before the Summit and bring with them. A short telephone survey was also undertaken of all participants before the Summit.
- A reconvened event (the Citizens' Summit) to which all participants in the regional workshops were invited; 152 public participants attended. The Summit was also attended by:
 - Five expert speakers, from Government, business, trade unions, consumer body and academia:
 - The Secretary of State for the Environment, David Miliband, who spoke about the draft Climate Change Bill
 - Richard Lambert, Director General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), talking about what UK business is doing about climate change
 - Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), talking about what the UK workforce is doing about climate change
 - Professor Tim Jackson, talking about the role of the individual in addressing CO₂ emissions

- Ed Mayo from the National Consumer Council (NCC), talking about how Government, business, the workforce and consumers can work together to tackle climate change
- 49 observers from government, NGOs, the young Climate Champions team and evaluators.
- A report of the regional workshops was produced when that series of meetings was completed, identifying the key issues to consider in the detailed planning of the Citizens' Summit, and reporting back on attitudes and views expressed during the workshops.
- An 'end of day' report was produced immediately after the Citizens' Summit summarising the process and the findings from all the public discussions throughout the programme. This was circulated to all public participants by email the evening of the event, and posted to others a few days later.
- During the day, participants were encouraged to stay in touch with Defra, if they wished. If they did sign up for this, they were offered access to resources, support and ideas through a virtual network after the event.
- A final report, providing detailed analysis of the findings from all the public engagement activities, was produced by Opinion Leader in June 2007.

In addition, the programme was supported by online and media activity during and after the Citizens Summit, and press coverage of the event. These involved:

- **Online activity.** As part of the Citizens' Summit activities, an online blog ran live from the event on a MySpace page including 11 videos and 60 pictures including interviews with David Miliband and participants. This resulted in 626 blog views and 36 friends on MySpace. Defra planned further work to follow up on this online social networking approach, potentially linking to the CO₂ footprint calculator.
- **Media coverage.** A special arrangement was established with Sky as the sole media partner for the Summit, although Sky were unable to cover the whole event. However, BBC News 24 covered the Secretary of State's presentation for broadcast on all the major news channels. ITV and Channel 4 also sent crews later in the day and recorded interviews with the Secretary of State. Radio 5 Live also attended. Sky and DfES TV spoke to Climate Change Champions as well as the Secretary of State. Regional broadcast media was entirely radio-based, with coverage on BBC West Midlands, BBC Radio Bristol, BBC Radio Derby, BBC Radio Newcastle and BBC Radio Nottingham.

In terms of national print media coverage, the Summit was covered in the Financial Times. The event was also covered on BBC News Online, 24dash.com, icWales and AOL News. There was also significant regional press coverage, including the London Evening Standard plus seven other London area papers, plus six papers in the Birmingham area, two in the Bristol and Bath area, three in the Derby area, six in Manchester, four in Newcastle and three in Nottingham.

The feedback from Defra media staff was that significant effort had been made to gain media coverage and, although the coverage was not extensive in the national print media, there was positive coverage online, and good coverage in the national broadcast media. These supplementary media and online activities have been separately reported internally to Defra, but the findings have not been published and they are not covered in this evaluation.

4 The public engagement process

4.1 The purpose of the public engagement

The public engagement programme was designed, as part of the draft Climate Change Bill consultation process, to:

- help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change
- to drive awareness, information and debate on climate change.

This section summarises the activities within the two main strands of the public engagement programme: the regional workshops and the reconvened national Citizens' Summit in London. It describes the main processes and how they worked at the workshops and at the Summit and assesses the effectiveness and value of the process, and what worked best and least well

4.2 The public engagement process

- **Overall scale.** The process overall comprised **six regional workshops** for the general public, held during in late March and early April 2007. The workshops were designed to reach 28 - 29 people each from a range of urban and rural locations: a maximum total of 174 participants. Each workshop ran for three hours in the evening (6.30pm to 9.30pm).

The participants of the workshops were then brought back together for a reconvened **Citizens Summit**, held on 12 May 2007, in London. The Summit was attended by 152 participants (all participants at the regional workshops were invited). The Summit was also attended by 49 observers:

- 17 observers from organisations working with Defra on climate change issues: primarily NGOs and other independent organisations (e.g. the Sustainable Development Commission and WRAP), and 8 from the team of Defra young Climate Change Champions (aged 11 - 18, who won a competition by Defra to find people who could spread the work about climate change locally). These observers were able to see the main plenary events of the Summit, and have their own discussions at separate tables on the same questions debated by the public, but they did not take part in any of the detailed discussions by the public participants.
- 32 further observers attended during the course of the event, from Defra (26), other Government departments (4), and the evaluators (2). These observers did not take part in any of the discussions by the public participants.
- **Location.** The workshops were held in Bristol, Birmingham, London, Newcastle, Nottingham and Manchester. The Summit was held in London.
- **Recruitment.** The participants were recruited by Opinion Leaders' network of professional recruiters using a recruitment questionnaire to provide a mix of age groups, gender, black and ethnic minority and socio-economic groups to reflect the general population profile from urban and rural areas in each region where workshops were held.

In order to get a range of opinions on climate change, minimum recruitment quotas were also set using consumer typologies based on climate change attitudes and behaviour, using Defra's segmentation model.

The target was to recruit at least two people from each of Defra's segments for each workshop; these segments were defined as: greens, consumers with a conscience, wastage focused, currently constrained, basic contributors, long term restricted and disinterested. These segments were based on an interim segmentation exercise based on qualitative research that has since been refined by Defra.

There were also recruitment questions to assess the extent to which potential participants felt environmental issues were important, or not. Again, at least two from each of the six categories on environmental interest were recruited for each workshop.

The aim in recruitment was to provide a diversity of views rather than a rigorously representative demographic sample of the UK or regional population. This diversity was achieved overall.

- **Incentives.** Participants at the workshops received an incentive payment of £35, and those at the Citizens' Summit received an additional £90 (London-based participants) or £140 (those based outside London to reflect travel time and need for overnight stay). This is normal practice in deliberative research, and helps ensure that those who cannot afford to attend because of the costs of travelling, child care etc can be encouraged to take part, thus ensuring a greater diversity of views at the event.

Travel was organised and provided to and from the Summit for all those outside London, and all those participants were also accommodated for the night before the Summit in hotels in London. Travel expenses were paid for those from the London area.

- **The regional workshop process.** The workshops were held in order to understand participants' level of awareness around climate change, where they got their information from and what actions they were currently undertaking to reduce their carbon footprint. They were also designed to enable participants to 'dump' current frustrations, misconceptions and cynicism prior to engaging constructively with the topic in more depth at the Summit. In addition, the workshops provided an opportunity to give participants some initial information about climate change, so that they could contribute at the Summit in a more informed way.

Each workshop ran for about three hours, in the evening (6.30 to 9.30pm). The steps in the process were:

- Introduction to the process, focusing on the Citizens' Summit, and table introductions.
- In small groups at tables, an exploratory discussion about how much of an issue people felt that climate change is, and what they know about it, where they got information from, and what they thought of the arguments around climate change. Participants then noted down key points on awareness of climate change and how big an issue it is (30 minutes)
- Plenary session feeding back on results from initial discussions (15 minutes)

- In small groups, discussion of awareness of current initiatives by Government and business on climate change, with prompts available for use by facilitators if needed, discussion about whose responsibility it is to tackle climate change, and who should and was taking a lead (20 minutes)
- Still in small groups, discussion about how much responsibility the individual has to tackle climate change, and what kinds of actions individuals could take and what they may do (20 minutes)
- Plenary session to feedback results on what actions were needed, and who should take them, with a straw poll on who people felt was taking the most action at present. (15 minutes)
- In small groups, discussions about home energy (20 minutes), tourism and holidays (10 minutes), food buying (10 minutes) and personal transport (10 minutes), considering what the impacts were and what could mitigate negative impacts.
- Final plenary to explain briefing materials and what would happen next. Thanks and close (15 minutes).
- **Interim information packs.** There were two **information packs** circulated between the workshop events and the Citizens Summit. These were designed to provide background information from a wide range of views to maintain neutrality. The aim was to help ensure that discussions at the Summit would be as well-informed as possible. The materials in the first information pack circulated comprised the following:
 - An introduction to the causes and effects of climate change, including facts and figures
 - An introduction to the four themes to be covered in the Summit: home energy, travel, tourism and food (linked to waste), with tips for reducing carbon footprints including some existing initiatives throughout the UK.
 - A feedback form for participants to record any activities they were currently doing, had tried after the workshop, and were still doing, plus some activities to investigate to make bigger changes over time. There were also questions about what they tried, how easy or difficult those activities were, and what they might do in future. Participants were asked to complete and bring the form with them to the Summit.

The second information pack contained the following:

- Information on how Government could make change happen to tackle climate change, and what business is currently doing. Both with links to websites for more information.
- Links to websites run by a range of organisations (BBC, Friends of the Earth, Climate Group, You Tube and MySpace and blogs) with other information on climate change
- A briefing note on the draft Climate Change Bill
- The Al Gore DVD 'An Inconvenient Truth'.

Shortly before the Summit took place, Opinion Leader undertook a short telephone survey to test opinions at that stage.

- The **Citizens Summit** process was designed to address the harder to adopt but higher impact behaviours, which were felt likely to require more reciprocation from Government and business to support and encourage positive change. The Summit ran for a whole day, from 9.15am (for registration; start at 10am) to 4.45pm. It built on the process and outputs from the regional workshops, and the same participants were invited.

The steps in the Summit process were:

- Registration. Name badges had a table number on them so participants knew which table to join. Participants sat in tables of 10, each with a facilitator. Each group was mixed in terms of age, gender and backgrounds, to ensure that they could all be exposed to a diverse range of views, behaviours and experiences.
- Welcome from Yasmin Diamond, Director of Communications at Defra. Then an introduction from the lead facilitator from Opinion Leader explained the aims of the day: the 'big question' about how people will work together to reach the Government targets for reducing CO₂ emissions by 60% by 2050. And a summary of the agenda, ground rules etc. (15 minutes)
- Electronic keypad training through practice on some questions about personal travel to the meeting and knowledge and attitudes on climate change. The results were displayed, including a comparison with the summary findings from the workshops, which were presented. (15 minutes)
- In small groups at tables, warm up discussion with round table introductions, feedback on the information packs circulated and how those may have changed views. (20 minutes)
- Plenary. David Miliband, Secretary of State for the Environment, on the launch of the Climate Change Bill. Including explaining how the 'environmental contract' between Government, business, the workforce and citizens was to work. (20 minutes)
- In small groups, participants discussed reactions to the proposed Government actions, and particularly whether the nation should have clear targets for reducing emissions. Participants were also asked to think about questions they may want to put to an expert panel that would be on the platform soon afterwards. (15 minutes)
- In plenary, the lead facilitator explained the environmental contract (5 minutes), followed by presentations by:
 - Richard Lambert, Director General, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) on what business is doing to tackle climate change (5 minutes)
 - Brendan Barber, General Secretary, Trade Union Congress (TUC) on what the UK workforce is doing (5 minutes)
 - Ed Mayo, Chief Executive, National Consumer Council (NCC) on the contract and the role of consumers (5 minutes)
- In small groups, public participants then discussed their reactions to the actions identified for Government, business, the workforce and communities, and the extent to which they felt these activities were taking climate change seriously, whether they were doing enough, whether they were doing enough to work together, and what else needed to be done. They were also asked what further questions this raised for them, and each

table was asked to identify one question to be submitted that the whole Summit could vote on. Questions were reviewed and synthesised by the organisers as the debate continued. (35 minutes)

- Plenary session to agree and prioritise (by keypad voting) questions for the expert speaker panel, based on the questions submitted during the previous session. (5 minutes)
- Speaker panel session, chaired by lead facilitator, with all four speakers. Questions were put to the panel, starting with the most popular question (from previous voting session) and then continuing until time ran out. (30 minutes)
- In small groups, participants discussed their reactions to what they had heard from the panel, what stood out, what they then thought about the environmental contract and what needed to happen next to ensure everyone works together. (20 minutes)
- Lunch (1.15pm to 2pm), during which time participants could leave messages on a 'burning issues' board, from which key issues could be picked up later.
- Plenary session, with polling on the behaviours that had been tried by participants after the workshops, based on the top ten behaviours people tried, identified through the telephone survey prior to the Summit. (10 minutes)
- In small groups, discussion on which of the behaviours were easy, difficult and what the barriers were. (20 minutes).
- Plenary session with presentation by Professor Tim Jackson, University of Surrey, on the role of individual consumer behaviour change in reducing CO₂ emissions (10 minutes).
- In small groups, discussion of the willingness and ability of the public generally (rather than participants themselves) to change behaviours in the four theme areas, what the benefits would be of changing behaviour, what the barriers were and what was needed to help increase the likelihood of change. (30 minutes)
- In plenary, the lead facilitator explained that each table would have the opportunity to make a one-minute presentation directly to the room (and the Secretary of State) on how lasting change could be achieved for a specific hard to achieve behaviour change, focusing on what the Government, business and the workforce could do to encourage and enable individuals to change their behaviour. A series of envelopes each contained a specific challenge, and each table chose an envelope, so they did not know what issue they would be working on until they opened the envelope. Three tables worked on each challenge. Printed sheets provided further briefing for this task. (5 minutes). The six tasks were:
 - Changing to low energy light bulbs as existing ones go
 - Repair things rather than throw them away
 - Don't use the car for journeys of one mile or less
 - Use water more responsibly
 - Holiday in the UK
 - Avoid throwing away uneaten food - try and make the best of all you buy.

- In small groups, in depth discussion of the specific behaviour change they had been given, allowing 15 minutes for discussion and 20 minutes to prepare their presentations / pitches. They were encouraged by table facilitators to consider broad barriers and thus what may be the broad triggers to encourage people to change behaviour. Groups were asked to consider what actions were required, and who would deliver them. Table groups also had to identify one (or more) of their number to make the presentation. (35 minutes)
- Plenary. Each table group presented their ideas to the Secretary of State and the whole meeting, for one minute. A 'Countdown clock' was used to time the presentations. The Secretary of State then responded and commented on the ideas once all the presentations had been made. (30 minutes)
- Thanks and final reflections from the Secretary of State (10 minutes), final polling questions (repeating questions from earlier to be able to compare changes in views), time for participants to complete the evaluation questionnaire, permission to re-contact people for future communications and potential surveys, thanks and close. (25 minutes)
- **Materials to aid discussion.** A series of handouts was provided throughout the process, to introduce information to aid each activity, and two information packs were circulated between the workshops and the Summit. These materials were drafted jointly by Opinion Leader and Defra, and were designed to present a range of views to maintain neutrality on the issues.
- **Recording and reporting.** During the Summit event, the plenary voting sessions were recorded, and results presented back to the group immediately. The voting sessions at the beginning and end were shown with the differences highlighted. These voting figures were recorded.

At the Summit and the regional workshops, each table facilitator recorded comments made by public participants on laptops at the same time as they were facilitating the discussion. Some facilitators checked back with participants that they were recording appropriate key points but not all did this and simply took notes as the discussion continued. This was the main form of reporting of detailed table discussions. Points presented back to plenary from the table groups at various points were recorded by other note takers that were recording the plenary sessions. The notes on laptops were available for policy maker observers to view throughout the session, and were being collated as the meeting progressed.

Opinion Leader presented the main findings from the engagement programme in their final report to Defra in June 2007. The full report was then published on the Defra website, and was placed formally into the consultation process on the Climate Change Bill.

Opinion Leaders' results showed that, prior to the engagement programme, the vast majority of the public participants were aware of the issue of climate change, but they were much less aware of how it works and what contributes to it. There was also considerable cynicism at the initial workshops when participants were asked to change their behaviour, with calls for:

- Clear information about climate change and how various activities can contribute to helping reduce the problems;

- More decisive and directed action from the Government (which would in turn help to communicate that the problem is serious and needs action);
- Changes to the infrastructure in order to enable people to change their current behaviour (e.g. improved transport infrastructure, consistency in recycling processes across local authorities).

The experience of taking part in the regional workshops, and the information in the climate change information packs circulated between the workshops and Summit, appeared to have a major impact on the majority of participants. Polling at the beginning of the Summit showed that a significantly greater number of people agreed that action needed to be taken urgently (up 14% to 79%) than had agreed before the regional workshops. There was also an increase in the number of participants who felt that climate change was a serious issue for citizens in the UK (up 8% to 73%).

Participants reported to Opinion Leader that one of the key reasons for their changes in attitudes was the information presented in the Al Gore DVD. They felt the DVD provided a good mix of both emotional (the plight of polar bears) and rational appeal, a high level of factual detail, and that Al Gore was a credible presenter. Generally participants felt at this stage that emotional appeal was essential in communicating the need to act on climate change.

According to Opinion Leaders' final report, participants' reactions to the legally enforceable targets in the draft Climate Change Bill were generally very positive. The summary of participants' recommendations on what was needed to enhance the Bill's chance of acceptance and success from the public's point of view, in order that trust, involvement and a sense of urgency could be created, was the following:

- As well as a long term target, there was a need for very specific short term targets to ensure the momentum is maintained
- The plan would need to be established as a 'non-political' goal, such that all parties were in agreement that it is a priority
- The Government needed to set out and effectively publicise a detailed programme of implementation and actions at each stage for all parties involved, including
 - Government activity e.g. investment plans for new technologies such as cleaner energy for the future;
 - What real changes are required by businesses to reduce emissions;
 - What incentives and enablers will be put in place to help the public change their current habits.

Real change by business was seen as central to this, and participants agreed that this would be best achieved by a mixture of positive incentives (e.g. tax breaks for greener technology) and Government legislation. In addition, there was a call for greater clarity on how legally binding targets would work: how would penalties work and would they potentially penalise members of the public? Finally, there were continued calls for clear, personally relevant and actionable advice from the Government as to how the public could make changes.

In terms of the three way 'environmental contract', Opinion Leader summarised the public views as generally positive on the idea, and that the idea of working together put forward by the Secretary of State resonated with participants.

It was also reported that a feeling developed among many that such a contract could contribute to a sense of national pride, perhaps creating a positive cultural shift in society. Some felt it would help to establish the UK as a world leader in tackling climate change, a point made earlier on in the day. Participants recognised that this approach would be much more effective than working in isolated groups.

However, Opinion Leader also reported that the public did raise a number of questions and concerns, particularly around the need for greater clarity and for more concrete proposals, and to ensure that the social and economic impacts of such action did not leave Government, business or individuals at a disadvantage and that the 'load' was distributed evenly (i.e. no one group should be expected to make disproportionate effort).

In terms of changes to personal behaviour, all participants reported to Opinion Leader that they had tried at least one activity to help tackle climate change between the workshops and the Summit. The most common activities were recycling, turning off the TV instead of leaving it on standby, and not using the car for journeys of less than one mile. In terms of the high impact behaviours, Opinion Leader reported that the greatest opportunities appeared to lie in encouraging less waste of food, energy efficient light bulbs (and possibly other energy efficient appliances), and more responsible use of water. Participants noted that there is an explicit link in all these three behaviours to saving money.

In terms of ways forward, from the presentations to the Secretary of State, Opinion Leader reported that the strongest and most common themes were:

- The creation of high profile public information campaigns with simple and hard-hitting messages
- Introduce financial policies and business incentives to edit choice in a positive and constructive way
- Ensure that public buildings and spaces lead the way in going green.

In terms of awareness and understanding of the issues, through polling at the end of the Summit, Opinion Leader's report showed the following:

- The number who agreed that they were "well informed about climate change" rose from 29% before the regional workshops, to 65% after the Summit: nearly two out of three participants felt they were well-informed by that stage.
- 82% agreed that action needed to be taken urgently at the end of the Summit, compared to 65% prior to the regional workshops
- 83% agreed that the responsibility for tackling climate change belonged to 'all of us', compared to 56% before the workshops.
- **Follow up to participants.** A short 'end of day' report was produced and emailed that evening (or posted a few days later to participants who had not provided email details). This report summarised what happened in the process (including the regional workshops), and the main findings from the Summit including the shifts in attitudes from before the initial workshops to the end of the Summit. It also summarised the main ideas from the 'one minute presentations' for ensuring behaviour change in the six key areas.

Participants at the Summit were invited to sign up if they wanted to be actively involved after the event, and a number of participants did so. Defra was in contact with these participants periodically after the Summit. More formally, rather than create a separate panel of these participants, in mid-2008 Defra invited them to join the Energy Savings Trust Green Ambassadors programme.

In addition, participants were invited to contribute questions to an 'Ask David' [Miliband] board, and answers were sent after the event (one evaluation interviewee reported they had done this and had received a reply).

A short follow-up survey was then undertaken by Opinion Leader for Defra six months after the Summit, in November 2007. The survey was undertaken through telephone interviews with 80 participants and was designed both to provide an update to Defra on continuing (or not) attitude and behaviour change, and also to re-engage participants. This research asked some of the same questions as those asked at the Summit (to test changes in attitudes and behaviour since), and some new questions to explore new issues. The findings included:

- The Citizens' Summit itself was by far the biggest influence on respondents' attitudes and behaviour, with 56% saying it had influenced them 'a lot', plus another 39% who said it had influenced them 'a little' - a total of 95% of respondents. The media was the next biggest influence, with a total of 77% being influenced (although only 25% said media had influenced them 'a lot'); followed by family (62% in total) and friends (46%).
- 85% said their behaviour had changed in terms of thinking about their CO₂ emissions since the Summit: 41% said their behaviour had changed 'a lot' and another 44% said 'a little'.
- 86% said they now thought climate change was a serious issue for citizens, compared to 65% at the pre-Summit workshops
- There was much less demand for information about how to be more environmentally friendly. At the pre-Summit workshops, 81% said they needed more information; six months on only 53% said they needed information.

These findings support and supplement both the findings from the public engagement programme, and from this evaluation report: the Summit was very influential in affecting participants' attitudes and behaviour, encouraging and enabling them to be more active in tackling climate change.

This mix of immediate feedback and follow-up contact, and research, are good ways of reinforcing the benefits of involvement for participants. In an ideal world, participants would also have been provided with a summary of how their input had influenced Government thinking and policy making but, in this case, the policy impacts were too broad and long term for such a report back to be feasible.

5 The effectiveness and value of the public engagement

The assessment that follows is based on observation of the Summit, analysis of questionnaires that were circulated to all participants at the Summit (a 95% return rate provides a very good basis for analysis), and interviews with a sample of public participants, policy makers, one of the speakers and several observers (see section 2.4 for details). A full analysis of the findings from the questionnaires is given in Annex 1, and a summary is given below.

5.1 General feedback

The questionnaire analysis shows remarkably positive feedback from participants, who clearly enjoyed and valued the experience, and were more likely to get involved in future such events as a result, which shows a very positive attitude to their involvement here. They clearly learnt a lot and the experience helped clarify their thinking. They could understand and use the information provided and found it fair and balanced. All these issues are explained in more detail below.

Overall:

- **99% of questionnaire respondents were satisfied** with the Summit overall; of these, **68% were very satisfied**. No-one was dissatisfied. **96% were satisfied with the way the event was run on the day**; 70% were very satisfied with that (and one person was not very satisfied).
- **96% agreed that they enjoyed** taking part (of these, 56% strongly agreed).
- **96% said that the Summit had delivered what they hoped or expected**; 23% said it had delivered completely and 60% mostly. Only 2 people (1%) said it had not really delivered. Just over half (55%) said what they had hoped for was information, knowledge and awareness raising generally, or specifically on climate change and global warming, and it seems that almost no-one was disappointed.

This is extremely positive feedback. It is not entirely unexpected in this sort of event, as public participants do generally value the opportunity to take part in these discussions very highly. However, this is particularly positive feedback and does reflect that participants were very satisfied with the process.

From observation, the positive findings above reflect the enthusiasm and energy that participants invested in the Summit. There was no sense that they were going through the motions for their incentive fee. There was a high quality of discussion, questioning and engagement with the issues as participants worked hard to understand and discuss the issues, and to come to the views that they felt comfortable expressing.

Feedback from public participant interviews was equally positive, with very positive feedback on the value interviewees gained from the process. The main comments from participant interviewees were that the main things they got out of being involved were:

- 9 (60%) interviewees mentioned the main thing they got was knowledge and awareness of the issues and about public engagement; 2 specifically mentioned that they had learned much more about the importance of climate change

- 4 interviewees (27%) said the greatest value was hearing the range of views and ideas at the Summit
- 3 interviewees (20%) specifically said the main thing for them was no longer feeling they were the only one thinking about and doing something on these issues. One comment was:

"A feeling that I wasn't the only one. A bit overwhelmed by the size of the problem, but determined to do what I can" (participant interviewee)

Although only a relatively small proportion, it seems significant that some of these participants (and actually 20% of the interviewees) had previously been concerned and active to some extent but felt they were on their own. This may suggest there are real opportunities to build on people's existing concern and action by helping them link into wider networks.

Other interviewees mentioned that it helped them want to do more and be more involved, and 2 specifically said the main thing they got was realising that the Government was serious about these issues. For example:

"To realise that the Government were serious about doing something. It is a good start and they should carry on. Some of the ideas people came up with were interesting – it was good to see." (participant interviewee)

Feedback from observers and policy makers was also largely positive. Comments included:

"I was impressed with the creativity of the process. You do have to go through well-rehearsed positions, you then get on to engaging people around actions. I thought there was a creative discussion of issues like taking holidays at home not abroad: people were prepared to engage in considering options for Government to incentivise holidays at home." (observer interviewee)

"Everyone at the event was engaged, whether negatively or positively. Everyone was pleased to have been invited ... Engagement was maintained throughout the day; there were no lulls and no-one left during the day to do their shopping, so it must have captured their interest." (observer interviewee)

[Motivation, interest and commitment of the public participants] "was very high, both among the champions and other participants." (observer interviewee)

"Everybody engaged. Everybody had the opportunity to input. The balance between being talked to and being able to input was fine. There was also a bit of fun. It generated a positive feeling." (observer interviewee)

"Almost universally people wanted to be there and were engaged." (policy maker interviewee)

5.2 The design and delivery of the process

Feedback from the questionnaires completed at the events and from interviews on specific aspects of the design and delivery of the process overall are given below.

Having a say

- **91% of questionnaire respondents agreed that they had been able to discuss the issues that concerned them;** of these, 31% strongly agreed.
- **92% agreed that no single view was allowed to dominate unfairly;** of these, 54% agreed strongly.
- **98% agreed that all participants were treated equally and respectfully;** of these 54% agreed strongly.

This suggests a process that ensured that participants were comfortable expressing their views, and that the facilitation ensured that strong and articulate characters were not allowed to dominate the discussions at the expense of those who were quieter and less confident.

In addition, all 15 interviewees agreed that everyone had an equal chance to speak and that they were able to have their say at the workshop (although one said 'not entirely'). Comments included:

"Everyone was given a fair chance and we were encouraged to speak."
(participant interviewee)

"The facilitators kept it on track and made sure no one person took over."
(participant interviewee)

"The groups were an ideal number. Everyone was given the chance to speak and it was well organised." (participant interviewee)

"Everyone had an equal chance, but not everybody took it. Some of them didn't join in at all in the group we were in. I thought the group leaders could have done a bit more." (participant interviewee)

"In every group you get people who talk more than others. The person in charge of each group made sure that everyone got a chance to speak."
(participant interviewee)

"Some people I agreed with, others I didn't, but I had the chance to disagree and talk where I wanted to." (participant interviewee)

From observation, everyone at the Summit did seem easily able to take part and facilitators stimulated, encouraged and controlled the discussion very well. The observers and policy makers agreed that the discussions had worked well, and that participants seemed fully engaged and enthusiastic about the issue.

Diversity and scale

- **94% of questionnaire respondents agreed that there had been a good mix of people at the Summit;** of these, 56% agreed strongly. 14 out of 15 interviewees also agreed there had been a good mix (93%); just 1 felt the mix was not entirely right. Comments on the mix of people included:

"You had everyone's opinion and it gave perspective on different areas. Also, there were people of all levels professionally." (participant interviewee)

"I reckon it was a good mix at the Bristol one and at my table in London. Having said that, I wouldn't say it was a good cross section of the UK population – there was a good age mix but everyone was fairly middle class." (participant interviewee)

"There were different age groups, a good mix of male and female and, especially in London, a good mix from different parts of the country. There was a good ethnic mix as well; it was well covered." (participant interviewee)

"It was a good number. I think that the organisers may have anticipated there would be more, but the numbers worked well. There was a good cross-section of people." (observer interviewee)

The recruitment was rigorous in terms of demographic representation, according to an agreed sample specification. The evaluation questionnaire circulated at the Summit asked some basic demographic questions and showed that there was a good diverse mix of participants in terms of age, gender and representation of black and minority ethnic groups. There were roughly equal numbers of men and women (slightly more women, as the specification proposed), and almost exactly as the specification in terms of black and minority ethnic representation (17% participants compared to the target of 18%). There was also a good spread of ages although perhaps slightly fewer under 29 year olds than had been targeted. Generally, this shows participants represented a very appropriate demographic spread.

The evaluation questionnaire did not ask about socio-economic group or knowledge and interest in the issues, which did form part of the recruitment. However, it is likely in any of these sorts of events that the people who agree to attend have the confidence to take part, and feel they have something to say. Financial incentives alone are unlikely to get over those types of barriers.

It is also worth noting that the scale of the Summit was important for some respondents. One public participant mentioned that they saw what they defined as 'large scale' indicated the importance the Government attached to the issue and to getting the public's views on it. That comment was:

"... for the event to be so big and have so much money spent on it, it must be important." (participant interviewee)

Feedback from observers and policy makers about the scale was rather more mixed. Some agreed that the diversity and scale of the event worked well, but some felt that the event was not large enough to provide a robust sample for research purposes, and others that it was not large enough to be able to argue that a large group had been involved. Comments included:

"We saw this as a way to engage with large numbers of people. There was a good mix of people with a range of perspectives and ages. The layout of the tables and the way people with different perspectives were mixed ... all helped the event work well." (policy maker interviewee)

"150 is not a big enough sample for an engagement process, you would need 1500 – 2000 people to get a broad sample ... 150 people is insufficient, especially if you are looking at behaviours. It would be necessary to have more quantitative data to support policy development in this field. I would expect the design to be demographically representative." (policy maker interviewee)

"It can't [contribute to greater awareness, information and debate on climate change], there were only 150 people there." (observer interviewee)

"500 people would have been a better number for the purposes of saying 'we have engaged with the public'. [We have] been asked by the media how many people took part. 1000 people would have more weight. It served our purposes, it worked, but numbers are worth a lot." (policy maker interviewee)

"If you put a lot of money into a day, it becomes an event, therefore the programming becomes more about managing the event than gathering robust evidence." (policy maker interviewee)

This feedback suggests that there are occasions when the scale of an event can make a difference to the value of the exercise in the perceptions of public participants, but also to the opportunities for the event to deliver effective value to policy makers.

There was some feedback that mixing the tables so there was a demographic mix of people at each, as is normal for this sort of deliberative debate and is valued by participants, may have reduced the value for research purposes (although the difficulties of this segmented approach were also recognised). Comments were:

"There were enough people. There was an attempt to recruit according to agreed segments and this was probably achieved, but by mixing up the tables it was not possible to provide a segmented analysis. This is not Opinion Leader's fault and they have provided segmented analysis on other occasions." (policy maker interviewee)

"It might have been better to organise the tables by segmented groups. The groups were mixed and this is likely to have hampered discussion because people will want to 'stay within the norm'. It is also more difficult to write up a segmented discussion." (policy maker interviewee)

However, while this may have achieved the research objectives of some policy makers, it would not have achieved other objectives of deliberative research such as enabling participants to learn from others from different backgrounds and with different opinions, and thus develop and refine their own views. Generally, deliberative research is based on the view that mixed groups enhance rather than hamper discussion because participants do move outside their own norms and consider other values and opinions, and this approach may also enable participants to move beyond individualistic / consumerist views to shared / citizen views.

Enough time

- **83% of questionnaire respondents felt there was enough time** to fully discuss the issues properly (of these, 22% strongly agreed). In addition, 13 out of 15 interviewees felt there was (or probably was) enough time to cover all the main issues although 3 also felt the Summit was a bit rushed. Comments included:

"You would get into deep conversation and then be moved on, which was a shame, but there was a lot to get through. But in general yes [enough time]." (participant interviewee)

"You can go on for a lot longer as it is not a small subject. It could have gone on for a bit more, but overall I think it was a good amount of time, as people weren't tired by the end." (participant interviewee)

From observation, and feedback from observers and policy makers, the balance may not have been quite right between presentations (input of information) and deliberation (detailed discussions in small groups). The morning session focused on presentations by speakers and then a question and answer session with the speakers, leaving little time for in depth discussions among participants. One observer commented:

"In terms of the content of the day, there could have been more deliberation and discussion. There was quite a lot of exposure to plenary. But you do have to bring people up to speed." (observer interviewee)

As a result, the mood observed in the morning was quite subdued. This shifted in the afternoon, with more opportunity for discussions among public participants. The introduction of the 'one minute presentation' session generated a lot more excitement and enthusiasm than had been apparent up to that point.

Process design and management

Although there was no specific question on this, 4 interviewees said that good organisation was what worked 'best' at the events they went to, and another 4 said that good facilitation was what worked best. This shows that more than half the interviewees suggested that the way the process was designed and run worked was very good. The event format, content, stimulus materials and recruitment were handled by Opinion Leader.

A separate company, World Events, was responsible for events management and logistics (e.g. travel, accommodation, venue and other facilities). Overall, the logistics of the event worked well, although there were some criticisms of the refreshments at the Summit (lunch not good / appropriate, and tea and biscuits running out). There was also some concern among some participant interviewees about the return journey as they did not know London and were anxious about catching trains which affected the mood at the end of the meeting. Although table facilitators and the lead facilitator dealt with these concerns as much as possible, there could possibly have been slightly more information available to people about these details, and clarity that the event would definitely end at the designated time, to reassure anxious travellers.

These logistical details are important. They can affect the level of participants' attention at key points (e.g. waiting for breaks, lunch, and for the meeting to end), as well as potentially creating a mood of anxiety and uncertainty. This was not a major issue in this case, but was mentioned and is important to participants and to their perceptions of the overall success of the event.

Feedback to participants

A short 'end of day' report was produced on the findings from the process and emailed (that evening) or sent by post (a few days later) to all Summit participants. In addition, those who indicated an interest in staying involved were contacted periodically by Defra and, in 2008, invited to join the Green Ambassadors programme.

Responses were also made to those who posted questions on the 'Ask David' [Miliband] board at the Summit. In addition, 80 participants were re-contacted in November 2007 for a follow-up telephone survey to assess changes in attitudes and behaviour and reflections on the Summit (in addition to interviews for this evaluation).

However, in spite of these feedback activities, a significant number of participant interviewees did not feel they had received sufficient feedback:

- 13 of the 15 interviewees (87%) said that they either had received no feedback (6) or had 'not really' had any feedback (7). 1 said they had received feedback and 2 said they had something but not really anything on progress. Comments included:

"I would like to have heard a bit more about what the Government is going to do – a progress report. But I fear that will be it and we'll go away and not hear anything else." (participant interviewee)

"I was given notes of what happened at the event but nothing to back it up." (participant interviewee)

"A bit of feedback and an update on what is happening [was missing]. And to invite us to more events like that." (participant interviewee)

"I got a letter by post but there is no mention of what they have done in the public domain." (participant interviewee)

One interviewee was clearly very pleased that they had put questions up on the 'Ask David [Miliband]' board, and had received an answer and follow up.

The importance of the link developed between Defra and the public, and of the need to specifically continue the relationship was recognised by a number of observers and policy makers in interview, several of whom suggested that more feedback and continuing involvement was important. Comments included:

"Follow up is the issue: events like this raise certain expectations and the response is crucial ... The report was unreadable because it was so long. Some way should have been provided of feeding through questions after the event, something to keep the debate going, like a website." (observer interviewee)

"It might have been good to have produced a simplified summary of what happened throughout the day to provide to participants, e.g. with 5 key outcomes which could be demonstrated at the end of the process. A simplified summary would have let people see where they fitted in." (policy maker interviewee)

"There was also a sense of "what next?" – what did participants go away with? What is next in terms of building engagement. There was a summary report but it was not very specific." (observer interviewee)

"The big question, 'OK, what are our conclusions?' seemed to be missing. We received an accurate report of the meeting, but what are we supposed to do with it?" (observer interviewee)

"Engaging people together, not just 1-2-1, was an important aspect, as was the link made between public participants and Defra." (observer interviewee)

"If this was about research, particularly behaviour change research, it should have had more follow up to see what happened after the event. However, if it was a communications exercise, this doesn't matter." (policy maker interviewee)

Feedback to participants is a vital part of any engagement process and, in this case, although activities to provide feedback were undertaken, they had clearly not registered fully with the evaluation interviewees. This is a complex area, and commissioners of engagement processes do not want to overwhelm participants with constant information.

However, it may be useful to use this experience to consider the type of information participants really want after a process of this sort - for example, an update summarising how some of the views discussed at the Summit were being taken forward by Government. Such additional communications clearly have resource implications, but could be considered highly cost effective if they provide continuing encouragement to citizen action at very little additional cost, and which therefore maximise the initial investment in engagement.

5.3 The provision of information

The feedback from questionnaire respondents was that:

- **94% agreed that they understood and could use the information provided;** of these 28% agreed strongly.
- **81% agreed that the information provided was fair and balanced;** of these, 15% agreed strongly.
- **88% were satisfied with the information packs** received before the Summit [and after the workshops]; of these 54% were very satisfied (only 4 respondents were not very satisfied).

This shows a high level of satisfaction among questionnaire respondents with the information provided, although the relatively low rates of 'strong' agreement on the usefulness, fairness and balance of the information suggests there was not an enormous enthusiasm for the information provided. Some reasons for this may be identified from the interview feedback (see below).

Feedback from observers and policy-makers was also positive. Comments included:

"I liked what I saw of the information that was sent to participants before the day: it was creative and allowed for interesting discussions. I thought it was the right sort of information for the event." (observer interviewee)

Enough information

All 15 interviewees felt there had been enough information provided at each stage to enable them to take part fully in the discussions, and almost all said that the information that was provided was clear and understandable.

Information fair and balanced

13 of the 15 interviewees agreed that the information was fair and balanced (3 of these said it was 'mostly' fair and balanced), while 2 felt it was not. Comments overall included:

"Yes [it was fair and balanced]. Although there was a Channel 4 documentary as a counter charge to the Government's views. I didn't see that and we didn't get that side of things – there was a push towards "let's do this". But because this documentary was talked about through word of mouth rather than being shown, so people felt they were being duped."
(interviewee)

"No, I'm not sure it was. I didn't see the Channel 4 documentary that rubbished some of Al Gore's ideas, but I'm not sure we went into those issues very much." (interviewee).

"Yes, I think it was one-sided in that climate change was presented as being caused what the Government thinks, with no opposite view. Whether people agree with the Government or not, it is a bit off-putting to see only one view."
(interviewee)

"I think I would have liked to have speakers who resonated a bit more with me and who knew a bit more about the real issues. For example: why is the situation of the economy so disposable in the first place; why can't all new buildings be made zero carbon? I didn't see anyone there who could really answer those questions." (interviewee)

"I think it did pretty well, except I do feel a lot of people appreciate there is something happening and I'm not sure everyone feels it is caused by emissions. They should make more emphasis on how much we waste rather than just emissions." (interviewee)

"There was one key issue missing because it's morally impossible to deal with. No one talks about the rapid expansion of the human race, but it has a huge bearing on this whole issue. It's the elephant in the room." (interviewee)

Clearly, the main issue for those who had concerns about the information provided was that there was no mention of any 'alternative' views on climate change. Although there was not any suggestion in the feedback that respondents felt they were being misled, the need to hear the alternative view was important. This lack of an alternative view was also identified as what was 'missing' from the information provided by 3 interviewees. These comments included:

"No-one to debate against global warming" (questionnaire respondent).

"No acknowledgement of the arguments against greenhouse theory and disproving them" (questionnaire respondent).

"More pros and cons" (questionnaire respondent).

Observers and policy makers also raised the lack of any opposing arguments throughout the process (see section 5.9). In terms specifically of the information, one comment was:

"It [the information provided] was fair and unbiased to the extent that this is possible. It didn't really attempt to present both sides of the argument, but rather represented the position of UK Government science. The Summit took place after the screening of the 'Great Global Warming Swindle'. The value of introducing sceptical arguments in an event like this depends on what you are trying to achieve. There were some people at the Summit who had sceptical positions. Where they didn't see these represented, they may have felt that they were being subjected to brainwashing." (observer interviewee)

As all these comments suggest, there are several arguments for including opposing or alternative arguments in these sorts of public engagement activities, beyond simply responding to people's innate desire to consider the opposite view to any that is presented by an official body. For example, presenting a diverse range of views can stimulate debate and discussion by widening the scope of the issues that are considered openly. It can stimulate discussion by 'allowing' expression of different perspectives. It can also provide answers to those sceptics among participants, as well as providing useful learning to those commissioning the exercise about where scepticism lies and how to deal with it. Finally, it can reduce suspicion among participants by ensuring that all views are openly identified and brought fully into the discussion, rather than some views apparently being ignored or hidden.

Most useful types of information

In terms of the types of information interviewees found most useful, the most popular types were the presentations by speakers (7 interviewees said this was the most useful form of information), and the AI Gore DVD (5 interviewees mentioned that). Several said they liked all the ways the information was given, and some specifically said they liked having a mix of types of information as it kept interest up. Comments included:

"I think the DVD was probably the most useful. The presentations were good and the written stuff was probably the most interesting" (participant interviewee)

"I liked the AI Gore DVD the most; it made the points in a very visual way" (interviewee)

"The AI Gore thing was good – very powerful." (participant interviewee)

"The majority of the speakers were very good and informative." (participant interviewee)

"There were people there in the know who were from different environmental agencies that spoke. They were good as they gave us some of the facts." (participant interviewee)

"Most useful was the speakers – I got a lot out of it." (participant interviewee)

"I tend to find presentations good, especially when you have a charismatic speaker." (participant interviewee)

"The experts were quite good as it was more interesting than just reading it. The university man and David Miliband were good." (participant interviewee)

"The presentations were good." (participant interviewee)

"My only problem was with the disc I was sent – I don't have a computer so couldn't play it. I wasn't the only one. I think there is an assumption in the modern world that everyone has a computer and is on the internet. That just isn't the case – I have no desire! Apart from that, I enjoyed the video and the written stuff." (participant interviewee)

"I think there was a good balance from different sources. It was all well covered in different ways, which stopped it being boring. Listening, seeing and reading was good as it kept you stimulated." (participant interviewee)

Specific information remembered

Interviewees were asked whether they remember any specific piece of information from the workshop, and about half of them said they did. In terms of the specific information identified as useful and making an impact, some mentioned particularly remembering information on practical actions that you could take (3 interviewees). 3 interviewees also mentioned that there was nothing new as they knew most of it already. Specific examples given included:

"I think it was just the stuff making us aware of the little things that all mount up, for example leaving the mobile charger on and other things around the house." (participant interviewee)

"The seriousness of it all – I didn't realise how serious it was." (participant interviewee)

"Particularly the stats on the last 10 years – it was to do with carbon output, temperature and water." (participant interviewee)

"I don't think there was anything startling – I knew a bit about it before." (participant interviewee)

"Perhaps how the different local authorities in the country are tackling recycling. Some have a lot going on, others very little." (participant interviewee)

Generally, this is good positive feedback on the information provided, which reflects the care that was put into the content and use of the information. From observation, the handouts and the way information was introduced worked well. Participants recognised the complexity of the issues, but obviously found no difficulty using and understanding the information they were given and seemed to have no difficulty in asking questions if there was anything they did not understand.

5.4 Feedback on learning

The feedback from questionnaire respondents was, in summary:

- 79% agreed that they learnt something they did not know before; of these, 42% strongly agreed

In addition 12 of the 15 interviewees said they had learnt something about climate change and what needs to be done as a result of taking part, plus another 2 said they had learnt a bit. 4 said they knew about the issues already.

Although this is very positive feedback, it is not a particularly high level of learning (for example, at a recent tidal power public consultation, 95% of public participants said they had learnt something new).

The lower level of positive feedback here on learning may be because participants here had already learnt from the regional workshops, and the information packs, and were focusing their answer on what they learnt at the actual Summit event. However, it is probably more likely that there is now a generally fairly widespread level of knowledge among the general public of the general issues around climate change, even if they do not have the detailed knowledge about the scientific background. and what action to take.

The key elements of learning tended to be focused around the urgency and seriousness of climate change, what was being done (especially by Government), and what could and needed to be done to tackle climate change. Comments from questionnaires and interviewees included:

"I didn't realise how serious and imminent the problem was" (participant interviewee)

"I suppose so [learnt something new], on potential impacts, and some of the facts" (participant interviewee)

"More information on climate change and the impacts, and hearing lots of opinions. For me it was an awareness thing." (participant interviewee)

"I think some of the stuff about government planning and intentions, but not really about climate change." (participant interviewee)

"[Main thing for me was] Information about what the Government is doing, that they are enthusiastic about it. Listening to the CBI and others. Reinforcement of the partnership idea." (participant interviewee)

"I learnt ways I can change my impact on the environment. I met lots of people and the presentations were good." (participant interviewee)

"I didn't realise how much ignorance was around." (participant interviewee)

"There were a lot of things I was ignorant about, but not so any more. On the general issues." (participant interviewee)

"[Main thing was] More awareness of leaving the lights on, using the washing machine and all the little things you can do around the house to help." (participant interviewee)

"I wasn't aware of much before so I found out a lot." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, definitely [learnt] – about the issues and what I need to do to contribute. First hand experience hearing about it was good, as I didn't really know anything before and only had second hand experience." (participant interviewee)

"Oh yes, [learnt] a lot. Different people have different opinions and knowledge from retired pensioners to employees." (participant interviewee)

"I had looked into it before. I was aware before, but it clarified some of the detail for me." (participant interviewee)

"I had some idea but it gave me much more detail." (participant interviewee)

"I certainly learnt very clearly about the ramifications of different things – things I hadn't thought of before." (participant interviewee)

"I learnt a lot. More about what I can do than the general issues – I had a general idea about them before." (participant interviewee)

Participant interviewees were also asked about the extent to which they now understood the main issues running throughout the public engagement programme: the draft Climate Change Bill, the Government's policy priorities on climate change, and the 'environmental contract'. Feedback was as follows:

- **All 15 interviewees said they now understood the purpose and implications of the Government's Climate Change Bill**; 2 of them said they 'thought' they understood it. Comments included:

"I understand a lot more now." (participant interviewee)

"I think I do. I'm glad it's happening and it has to happen but I am sceptical of government as it seems this is an economic thing and we need to go much further to involve China and the rest of the world." (participant interviewee)

"I understand more about it. But there's been so much about it in the media since that I feel these events have rather paled into insignificance." (participant interviewee)

"Purpose – yes. Implications – not really because the difference between stated and implemented policy is often so wide, so it is impossible to tell what the actual implications will be." (participant interviewee)

Although there was unanimous feedback that interviewees understood the Climate Change Bill, the specific comments they made suggest that there was actually little real understanding among most people of the detail of the Bill, nor of the priority issue of setting clear targets for reducing emissions - or at least no-one mentioned targets as something they remembered.

Interviewees seemed to see all Government policy and messages as the same thing, rather than differentiating general policy from the specific proposals in the Climate Change Bill. Although an information sheet was handed out to participants on the Bill at the Summit, from observation at the Summit, the specific proposals of the Bill were not particularly clear and separate in the presentations at the event generally, and tended to get mixed in with general facts and figures on climate change and general Government policy.

- **12 of the 15 interviewees said they now understood the Government's priorities on climate change**, and what they are planning to do; 1 of these said they 'thought' they understood. Another 1 was not sure and 2 said they did not understand this.

Here, there did seem to be a general understanding of Government priorities among respondents. Comments included:

"I know what they have done so far. I'm not sure of the priorities but I know of some plans." (participant interviewee)

"The idea of the carbon footprint is fascinating and a good way for people to understand it." (participant interviewee)

"Yes I do. It impacts on everyone, not just the UK. It's something we all have to do something about, the whole world." (participant interviewee)

"Yes. And in the last couple of weeks we seem to have seen the realities of what we have to deal with, with the flooding." (participant interviewee)

"Oh no, I don't. The Government tell us what they want us to know." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, I've always thought along those lines anyway. My age group grew up around the second world war where waste was a big issue, so I think we tend to think about it more anyway." (participant interviewee)

As mentioned above (and some of the comments quoted above were actually answers to the previous question), interviewees tended to conflate the proposals in the Climate Change Bill with general Government priorities.

- **13 of the 15 interviewees said they felt that the Summit reflected the principles of the 'environmental contract'**, 2 of these said it 'mostly' reflected these principles. The other 2 said it did 'not entirely' reflect the principles.

The feedback on this issue showed that respondents did grasp the general principles of the environmental contract quite clearly - both the partnership element and the sense of shared responsibility. Comments included:

"I think a lot of the public said it should be government led, but there did seem to be a feeling of sharing the load." (participant interviewee).

"Generally yes. It's hard for me to see how it could be done any other way." (participant interviewee)

"Not quite – I thought the director of the CBI put up some particularly weak arguments, for example he said that business was part of the solution, not part of the problem. But otherwise, yes, the idea was reflected" (participant interviewee).

"Yes, yes, I think everyone agreed that it needed everyone to act." (participant interviewee)

"I think each interest did [play their part], and they got the message across at the end that it was everyone's problem." (participant interviewee)

"I thought that was dealt with very well. There were quite a few people there who I felt had been made more aware as well. I do feel more one of a group now than that I'm the only one doing something." (participant interviewee)

Some of the observers commented that the purpose of the discussion of the environmental contract was not clear. Public participants' feedback shows that they did clearly understand the general principles of the contract (i.e. 'we are all in it together'), but there was some feedback that these issues were not made clear enough. Comments included:

"There was lots of discussion about the environmental contract and how it would be presented. This played out as presentations on the roles of different sectors. It was not clear what participants were supposed to take from this, and participants' comments on the day showed that they probably hadn't got a clear understanding ... People didn't seem clear about what they were supposed to take from the event on this. There was a lack of clarity both in the manner of presentation and in the content: at the event, speakers seemed to slip away from the issue, so it was never clear. It is a difficult thing to get across: it's a high level, abstract idea, so more thought was needed on how to translate it for a general public." (observer interviewee)

"The fact that the different parties (CBI, TUC, Government) were there to talk meant that this message was implicit. I'm not sure that it was explicit enough to have been picked up by the participants." (observer interviewee)

However, in spite of observer concerns, feedback from interviewees (above) does clearly indicate a good understanding among public participants of the principles of the environmental contract.

3 participant interviewees commented that they felt the environmental contract lacked the vital 'global' dimension - that the sectoral partners in the UK were insufficient to achieve the objectives sought. Some participants felt that this was a global issue that needed international co-operation in ways that were not discussed in this engagement process, and they clearly felt this was a missing dimension to their debates. Comments included:

"I think it [the environmental contract] probably was reflected in the Summit, but it is very difficult to put into practice. It's a global issue and has to go beyond the kind of actions we were talking about." (participant interviewee)

Overall, the feedback on the environmental contract suggests that there was good understanding of the principles of the contract as a result of the process among public participants, and the comments reflect that understanding, as well as general support for the principles of the environmental contract among interviewees.

5.5 Impact of engagement on people's views and actions

There were various themes in the evaluation designed to test the impact of the engagement on what the public participants thought and did. These included whether the process had helped participants think more clearly about the issues, whether they had changed their views and what they thought, whether they felt more personal responsibility as a result, whether they had discussed the issues with others, whether they wanted to find out more, and whether they had actually done anything different as a result of taking part. All these themes are analysed below.

Changing views

- **68% of questionnaire respondents agreed that attending the Summit had *changed their views***; 22% agreed strongly. Only 14 respondents (9%) disagreed, of which only 2 disagreed strongly.

This is higher than is normal for these processes; engagement processes of this type usually find it hard to show real shifts in views (and participants are often quite reluctant to say they have changed their views). It is therefore likely that this feedback represents quite a significant shift in views for it to be shown so clearly.

- **94% agreed that the event had helped them think more clearly about the issues**; of these, 48% strongly agreed.

The feedback from participants here shows a very positive response on the extent to which the event had helped them think more clearly about the issues. This demonstrates the value of deliberative working, where participants have time to really question and discuss the issues in detail, and can thus clarify their own views and learn from each other as well as from expert speakers. Academic behaviour change research shows the importance of collective learning from peers in changing attitudes and values, and the discussions with each other at these events clearly helped these participants develop their own thinking on these issues.

- **71% of questionnaire respondents said that being involved in the engagement process had *made a difference to what they think***; 20% said it had not. In an open question, the main impacts were around the importance of climate change and the need for urgent action, an increased personal sense of responsibility and of empowerment, understanding the importance of partnership on these issues, and gaining greater awareness. These are all covered in more detail below:

- **The importance of climate change and the need for urgent action.** Comments included:

"How widespread is the need for action" (questionnaire respondent)

"Yes [made a difference] because I didn't really know the full issues about climate change" (questionnaire respondent)

"Emphasis on urgency and need to make a difference now" (questionnaire respondent)

"Agree that climate change is happening with more passion" (questionnaire respondent)

"Severity of climate change. Importance of doing one's own bit" (questionnaire respondent)

"Climate change is a much bigger issue than what I initially thought. I also didn't realise the UK government is doing as much as they are" (questionnaire respondent)

- **An increased personal sense of responsibility, and of empowerment.** Comments included:

"More involved. Feel I can make a difference" (questionnaire respondent)

"Made me consider it on a more personal level" (questionnaire respondent)

"I'm more aware about what I can personally do in my community to make a difference" (questionnaire respondent)

"More knowledge is empowering, enabling positive action" (questionnaire respondent)

"I'm going to try harder and I've learnt that food makes a big impact too" (questionnaire respondent)

"It has made me think about my own behaviours more and realise how little you have to adapt your lifestyle to make a 'difference'" (questionnaire respondent)

"Its shown that even little steps can make a big difference if everyone's on board" (questionnaire respondent)

- **Understanding of the importance of partnership** in tackling climate change. Comments included:

"I feel something positive will now happen with government and business amalgamating to take this issue of global warming forward" (questionnaire respondent)

"I'm aware that business and consumer groups are working together" (questionnaire respondent)

"Much greater awareness of the responsibility different elements of society bear" (questionnaire respondent)

"It made me much more interested in what the Government and business is going to do" (interviewee)

- **Gaining greater awareness.** Comments included:

"More awareness ... be positive ... anyone can do their bit" (questionnaire respondent)

"More understanding, more evidence, better arguments" (questionnaire respondent)

"It has opened my eyes and made me more conscious of making a difference" (questionnaire respondent)

The evidence from the interviews also showed the impact of the process on participants' views:

- **11 of the 15 interviewees said being involved had made a difference to what they think about climate change and what needs to be done.** 3 said it had 'not really' made a difference, and 1 said it had not. As with the majority of questionnaire respondents, for 4 of the 11 interviewees the main impact had been to make them feel more concerned, including feeling the issue was more serious and more urgent. Comments included:

"Much more of a wish to do something and be involved. It's going to take a lot more than just a few people composting and recycling. I have noticed a lot more about it in the news though" (participant interviewee)

"It reinforced what was already there. David Miliband was enthusiastic."
(participant interviewee)

"Before in terms of how serious it is I'd say 4/10 but now it's more of an 8 out of ten." (participant interviewee)

"I think it is more important than before." (participant interviewee)

"Some change – to be more aware of what I do and how big the issue is."
(participant interviewee)

"The seriousness of it – for the event to be so big and have so much money spent on it, it must be important." (participant interviewee)

"Being involved has made me realise that it has taken us a long time to do anything about the issue. It's better to be proactive." (participant interviewee)

"It just really backed up what I already thought." (participant interviewee)

"A lot of things were there already, but it has just made me think more about them." (participant interviewee)

"Yes it has a bit. It made me think that even if fuel or waste isn't changing the climate, we should do something about it anyway."
(participant interviewee)

"I suppose it made me a more concerned citizen, yes." (participant interviewee)

"It enhanced what was there already I think." (participant interviewee)

"No, but my views are fairly... it's not that they are dogmatic; I'm aware it's important, I just didn't come out feeling any differently one way or the other." (participant interviewee)

"Yes it did. It changed what I thought; I'm much more interested in doing things about it." (participant interviewee)

- **10 of the 15 interviewees said taking part made them feel more responsible personally** for taking action to reduce their impact on climate change. 1 said they were not sure and 3 said it had 'not really' made that difference. 5 (33%) did say they already felt responsible. Comments included:

"I think I was quite good before, but it has made me more aware"
(participant interviewee)

"That's a definite thumbs up. It's made me aware of lots of good and bad points that we do every day. And to spread the word – it sounds like a religion! I guess it's like a ripple in a pond." (participant interviewee)

"Very much so. I have more awareness – so I am very conscious of what I do now." (participant interviewee)

"I was always fairly aware, but even more so now." (participant interviewee)

"Funnily enough according to my religion there is a lot that we should do to protect our environment, so I was already taking action." (participant interviewee)

"No not really [more responsible]. A lot of things I am doing already, but it did reinforce these, and gave me good points to discuss with other people." (participant interviewee)

"I was actually giving myself a pat on the back in some cases because I am already doing things, but now I'm doing more." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, marginally. I lead a fairly frugal life anyway, so no great effect. There is a good quote: "there is no happiness without restraint". It's not just an environmental issue; it's an emotional one." (participant interviewee)

"It was interesting; it did actually. I had the attitude going in that I couldn't care less, but came out thinking I should start doing things. I was quite surprised." (participant interviewee)

Overall, this feedback demonstrates that the engagement programme has had a major impact on what people **think**, and their sense of personal and shared responsibility. The next section provides feedback on changes in **actions** / behaviour.

Changing actions

- **78% of questionnaire respondents said they were likely to change things they do as a result of being involved**; 13 (9%) said they would not. 13% said they did not know. Here, the main behaviour changes identified were:
 - Talking to others and encouraging them (46 respondents said they were likely to do this; 32%)
 - Changing their own behaviour (40 respondents; 27%). The behaviours mentioned included changing their own behaviour generally (16%), reducing energy use (8%), using the car less / more walking (2%) and using less water and food issues (1% each).

These types of actions were not mutually exclusive. Respondents saw talking to others as an important action in itself. Comments included:

"Broadcast to others the importance" (questionnaire respondent)

"Talking to others ... spread the word" (questionnaire respondent)

"Changing my own actions and talking to others" (questionnaire respondent)

"Talk to others. Seriously consider impact of actions" (questionnaire respondent).

Interviewees were also asked about whether being involved made any difference to what they do. This was better able to test whether they had *actually* changed their behaviour, while the questionnaire responses focused largely on *intentions*. The findings were:

- **10 of the 15 interviewees said being involved had *made a difference to what they did*; the other 5 said they were already doing it.** No-one said it had not made a difference. For interviewees, the main activity was recycling more, followed by turning off electrical appliances at the mains rather than leaving them on standby (especially the TV), and switching off lights. Several who said they were using the car less, and walking, cycling or taking the bus more. Comments included:

"I car share more regularly. I compost and recycle anyway" (participant interviewee)

"I've started taking the bus, which I'm proud of, and other little things." (participant interviewee)

"I did change some of the things that I do following the events. It's mainly little things like walking more and turning off the TV. Nothing major, but I'm doing as much as I can given my lifestyle." (participant interviewee)

"It didn't make much difference as I already do a lot – energy saving light bulbs, insulation and so on. It reinforced what I thought anyway." (participant interviewee)

"Just little things around the house. I recycle anyway." (participant interviewee)

"I am becoming more efficient with electricity and recycling." (participant interviewee)

"I've started doing more little things like turning off the electricity at the mains and recycling more." (participant interviewee)

"I try and live my life well anyway. It has made me realise that on a personal level it is all about how to articulate things and that you need to know your facts." (participant interviewee)

"I think my awareness has been improved – I use energy saving bulbs and switch off lights more." (participant interviewee)

"I've started using the car and the tumble drier less – things like that." (participant interviewee)

"I've started doing small things like recycling plastic bags ... turning the television off at the plug, that kind of thing." (participant interviewee)

"Things like getting out of bad habits like filling the kettle up to the top when I only want a cup of tea." (participant interviewee)

"Actually I'm walking and biking a lot more and I make the kids walk more." (participant interviewee)

- **All 15 interviewees said they had *discussed the issues raised in the engagement process with friends, family and others*.** The impact of the engagement process was very evident here, with unanimous agreement on this, even if (for one person), it was only with their wife. 2 of the interviewees mentioned that they had been in the local paper because they had taken part in the process, so people were interested in what they had to say and asked them questions.

For many interviewees, however, being involved had clearly prompted them to become quite passionate messengers about the issues. Interviewees were asked how many people they had talked to, and the numbers given were much higher than expected. Only 1 said they had talked to less than 10 people, 6 said more than 10, and the rest said more than 20 (more than 50 in some cases and over 100 in one case).

Calculating an overall number across the interviewees, it seems that the 15 interviewees talked to around 450 people. If this were extrapolated across all 150 public participants in the Summit (taking an average of 30 people per participant, and recognising that some would talk to very few and others to a lot more), this would make a total of around 4,500 people. This can only be a rough calculation, but is based on direct feedback from the random sample of participants who were interviewed so this total does have reasonable foundations in evidence. Comments from interviewees on talking to others included:

"Quite a lot, yes – mostly about whether it was worth it. I am at pains to switch off lights and have started switching other things off, but then I drive past Meadowhall and every square foot has three or four lights in it. Does what we do actually make any difference?" (participant interviewee).

"I showed the [Al Gore] DVD to some people and talked about the little things we can do" (participant interviewee).

"Yes, about climate change issues from the event, at work and church as well as with my family." (participant interviewee)

"My picture was in the paper which I wasn't expecting, so lots of people have spoken to me about it." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, definitely. A lot of people are still sceptical. I've talked about lots of things. About waste and separating it out, sending the message that every little bit counts. I could go on for ages." (participant interviewee)

"Lots of people. I passed round the DVD and talked about people's views and why I went to the event." (participant interviewee)

"Actually yes – with family and friends. I talked about the overall issue of climate change." (participant interviewee)

"I am very much still interested. In fact I've become a bit of a missionary. There was a recent programme on TV that said there was no panic and that whatever we did wouldn't make a difference. I tend to get on my high horse about that whenever anyone mentions it." (participant interviewee)

"Actually I have. In fact I've become a pain in the backside." (participant interviewee).

In addition, the feedback from interviewees was that the people they had talked to had been interested (14 out of 15 said people had been interested), and there was a good chance that some of them would also change their behaviours. Comments included:

"Some aren't interested at all. A lot of the sceptical people will stay sceptical. And people that recycle and compost do it anyway, so I don't think I've impacted in that way. But people have been interested in the facts and figures." (participant interviewee).

"They have actually. Some friends have said they will change things." (participant interviewee)

"It's been more of a debate than them listening intently. I've talked about what we do as a family but they have been argumentative. It's persuading them to change what they're doing. For example I'll talk to them about turning the lights off and they'll come back with talking about Blackpool and how the lights are always on. I have persuaded one or two family members to change what they do." (participant interviewee)

"Most people are interested. I have scanned some stuff for a couple of people. Quite a lot of them are like-minded anyway but they might get other ideas for what to do." (participant interviewee).

"Yes. Oh yes, I have given them the knowledge I have on recycling, electricity so they can use it too." (participant interviewee)

"Yes. I'm a visual artist, so its very relevant to the materials I use. And I work with large groups of people, so it does resonate." (participant interviewee)

"They have actually. The people who were sceptical have started to think more about it." (participant interviewee)

"A lot of people wanted to know more about it, yes I think they will [do something themselves]." (participant interviewee)

"I think a lot of people are getting overloaded with the issue. They are still very concerned, but it is difficult for them to see how they can do anything." (participant interviewee)

"I must admit most people are interested in how it will affect their pocket." (participant interviewee)

"Yes they have. And they're starting to do exactly what I'm doing." (participant interviewee)

The level of wider engagement created by public participants in this process talking to their friends, family and others is quite remarkable both in terms of numbers reached but also in terms of the value of messages about climate change being spread in this way.

It is well recognised that the public tend to trust messages from friends and family more than they do Government or the media, so the willingness and ability of public participants in this exercise to spread messages about climate change and what to do is of very high value in terms of likelihood of impacting on the views and actions of wider audiences.

Finding out more

- **14 of the 15 interviewees also said that they planned to find out more about the issues** themselves, and that they would probably use TV or the papers, although one or two said there needed to be more from Government. Comments included:

"I would like to see both wider media coverage and things like emails or bulletins; something from the Government saying what progress on reducing fuel consumption has been made, what they are doing with the money from airplane surcharges, and so on." (participant interviewee)

In terms of what would help them most to find out more and change what they do, the most popular idea with questionnaire respondents was the **carbon footprint calculator**, followed closely by **advice from the local council or other local organisation**. The full findings were:

- 60% of questionnaire respondents said they would like help by finding a way of calculating their carbon dioxide emissions
- 56% said they would like advice from the local council or other local organisations
- 38% said they would prefer written technical information (printed or on the web)
- 31% said they would like a local group of people who all want to do something
- 22% said they would like individual help from a local expert
- 18% said they would like help from a national telephone helpline.

This was useful and interesting feedback in terms of feeding into whatever support may be provided for future support for behaviour change. It should be noted that the idea of a carbon footprint calculator was introduced at the Summit as a 'good idea', but it was clearly an idea that met with interest from respondents. None of the other options for help in future were raised specifically at the Summit.

5.6 The clarity, transparency and trust in the process

- **90% of questionnaire respondents said they *understood the purpose of the consultation***; 31% of these strongly agreed. Only 3 people said they disagreed.
- **80% of questionnaire respondents said they *understood how the results of the consultation would be used***; however, only 19% of these strongly agreed. 6 respondents disagreed (5%); 1 of these strongly disagreed. 14% said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

These findings suggest a high level of clarity over the purpose of the engagement process. This is borne out by observation: participants were generally clear about why they were there and what they were supposed to be doing. The findings do show rather less clarity about how the results would be used, although most respondents did feel they understood this in broad terms.

However, not everyone agreed that the purpose of the process was clear. A couple of respondents identified some lack of clarity about why the engagement was happening. Comments included:

"Greater explanation of the purpose of the Summit [needed]"
(questionnaire respondent).

"Not entirely [clear]. I couldn't quite see whether we were being used as a sample to educate or get opinions from - clarifying that would be useful" (participant interviewee).

"The only thing I can see [missing] is that I still don't really know what the focus of the day was. Having something at the start of the day outlining the focus and the agenda would have been good. The feedback aggregator showed that people's opinions had changed by the end of the day, which in itself was astonishing, but I'm still not sure why we were there" (participant interviewee)

From observation, it may have been that the lack of clarity was because participants had a lot to take on and consider - the importance of the issue of climate change, behaviour change, the environmental contract AND the Climate Change Bill. This may have been too many different elements to cover in one day, and thus created some confusion for some participants.

Feedback from observers and policy makers also suggested a lack of clarity over the purpose of the exercise, which contributed to some confusion for participants. Comments included:

"There was an uneasy question about the relationship between the event and Defra policy. Greater clarity on Defra's part would have helped ... It would have been good to have had a sense of what the Government wanted out of this event. The messages I got were not entirely consistent." (observer interviewee)

"Yes, there were enough [people there], but what was intended to be got from bringing them together? It was a way of making a group of people come up with a set of ideas. I don't think it would be an economically feasible way of producing change in behaviour. (observer interviewee)

- **11 of the 15 interviewees (73%) said they were clear about how the events they took part in fitted in to the overall development of Government policy on climate change;** 1 said they were not really sure, and 3 (20%) said they were not clear. Comments included:

"Not at all [clear]. Having thought about it afterwards, I'm not really sure what we were there for. I didn't really feel we were having anything pushed out to us. Were we a yardstick? It was a good day and good that David Miliband was there for the whole day, but I'm not sure he heard anything new. I don't think we were particularly being listened to or given anything new." (participant interviewee)

"Not entirely. I couldn't quite see whether we were being used as a sample to educate or get opinions from – clarifying that would be useful." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, yes. We were made very aware that our views would be listened to and fed in." (participant interviewee)

- **5 out of 15 interviewees said that they definitely thought that *the Government listened to and would take notice* of what the public said on these issues; a further 6 said they 'hoped so', and a further 2 said they thought so or 'maybe'. This is a fairly positive response, with **a total of 13 out of 15 interviewees being at least 'hopeful' that the Government would listen** and take notice of what had been said. Comments included:**

"I hope so – it was a waste of money otherwise." (participant interviewee)

"Hopefully, yes. It is a good forum to get views across." (participant interviewee)

"I hope so. I would think so because it was such a massive thing. David Miliband seemed genuinely interested in our ideas." (participant interviewee)

"There were a lot of good ideas coming out so I do hope they listen." (participant interviewee)

"Definitely [Government would take notice] – it's what they need to know because they will come up against opposition. But at the end of the day it's got to cut a bit deeper. They have to mean it and want to do it otherwise people will see through it." (participant interviewee)

"I hope they will listen to what we were saying. There were some quite forthright opinions there and quite a lot of cynicism about the Government – I hope they take notice." (participant interviewee)

"One would hope so but cynically I'm not sure they will." (participant interviewee)

"I think they are going to have to. There will be some things they will introduce that people won't like, so they have to get feedback and get an idea of what people think." (participant interviewee)

"I don't think the responses garnered at the meeting will make a difference – I didn't hear any fresh ideas. I don't think they'll learn anything they don't already know." (participant interviewee)

"I think they will now. I wasn't sure at first." (participant interviewee)

4 interviewees specifically mentioned that they thought it was a shame that David Miliband was no longer Secretary of State, partly just because of continuity as he had been the one at the event listening directly to what people had to say, and partly because he was seen by respondents to be particularly enthusiastic about taking action on climate change issues. Comments included:

"Well, being a bit cynical I would like to think so [that Government would take notice]. It is a bit unfortunate that David Miliband has moved job, as he seemed very keen. It would have been nice to see a bit more continuity." (participant interviewee)

5.7 The importance and value of public engagement

- **99% of questionnaire respondents thought public engagement in these issues is important**; 89% thought it is **very** important.

This is extremely positive feedback, both on the importance of public engagement on these issues but also as an indicator of the success of this engagement. The experience in this case had clearly encouraged respondents to be positive about public engagement in future (see below).

- **92% of questionnaire respondents said they were more likely to get involved in these sorts of events as a result of attending this one**; 49% (almost half) agreed strongly. No-one disagreed.

This finding was echoed in feedback from participant interviewees:

- **14 out of 15 participant interviewees said they were more likely to want to get involved** in discussions on these sorts of issues in future as a result of their involvement here; the other 1 said they 'may be' more likely.

In terms of **how** they may want to be involved in future, feedback was:

- **11 out of 15 participant interviewees said they would like to be *involved in the same, or a similar, way***, with the focus on interaction and discussions among participants. Comments included:

"The discussion part of it was good – more of that kind of interactive stuff, making people think and do things rather than just sitting and listening." (participant interviewee)

- **12 out of 15 said they would like to be involved at *either or both national and local level***. Only 1 said they would prefer to be involved locally, and 1 nationally. 1 did not know. A couple again mentioned the importance of international action, and mentioned getting involved 'nationally and beyond'. Comments included:

"Both [national and local involvement in future]. A number of interesting issues came up in the local discussions. Every council has different recycling policies. But national issues are also important, like reducing the amount of packaging that needs to be recycled in the first place" (participant interviewee)

"You have to be aware of the local issues to understand the national. Local are the priority." (participant interviewee)

"I suppose a bit of both [local and national], depending on the issues. There is some more relevance to local issues, but I do like national too." (participant interviewee)

"National and beyond – unless you talk beyond national level you won't ever start tackling some of the bigger issues." (participant interviewee)

"Both. Perhaps the national ones are a bit more productive, but it depends on what you mean by local." (participant interviewee)

- **10 out of 15 interviewees (66%) said that being involved had *made a difference to what they thought about the Government consulting the public* on these sorts of issues; with 8 of those saying they thought it was a good thing and / or that Government should do it more often. Comments included:**

"I thought it was great – this is a long way away from 10 years ago"
(participant interviewee)

"I didn't know if they had done anything like this before, but it was good."
(participant interviewee)

"I think it's a good thing, the way they are involving the public."
(participant interviewee)

"I think they are taking the right steps. And I am seeing more out there on TV, so they are telling more people – it is good I think" (participant interviewee)

"It was good to have an insight into that. It reminded me of a strange sci-fi big brother type thing where we pressed buttons and suddenly there was consensus decision on things." (participant interviewee)

"Absolutely. I think they should have more forums. We were privileged to be involved. I think each borough could have an environment day to get people together. What would people in the borough like, what would they do? Not just the councillors." (participant interviewee)

"They should do more – they don't do enough in terms of awareness."
(participant interviewee)

"I think they should keep this sort of thing up. Do more of it, though perhaps not exactly the same as this." (participant interviewee)

"Yes, I was pleased they were doing it – the future will tell whether they will take notice of what was said. I am very interested in what they are doing." (participant interviewee)

"I'm afraid to say, no. If this issue is as potentially catastrophic as it might be, then living in a democracy will only make it worse. The majority vote for short-term gain. Democracy is part of the problem. If this is as big a problem as they say it is, then the moves suggested on the day would be like shifting deckchairs around on the Titanic."
(participant interviewee)

This feedback suggests that taking part had provided an insight into the way that Government wanted to hear the views of the public, and most interviewees clearly felt very positive about the process.

- **12 out of 15 interviewees agreed that, although public engagement has financial costs, it is *money well spent*. The other 3 said they did not know or 'probably' not. Comments included:**

"Whatever is being spent on it is a drop in the ocean compared to the money needed to tackle it [climate change]" (participant interviewee).

"[Money well spent] If they are going to listen and take on board what was said" (participant interviewee)

"Seeing the mix of people there was good. But as I haven't had feedback, then unless I see some good come out of it, it would be a waste of money." (participant interviewee)

"I think it was – hope it was. There was a lot of electricity used at the event, which could be hypocritical of what we were trying to do. But even if it changed 200 people's opinion then it was worth it." (participant interviewee)

"Absolutely. Really it was, considering the amount of money we're talking about, to enable the Government to hear that number of people's view." (participant interviewee)

"Yes I do, if everyone got out of it what I did then definitely. It also gives the Government access to the man on the street, which is important." (participant interviewee).

Not everyone agreed:

"This is very difficult. Probably not [money well spent]. I think you could probably reach more people in a more direct fashion depending on how much money was spent. Also you have to start telling people, not asking them." (participant interviewee)

This feedback from participants is important as funding is always limited and there is always a balance between investing in public engagement, other activities to work with the public, and actually changing policy and practice to make a physical impact on emissions and tackling climate change.

Overall, the participant respondents felt that public engagement was money well spent in tackling climate change, as long as the public was listened to and their input made a difference. Feedback from observer and policy-maker respondents on whether it was money well spent was more mixed (see section 6.4).

5.8 What worked best

Participants were asked in open questions on questionnaires and during interviews what they felt were the best / most successful elements of the process. Generally, questionnaire response rates to open questions of this sort are much lower than to tick box questions, so the lower figures given below need to be seen in that light.

The feedback from participants overall was that working in small groups and listening to each other and exchanging views was the most successful aspect. For interviewees, the organisation and facilitation were identified as what worked best, followed by the input from the speakers, while for questionnaire respondents, the speeches and the part of the meeting involving the 'one minute' presentations / pitches to the Minister were the best elements. Some respondents from both sources identified the value of feeling involved, just taking part.

This is interesting feedback. Very often these open questions in evaluation research into public engagement processes throw up the answer that 'learning' was the best aspect. The different feedback here does not mean that learning was not important, and learning and awareness gained a lot of positive feedback in terms of the question to interviewees on what the main things were that they got out of being involved.

The lack of mention of learning here may relate to the points made earlier in relation to the relatively low positive feedback in questionnaires on whether people had learnt something new - that general issues around climate change have been discussed in the media for several years, and the public feels familiar with those general issues. As the feedback to the questionnaire shows, this does not mean that there is deep understanding of the reasons for climate change, or what to do about it, but does suggest a broad level of awareness and thus lower levels of positive feedback on learning from an engagement process on climate change issues.

In summary, the findings on the most successful aspects of the process were as follows.

Small group discussions and exchanging views

- 23 questionnaire respondents (16%) identified **listening to others and exchanging views** as the best aspect of the Summit, plus another 7 people (5%) identified group discussions. Similarly, 7 out of 15 interviewees identified **small group discussions** as the best aspect of the Summit. Comments included:

"Discussion with a group of people who shared a general interest and concern" (questionnaire respondent).

"Meeting people and hearing their views" (questionnaire respondent).

"Getting the opinions of a cross-section of people" (questionnaire respondent).

"Having various members of the population put forward their views" (questionnaire respondent).

"The team events. It was good to meet and work with people you don't know" (questionnaire respondent).

"The group talking to help teach each other new ways to help global warming" (questionnaire respondent).

"It was positive and interesting to hear a range of opinions." (participant interviewee)

"It was nice to listen to ideas from other people from different backgrounds, and for others to listen to me. It was nice to find out others are doing the same as me." (participant interviewee)

"It was good to have the small discussion groups. It had been worked out very well – seemed to work well." (participant interviewee)

"Just being exposed to the professionals and other people's ideas, and that there are others who care." (interviewee)

"The fact that we worked in small groups. It gave everyone the chance to be heard and to give their opinions. We had a representative to feed our views back – that worked well." (participant interviewee)

"I thought it was well sorted that we were in groups small enough to talk and listen, then pooling the views at the end. We couldn't have had the level of discussion we did if we were in the bigger group all the time. Having someone supervising was good as they shut people up when they needed to and let others speak. That worked well." (participant interviewee)

"It was also good that the tables were small, which should have given everyone a chance to contribute." (observer interviewee)

From these comments, it is clear that respondents enjoyed the discussions with each other, and that the diversity of the group was a key element: it is important to public participants to talk with people of 'different backgrounds' and with a cross-section of people.

Good organisation and facilitation

- 8 of the 15 interviewees identified good organisation and good facilitation as the elements of the events that worked best. Comments included:

"The professionalism of the facilitators" (questionnaire respondent).

"If people weren't getting involved then the organisers helped them." (participant interviewee)

"The organisation was good, in particular our facilitator. He was excellent and made sure everyone got the chance to speak. We had an odd mix at our table: conspiracy theorists, students who didn't say anything and a businessman who saw everything as a business opportunity" (participant interviewee)

Observers and policy makers also felt that the process worked well generally, with good organisation and facilitation. Comments included:

"The process was good and the facilitators didn't close down conversations." (observer interviewee)

"It was very well organised. There was a good programme of speakers and it was a balanced programme overall." (observer interviewee)

Observers and policy makers did have other criticisms of the design and delivery of the process (see below in section 6.4), including the extent to which the design was appropriate to the multiple objectives given.

Input from speakers

- 18 (13%) of questionnaire respondents, and 3 out of 15 interviewees (20%) said **the input from the speakers was the best aspect**. The positive feedback here does connect the way the process was designed to enable participants to listen to the speakers, then discuss the issues in small groups and then present back their own views. Comments included:

"Listening to the speakers and have them listen back to our views" (questionnaire respondent).

"Discussions with leaders from all sectors e.g. CBI, TUC etc"
(questionnaire respondent).

"The four speakers at the London event were a big eye opener too – that worked really well." (participant interviewee)

From observation, the speakers' input did work well, both to model the partnership inherent in the environmental contract (showing the different partners supported the principles by sharing the platform) and to provide background on their own sector's priorities.

Some of the feedback from participant respondents was critical of specific speakers and, from observation, the two speakers who received the warmest response (apart from the Secretary of State whose involvement was very widely valued), were Ed Mayo (National Consumer Council) and Professor Tim Jackson. Both these speakers clearly connected with the interests of the participants and spoke about the role of citizens and ordinary people in tackling climate change in ways that resonated with participants.

Generally, there was a sense from participant feedback that 'everyone is in this together' but, from observation, that did make some of the input from speakers seem a little bland. There were no real differences of opinion between the speakers, which may have reduced the likelihood of stimulating discussion among participants and potentially reveal some of the underlying differences of views.

Indeed, some respondents specifically identified the lack of opposing arguments as something that was missing (see section 5.9), and one or two mentioned the value of having political parties represented. From observation and experience, it can sometimes be useful to have more diversity of views from speakers to stimulate discussion and help participants clarify their own views.

Pre-Summit regional workshops

The regional workshops worked well to start the debate with participants, and to enable them to start to engage with the issues. The time between the workshops and the Summit gave time for further information to be circulated, and for participants to consider and start to take action themselves.

From informal conversations with participants at the Summit, the initial regional workshops had clearly worked well to introduce even people with little or no knowledge of the subject to the issues involved, and to make them feel confident and comfortable expressing their views, which then enabled them to take part more easily in the national Summit. This is an important element of the capacity building often needed for the general public to take part and feel they are contributing fully to the discussions.

Observers and policy makers also identified the pre-Summit workshops as a valuable element in the overall process. Comments included:

" The pre-Summit activities which contributed to the participants' ability to do the tasks [were the best aspect] ... Because of the exercise they had been engaged in before the event, they were able to work in a creative fashion."
(observer interviewee)

"I personally thought the Summit was very good and the fact that it wasn't an isolated event was particularly good." (observer interviewee)

"[The motivation, interest and commitment of the public participants was] Really good. They had done a certain amount of work beforehand – that worked well, because they needed to have thought and talked about the issues before. The pre-Summit workshops seem to have worked well."
(policy maker interviewee)

Making one minute presentations

16 (11%) of questionnaire respondents identified doing the one minute presentations to the Minister as the best aspect of the meeting for them. Comments included:

"The best was 'our ways' of making changes i.e. what we would like to see happening (1 minute presentation)" (questionnaire respondent).

From observation, the relatively low number of respondents that thought this was the best aspect does not entirely reflect how well this part of the event worked. This was when the enthusiasm of the participants rose significantly, and there was a real buzz in the room as they worked to develop their presentations.

When the presentations were made to the Minister, there was a real sense of excitement, enthusiasm and even passion among some participants. The exercise did clearly spark their imagination and encourage enthusiastic participation. Not everyone agreed; one comment from an interviewee was:

"The later session where each table was given a question and then had a short presentation for each table felt a bit holiday camp-ish, like they'd suddenly decided to unwittingly introduce the entertainment." (participant interviewee)

However, from observation, this comment does not reflect the wider view, and overall this did seem to be the most successful single element of the Summit event. It provided a real focus for debate, and enabled participants to frame solutions in their own words, as well as participants coming up with some innovative ideas for tackling the particular issues.

The details of the exercise were very carefully designed, and avoided any sense of unfairness in the choice of issues as each topic was given out in a sealed envelope and no-one knew who was getting which issue. The 'Countdown' clock at the front as table groups made their presentations introduced a further sense of urgency and excitement, and presentations were rewarded with cheers and applause. In addition, participants seemed to really value making the presentations direct to the Minister, who sat and listened to them all, visibly took notes, and responded to specific ideas.

It is therefore really quite surprising that this part of the Summit was not identified at all by interviewees as one of the things that worked best. It may be that interviewees had forgotten some of the specific details of what had taken place at the Summit by the time they were interviewed, and interviewers were instructed not to prompt on these open questions. Alternatively, the explanation may be that, on reflection, these one minute presentations were not as important to interviewees as other aspects of the meeting.

Observers and policy makers did identify the one minute presentations as a useful element in the process, including because it provided a clear task with clear outputs that could be used in policy development. Comments included:

"The discussions were most creative where participants had a clear task. There was some sense of people rehearsing well-worn arguments at the beginning of the day, but when they got on to actions, they were more directed and creative." (observer interviewee)

"These worked really well – there was a high level of creativity and engagement" (observer interviewee)

Not all agreed:

"The debate on individual pledges in the afternoon went on for too long ... This was the weakest point of the day. The presentations were repetitive: participants then started going for weaker ideas that had come up in their groups so as not to repeat things that had already been said." (observer interviewee)

Enthusiasm for continuing involvement

As shown above (section 5.7), 92% of public participant questionnaire respondents said they were more likely to be involved in these sorts of events as a result of attending this one, and 14 out of 15 participant interviewees said the same. In terms of how they would like to be involved in future, 11 out of 15 interviewees said they would like to do the same sort of event again, and 12 out of 15 were happy to be involved at either or both national or local level.

Several questionnaire respondents suggested that the same group of people should be brought back together in a few years time, to review progress and lessons. In addition, 4 out of 15 interviewees suggested that more of this sort of engagement was needed. Comments included:

"Repeating with same people in 2-3 years time to see their opinions then" (questionnaire respondent).

"Maybe 5 years on what we the same candidates are doing and what more we have learned (another meeting)" (questionnaire respondent).

"I think it would be a good idea to involve the same group of people annually to monitor progress" (questionnaire respondent).

This suggests a good level of enthusiasm for continued involvement. In particular, some respondents suggested that more local activities would be welcome and would improve these types of engagement activities. Comments included:

"Local meetings - information pooled and analysed centrally" (questionnaire respondent).

"By doing more in local areas" (questionnaire respondent).

"Local group awareness discussions, with delivery on a regular basis from each to a governing body" (questionnaire respondent).

From observation too it was clear that participants enjoyed the chance to share local knowledge and experience (e.g. about approaches to recycling by different local authorities). It may have helped to link the regional workshops, local experience and local government involvement into the discussions more - especially as the participants would clearly be looking for help locally in future to support longer term behaviour change (see above).

Presence of Secretary of State throughout

Several respondents mentioned at various points in the research that it was very good that the Secretary of State, David Miliband, was present throughout the day, that he was clearly enthusiastic and interested in the issues, and that he listened and responded to participants' points.

From observation, the status and value of the event for all involved was clearly raised by the presence of the Secretary of State throughout. However, there was also disappointment among interviewees that he had since moved job, as he could no longer take action on the issue (see section on Clarity of influence on Government above). Comments included:

"It was nice how David Miliband came round and introduced himself to each table – nice to have the personal touch." (participant interviewee)

"It certainly helped to see young David Miliband on the stage, but that was just personality and now he's [no longer in the job] so it's not relevant any more" (participant interviewee)

"David Miliband was there, which was good. Think we helped him to get the promotion." (participant interviewee)

Observers and policy makers also identified the presence of David Miliband as one of the elements of the process that worked particularly well, and they also commented that it was unfortunate that he had since left that post. Comments included:

"I was pleased that the Secretary of State was there. He was very good and lifted the occasion." (observer interviewee)

"David Miliband was very good: he was motivating." (observer interviewee)

"David Miliband was brilliant – but it is difficult to plan for a Secretary of State to have this kind of skill." (policy maker interviewee)

"The accessibility of the Secretary of State was a really positive feature, the fact that he was there all day and that participants could go up and talk to him." (policy maker interviewee)

"If David Miliband were still there [in the Department], it would definitely have had an effect. David Miliband made a personal commitment – who is leading now?" (observer interviewee)

This does raise an important issue for this sort of public engagement. It is generally seen as very important that the lead decision-makers should be present to hear public views first hand (especially very senior politicians), so they can assess the strength of feeling on different issues (enthusiasm or contention). However, if the person who has given a strong personal lead to the engagement process then leaves that post, the value of that part of the exercise may be lost. In this case, there was also a large number of senior Defra officials who attended the Summit to hear public views first hand (Defra had 26 officials present). This enabled the Department to make good use of the results of the Summit even though the Secretary of State had moved on.

Involvement of stakeholders

The process included two ways in which organisational stakeholders who were working with Defra on climate change issues could be involved:

- the speakers were chosen to reflect the 'environmental contract', and their involvement allowed them to explain their own organisational and sectoral interests and commitment to tackling climate change
- 17 observers from other organisations (mainly NGOs and other independent bodies) attended and took part in the process separately from the public participants and on a non-voting basis, but within the room so they could test the process directly.

The involvement of a wider group of stakeholders within the public engagement processes enabled those stakeholders to see the processes first hand, and assess their effectiveness as part of Defra's wider work on climate change. It therefore made the engagement process more open and subject to scrutiny, including the information presented in various ways, providing an independent view of the extent to which the information was fair and balanced (see section 5.3). For the observers, the experience provided value in learning more about public engagement processes, about public views on the issues and about Defra's approach. More details on the value the observers drew from the process are given in section 6.4.

Feeling involved

A few respondents identified that the feeling of taking part, just being involved and being listened to, was the best aspect. Comments included:

These comments on this issue reflect feedback on other questions, where the value of the engagement depended to some extent on whether what they said was being listened to. Respondents felt this in varying ways. Comments included:

"A sense of participation" (questionnaire respondent).

"A feeling of personal involvement that my views were valued" (questionnaire respondent).

"A chance to participate and make a change" (questionnaire respondent).

"I felt I'd actually done something and contributed." (participant interviewee)

5.9 What worked less well

Participants were also asked on questionnaires (completed at the end of the event) what they felt were the **worst or least successful** elements of the event.

The biggest group of responses to this question was 'nothing'. Some specific points were made about lunch and refreshments at the Summit, and travel arrangements. However, these were minor quibbles rather than major problems with the process.

In terms of what could improve the process, or what was missing, the main issue for questionnaire respondents was a request for more activity locally, a greater mix of people taking part, greater clarity about the purpose, and the need to repeat the Summit again in the future. For participant interviewees, there was also some mention of the need for a greater mix of people, and some lack of clarity about the purpose. Other issues raised were the lack of any local dimension, lack of feedback and follow up to participants, and some sense that there was too much media presence at the Summit.

For observer and policy maker interviewees, there was also significant feedback on what they saw as lack of clarity in the design of the process (covered in section 6.4 below), and they also mentioned the problems of not including opposing or alternative views. These interviewees also mentioned problems with the recording and reporting of the process, and lack of follow up with participants.

All these issues are covered in more detail below.

Nothing

19% of questionnaire respondent (the biggest group of responses on this issue) said 'nothing' was not successful, and 4 interviewees (27%) also said 'nothing'. These figures are based only on those who actually said 'nothing'; not those who left the question blank. This feedback supports the generally positive mood of the feedback received overall.

Diversity and scale

Although there was generally wide agreement among respondents that there had been a good mix of people, there were some comments about how that spread of involvement could be improved, and that it would have been useful to have some **more and different** people involved. Comments included:

"Get more ethnic representation and younger people" (questionnaire respondent).

"Involve more people and a wider x-section. Most participants appear to be from upper social classes" (questionnaire respondent).

"I think they probably ought to try and involve more people from different walks of life. I spoke to a teacher at the local event. He taught in a fairly deprived area of the city. I asked him if he thought any of the local mums and dads would be interested in something like this and he said definitely not. They need to try and get the people who aren't interested or involved." (participant interviewee)

"More people taking part" (questionnaire respondent).

Observers and policy makers also questioned the scale of the event, particularly the value of an event of 150 people (see section 5.2), and suggested that a larger sample may have helped create a more robust evidence base for research purposes, and also to make a stronger case that 'the public' had been consulted by involving a larger group.

Lack of opposing arguments

There was some feedback from public participants, and from observers and policy makers, that the lack of opposing and alternative arguments reduced the value of the exercise. This was partly about the lack of input from diverse perspectives (e.g. speakers with strong views from different viewpoints), and partly that there seemed to be a mood of consensus which made it difficult for participants to express conflicting views.

Some comments have already been identified above (under the section on the fairness and balance of information), but there were also some wider comments about the disadvantages of not allowing for the discussion of differing views on climate change. Comments included:

"Perhaps the one issue that wasn't picked up was when climate scepticism came up in the morning ... It is a pity about the loss of an opportunity for discussion on climate scepticism and how to engage with that." (observer interviewee)

"The disagreement was missing. Hearing back from the tables could have been improved. It could have been more challenging – it was a little too comfortable. The voting system meant that you could see that there was disagreement but most of the reporting was positive: the disagreement wasn't aired on the floor." (observer interviewee)

The disadvantages of not including opposing arguments have also been described in section 5.3 on the provision of information.

Recording and reporting

Some observers and policy makers found the recording processes worked very well. Comments included:

"There was a very high level of recording and lots of support people on hand during the day." (observer interviewee)

"Yes, a lot of effort went into that [recording] and everything was captured electronically" (observer interviewee)

However, some felt that it was asking too much for one person on each table to both facilitate and fully record the discussion. From evaluation observation too, this was a problem as facilitators struggled to both ensure that all participants were able to participate fully and have their say, while also trying to keep full notes of the points made by the group. Comments included:

"It was very ambitious to have one person to both facilitate and record the discussion: they will have had to concentrate on one or other of the tasks. So if they concentrated on recording the discussion, they are unlikely to have been able to draw in people who find it difficult to participate." (policy maker interviewee)

Several of the observers and policy makers felt it had been a weakness of the process not to have more detailed recording of the discussions within the table groups, and for that data to have been fully analysed, resulting in a more in depth picture of public views to have been presented in the final report. There was also some criticism of the final report as too long and broad, without sufficient detail to make it really valuable. Comments included

"One casualty of big plenary events is the ability to get verbatim transcripts. This event achieved a good balance – the facilitators did a good job. But I would have liked verbatim transcripts of the table discussions. This might have been possible with good sound recording. In the end the information obtained was wasted because there was no in-depth coding and analysis." (observer interviewee)

"It would have been good to have had more detailed feedback from the tables and a flavour of the conversations. But I recognise that this would most likely have been expensive and it would have taken longer to get the feedback." (policy maker interviewee)

"The IT almost got in the way at times. A simpler system might have been better: with more thought it might have been possible to capture the information from the tables better to give greater granularity³. I felt that quite a lot of good information from the tables was lost. The use of the [laptops] led to precis being made of what people were saying rather than capturing good discussions." (policy maker interviewee)

"I felt that the feedback [in the final report] was broad but shallow. A lot of things were covered but with a fairly light touch. I would have liked more depth. There was no transcript of the event available or detailed analysis of the discussion. Topline findings are unlikely to reflect new insights on subjects like this which are already well-researched." (policy maker interviewee)

"The discussions were not fully logged in terms of who was contributing, etc. This meant that you only got 'the tip of the iceberg'. This takes us back to the question of what was the purpose of the event." (policy maker interviewee)

Further reflections on the reporting processes are given in section 6.4 below under Quality of Outputs.

Media presence

Although it was not a major issue for respondents, from observation there was a lot of media activity, particularly focused around interviewing David Miliband. This had been intended, as one policy maker explained:

"Five media teams with cameras were there and the Secretary of State did give live interviews. The press were encouraged not to 'pester' participants for interviews but to talk to specific people, and in general they respected this and appreciated being able to talk to a range of participants ... There could have been a better allocation of slots for interviews to the external media teams. The Press Office took a hands-off approach, but it might have been better if this had been organised." (policy maker interviewee)

However, this level of media presence clearly did have an impact on the event. People at tables were having discussions while a TV crew was interviewing the Secretary of State or another participant a few feet away, with their table as background. This was clearly slightly distracting for participants, although most seemed to take it in their stride. Few seemed bothered by the media activity, although on balance media presence may have been slightly overwhelming at some points. One respondent made the point:

³ Interviewee explained that this terminology comes from photography

"I was surprised at the high level of filming / recording. I had not been expecting it prior to the event and felt I did not really have a choice not to sign the consent form at the start. I was not sure what the types of filming would be used for and it made me feel uncomfortable" (questionnaire respondent).

"I was surprised that there were supposed to be live news crosses ... creating this sort of media opportunity shouldn't have been necessary at an event of this kind. It seemed to be more about getting David Miliband on TV than about engagement." (policy maker interviewee)

This feedback suggests that, although media involvement and links to other campaigns (e.g. Act on CO₂) were an important element of the programme, the balance may not have been quite right in this instance.

5.10 Lessons for the future

Participant interviewees were asked to suggest any specific lessons about involving people that they would like the Government to take from this consultation. The comment made most often was to 'do it again'. Other general comments included:

"Listen to people because they do have valid points. A lot of people have things to say. Listen to a broader range of people. There were a good mix of people at these, not just your average middle England folk." (participant interviewee)

"I think we should invite them (Government representatives) down to the local discussions, even if only for a couple of hours. Especially the schools – get them to the grass roots." (participant interviewee)

"I think there need to be community groups involved – give them more information." (participant interviewee)

"The fact that a lot of it involves saving money. This is a good tack to take – if they sold policies more on that, they could have more effect." (participant interviewee)

"I think it [involving people] is a good idea. I do realise the costs are prohibitive. Perhaps if there were local discussions and then one representative from each local group went to a national discussion? I think that would work really well and be cheaper." (participant interviewee)

"In terms of "can these kind of events be justified in the future?" probably not, as they won't get anything new out of them. They probably shouldn't do more. If this issue is as serious as it is then you can't rely on individuals to turn it around – you have to start telling people what to do." (participant interviewee)

"They should do more things like that on a lot of different issues. Or if they are doing them, I don't hear about them." (participant interviewee)

5.11 Other comments

As with lessons for the future, the other comments made included a fairly strong view that engagement of this sort on these issues should continue. There was also a high level of general appreciation for having been involved. Comments included:

"The dialogue should continue" (questionnaire respondent).

"Need to engage more before delivering solutions" (questionnaire respondent).

"More events like today, accessible to everyone not only a select few!" (questionnaire respondent).

"Thanks you for giving me this opportunity to give my views" (questionnaire respondent).

"I really appreciate the event" (questionnaire respondent).

"I was pleased with the event. I feel that the issue is so big to change that it is unrealistic as it affects the economy and businesses etc with knock-on effects, but the UK government is making a good start. Thank you" (questionnaire respondent).

"All I can say is don't stop now. This was a great thing. This is democracy in action. Even if you're not being listened to, you feel like you are. I'm all for it." (participant interviewee)

"I enjoyed it; it was an eye opener." (participant interviewee)

"The Government is looking at supplying every house with a meter that tells you how much electricity you've used on what. I'm looking forward to getting one of those so I can show my kids how much they use on leaving the TV on." (participant interviewee)

"I was very happy to be involved – my knowledge has increased. If you study any religion there is advice about caring for the environment and climate change – we should talk more about it." (participant interviewee)

"It was very good. I really enjoyed it and it was better than I expected. The electronic voting worked really well. It was very well organised." (participant interviewee)

"Just to say thank you, that I really enjoyed it and got a lot out of it." (participant interviewee)

"I thought it was really good." (participant interviewee).

It is important to recognise the general goodwill from participants, as their view of the process will affect what they do in future: their willingness to get involved in similar engagement activities again as well as taking action on climate change. The level of appreciation in this case was clearly very high.

5.12 Overall conclusions on the value and effectiveness of the engagement process

Overall, the public engagement process worked very well - the events were well designed and facilitated, the information materials were carefully drafted and were fair and balanced and the groups found them understandable and usable. Information was introduced in a variety of ways (printed sheets, information packs, DVDs, speakers), and participants had enough time to grasp the basics and then discuss the implications in some depth, and all respondents felt they had contributed.

Participants clearly enjoyed the experience and learnt a lot from it, and left the event more enthusiastic to participate again in such events in future. Perhaps more importantly in this case, the event contributed to participants' understanding and awareness and clarified their thinking, and encouraged them to talk to many other people about the issues, and to change their own behaviour. The feedback from the immediate questionnaire responses indicated willingness to change behaviour, and follow up interviews showed that (for interviewees) this willingness had turned into practical changes. This was a very positive overall response by participants to their involvement in the process, as well as achieving a significant impact on their thinking and action.

The main problems identified were the need for more feedback to participants, and more of the same sorts of events to happen in future. A few people were concerned that there had been no mention of opposing arguments on climate change, and one or two other issues, but generally the feedback was that the process had worked very well and participants were pleased to have been involved.

6 Impacts and outcomes

6.1 Introduction

The overall purpose of this public engagement process was to help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change, and to drive awareness, information and debate on climate change. This section of the evaluation report considers the evidence for any impacts on Government policy-making processes, as well as the impacts on - and value for - all those who took part: the public, observers and policy-makers.

6.2 The policy process

The Government has been developing a range of policy initiatives on climate change over recent years, including legislation through the draft Climate Change Bill, which was launched for consultation in March 2007.

The engagement process considered in this report was part of the consultation that was undertaken on the Bill during 2007 (plus consulting with stakeholders, and three Parliamentary committees) before it being finally published in October 2007.

At the same time, Government (through Defra) was also working on developing an 'environmental contract' between Government, consumers and business to promote a greater sense of reciprocal action across all three sectors, and a citizens and public engagement programme based around research on effecting behaviour change.

All these areas of work formed the basis for the climate change engagement programme considered here (more details of the policy context are given in section 2.5 above).

This engagement programme was not intended to provide findings that would feed directly into any one of these policy programmes, but rather to help Government design overall policy on these issues. In these circumstances, it is not possible to track the influence of this particular engagement process into specific policy changes. The evaluation has, therefore, attempted to identify where there has been influence and impact - and value - more generally.

This section therefore outlines the value for the public participants, policy makers and observers, and considers the extent to which the costs of the exercise could be considered 'money well spent'.

6.3 The value for the public participants

The following summary draws on the previous sections analysing feedback from public participants' questionnaires, interviews and evaluation observation of the Summit. Those sources suggest that the main value from the process for the public participants was as follows:

- **The process worked well for participants.** Overall the participants were very satisfied with the process, they enjoyed taking part and felt the Summit had delivered what they hoped or expected. The process engaged people effectively overall and the participants felt there was enough time to fully discuss the issues, and that the organisation and facilitation were very good.

- **Positive experience of engagement.** As a result of being involved in this process, 92% of public participants were more willing to get involved in discussions on policy issues in future. They particularly enjoyed and valued the small group discussions, where everyone had a chance to speak and exchange views and there was a good mix of participants and a diversity of opinions. The pre-Summit workshops had worked well to build confidence and basic knowledge of the subject, which enabled them to participate more easily and fully in the Summit.
- **Learning.** Participants clearly learned a great deal through the process. They found the information provided useful and easy to understand, and felt able to ask questions if needed. Several could remember specific pieces of information that they had picked up during the event, and most felt that being involved had clarified their thinking on the issues. They particularly valued the speakers, the Al Gore DVD and also the overall mix of information that was provided (speakers, information sheets, information packs etc). The information packs circulated between the pre-Summit workshops and the Summit itself had helped increase their knowledge of the subject.
- **Developing thinking and taking action.** Participants were very positive about the impact of their engagement here on their thinking particularly around the importance and urgency of climate change, an increased sense of personal responsibility and empowerment, a greater understanding of the need for partnership involving all sectors to tackle climate change, and just generally greater awareness of the issues. They also valued the experience in terms of wanting to take action, and actually making practical changes in their own lives, through activities including recycling more, using the car less and using other forms of transport more, and turning off lights and the TV at the mains.
- **Spreading awareness of the issues.** All the interviewees said they had discussed the issues with friends, family and others, reaching around 450 people. If these figures were extrapolated to all those at the Summit, the 150 participants would have discussed the issues with around 4,500 people. This was a result of motivation developed through the engagement process, and continuing enthusiasm for taking action on the issues. Participants felt that spreading awareness was an important part of taking action on climate change.
- **Sharing views with others.** Listening to and learning from other participants in the small group discussions was very important to the public participants. Some mentioned the particular value of no longer feeling that they were the only ones that cared about these issues, and finding common feeling with others, as the best aspect of being involved. Others mentioned the importance of being with people, and hearing views, they would not normally know.
- **Enthusiasm for continuing the discussion in future.** There were calls simply to repeat the programme, so that the same participants could revisit the issues and review progress that they, and others, had made. There were also comments that it was important to include a local dimension in considering climate change issues (e.g. through local meetings and local groups), as well as calls for the international dimension to be included, especially in the sense of 'partnership' through the environmental contract. This enthusiasm for continuing involvement suggests that the Summit generated a significant level of goodwill, interest and commitment among some participants.

- **Opportunity for involvement.** Some respondents clearly valued taking part and making a contribution on these important issues. Several also mentioned how important it was that the Secretary of State (David Miliband) was present throughout, which added status and importance to the whole event, and to their assessment of their engagement.

In terms of what worked less well, quite a few of the participant respondents felt that there was 'nothing' that did not work well. However, there were some areas of concern:

- **Diversity and scale.** Some participants felt that the issue was so important that spread of involvement should be extended, and more people should be involved.
- **Lack of opposing arguments.** Some participants felt that there was insufficient account taken of opposing and alternative views on climate change. For participants, this was largely in relation to the information provided, which some felt did not reflect that not all perspectives on the issues had been taken into account in their discussions.
- **Media presence.** Although not a major problem for participants, there was a significant media presence that did slightly change the atmosphere of the event from being entirely focused on public debate to being part of a wider promotional process. Although participants recognised that media involvement and links to other campaigns on climate change were an important part of the process, the balance may not have been quite right in this instance.

6.4 The value for policy-makers and observers

Interviews were undertaken with policy makers from Government and with observers who attended the Summit from other organisations, to gain their feedback on the value and effectiveness of the process in terms of their own work, and the value of the outputs to them.

The main areas of value to policy makers and observers were that it was an effectively designed and delivered process, that it provided opportunities for learning about public engagement, there were quality outputs, the process provided data on public views on the issues, led to attitude change, influenced Government thinking on policy, promoted public awareness and was, overall, money well spent. This feedback on the policy value from the process is summarised below.

An effectively designed and delivered engagement process

Observers and policy makers felt that the process had been well-designed and delivered by those responsible, and that it had provided outputs that were useful in the relatively difficult circumstances of seeking to meet a range of (potentially conflicting) objectives. In particular, the multiple objectives were seen to have created difficulties in the approach taken. Comments from observers and policy makers included:

"The demand for the event came from the Sec of State who wanted a Summit on climate change, rather than being driven by specific research questions. This Summit was more about communications and consultation than research ... This meant that there was a hybridisation of two separate activities (i.e. research and consultation)" (policy maker interviewee)

"The design was OK for getting ideas on how to influence behaviour change. There were some interesting conversations on the day, but we didn't learn anything that we didn't already know from previous research. It was an interesting sociological event, generating a dynamic on the day more than providing well grounded information ... While some collective opinions were reflected in the polling, I felt that some of the comments in the report, along the lines of 'people felt that people needed to change their lifestyles' could not actually be said to reflect collective opinions. A segmented social marketing strategy would have been a better way of collecting that kind of information." (policy maker interviewee)

"This is a way of generating energy and enthusiasm – it is very good for looking at particular subjects with a certain scope, e.g. consultation, testing marketing strategies, etc, or looking at an issue where there is a dilemma (e.g. in the pensions debate)" (policy maker interviewee)

"There was a feeling of enthusiasm: people were keen to talk about and promote climate change actions. There was acknowledgement and appreciation of the fact that it was the Government that was organising the event: this backed up the message that it's up to all of us to take action on climate change." (policy maker interviewee)

"It was reassuring and encouraging that so many people were aware and engaging. We possibly expected to encounter greater scepticism, though there were sceptics there." (policy maker interviewee)

"It was an interesting exercise in a deliberative forum. If you can invest the time, working with people in deliberative environments can be valuable. It reinforces the need for a social networking approach." (observer interviewee)

"It provides an example of good practice and raises the bar for the future." (policy maker interviewee)

"It all worked well. There was a good atmosphere." (policy maker interviewee)

"The design was good in terms of engagement. It generated quite a lot of high level information and data. But it did require quite a lot of resource to get that relatively high-level data. It wasn't possible to drill down to get more detailed information: I would have liked something that gave more depth. Academics might have been better at providing this. But the event had multiple objectives and it was good PR." (policy maker interviewee)

"It was remarkably slick. The IT wasn't flawless but it did capture the information. The compering was done well. There was the right balance between 'talking heads' and participant involvement." (policy maker interviewee)

Some observers also said there was a need for a fuller assessment of the costs and benefits of the exercise (including a full carbon evaluation) than the current evaluation. One comment was:

"It was a useful event. But I would like to have seen an assessment of its true energy and commercial costs ... The "concept" of a deliberative event on this scale was proven: i.e. it does deliver benefits. But the carbon costs from travel, hotels, etc were high. I wondered whether you could use that format on a regional basis to bring the carbon and commercial costs down to a more reasonable level?" (observer interviewee)

Learning about public engagement

The effectiveness of the process did impact on observers' and policy makers' view of public engagement, generally encouraging them to consider future engagement more positively. Several commented that taking part had reinforced their existing views about public engagement, rather than changed them significantly. Comments included:

"It [public engagement] can inform policy makers about the complexity of issues involved in engaging people with climate change. It is a pity about the loss of an opportunity for discussion on climate scepticism and how to engage with that. If the point was wider engagement, then the event couldn't succeed. If the point was to inform policy makers, it missed the point in relation to engagement with climate sceptics, but it did give a sense of how people engage deliberately with climate change." (observer interviewee).

"It reinforced my views; I can't say there was a massive change." (observer interviewee)

"I have always thought that engagement is important, so it hasn't changed my opinion, only confirmed it." (policy maker interviewee)

"In terms of what the process sought to do, it is as much about listening as anything else. The learning is on the Government's side, it's not about changing what people think ... The Summit *has* fulfilled some role in educating policy makers ... [there] is evidence that policy makers have listened" (observer interviewee).

"It reinforced my belief that 1-2-1 approaches need to be supported by work with bigger groups ... We have used some ideas in our Communities campaign which is part of Energy Saving Week." (observer interviewee)

"I realised that if you want the public to be engaged, you need to give a lot of information in order to get beyond superficial contributions. People haven't thought about these issues deeply, so you need to take them through it." (policy maker interviewee)

"You shouldn't make events too formal. Government shouldn't be seen to be telling people what to do but rather to be listening and making it clear that the public is the focus." (policy maker interviewee)

"It was helpful to see the process in practice rather than reading the theory – there is a subtle difference ... Next time I'm involved in consultations I will be more mindful of what I want to achieve. You shouldn't drop into default mode and do the same as you always do. We need to be more sophisticated." (policy maker interviewee)

"It is relatively unusual for Defra to do engagement with the general public, beyond the formal written consultations. There may be more enthusiasm in Defra for active consultation of this kind in the future." (policy maker interviewee)

"[The motivation, interest and commitment of the public participants was] Very good and positive. The event showed 'yes, you can energise people' – the process with pre-Summit activities contributed to this." (policy maker interviewee)

"I have learnt that you can organise an event of this kind, and no matter whether it is a good version or a bad version it might still look similar. What makes the difference is how you use the results." (policy maker interviewee)

"We need to ask ourselves whether we want genuine debate on issues that are at the boundaries of what people regard as the social norm e.g. 'do we want to give up flying?', 'how much more do we want to spend on renewable energies'?" (policy maker interviewee)

"This was a positive and interesting experience for the Defra staff involved. Everyone learned a bit, but we might have done it in a different way. The Children's Summit had officials sitting down at the tables, listening to the evidence directly: this meant that they exposed themselves to the discussion." (policy maker interviewee)

There was also specific feedback that it was important to decide the overall purpose of the event as early as possible, and therefore what the appropriate engagement methods should be. The lack of clarity in this case, or possibly the attempt to meet multiple objectives which actually required different approaches, were seen to have caused problems and provided lessons for the future in how to design public engagement. Comments included:

"[I am] More sceptical about this kind of process ... There is mileage in deliberative fora, but if we're interested in collecting evidence on public opinion, these should be run by third parties ... In depth qualitative research is what you need to get in depth information on what people are doing and how they tick. Deliberative fora could be a way to open up public debate, especially where there are differences of opinion. This requires bravery on the part of Government, to go where there is real public debate ... I would not be more likely to use deliberative fora. If I were interested in provoking debate I would ask someone like the SDC to do it and Defra should remain at arms' length ... Or factor them into communications and marketing and don't try to also influence policy ... Communications should be done by communications staff." (policy maker interviewee)

"It could have been done differently to get more value by deciding whether this was about evidence gathering or communications. Expectations in Defra differed and this made the event difficult to plan: a client must have a clear idea of what they want and not expect to achieve too many things at the same time. There was a tension between the types of questions we were trying to cover: these covered both technical and theoretical issues, as well as seeking to explore what people may or may not actually do. This was too much ground to cover and made it difficult to scope the event ... We could have concentrated on one question. Opinion Leader did point this out during planning, but as the client Defra wanted multiple outcomes." (policy maker interviewee)

Quality of outputs

The outputs from the process (reports, data etc) were broadly valued. The most valuable outputs were the polling data (which provided clearly recorded outputs that could be used in reports for policy development as well as clear headlines that could be used in various ways), and first hand access to public views by attending personally and listening to the discussions. Comments included:

"Polling data, listening directly to the views of the public and their discussions." (policy maker interviewee)

"The voting worked best. It was a good way of getting people engaged from the start. It was also easy for individuals to participate." (observer interviewee)

"[The main value of this sort of public engagement process was] Having hard data about the degree to which the public is engaged and believes Government should be acting." (policy maker interviewee)

For some interviewees, the immediacy of the outputs was useful, especially seeing the polling results immediately which helped make the whole process more open and transparent:

"The interactivity of the event was very good. It was a good way of getting immediate results and seeing them up on the stage. This made people feel part of a process and made the process open/not secretive. The media who were there could see the process in action." (policy maker interviewee)

The full final reports were seen by some policy makers and observers as easy to use and useful as part of the evidence base for policy development; others found the final report too long and less useful. As mentioned above (see Recording and Reporting, section 5.9), some felt there was not enough detail in the reporting for the outputs to be really valuable. Comments included:

"We were able to quote the data and use the statistics directly. We also sent out copies of the report – I remember that we sent it to the Select Committee." (policy maker interviewee)

"The full report was frustrating because of the missing depth. This may not be a requirement of policy makers, but I had a sense that there was more depth in the event than had been used ... It would have been nice to have had access to the qualitative data. There is more value in this than is given credit for. The event could have provided richer qualitative data. I want to make a plea for more academic research ... I would want to say to Defra: here is a rich source of data and now you're going to throw it away." (observer interviewee)

"It is important [for the sample to be demographically representative] but you need to know what different sectors are saying. Outputs such as 'Participants thought ... ' are not useful because they don't tell you enough. This kind of result is designed to give a feel-good factor, and they did generate that feeling on the day. So it's OK if this is what you are trying to do ... It could have given straighter answers; it would have been useful to have had some idea of how different groups were responding on different issues. So it would have been useful to have had differentiation of responses and an idea of why people have different views." (policy maker interviewee)

"There were good contributions on the day. But the final report was too long: it was a challenge to keep the momentum going. I didn't circulate that report to colleagues as I didn't think they'd read it." (observer interviewee)

"The final report was too bland and long. Seeing comments come up on the day was useful, although difficult to read on the screens simultaneously." (policy maker interviewee)

Some of these comments reflect a demand for more detailed research findings from the engagement process. The balance between the potentially conflicting demands for detailed research findings and the other objectives for the process (e.g. to drive awareness and debate) was clearly difficult to achieve throughout the design and delivery of the programme.

Understanding public views on the issues

Several observers and policy makers identified the value of the exercise in providing a general understanding of public priorities that was useful to programmes within and outside Government. There was a general sense that there was not anything unexpected or startlingly original coming from the engagement process but that it was valuable confirmation of expectations.

Comments included:

"A general understanding of the headline messages: it was interesting to be involved both with the data and with the policy making process." (observer interviewee)

"We run EcoSchools. This incorporates climate change. A lot of information from the Summit was fed back to that programme." (observer interviewee)

"I found it very interesting to hear people's views." (observer interviewee)

"It brought people in Defra closer to what people think – it was better than the average event. From that point of view it shouldn't be ignored." (observer interviewee)

"None of the responses were unexpected. I didn't expect to hear anything new – I wanted to know what proportion of people had certain views and how interested they were." (policy maker interviewee)

"The main value is to allow us to gauge public attitudes to the ideas we are putting forward. We want to see how receptive people are to these ideas. We are not looking for measurement of attitudes as such." (policy maker interviewee)

However, for some, the value of the event in terms of understanding public views on behaviour change was questionable. Comments included:

"Where you get members of the public together like this you get a positive feeling, which I'm not sure is a good reflection of how much is being done today. This was an intensive event, and one that was intensive in terms of time and resources, so although it provided positive signs of what can be done, I wonder how replicable this is? From an event like this you get a group outlook on issues which may not really reflect individual actions." (observer interviewee)

"If you get a large number of people together and provide ample information, thinking will evolve. You could see a bit of "group think" happening. It was natural and positive. The event was intense and therefore difficult to replicate, so you ask yourself, what did we learn?" (observer interviewee)

There was also some feedback about the extent to which the public feel part of Government policy making processes more generally. One comment was:

"It is very important for all policy development work (not just Defra's work). The public need to feel that they have been part of the policy making process and feel ownership. This will make them more likely to support legislation and work with it / make it work ... it gives participants a sense that they've been part of a process that made a difference; I think this is particularly the case because the subject was climate change which is an issue that is happening now. People came away feeling 'I've got a role to play' and that leads to behaviour change." (policy maker interviewee)

Attitude change

Several observers and policy makers identified the shifts in views and attitudes of public participants over the day as an important impact and value of the process. However, this was not enough for some, who saw this as only the beginning of a process leading to behaviour change. Comments included:

"I was surprised at the start of the event that not everyone thought that climate change was the responsibility of all. There was a shift of thinking on the day." (observer interviewee)

"Attitude change was achieved. Other behaviour change achievements are still to be demonstrated, and this is the most important change. (observer interviewee)

"You could see a change in people's attitudes through the day." (policy maker interviewee)

Influence

There was feedback from policy makers that the process has influenced policy development processes within Government, partly in relation to increasing credibility for the Climate Change Bill but also more generally, with no particular focus on any specific changes or developments. It was seen by some as impossible to separate out the specific influence of this process on climate change policy, given the wide range of current initiatives. There was also a view from some respondents that it would not be appropriate for an engagement process of this sort to influence policy making directly. Comments included:

"For the Climate Change Bill the process was very important. We could feed something analytically robust into our response to the consultation. This added credibility... The feedback was useful and interesting. It mainly provided high level inputs and the nature of the Bill meant that people were only able to engage at a very high level. There was interesting feedback on a some specific issues such as the Contract (between Government, business and citizens). But inevitably it couldn't provide input on more technical aspects like the approaches to putting a cap on emissions, the details of which are quite arcane." (policy maker interviewee)

"On the Bill, the results were not really helpful because policy areas in the Bill are arcane – it requires sophisticated understanding to be engaged. High level agreement of the kind seen at the Summit leads pretty quickly to detailed issues, and the process didn't contribute much to that. It did contribute to other policy development on climate change: the Bill represents one end of policy, setting up checks and balances. Other policies are the ones that will bite on individuals ... There could have been more tailoring of the discussion to take people through issues in the Bill. But the effects of the Bill on the general public are likely to be indirect – lots of the limits that this will impose are indirect." (policy maker interviewee)

"I don't think that it is quite as direct as David Miliband spending one Saturday with 150 people and then doing what they say, and this is not how it *should* work. The process advanced understanding of how consumers relate, for example, to energy, and of the barriers to changing those relations. But there is no legitimation for Government to act on what 150 people tell it." (observer interviewee)

"You need to be careful with the results of the event if you are trying to inform policy, as it gives one-dimensional feedback. We would have had to take simpler questions and tested a controversial subject to get better information." (policy maker interviewee)

"It won't affect policy as such and shouldn't affect it. It is more about changing the way that Government engages with the public on climate change and the way that we encourage changes in behaviour." (policy maker interviewee)

"A combination of pressures [influence policy] – from the public and from Government – all influence in different ways. You can't separate out the influence of this engagement process from other pressures." (observer interviewee)

"The public could contribute ideas and shape policy, setting the 'tone' for Government. But the participants at this event weren't experts so they shouldn't be shaping policy. It was a useful way for Government to find out about public responses, but this wouldn't immediately transfer into policy." (observer interviewee)

"This process was ... about influencing and supporting, but not necessarily about informing policy development. The ideal would be to do it the other way round. Of course, it is hard to justify this level of spending on an issue that has not already become high profile." (policy maker interviewee)

"The polling data was useful: we need information that is statistically robust. However it is important to say that the Civil Service doesn't usually listen to ordinary people. These interactions would be the hardest thing to replicate, so this added value. In policy terms it is often easy to forget this grounding in reality, the understanding that things are not as simple as they seem." (policy maker interviewee)

"The overall engagement process on behaviour change has influenced Government. The Summit highlighted the need to listen to more people and made Defra officials aware of different views. Defra has done work on behaviour and is now smarter at drawing on evidence and applying it where policy is being developed. Citizens' Summits like this are part of this process ... I can't think of any examples of changes as a result of the public engagement process. What I would say is that Defra's work on behaviour change has made it more receptive to initiatives that focus on catalytic behaviours over and above cost benefit rationales." (policy maker interviewee)

In terms of level of influence, the main impact therefore seems to be that the results from the engagement process are "being taken into account", but without any specific impacts being identified. Comments included:

"It is being taken into account ... I can't say that there was anything that changed in importance [as a result]." (policy maker interviewee)

Greater public awareness

Greater public awareness of climate change issues was one of the key objectives of the exercise, and it is clear from the feedback from public participants that, not only was their own awareness raised significantly (with high levels of learning and understanding), but participants were also spreading awareness to others as a result of having been part of this process.

This sort of dissemination of information about the nature of the issues (rather than specific details) is very valuable to the policy-making process, contributing to a better informed and thus more knowledgeable public who are more likely to be receptive to future proposals for changing behaviour to tackle climate change.

The public engagement activities in this programme were supported by a media campaign, run from the Defra press office, which aimed to make a wider audience aware of the issues through involvement of the press. The media activities at the Summit had a mixed impact on the engagement activities, with some feedback that media involvement was a little intrusive (see Media presence, section 5.9).

The feedback from observers and policy makers was more mixed on the issue of spreading public awareness than had been the very positive feedback from public participants. Observer and policy maker comments included:

"The venue was full of 'ordinary people' not celebrities. I felt that other members of the public would take more notice of what that kind of people were saying than if they were celebrities or Government ministers. So there was a question of how the people there could become spokespeople. Others (i.e. not at the Summit) would not feel that they were being spoken down to or patronised. This seemed to have a lot of potential and I'm not sure that was fully explored or made use of." (observer interviewee)

"People felt that they had been engaged and listened to. I felt that they might well go back and be advocates ... The process showed that people will become advocates for action to tackle climate change if they are exposed to this sort of process: this was only a small number of people to influence, but we couldn't do more." (policy maker interviewee)

"I think that it must have [contributed to greater awareness, information and debate], but it is difficult to say how much in comparison with other things, like Al Gore's film. It contributed to the drip effect. It takes a long time to change behaviours." (observer interviewee)

"I think that the people who were directly involved will be more likely to act. I would be interested to see whether wider behaviours in the public have changed, though this will also be influenced by the TV advertising ... I am confident that those involved will have had an effect on their families and communities on occasions when this kind of thing gets talked about. This is difficult to quantify." (policy maker interviewee)

"Originally people didn't know about climate change. Now they are becoming more aware, they don't know what to do about it. The message about what they can do is gradually getting through. This is important because it establishes the starting point for policy development, i.e. if people are aware and know what to do, you don't necessarily need legislation." (policy maker interviewee)

There was also feedback that spreading awareness needed to be fully assessed. Comments included:

"It is all about the outcome. If you want to get these people to go out and spread the word, you need to measure that effect." (observer interviewee)

Some feedback suggested that there were broader problems with the many and various campaigns to drive public awareness and debate on climate change, which also affected this event. Comments included:

"In general I don't think that public engagement in climate change is successful at the moment because there are too many mixed messages ... The National Consumer Council says that there are over 500 sources of information on climate change. This is too many as it creates confusion. There is a lack of understanding of the relationships between, for example, turning off your light bulbs and CO₂ emissions ... [Also] There seem to be contradictions between the Government's messages and its own behaviour." (policy maker interviewee)

One observer also commented that the Summit did suggest that Britain was leading on climate change. The comment was:

"The idea came through during the day that this response to climate change was something that Britain does quite well, so it generated a sense of pride." (observer interviewee)

Given the often negative messages of climate change, and the need to take difficult decisions, this sense of pride may be a useful focus for future communications with the public, who seemed to respond very positively at the Summit to the idea that Britain was taking a leadership role internationally.

Money well spent

Policy makers were asked whether they felt that this engagement programme represented 'money well spent'. Generally the feedback was positive, although there were caveats about how greater value could have been generated. Comments included:

"Difficult to say whether it is cost effective - across the multiple objectives of the process it was cost effective, although it may not have been for the individual objectives e.g. getting data on people's behaviour" (policy maker interviewee)

"Using [x] pounds to generate public interest may not have been money best spent. To judge whether it was well spent you would need to find out more about the impact of the event on the groups involved. That would mean taking a segmented approach. From the policy point of view, we seek endorsement (e.g. 'The majority of the public support this ...'). This kind of process can be used to give endorsement, even though the results are likely to be challenged. From the research point of view, it is not as robust as other methods. Making it more robust, e.g. by making transcripts of the discussions on each of the tables, would drive the costs up even more." (policy maker interviewee)

"The amount of media coverage achieved probably balances out the cost of the event. A lot of people have been made aware of the issues who weren't aware before, so there is the value of that information." (policy maker interviewee)

This question also threw up useful feedback on the difficulties of assessing the value of public engagement processes:

"I do wonder about the relative value of the Summit versus focus groups. I think that it is difficult to assess the value of engagement processes, because the results will only be seen in the long term when the policies developed as a result are successful or not." (policy maker interviewee)

6.5 Conclusions

The analysis above shows that the process had significant impacts on all those involved. The public participants particularly valued taking part in a well designed and run process, where they could express their views and listen to and learn from others. They also valued the learning from expert speakers and information provided. They appreciated the opportunities for developing their thinking and learning how to change their actions to reduce their negative impacts on climate change. They were enthusiastic about spreading the message about climate change to their friends, families and others, and wanted to pass on the information they had learned. They also valued the opportunity for involvement in what they saw as an important, high profile and high status event, with the presence throughout of the Secretary of State (David Miliband).

There were some problems, particularly around lack of report back to participants, some feelings that more and a wider range of people could have been involved, and the need for the dialogue process to continue. There was also some concern that the events had not taken sufficient account of opposing and alternative arguments about climate change. However, overall, all participants gained significant value from the process.

For policy makers and observers, the value was in a well-designed and delivered process, especially in terms of generating enthusiasm and energy among participants. The pre-Summit workshops were seen as vital in creating a more effective process by providing initial input, time for reflection and then the Summit at which views could be further developed and shared. They also felt that the presence of the Secretary of State throughout the event was extremely valuable.

However, there were concerns that the process had not been ideal for research purposes and that it would have been useful to have gained more detailed data through more effective recording and reporting processes. They did feel that the process had influenced Government thinking on working with the public on climate change issues, although it was difficult to point to any specific changes in policy that had resulted directly from this process.

As with the public, observers and policy makers felt the lack of opposing and alternative views on climate change was a weakness in the process, and that more could have been learnt by explicitly tackling scepticism through these discussions and thus learning more about those public attitudes.

Policy makers and observers also valued the opportunity to learn about public engagement, and to learn about public opinions on the issues. Some useful lessons emerged from the experience for respondents that they would use in their future work. Finally, there was also value identified in the increased public awareness of climate change issues and the potential for this awareness to be spread further.

7 Assessment of activities against objectives

7.1 Introduction

The overall objectives for the public engagement programme on climate change were:

As part of the draft Climate Change Bill consultation process, to:

- help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change
- to drive awareness, information and debate on climate change.

In early discussions on the evaluation research, underlying assumptions about the engagement programme were tested by evaluators, and it emerged that there were also several other implicit objectives, including:

- the extent to which the public engagement process could 'model' the environmental contract, to create a living version of that contract
- to understand the 'customer journey' in terms of behaviour change to tackle climate change
- to provide an opportunity for democratic engagement, and
- to create an event that stimulated further interest and action by participants.

It was not considered appropriate to use these implicit objectives to formally assess the engagement programme, as they had not been articulated at the stage of designing and delivering the programme. However, as with many evaluations, the implicit objectives are often the crucial factor for the commissioning body (in this case, Defra) in believing that the process has been successful. For that reason, a brief assessment of the process against these implicit objectives is undertaken below, after an assessment of the main objectives.

7.2 Assessment against objectives

Objectives	How each objective has been met
To help government design policy to maximise positive individual behaviour on climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from policy makers in Defra has been that the outputs from the public engagement process had been 'taken into account' in various policy processes. However, there are no specific examples of changes to policy, or of ideas being taken from the public engagement process into policy but also feedback that no new ideas emerged from the engagement process. There is also no evidence of changes in priorities in policy as a result of the outputs of the public engagement process.• Useful information was gained on public views on willingness to change behaviour, and what issues the public felt were most important in terms of the Climate Change Bill, the environmental contract and behaviour change policy, which were summarised in the final Opinion Leader report.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy change resulting from the engagement process has focused on enhanced understanding of public views on the issues, attitude and behaviour change, and encouraging policy makers to listen more to public views. It is expected to some extent to change the way Government engages with the public on climate change and how it may encourage behaviour change in future. • The most useful outputs for policy makers were the polling results, which provided headline data on the most important issues for the public and listening directly to public views to better understand the depth and strength of public feelings on specific issues. • The main reports from the process were seen to be useful as part of the general background evidence for policy making. However, they were seen to be too long for immediate assimilation and also too broad but shallow to provide useful new and robust research evidence. This was partly due to recording methods which did not capture all the detail of the public discussions when they were talking in small groups. There were, however, significant problems with the design of the process in trying to meet the multiple objectives in a short space of time, which made it difficult to find appropriate methods that would fit all objectives. • There was learning among policy makers and observers about how people engage deliberately with climate change issues, which will be useful in designing future public engagement activities. • The engagement process did work in terms of clarifying the views of the public participants who took part, changing their views and influencing their behaviour. As such, the exercise may perhaps be better seen as a 'model' for promoting behaviour change rather than a research tool to explore how policy could change or be improved to encourage behaviour change. • Participants generally felt 'hopeful' about the likely influence of their input through the process. However, they had no evidence of such influence as no feedback or follow up has been provided to show what difference the public engagement has made.
<p>To drive awareness, information and debate on climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information was provided in various forms (information packs, DVDs, speakers at the Summit etc). Participants had read the materials and found them easy to understand and use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence of participants talking to friends, family and others, and spreading the message about climate change issues to a wide group of people. • There is evidence of increased awareness and understanding of the issues among participants, both from the Opinion Leader reports (showing perceived levels of knowledge before, during and after the events), and from this evaluation research (showing perceived learning and understanding of the Climate Change Bill, the environmental contract and the Government's broader policy priorities on climate change). • There is evidence of press coverage of the Summit, but any examination of the extent to which that press coverage influenced further attitude and behaviour change among the public is outside the scope of this evaluation.
<p>Additional objectives</p>	
<p>To explore a 'living version' of the environmental contract in the Climate Change Bill within the Summit (Government, business and citizens working together)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'living version' of the environmental contract was achieved through the presence at the Summit of representatives of all sectors in the contract (Government, business and the workforce, and citizens). Speakers represented Government, business, the unions and consumers, and the participants represented citizens. • Speakers explained what their sector was doing in terms of tackling climate change. Information sheets contained further information. • The process explored the principles of the environmental contract explicitly, allowing participants the chance to discuss the issues of shared responsibility and to express their views. • There is evidence that the public participants understood the basic principles of the environmental contract, and did feel a greater sense of both shared and personal responsibility as a result of taking part in the process.
<p>To understand the 'customer journey' in terms of behaviour change to tackle climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process did provide information on how citizens' values and attitudes changed, with polling to measure values and attitudes at the beginning, during and at the end of the process. These were reported to participants at the events, and were fully reported in the final Opinion Leader report on the whole engagement programme.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process also included some assessment of behaviour change, by asking participants to complete questionnaires on what they had done as a result of being involved. This evaluation followed up this earlier work, and found further evidence of changes in views and reported behaviour as a result of involvement. • There is no detailed evidence about <u>why</u> these changes in values, attitudes and behaviour have happened.
<p>To provide an opportunity for democratic engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic engagement has been defined for this purpose as a good quality engagement process which related to the democratic process of influencing government policy. These diverse issues are dealt with in the individual points in this table in the analysis of the work to achieve the first objective of the process, and the points below. • There was a sufficiently large group to ensure a demographically representative sample of the public, including ensuring representation from all age groups, men and women, and from black and minority ethnic groups. The sample also included a range of environmental opinions and levels of current environmental activity. Although there were criticisms from some respondents that a larger groups would have provided a more robust sample, this was not necessary to achieve the specific objectives of this exercise. • Participants were able to discuss the issue within small groups with a good mix of demographic characteristics and different views and opinions. • Participants felt that they had been able to share their views, had made a contribution to a process they understood, were treated fairly and respectfully, and that no single view had been allowed to dominate discussions. • Participants felt that the information provided had been fair and balanced, that there was enough information, and that it had been useful. • Participants felt hopeful that Government would listen and take account of their input on the issues of climate change. They also felt able to discuss the issues that concerned them. • Observers and policy makers agreed that the information provided had largely been fair and balanced, and useful (although some regretted the lack of opposing or alternative views on climate change).

<p>To create an event that would stimulate further interest and action by participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant feedback is that they learned a great deal about climate change from the process. They also gained in knowledge and confidence from the pre-Summit workshops. • There is evidence that participants changed their views, clarified and changed their thinking, and changed their behaviour as a result of taking part. • Participants talked to many other people as a result of taking part in this process (see section 5.5 for details) as a result of their interest having been stimulated by their involvement here. • No target numbers for climate change ambassadors were set for the event, so there is no opportunity for measuring the extent to which that target was met.
<p>To identify lessons for future engagement practice by Defra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a description of the engagement activities in the Opinion Leader final report, as well as in this evaluation report, which therefore provides a full picture of what happened for future reference. • The process met all targets for recruitment in terms of geographical coverage, mix of people, demographic representation, and mix of views and levels of activity. • This evaluation report identifies what worked well, and what worked least well, and provides some analysis of why that may be, as well as lessons for future public engagement practice.

7.3 Conclusion on achievement of objectives

The objectives were quite broad and a framework of questions and criteria was defined early in the evaluation process to assess whether the objectives had been met. That framework has been used to assess activity against the objectives in the table above. From that analysis, it can be seen that the two formal objectives were largely met.

However, achievement of the first objective is difficult to assess fully as, although specific research was undertaken to assess the impact on policy design around behaviour change, little specific evidence was forthcoming. This may be because this policy is continuing to be developed in the longer term. It may also be that this public engagement process was not specific enough to feed directly into specific policy initiatives (and some policy makers and observers felt that it would not have been appropriate if it had). Nevertheless, the policy makers working in the relevant policy areas confirm that they have been influenced by the outputs of this public engagement process, and do feel they are taking the outputs into account as policy develops.

There is clear evidence that the other objectives have been fully met, in terms of driving awareness, information and debate on climate change, and also on the more specific issues of exploring the environmental contract, understanding behaviour change, providing an opportunity for democratic engagement and creating an event that would stimulate further interest and action by participants.

8 Overall conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This final section summarises the key outcomes identified in the report, and identifies some lessons for future public engagement. It draws on the analysis within all the previous chapters.

8.2 Summary of key outcomes

Defra's public engagement programme on climate change has worked very effectively and provided some significant benefits to all those who have taken part and those who have used the outputs. The key outcomes were:

- **For public participants:**
 - Satisfaction with the process and a sense of their involvement being worthwhile
 - Learning from the process, both from information provided (in writing, the DVD and from expert speakers at the Summit) and from other participants
 - Clarifying and developing thinking on climate change and empowering them to take action
 - Gaining and spreading awareness of the issues to friends, family and others, which they saw as a key aspect of taking action on climate change
 - Sharing views with a diverse group of other participants
 - Having an opportunity for involvement, and the potential for influencing Government on policies around climate change.

There were some problems for public and stakeholder participants, particularly around:

- Lack of opposing and alternative arguments on climate change as part of the deliberative discussions.
- Lack of continuing opportunities to widen engagement, including continuing the process with those involved here.

However, overall, all participants gained significant value from the process and found it enjoyable, informative and worthwhile.

- **For policy makers and observers:**
 - This was a well-designed and delivered process, that generated energy and enthusiasm among participants. The pre-Summit workshops were seen as essential in ensuring a basis of knowledge for participants so they could participate fully and easily in the Summit. The presence of the Secretary of State throughout was seen as particularly valuable.

- The most valuable forms of output were the polling results, and the opportunity to listen directly to public participants debating at the Summit. The final report of the engagement process was seen as less useful, being broad but shallow in terms of detailed research findings, as a result of the recording methods used which did not capture all the detailed points made during the table discussions. There were concerns that the final report did not fully deliver the detailed research outputs that had been hoped for by some policy makers, although it did meet other of the multiple objectives for the process.
- There was also value in the increased public awareness of climate change issues. Many of the public participants had developed their own awareness and had also talked to others (friends, family, colleagues) about what they had learned from the process. This dissemination of interest and knowledge of climate change issues through peers is likely to be particularly valuable as it is known that information from friends and family is often more trusted than from some other sources. In this way, the spreading awareness from this process may also provide a valuable foundation for future engagement activities.
- Policy makers and observers did learn about public engagement as a result of this process, including about the appropriate methods of engagement depending on the objectives. In this case, the multiple objectives were seen to make it difficult to find methods that delivered them all fully although the programme was seen as a success overall.
- The process has influenced policy in that it has provided understanding of public views on the issues, achieved and assessed attitude and behaviour change, and encouraged policy makers to listen more to public views. It may have been more influential in changing the way Government engages with the public on climate change and how it may encourage behaviour change in future, rather than impacting on specific policy developments.

Overall, policy makers and observers thought the process had been effective and valuable in both its process and outputs.

8.3 Lessons for the future

This section summarises some of the main lessons from the evaluation, across the whole consultation process. Each of the preceding sections also identifies lessons from the specific activity covered in that section.

- **Design appropriate to objectives.** Multiple and potentially conflicting objectives can make it very difficult to design an appropriate public engagement process. In this case, there were research objectives (in terms of gaining data on public opinions, why they were held and how they might change) as well as engagement objectives (in terms of generating enthusiasm and energy so that participants would continue to develop their thinking and change their attitudes and behaviour). While this exercise did succeed in partially achieving one objective and fully achieving the others, it did not result in a process that was completely clear in purpose.

The design and delivery of the process worked well, but greater clarity and simplicity of objectives is likely to enable a more completely appropriate design and more effective and easy delivery.

- **Appropriate size.** A diverse range of views can be obtained from a relatively small sample of the public, which can be robust from a deliberative research perspective. This was a large enough group (over 150 people), although some respondents felt the results would have been considered more robust in terms of research evidence if there had been more people involved. The disadvantage of increasing size was felt to be the amount of time and effort that was needed to manage a large event, and the potential for decreasing returns in terms of stimulating participants and generating research results even with greater cost and effort.

Size is an important factor to consider in planning future events, and can affect more than simply the venue that can be used.

- **Value of deliberation.** Deliberative public engagement processes provide new information and time for the participants to carefully consider input and develop their views through reflection and discussion.

These processes can deliver particular value in terms of public education through engagement even on a complex, technical and controversial topic such as climate change, as well as outputs that provide richer data on public attitudes and views that are of particular value to policy makers. In this case, both participants and policy makers felt they had learned from being involved. Deliberative methods may also be seen as potentially particularly valuable in exploring issues where behaviour change was most difficult (e.g. giving up flying), and in exploring scepticism about climate change and how to engage with that.

- **Appropriate recording and reporting.** The main cost and effort in public engagement is in designing and delivering an appropriate process. The greatest resource is having the public in a room debating the issues in as full a manner as possible. In order to gain the maximum return on that investment, it may be appropriate to reconsider the current practice of having the facilitator of small discussion groups also record the points made by the participants.

Although full audio recording and transcription, and full analysis, is expensive, it does more fully respect and value the input of the participants, as well as providing much richer data for research purposes. A cheaper and effective alternative is to have another person (not the facilitator) record participant comments on flipcharts; this has the advantages of being less expensive than transcribing and analysing verbatim recordings, as well as being a transparent process so participants can challenge what is being noted if they disagree with it as an accurate record of their views.

- **Feedback to participants.** Feedback to participants is vital and should be done as soon as possible after their involvement. Ideally, feedback should provide a summary of what was provided to policy makers based on public input, what influence that input had, and what is finally decided at the end of the process. In this case, there were considerable follow-up activities with participants including an immediate summary report on outputs from the process, Defra maintaining contact with those who had expressed an interest in staying involved after the Summit, and a follow up survey after six months.

This is a complex area and it may be useful to test other approaches to providing feedback that maximise the benefits of engagement processes to participants, commissioning bodies and policy makers, without incurring significant additional costs.

- **Deliberation stimulating reported behaviour change.** This process did achieve quite significant attitude and behaviour change, including driving awareness for participants and beyond as participants took the message to their friends, families and others. This behaviour change is not just in terms of personal environmental behaviour but also in terms of active citizenship and empowerment. In this way, the exercise not only built the capacity of those involved, it also energised them to make changes themselves and persuade others of the need to change.

This is a remarkable achievement and this public engagement process should therefore perhaps be seen more as a 'model' for future engagement as an element of behaviour change, rather than as an approach to researching tools for future behaviour change.

- **Including opposing and alternative views.** While this process was clearly valuable in exploring and modelling the environmental contract, that did have the effect of removing elements of conflict from the debate. There is real value in including opposing and alternative views on climate change, partly to tackle and explore public scepticism about climate change, and partly to stimulate and broaden the debate. This will be particularly important in attempting to tackle the areas of behaviour change beyond people's immediate comfort zones.
- **Involving senior policy makers.** It was clearly enormously valuable to the status and sense of importance of the process for participants (and observers and policy makers), that the Secretary of State was present for the whole event. It will always be valuable to have senior decision-makers present to hear public discussions on these controversial issues at first hand. However, David Miliband's almost immediate move to another post did create a sense among participants that the value of his involvement was reduced. In this case, the presence of numerous senior Defra officials to hear public views first hand helped ensure that messages from the public were not lost.

This is an issue partly of public perception and it may be useful for those commissioning such public engagement processes in future to ensure visibility for civil servants, as well as maximising the value of the presence of senior politicians.

8.4 Final conclusions

Developing an effective public engagement process to meet the multiple objectives of this programme was a major challenge.

The process was largely very successful, and provided significant value for the public participants, policy makers and observers. However, it did not fully meet all the expectations from all policy makers involved, particularly for detailed research findings. The complexity of the objectives did create some problems for the design of a process that was intended to provide research, engagement and communications outcomes, and it was perhaps inevitable that not all these outcomes would be fully achieved within the limited timescale for this programme.

Overall, however, this was a very good, innovative and highly effective public engagement programme which largely met all the objectives set. The process has also provided significant value to the public participants involved, and to the policy makers who have used the outputs of the process in various ways.

The process has increased public awareness and understanding of the issues of climate change, changed participant attitudes and behaviour, and encouraged participants to take the messages out to many other people. It has also increased the willingness of public participants, and several policy makers, to get involved in engagement programmes in future.

There are numerous lessons for future practice that have emerged and this process can therefore be seen as a valuable contribution to the future development of public engagement on issues around behaviour change and climate change.

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