

# Mainstreaming collaboration with communities and stakeholders for FCERM

Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding

Science Report: SC060019 Work Package 4



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Steve Killeen

**Head of Science**

# Executive summary

This report proposes a new analysis tool to help Environment Agency staff decide how much collaboration is appropriate in different situations, to improve flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM).

The need for such a tool is based on a review of literature and practice which shows that FCERM solutions can no longer be imposed or delivered by the Environment Agency using traditional decide-announce-defend (DAD) approaches alone. Instead, a broader range of approaches is required, especially those which enable others to engage-deliberate-decide (EDD). Many examples of the EDD-type of collaboration exist, and programmes such as *Building Trust with Communities* are helping to develop these examples.

However, the research found that two myths pervade, preventing the consistent use of collaboration to improve FCERM outcomes:

## **Myth 1: Collaborating with others is expensive and time-consuming**

*Reality:* There is a range of ways of collaborating with others, each with a range of associated costs and benefits. Matching the most appropriate approach to the situation at hand offers a cost-effective way of achieving multiple goals and added value. Collaborative methods also offer a precautionary approach which can reduce the costs and risks associated with non-delivery of flood schemes. The critical factor is for collaboration to be tailored to the situation.

## **Myth 2: It is possible to choose whether or not to work with others on FCERM**

*Reality:* All FCERM work will involve some type of engagement, which will increasingly be needed to deliver essential services. Working with others is sometimes the only way of getting things done – not just at the local level, but also nationally. Choices to be made are about the extent and type of engagement with others, not whether or not to collaborate.

To counter these myths, the report suggests that new processes are needed to help the Environment Agency decide when to collaborate and how much collaboration is required, in a similar way to current Environment Agency processes which assist engineering-based decision-making. For collaboration to be used effectively within FCERM, a clear decision-making process is needed at the start of any project or programme that looks at what type of decision or situation is being dealt with, how much and what type of engagement is appropriate (and how much it will cost).

The report suggests that use of the proposed analysis tool could not only improve Environment Agency decision making, legitimacy and trust, but could significantly reduce the risk of non-delivery of flood risk projects, and reduce the costs of controversial decisions. The tool will enable staff to decide on the most appropriate amount and type of collaboration for a given situation, whether the situation is a unique project or the delivery of ongoing work:

- **Type A situations** are characterised by low controversy and/or few alternative options due to constraints of time, procedure and resources, or by the existence of a crisis (and need to act immediately).
- **Type B situations** are characterised by a greater number of options, increased uncertainty around the 'right' decision and/or the need to make trade-offs and compromises.

- **Type C situations** are characterised by the need to make a decision that will affect many stakeholders (individuals, communities and/or organisations) in a situation with much complexity or uncertainty, a range of (often entrenched) views on the ‘right’ decision and a strong likelihood of conflict and resistance.

The report describes classic engagement processes for each of these decision or situation types. It also analyses the current organisational readiness for mainstreaming collaboration in this way, and identifies a number of barriers including:

- procedures and systems which do not enable staff to spend time on/reward collaborative efforts;
- inconsistency in messages and leadership on the desirability of collaboration;
- gaps in individual collaborative skills, abilities and knowledge.

The report does not recommend changing the ‘culture’ of the Environment Agency to address these challenges, but rather that staff (including managers) should be aware of and make efforts to mitigate the inward-focused tendencies of the organisation during outward-facing collaborative tasks including:

- Build up skills of rapport and planning collaboration (making it a less seemingly chaotic process) with staff in relevant roles and give them recognized formats, systems and processes to execute.
- Recruit and assign or enable people with outward-facing and interpersonal skills to support outward-facing activities, for example through *Building Trust with Communities* mentors and ‘key contacts’ as well as technical staff who have these skills.
- Work strategically and tactically with other organisations who are culturally better equipped to carry out some tasks, and build recognition of what they do (and how the Environment Agency will link to their work).
- Retain consultancies and agencies skilled not just in public relations and consultation (DAD), but in collaborative approaches (EDD). Make it possible for staff to call on them for assistance in designing and delivering collaborative programmes – not just for one-off support, but over the longer term/day-to-day work that is being done.

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# 1 Introduction

This report brings together the work carried out as part of Work Package 4 of the project “Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding (Science Project SC060019).

This work package was designed to inform the Making Space for Water project work on building community and stakeholder engagement (Thomas *et al.*, 2007) and a significant proportion of the resulting report was based on the framework and business case put forward in Work Package 4 Part 1 Report<sup>1</sup>. This final Work Package 4 report takes the work a step further, building on the evidence from literature reviews and practice to put forward a consistent framework for:

- why and when to apply engagement and risk communications in a cost effective way;
- how to go about it (what changes are required).

In order to develop recommendations for improving cost effective involvement of others in flood risk management we have:

- reviewed literature and worked closely with Environment Agency and Defra staff, and key collaborating partner organisations to understand why and when to apply engagement and risk communications in a cost effective way
- developed practical tools/frameworks to assist the above;
- tested and refined the tools;
- reviewed findings and made recommendations for taking the work forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1

# 2 Proposals for cost-effective involvement of others in flood risk management

## 2.1 Introduction

This section sets out key findings from the literature and current practice review, and proposes a practical process and tool to establish appropriate levels of engagement.

## 2.2 Key findings from the review of literature and current practice

Our review shows that there **is simply no longer any choice in the matter**: flood and coastal erosion risk management can no longer be imposed or delivered by the Environment Agency working alone or within its traditional remit as a result of:

- policy shifts
- research and literature
- legislation
- constraints on resources
- the significance of politics
- the rise in complexity and relevance of multiple perspectives.

For example, constraints on resources mean that at a community, area and regional level more collaborative approaches are **having to happen**. This is not only due to the ‘funding gap’ but also due to the nature of flooding and the inability of organizations to provide full ‘protection’.

Another reason for having to collaborate is the tendency for the Environment Agency (and other organisations) to resist **joined up working** on flood issues (and to perpetuate silo working). This stands in stark contrast to the views of communities (and more recently national and local press and media coverage, for example after the summer 2007 floods) who consider issues in the round, seeking integrated solutions across a range of geographies and organizational remits. This is reinforced by findings in the science community that the limits in reductive thinking are being reached, and calls for use of holistic science and values in resolving problems.

Furthermore, lessons learned from practice – including pilot projects for example on integrated urban drainage, building trust with communities and so on – show that the integration of **multiple perspectives** and systems thinking results in a better, more informed decision than would be reached by the Environment Agency working alone from the ‘Decide-Announce-Defend’ model. However, the **we know best** attitude is still prevalent and underpins the current reliance on one-way communication (convincing others we are right), or standard consultation.

Another example of the need to shift towards greater collaboration to deliver FCERM outcomes is the significant mismatch between the inherently **political nature** of many flooding decisions and policies, such as Making Space for Water (MSfW), and the existing mindset that it is inappropriate for staff (or civil servants) to engage with politics and human or psychological issues. This results in the Environment Agency being considered remote and out of touch with people, and in ignoring significant sources of information.

At the same time, there is significant **demand for involvement** from communities, stakeholders and the public – not just in refining solutions but in working through the whole decision making process, from problem identification through to implementation. Some of these have been welcomed and supported, for example work done to reduce flood risk in Shaldon, South Devon or with communities in Carlisle post flooding, or in Wessex to deal with ground water flooding. But there are many examples of leadership by others (such as local authorities, voluntary groups, communities and individuals) that go unrecognized by the Environment Agency, or that are viewed with hostility.

Therefore there needs to be a shift which places collaboration and engagement with others – communities, civil contingency partners and individuals – **at the heart** of FCERM decision making and delivery. There is some evidence that this is being reflected in new policies, and there are example of innovation and excellent practice at the local level as a result of individual leadership. However, the ‘policy shift’ towards more participatory working was found in our review to be more **‘hierarchy in disguise’** than a genuine shift towards collaboration. This has resulted in the Environment Agency putting more efforts into ‘telling others better’ or **‘more sophisticated nagging’** (for example, better awareness campaigns, getting people to sign up to Flood Warnings Direct) rather than genuine two way engagement in which collaboration for better outcomes is the driver (for example individual or community preparedness). At worst the current approach to greater engagement is resulting in what one local authority officer termed an **‘aggressive transfer of responsibility’** at the community and individual level.

Partly the reason for this is that the **shifts being promoted by MSfW are not yet part of the thinking** (internally or externally). There is still very much a ‘our responsibility is to build/maintain flood defences’ mindset within the Environment Agency. In that context, the relevance of engagement is reduced because staff may still believe their role is (after careful analysis), to impose their (engineering) solution. They believe they have all the knowledge and skills required to make the right decision and implement it. Engagement in this context is simply about telling people what is happening, or what they have to do.

And this is not just a local mindset. Engagement and politics around flooding is not something that can or should be considered only at the community, area or regional level: there are significant gaps in securing ‘buy in’ to new policies (such as MSfW) at a national **level** which make local level implementation very difficult. Change in the name of the ‘Building *Trust with Communities*’ to ‘Building Trust with Others’ programmes is starting to reflect this need for engagement above the local level, but there is some way to go for this to be widely accepted, or for national level to recognize the scale of the shift required.

Finally, we have found that there is continued scepticism within the Environment Agency about engagement despite its successes – and even its successes are ‘reframed’ to emphasise the costs or down sides. This may stem at least in part from the predominant **organisational culture** which, according to the Organisational Character Index<sup>2</sup> may be strongly “ISTJ”, classification for an internally focused organization which concerns itself with facts and details, depends on procedures and principles and likes things spelled out and definite. It probably does not like to work collaboratively and it resists change and innovation.

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<sup>2</sup> Bridges (2000).

## 2.3 How and when to work collaboratively with others in a cost effective way: Busting two myths

Section 2.2 provides an overview of our key findings from research and practice. Within these findings are two pervasive 'engagement myths'.

### **Myth 1: Working collaboratively with others is expensive and takes a long time**

*Reality:* A wide range of ways of collaborating with others exist with a range of associated costs and benefits: matching the appropriate approach with the situation presents cost effective ways of achieving multiple goals and added value. Collaborative methodologies also offer a precautionary approach which can reduce the costs and risks associated with non delivery of flood schemes. The critical factor is that the collaboration is designed and appropriate to the situation.

### **Myth 2: It is possible to choose whether or not to work with others for FCERM.**

*Reality:* All FCERM work will involve some type of engagement and increasingly it is going to be required in order to deliver key services: working with others is sometimes the only way of getting things done – not just at the local level, but also nationally. Choices to be made are about the extent and type of engagement with others, not whether to or not.

New processes are needed to help the Environment Agency decide when to collaborate with others and how much collaboration is required, in a similar way to current Environment Agency processes to guide engineering-based decisions.

A clear decision-making process is needed from the start of any project or programme that looks at what type of decision or situation is being dealt with, how much and what type of engagement is appropriate, and how much it will cost.

This decision making process will be appropriate even for ongoing pieces of work, and where engagement is part of the day to day job to be done: it is all about how much time and effort will be appropriate at different stages in the decision making process, and in implementation and maintenance.

The danger of NOT considering who to collaborate with at the start of a project is illustrated in the article below from the Western Gazette (February 2008) – see Figure 2.1, which shows what happens when a community that has been campaigning for flood risk management is not involved in designing the scheme:

*“How extraordinary an achievement it is for a public agency to devise something that is clearly intended to fulfil aspirations but has managed to unite residents in feeling it would be worse than useless.”*

The article concludes that

*“A quick word with the locals is not, after all, part of a proper bureaucratic process.”*

The process we propose in this section would reduce the risk of this situation arising: a quick word with the locals MUST become part of a proper bureaucratic process, not just at the beginning of a project, but throughout.

**Figure 2.1:** Article to illustrate the danger of DAD rather than EDD approach

Oliver's weekly column in the Western Gazette, Saturday 9 February 2008

**DEMOCRACY PRODUCES A FLOOD PLAN NO-ONE LIKES**

When is progress not progress? Answer; when it makes things worse rather than better.

This riddle came into my mind as I stood staring, last Friday, at a large map in the kitchen of a house in Charminster. The map showed in glorious technicolour the scheme proposed by the Environment Agency for relieving flooding in Charminster. For those who are not familiar with Charminster, it is a village that has, at its centre, a beautiful old church, a confluence of various streams, and a number of lovely old houses coming down a rather steep hill.

For many years, I have been trying, at the behest of people living in the village, to persuade the Environment Agency to devise a scheme to make it less likely the village will be flooded by the streams. You might have assumed the early morning inspection of the map was something in the nature of a celebration. Here, at last, was an Environment Agency scheme for doing exactly what we had all been seeking.

Alas, there is a hitch.

The parish council chairman reports the scheme has succeeded in achieving unanimity in the village, something that is rare in any place. Unfortunately, the unanimity resides in the fact there is no-one who approves of the scheme.

There seems, in fact, to be various kinds of objection. Villagers believe the scheme will probably make flooding more likely rather than less, at least in some places; not an auspicious start for a flood alleviation project. This is not the end of the matter. Villagers are also alarmed at the aesthetic damage the scheme will cause, creating a rather intrusive and unsightly bund in a location of exceptional charm.

As I listened to the various objections to the Environment Agency proposal, I reflected on how extraordinary an achievement it is for a public agency to devise something that is clearly intended to fulfil aspirations but has managed to unite residents in feeling it would be worse than useless. I do not suppose the cost of producing the drawings and doing the other work associated with the proposal will have been enormous, but a consultancy was nevertheless employed and we will all have contributed a small amount through our taxes in paying for this object d'art.

It is a little irking that we will now have to spend a certain amount of energy persuading the Environment Agency to abandon the very thing we had expended so much energy persuading them to undertake.

The strange thing is when one inspects the proposal, it transpires that enormous numbers of worthy bodies were duly consulted. The so-called Scoping Consultation Document has been issued to Natural England, English Heritage, West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and the Dorset Wildlife Trust. These worthy bodies will, no doubt, now have to expend some time and effort considering their responses to the proposal.

The thought flitted through my mind, as I left the kitchen meeting, that it might have made sense for the Environment Agency to ask their consultants to have a quick word with the locals at an early stage, to see what might be acceptable, before they did all the work.

I quickly banished this ludicrous fantasy from my mind. A quick word with the locals is not, after all, part of a proper bureaucratic process.

### 2.3.1 Establishing what type of decision or situation is being dealt with

As the previous article illustrates, there is **risk** in not collaborating with others: But this may not always be the case. In some situations, the input of others may not be needed to make an informed, acceptable decision, or to implement an ongoing programme of work: it might simply be a waste of time to spend time and money on engaging others when there is no need. The question is, how to know?

We have developed three decision types as a broad framework for analysing the particular situational context of a piece of work, and the risk of 'making the wrong decision'. These decision types represent an indicative spectrum rather than three discrete types<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 2.2:** Three broad decision types

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#### Type A decisions

*Characteristics:* In Type A situations, there tends to be little conflict, controversy or uncertainty about the decision or situation. There may be few or no options due to constraints by time, procedure, legislation, resources or crisis.

*For example:* Flood warning campaigns, small changes to existing flood defence schemes, implementation of an emergency plan, implementation of already accepted solution.

#### Type B decisions

*Characteristics:* In type B situations/decisions, there is not huge controversy but there is a need for buy in/understanding from a discrete number of stakeholders (individuals, organisations and/or communities) to ensure the decision is well informed AND to reduce risk of non delivery through resistance or opposition by individuals, communities, partners or other stakeholders. The situation/decision may also require that tradeoffs and compromises are made.

*For example:* Managed realignment in sparsely populated areas, developing a scheme where acceptance is needed but where there may be concern about the design (for example, the effect on village character), where there is low trust in the Environment Agency.

#### Type C decisions

*Characteristics:* In Type C situations there is – or could be - high conflict, controversy and uncertainty about the decision. The decision is likely to affect many – rather than a discrete number of - stakeholders (individuals, organisations and/or communities). It may be that some stakeholders will be disproportionately affected, or that one set of stakeholders may gain out while others lose out. There may be a need for shared ownership of solution by multiple actors in order that they will play their full role in delivering it (working in partnership to fund, build or maintain defences, for example). There may be a risk of strong opposition which may derail the scheme unless people are involved.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 2.3 of Appendix 1 sets out the theoretical underpinning of this tool.

*Examples include: Managed realignment in populated areas with campaigns/a history of resistance against a particular solution, where the Environment Agency has a poor reputation*

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### **The analysis tool**

**Figure 2.3** shows our proposed analysis tool for deciding which situation matches a particular project<sup>4</sup>. After answering the questions, consider where the weight of answers lies:

If mostly type A is circled - characterise **type A**

If mostly type B is circled - characterise **type B**

If mostly type C is circled - characterise **type C**

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<sup>4</sup> The tool is based on work done by Arthur Little (2005 for the Rail Safety Standards Board, itself based on work by Galston Sciences (2005) and a framework developed by UKOOA (1999)). For further information see references and Appendix 1.

**Figure 2.3:** Decision-type analysis tool

Instructions: To characterise the situation or type of decision<sup>5</sup> in a particular programme or project, circle the most applicable words in the table below.

Decision type	A	B	C
<p><b>Feature 1: How affected will others be by the decision?</b></p> <p>The decision may have ___ effect on ___ public interest, health, livelihoods</p>	<p>Very little</p> <p>Few people's</p>	<p>Some</p> <p>Some people's</p>	<p>Severe</p> <p>Many people's</p>
<p><b>Feature 2: How many perspectives/politics?</b></p> <p>There is likely to be _____ different perspectives on the issue (to ours) and _____ politics</p>	<p>No significant</p> <p>No/containable</p>	<p>A number of</p> <p>Some</p>	<p>A wide range of</p> <p>Significant</p>
<p><b>Feature 3: How much support or ownership of the decision or implementation by others is required?</b></p> <p>The 'best' decision is _____</p> <p>And we can implement _____</p>	<p>Known</p> <p>Alone (with or without support)</p>	<p>Open to influence, but limited options</p> <p>More easily if others work with us</p>	<p>Unknown</p> <p>Only with sufficient support, or only with others</p>
<p><b>Feature 4: Understanding of risk and uncertainty?</b></p> <p>Risk and uncertainty relevant to the decision is _____</p>	<p>Low: understood by most</p>	<p>Medium: understood by us (and some) but not by all others</p>	<p>High: poorly understood</p>
<p><b>Feature 5: Timescale?</b></p> <p>Actions or decisions need to be made and implemented _____</p>	<p>Immediately/very quickly</p>	<p>Over months</p>	<p>Over years</p>

<sup>5</sup> 'Decision' in this context refers to anything that needs to be resolved, for example, 'how can we deal equitably with the insurance issue' or 'how can we ensure the impact of flooding in the future is reduced', or 'what might be the most acceptable design for a flood defence scheme'.

## A worked example

The tool was tested by the *Building Trust with Communities* (BTwC) programme and found to bring clarity and purpose to a whole range of situations<sup>6</sup>.

The results of applying the tool as a theoretical exercise by the consultants (and informally tested on staff and with members of a local community experiencing a similar situation) indicates that the situation in Charminster (as outlined in the article in Figure 2.1) was almost certainly a Type B situation.

This suggests that if such an analysis had been undertaken within the project, it would have told project officers that there is a need to engage with key stakeholders in the design of the scheme (more broadly than statutory consultees such as the parish council, English Nature and so on). Doing so would be likely to reduce the risk of scheme rejection through inappropriate design, lack of understanding of options and so on.

**Figure 2.4:** Worked example: Retrospectively applying the tool to the situation in Charminster (see Figure 2.1)

<p><b>Feature 1:</b> How affected will others be by the decision to implement a particular flood defence scheme in Charminster?</p> <p>The decision may have SOME effect on MANY PEOPLE'S public interest, health, livelihoods.</p>
<p><b>Feature 2:</b> Multiple perspectives</p> <p>There is likely to be A NUMBER OF different perspectives on the issue (to ours) and SOME politics.</p>
<p><b>Feature 3:</b> How much support or ownership of the decision or implementation by others is required?</p> <p>The 'best' decision is OPEN TO INFLUENCE, BUT LIMITED OPTIONS. And we can implement MORE EASILY IF OTHERS WORK WITH US.</p>
<p><b>Feature 4:</b> Risk and uncertainty</p> <p>Risk and uncertainty relevant to the decision is LOW: UNDERSTOOD BY MOST (because there is acceptance that flood risk needs to be reduced).</p>
<p><b>Feature 5:</b> Speed</p> <p>Actions or decisions need to be made and implemented OVER MONTHS/YEARS.</p>

**Result:** Mostly Type B. This implies it would be worthwhile to engage with local groups and community members (especially active ones) at an early stage.

<sup>6</sup> *Building Trust with Communities/Making Space for Water* 'How to Guide': Evidence from training and individual mentor feedback 2007-2008.

## 2.3.2 Types of collaboration and engagement

In addition to understanding the situation in which one is working, it is vital to understand the range of approaches to collaboration that are available for FCERM projects or ongoing work.

Our review indicates that there are two key ways of conceptualising the types of engagement required for FCERM. The first is by considering the **amount of power** those that are involved in the process will be given within the decision-making and implementation/maintenance process. In some situations, those involved will simply be informed of a decision (for example, sandbags will be available at the village hall) or encouraged/enabled to act (such as flood-proofing the house). In others, they will get a chance to give their views (by attending an meeting or completing a questionnaire). Those involved may be able to liaise regularly with decision-makers to check on or inform the work of the latter throughout the life of a programme, or they may actually share the decision-making power (for example, by sitting on a Local Resilience Forum, being part of Gold Command). Some types of engagement naturally lend themselves to particular situations or types of decision. The table below summarises the types of collaboration available, and which may be appropriate for the three decision types set out in Figure 2.3.

**Table 2.1:** Typology of collaboration, adapted from Building Trust with Others/LCA

Type of collaboration	Why you might want to use this type of involvement or collaboration	Key to which type of decision making?
<b>Involving others in decision-making</b>		
<i>Information gathering</i> - targeted	a) Finding out specific information from specific people or organisations to inform a decision b) Collecting and analysing day-to-day, non-solicited feedback from your stakeholders to inform any decisions.	Type A Type B Type C
	- broad Informing decisions by gathering views as widely as possible from professional partners, the community and others. Often one-off involvement.	Type B (limited) Type C (extensive)
<i>Involving</i>	Enabling others to shape decisions on an ongoing basis. This results in longer term and more influential relationships in which final decisions are made by the Environment Agency, but based on the working relationship with those involved	Type B (small scale) Type C (large scale)
<i>Deciding together</i>	Sharing the decision-making equally with [named] stakeholders.	Type C
<b>Involving others in practical delivery</b>		
<i>Information giving</i>	Letting others know of decisions, opportunities, ideas. This may or may not be with the intention of altering their perceptions (PR) or behaviour (education).  Informing may also involve sharing views/just listening to different points of view, and allowing people to understand differences, rather than explicitly trying to inform the community and others about decisions.	Type A (late in the process) Type B Type C (right from the start)
<i>Co-delivery and capacity building</i>	Working with and enabling others to act, such as closing flood gates, collecting data, raising funds, writing community emergency plans.	Type A Type B (small scale) Type C (large scale)
<i>Co-ordination/networking</i>	Maintaining relationships, sharing information, ensuring coordination.	Type A Type B Type C

The second way of conceptualising engagement is based on the way that involvement takes place. There are two broad approaches to bringing people into a decision-making process: decide-announce-defend (DAD) and engage-deliberate-decide (EDD).

Decide-announce-defend is a well-established process in public bodies. In this model, the decision-maker decides on the preferred solution to a problem internally (or possibly in consultation with statutory stakeholders), according to established processes and requirements. They then **announce** the solution (s), decision (s) or options to the affected parties (in a consultation document, presentation at a meeting, leaflet, press release). The next step, because the announcement shows more or less made up minds, is to **defend** the solution in the face of any opposition from stakeholders. Because those stakeholders may have very different experience or perspectives to the decision maker, they will probably have limited understanding of how the decision maker has come to that conclusion. As a result they may feel railroaded – rather than involved – in the decision. This may be appropriate in routine decisions<sup>7</sup> but if there is any complexity or controversy involved, they may treat any ‘options’ with suspicion, and almost automatically shift to ‘attack’ mode by which they test the decision makers power and ability to insist on the solution. Where decisions will affect their lives and property, or their village character or favourite places this attack may become organised and may be impossible to counter. As a result the ‘defence’ fails and the decision maker may have to go **back to the drawing board** and this time, the very people they need to help them design the solution will consider themselves in opposition.

This approach isn’t just limited to one off decisions, but will be replicated within the whole series of day to day actions and decisions being made as part of ongoing work.

Engage-deliberate-decide is a more recent engagement model of taking a step by step approach which starts not with decision making but with identifying all stakeholders (communities, organisations, individuals) that may be interested. The next step is engaging them in scoping and defining a problem before going on to identifying and evaluating options and informing (and very often advocating, supporting and implementing) the preferred way forward. The EDD approach does not always result in ‘consensus’ or universal acceptance of the preferred way forward, but it is much more likely that there is the understanding of why that (difficult) decision has to be made.

Again, EDD can be applied to ongoing, day to day work, as well as to specific one off ‘projects’: it is about the way that the job is being done, including the many little decisions and actions being taken along the way.

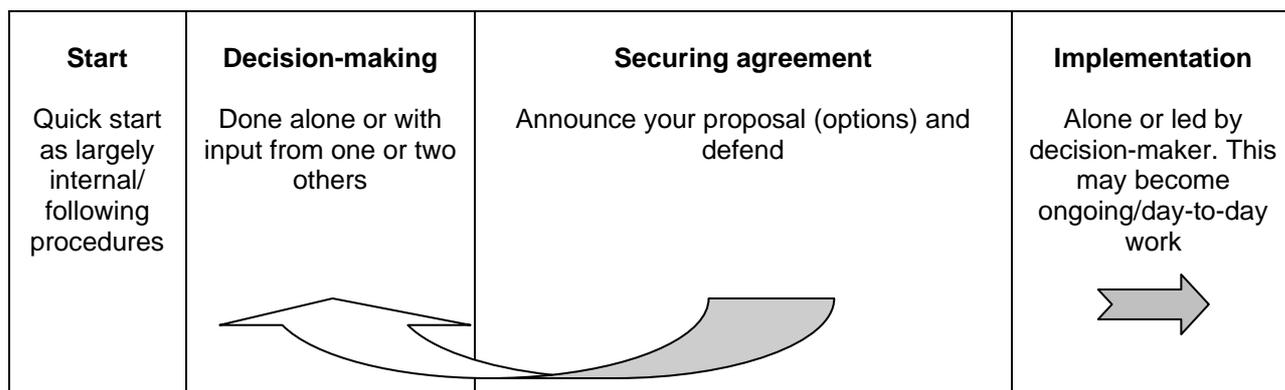
DAD and EDD have different cost profiles, with EDD placing emphasis on time and money being spent ‘early on’ or ‘front loading’ (taking a planned approach, identifying and working with stakeholders). For this reason it is often referred to as the ‘precautionary approach’. See Figure 2.5 and also Section 2.3.5 for more discussion of cost/benefits.

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<sup>7</sup> Deciding what is or is not a routine decision may not be straightforward, so the decision on the need for engagement should always include the local context.

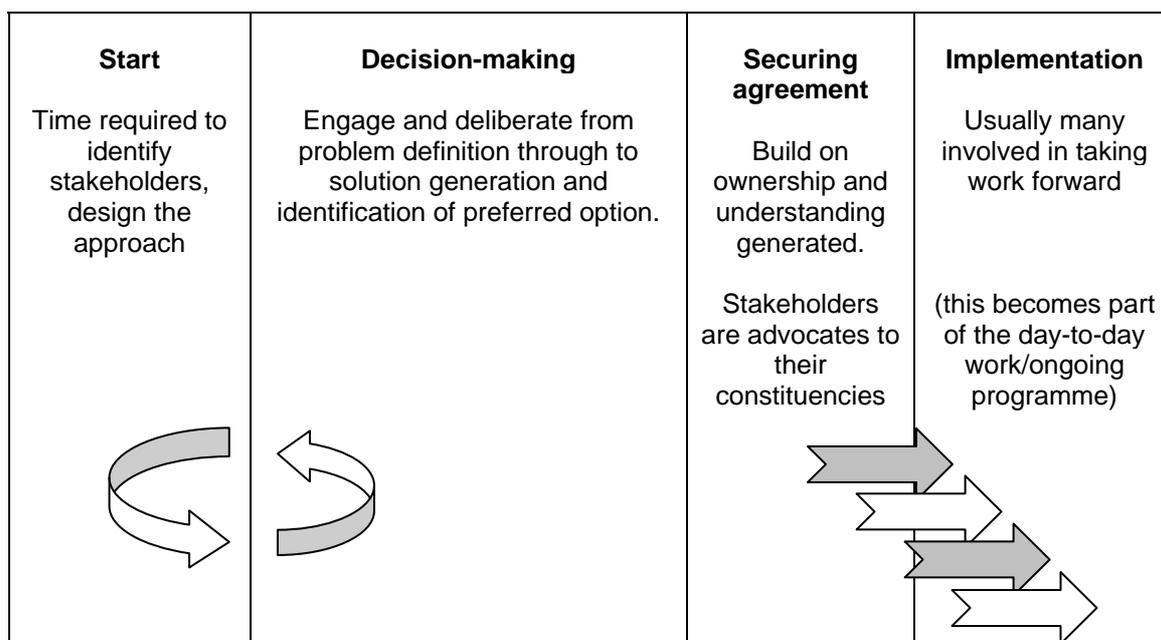
**Figure 2.5:** From DAD to EDD: Timeframes and risks of traditional and collaborative decision-making processes

Traditional approaches – DAD: decide, announce, defend



*Risk: if you are unable to defend or implement, return to the start*

Collaborative approaches – EDD: engage, deliberate, decide



*Risk: Process may take longer if particular issues, controversy, uncertainty uncovered*

### 2.3.3 Current approach to engagement by Defra/Environment Agency

Until recently, the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have relied on a DAD approach, with most engagement activity about informing others (to educate them or defend decisions against attack, improve the

Environment Agency's reputation and so on). This is consistent across UK Government, but there is increasing recognition that this needs to change<sup>8</sup>.

The benefits of using the EDD – or collaborative – approach have been promoted through *Building Trust with Communities* (BTwC) and demonstrated in various community engagement exercises<sup>9</sup> as well as increasing numbers of national-level engagements<sup>10</sup>. Fundamentally, DAD remains part of the organisational mindset, not least because of the two myths set out at the beginning of this section. As explored in our research, the collaborative approach does not come naturally to professional bodies such as the Environment Agency. For example, in their recent publication, *The collaborative state: How working together can transform public services*, Demos state:

*“In a world focused on action and achievement, collaboration often seems like a distraction from completing tasks and meeting output targets. Worse, for professional groups, collaboration can sometimes suggest a betrayal of their training, values and identities as they take on responsibilities traditionally associated with others.”<sup>11</sup>*

It is possible that one factor trapping the Environment Agency in the 'DAD' mode (which makes it hard to embrace collaboration for the reasons outlined above) is that there is no mainstream shift to Making Space for Water type thinking amongst staff, and so no perceived need to engage with communities and stakeholders in more meaningful ways. For example, taking the level of 'giving information':

*“If the Environment Agency still sees [that its] reason for existence is to put in hard defences, and the Environment Agency are no longer able to do this, then they will see no need to engage. They will just need to tell others it is their responsibility to deal with it. There is no challenge to the engineering grip. And yet if [we] look more broadly at managing flood risk across the UK, the engineering professionals don't have the answers, just the tools to deliver some solutions. There needs to be honesty about what the Environment Agency can and can't do. Engagement works when you realise you are working for communities, not to put in defences, or to get rid of responsibility onto others.”<sup>12</sup>*

On the other hand, many staff are recognising the importance of better engagement but face that the problem of how to make it a reality.

Our work indicates it is possible to apply the EDD approach not just in the major, high risk, controversial flood defence (or managed realignment) projects (conceptualised as Type C in the previous section, and undertaken in Shaldon, Devon), but in all types of engagement activity – in routine or day-to-day Type A FCERM situations or light-touch collaborative Type B FCERM situations.

This conclusion is also supported by the Making Space for Water report which concludes *“The important point to note is that DAD and EDD apply in a whole range of situations – from those where a decision has been made and others need to be told about it, to situations where the Environment Agency is enabling others to make a decision”*. The

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<sup>8</sup> Work initiated in November 2007 by the Cabinet Committee on Public Engagement and Service Delivery DA(PED) directs officials to develop a cross-government strategic framework for engagement and empowerment. Mapping by the Ministry of Justice shows that most departments focus on informing citizens and communities rather than engaging and empowering them.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the Shaldon BTwC pilot in Devon. Other successful examples documented as FRM engagement case studies include Ottery St Mary; 2000 Flood Events – Northern Wales; Todmorden Flood Storage.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Defra's consultation on the Carbon Reduction Commitment which has engaged stakeholders over the last two years in shaping what would otherwise have been a very controversial scheme.

<sup>11</sup> DEMOS (2007). *The collaborative state: How working together can transform public services*.

<sup>12</sup> Dave Melling, Bradford City Council. Interview by LCA. March 2007.

almost universal applicability of the EDD approach is mirrored in MSfW Project SD6 principles: the project board made the conscious decision to recommend the DAD approach as only suitable in emergencies, and to list it as the last rather than the first option.

The EDD approach can be applied to the way that: information is given out; consultation is managed; an individual meeting is run; an ongoing relationship is managed; or to the way that a large-scale involvement process is run, as illustrated in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2:** Potential use of EDD approach across different types of engagement

<b>Collaborative motivation (EDD approach)</b>	<b>Type or level of engagement</b>	<b>Environment Agency-centric motivation (one-way provision of information, DAD approach)</b>
Continuous process feeding into decision-making. <i>Motivation: more informed decisions.</i>	<b>Gather information (consult)</b> E.g. drop-ins, surveys	Discrete activity at arm's length from the core decision-making process. <i>Motivation: due process.</i>
Flexible, evolving negotiation. <i>Motivation: shared learning and better decisions.</i>	<b>Involve</b> E.g. meetings with CCPs	Formal structures. Tightly controlled. <i>Motivation: bring others along with us.</i>
Process of negotiation, boundaries determined by what is appropriate. <i>Motivation: greater capacity to deliver.</i>	<b>Decide together</b> E.g. LRFs	Formal agreements bounded by organisational considerations. <i>Motivation: clear responsibility.</i>
Explicitly meshing 'our views/needs' with those of the target audience. <i>Motivation: shared understanding and increased capacity.</i>	<b>Give information</b> E.g. issuing flood warnings	Telling/educating. <i>Motivation: bring others round to our views/our facts; shed responsibility.</i>
Supporting others to understand and do what they need to do. <i>Motivation: more resilient communities.</i>	<b>Co-delivery and capacity building</b> E.g. community emergency plans	Telling others it is not Environment Agency's responsibility/budget, so they have to do it themselves. <i>Motivation: reduced responsibility.</i>

Even more importantly, this is also recognised by the *Building Trust* guidance, which states:

*Put simply, building trust is about improving the way we communicate with each other, being more open and working together. Naturally, we tend to confront or challenge proposals and ideas. If you present someone with an idea, you will almost certainly end up defending it, rather than negotiating.*

*Traditionally, most public organisations have followed this 'confrontational' approach in most of their planning and decision-making. We have followed this 'Decide, Announce, Defend' (DAD) approach, which has meant we have made decisions, let people know what we plan to do and then had to defend our decisions against those who don't like them.*

*The DAD approach risks:*

- *interest groups throwing out our preferred decision, and having to go back to the drawing board;*
- *relationships and trust breaking down, which makes our work more difficult in the future;*
- *making decisions without fully understanding relevant issues and reactions, which means they will not be appropriate or introduced.*

*Building Trust follows a different approach known as ‘front-loading’, or ‘Engage, Deliberate, Decide’ (EDD). This involves working with communities early on to understand their concerns, what they want and why, and working closely with, rather than against, them to decide how best to move forward. We may still make the final decision, but we will have worked with others to come up with the best solution. At the very least, communities will understand the reasons for our decision, and will be less likely to oppose it.*<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3.4 Collaborative approaches appropriate for each situation

In this section, we draw on experience to set out some examples of collaborative processes for each type of decision-making context (Types A, B and C). It is to be noted that these decision making contexts and processes might be ongoing. In reality, most work and most relationships with others are ongoing, involving many different decisions and actions over time.

Our review of literature and practice shows that appropriate engagement can result in better decisions and increased support for those decisions, including increased involvement in delivery. This is a conclusion supported by The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE)’s two year scientific study (some itself based on Environment Agency work on engaging with communities):

*...for 17 to 20 projects of this kind [constructing controversial flood defence schemes], if engagement were to change the decision from NO (without engagement) to YES (with engagement) in only one of the projects, it would be (just) worthwhile to conduct engagement in all projects.*<sup>14</sup>

But we are aware that there is a danger in thinking that collaboration must mean a big, expensive process. This section sets out typical processes for each decision type/situation to illustrate that collaboration simply needs to be commensurate with the type of situation and decision being made. In these examples, we necessarily focus on the inception to decision making part of the work, but in almost all cases, the process will continue in repeating cycles as the next decision or decisions and actions are required.

These typical processes have been based on practical experience and aim to:

- keep the time and cost of collaboration to a minimum where risk of non-delivery is low, and increase collaboration where the risk is high;
- build collaboration early on, and reduce the intensity later if it is found that the project is not controversial (precautionary approach);
- focus collaboration on **working** through issues together, to reduce the risk of non-delivery which may result from opposition, poor design and low trust in the Environment Agency

This (EDD) approach is different to the traditional approach (DAD) which is to:

- keep things quiet if they are controversial in order to ‘get them right in house’;
- engage others only when opposition has been established;

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<sup>13</sup> *Building Trust with Communities: Supplementary information. 2007*

<sup>14</sup> Pending publication: CE9&10-7 Economic Analysis Report (version sent to stakeholders for consultation). NICE Community Engagement Programme Development Board, 2007.

- use engagement to convince others of 'our' view.

Section 2.3.5 explores the cost-benefit profiles over time of these approaches, again illustrating why they need not be considered too costly.

**Figure 2.6:** Characteristics and collaboration for Type A decisions

**Characteristics:** In these situations/decisions there is low conflict, controversy or uncertainty about the decision or situation. There may be few or no alternative options due to the decision being constrained by time, procedure, resources or crisis. For example:

- when quick decisive action is required, such as in an emergency situation;
- when unpopular actions have to be taken - no alternative options;
- in high certainty (for example, of achieving outcomes in a particular way);
- when immediate temporary solution is required due to time pressure or other factors;
- when status quo is to be maintained (such as non-urgent change to flood defences).

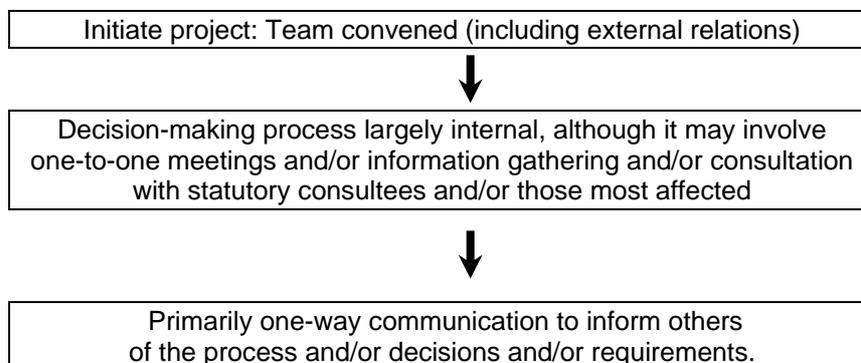
**Examples:** Flood warning campaigns, small changes to existing flood defence schemes, implementation of an emergency plan, implementation of already accepted solution.

**Negotiation strategy:** Be clear whether you are expecting to compete (win or lose), convince (educate), avoid (leave as is) or accommodate (yield to) others.

**Type of engagement:** In this situation it may be appropriate to apply the 'traditional' Decide – Announce – Defend approach (i.e. make up minds and then tell people about it and try to convince them of the value of it, including communication, education and PR campaigns). However, there is still an important opportunity to improve on standard communication practice with EDD type motivations and approaches. For example, use the BTwC guides and mentors to ensure clarity of purpose internally/externally, better quality of communications materials, encourage effective conversations rather than defensiveness, improved questionnaires.

**Beware of:** Adopting this approach by default or because it seems easier, especially when there are a range of options that could be usefully considered and influenced by other perspectives. If Type A is adopted when type B or C are more appropriate, it risks unnecessary conflict developing which can then only be rescued by a Type B or C approach (at greater cost due to the lost good will).

**Classic Type A process** (typically conducted over weeks or months with a budget of up to £10,000 for engagement/communications):



**Figure 2.7:** Characteristics and collaboration for Type B decisions

**Characteristics:** There is a need for understanding from individuals, organisations and/or communities to ensure the decision is well informed and to reduce risk of non-delivery through resistance or opposition by individuals, communities and partners. Trade-offs and compromises may be required:

- when some will lose out for others' gain or deals will have to be negotiated (for example, with landowners);
- when the Environment Agency cannot solve the problem alone;
- when the Environment Agency is sure that a mistake has been made;
- when issues are very important to one or more groups;
- to build social credits for later use;
- when building the relationship is as important as the issue at hand.

**Examples:** Managed realignment in sparsely populated areas, developing a scheme where acceptance is needed but there is interest due to previous flooding, where there is low trust in Environment Agency due to past performance.

**Negotiation strategy:** Be clear whether you intend to compromise (split the difference) or accommodate (both yield to find new solution) or compete (win: lose).

**Type of engagement:** Take time early on in the process to identify those interested and then engage them in defining the problem before looking at solutions. Gather and use social intelligence to maximum effect. If the Environment Agency is not central to the issue, consider being a participant in the process rather than running it. Analytical tools such as multi-criteria decision-making may assist the process. May involve steering group at key points in the process.

**Beware of:** entrenching different views too early on; being held 'to ransom' by one or two individuals who don't feel engaged by the process.

**Classic Type B process** (typically conducted over months or years, with engagement budget from £10,000 - £50,000)



## Figure 2.8: Characteristics and collaboration for Type C decisions

**Characteristics:** In Type C situations there is – or could be - high conflict, controversy and uncertainty about the decision. The decision is likely to affect many – rather than a discrete number of - stakeholders (individuals, organisations and/or communities). It may be that some stakeholders will be disproportionately affected, or that one set of stakeholders may gain while others lose out. There may be a need for shared ownership of solution by multiple actors in order that they will play their full role in delivering it (e.g. working in partnership to fund or deliver or maintain defences). There may be significant risk of strong enough opposition to derail any scheme unless people are part of finding the solution. Use Type C:

- to find integrative solutions;
- when the Environment Agency is not able to deal with the issue alone and needs to work with other competent players to solve the problem
- when the basic objective is to learn from sharing;
- to gain commitment for the implementation of the decisions;
- to have better understanding with the participants;
- when the 'best'/optimal outcome is unknown and may be uncovered by negotiation, or, is defined as the negotiated outcome (may apply to many area wide schemes, coastal realignment).

**Examples:** Managed realignment in populated areas, where there are established campaigns/a history of resistance against a particular solution, where the Environment Agency has a poor reputation or this is the first time of working in a particular area.

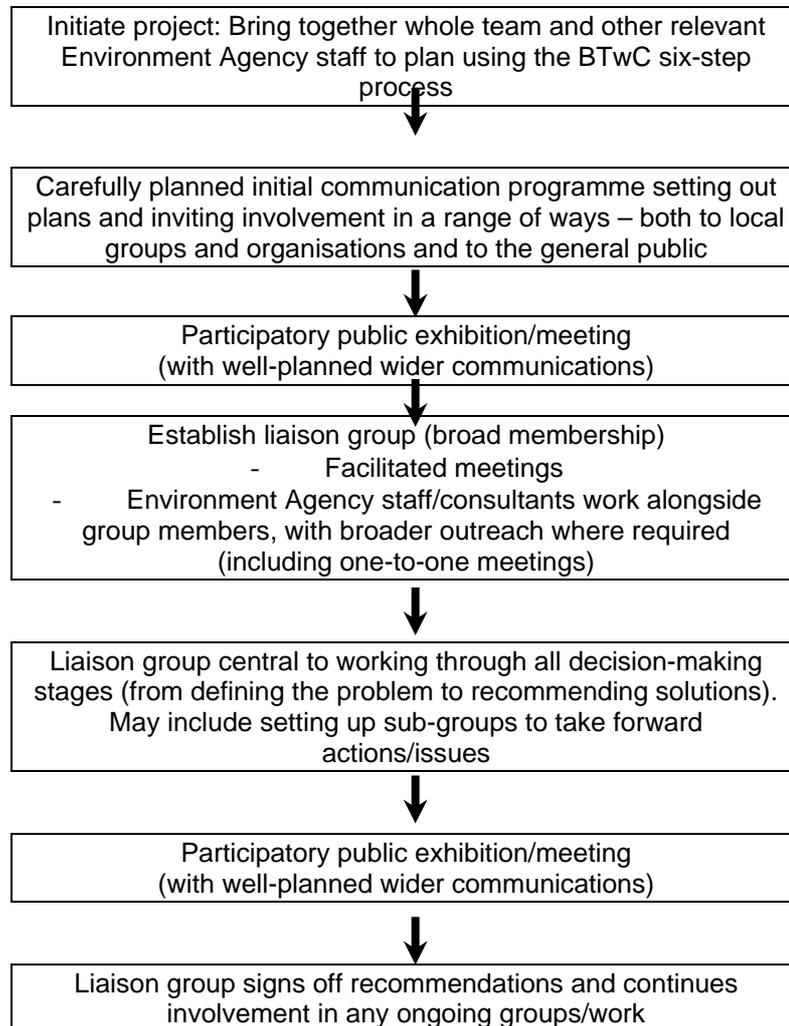
**Negotiation strategy:** Collaborating (Win/Win)

**Type of engagement:** A carefully planned and managed engagement process which builds ownership from inception to delivery of the project or programme. Processes such as the environmental impact assessment are managed within the overall engagement design which determines the timescale. Usually managed via a liaison group at the centre of the work (doing the work, not consulted on it).

**Beware:** This approach takes a while to set up (although benefits are reaped later in the project). Do not use if not open to influence from outside.

Classic Type C processes (such as Shaldon, Humber) are continued overleaf.

**Classic Type C process** (typically taking place over a year or more, with a budget of £20,000 - £100,000\*)



**Note\*:** In Type C situations, the engagement process will be more difficult to cost separately to engineering and other costs, as much of the engagement will be an integral part of the design and impact assessment processes. See Section 2.3.5 for more on this, for example in the pilot project: Shaldon Flood Risk.

### 2.3.5 Costs and benefits of collaborative approaches

There have been myriad attempts to analyze the cost-benefits of collaboration. Current and forthcoming work by NICE and Involve<sup>15</sup> has concluded that it is not currently possible to do such a cost-effectiveness analysis in any meaningful way:

*Very often, the practical benefits of participation are taken for granted and not really mentioned at all. In addition, there is very little data indeed on the costs of participation - in time or money (Involve, 2006)<sup>16</sup>*

*The act of engagement is also often difficult to define, as is any comparator activity that is needed for economic analysis. Given that in a democratic society, the act of engagement is akin to a “right”, it transcends economic analysis and therefore it can be argued that economic analysis in such circumstances is irrelevant (NICE, 2007)<sup>17</sup>*

Similarly, our review suggests that one reason for the current scepticism and resistance to collaboration is a lack of understanding of the full costs and benefits. A first step in addressing this is to establish a framework for conceptualising the costs and benefits of collaboration, before starting to collect data to populate those frameworks.

#### A framework for conceptualising the benefits of collaboration

This study has found no attempts to quantify the benefits of collaboration within FCERM. However, our literature review shows there are two sets of potential benefits of collaboration: The first are **‘added value’ benefits**, things that are gained in addition to those that would be gained ‘without’ collaboration or engagement. a cost/benefit analysis is appropriate on these added value benefits: do the added benefits outweigh the added costs? the second set are **unique benefits**, things that can only be achieved through engagement. It is much harder to attribute a cost/benefit to these.

*Added value benefits: what does increased collaboration/participation add to the following<sup>18</sup>*

- *Achieving goals and targets.* To what extent does collaboration help to meet practical goals and ensure policies are implemented more easily?
- *Better informed plans and policies.* To what extent does collaboration help create stronger, better quality, more creative plans and policies based on wider expertise and experience, making sure they meet needs and solve complex problems (such as sustainable development)?
- *Better quality of services.* To what extent does collaboration contribute to the delivery of more efficient and better services that meet real needs and reflect community values?
- *Support.* To what extent does collaboration prevent crises from developing, boost support for the Environment Agency’s work, enable people to be more informed/reassured/ less resistant to projects, contribute to less litigation and fewer delays?

<sup>15</sup> NICE Community Engagement Programme Development Group, *Cost-effectiveness in community engagement in delivering health outcomes*, Carr Hill et al. (2007); Involve (2006) *The trust costs of public participation*.

<sup>16</sup> Involve ibid.

<sup>17</sup> NICE Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> *Literature review of public participation and communicating flood risk*, produced by Lindsey Colbourne Associates for ComCoast/Environment Agency (2005).

- *Trust in government and democracy.* To what extent does collaboration contribute to people believing their democratic rights are working, the Environment Agency is more accountable for what it does, people are encouraged to get involved, the gulf between government and the public is narrowed, public confidence and trust is restored?
- *Fairer and more unified society.* To what extent does collaboration contribute to building relationships, ownership, fairness, people feeling empowered, costs and benefits distributed fairly, people having the right to make decisions about issues that directly affect their lives?
- *Influencing and learning.* To what extent does collaboration create opportunities to influence others, and to learn from them, providing resources to improve understanding of - and more appropriate reaction to - a particular risk?
- *Reputation and openness.* To what extent does collaboration make the Environment Agency, government and institutions more accountable, open and credible, making the public trust them and the information they provide?

*Unique benefits – the following can only be achieved by working with others: it is simply not possible to measure cost-effectiveness against not working with others:*<sup>19</sup>

- Flood risk management solutions can no longer be imposed. They only work if they are accepted and implemented by local people.
- Participation can help meet policy requirements for involving people at the heart of decision-making. Traditional **'end of pipe' consultation methods are no longer sufficient.**
- **You can no longer rely on technical/'expert' knowledge alone.** The quality and acceptability of decisions depends on the inclusion of social science and lay knowledge and ideas.
- **It is no longer acceptable to work within traditional institutional, geographical or issue-based boundaries.** Participation can enable joined-up thinking and working across a range of geographical scales and on complex and uncertain situations.
- **Government can no longer assume trust.** It is earned<sup>20</sup>, not given, and once lost is hard to regain. Participation, especially if longer term and deliberative, can help build trust.

## **A framework for conceptualising the costs of collaboration**

The only work our review identified of costs was the Floodscape Communications Audit (2004)<sup>21</sup>, which lists the costs of various communication activities. These were limited largely to publication costs, see Table 2.3.

<sup>19</sup> *Literature review of public participation and communicating flood risk* produced by Lindsey Colbourne Associates for ComCoast/Environment Agency (2005).

<sup>20</sup> Petts *et al.* (2002) *Understanding public perception of risk*. Report of an Environment Agency Workshop, R&D Project Record: P5-040/PR1, p9.

<sup>21</sup> Tapsell *et al.* (2004) Floodscape Communications Audit.

Involve and NICE<sup>22</sup> have identified a fuller set of potential costs associated with collaboration or engagement:

- **Monetary costs, including:**
  - staff time (paid and unpaid)*
  - staff expenses*
  - external staff/consultants*
  - fees to participants*
  - participants' expenses*
  - training for staff and participants*
  - administration*
  - venue hire*
  - other event costs (e.g. refreshments, equipment)*
  - publications such as reports, newsletters, leaflets*
  - monitoring and evaluation fees.*
  
- **Non monetary costs, including:**
  - time contributed by participants*
  - skills needed for the new approach (taking time from other work).*
  
- **Risks, including:**
  - risks to reputation (from bad participatory practice)*
  - stress (of participants, staff)*
  - uncertainty*
  - non-delivery*
  - conflict.*

## **A framework for integrating cost and benefits**

We found no Environment Agency-based attempts to do a cost-benefit analysis on different approaches to collaboration. However, a two-year study by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence<sup>23</sup> has attempted this, and has raised difficulties with evaluating the cost-benefits of collaboration. Interestingly the only example that the study could use was Environment Agency work to engage the community on flood risk management in Shaldon, Devon:

*It is difficult to determine cost-effectiveness [of community engagement] because the intensity and duration of approaches may differ to a small or large degree; apparently small changes in an approach may be crucial to success. These factors cannot be controlled in a study, making it difficult to generalise. It is also difficult to use a comparator in any non-controlled situation, as it is not usually possible to say what would have happened if the intervention had not taken place.*

This finding chimes with ours, for example the Floodscape Communications Audit (2004)<sup>24</sup>, considered the costs of various activities and how to reduce them rather than cost-benefit for different approaches. The study shows how costs can vary considerably depending on the approach taken, and the emphasis given to communications (e.g. producing reports) and engagement (meetings and so on): Although it is a start, it would be very difficult to conclude anything generic about costs because the approaches are so

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<sup>22</sup> NICE Community Engagement Programme Development Group, *Cost-effectiveness in community engagement in delivering health outcomes*, Carr Hill *et al.* (2007); Involve (2006) *The true costs of public participation*.

<sup>23</sup> Pending publication, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008) *Public Health Guidance: Community engagement to improve health*.

<sup>24</sup> Tapsell *et al.* (2004). Floodscape Communications Audit.

different and there is very little information on the context (or decision type/situation), or indeed on which costs are included and which are not. The listing of 'costs' come no way near understanding the full costs, and do not begin to quantify the benefits.

The NICE report continues:

*Nevertheless, there are a few exceptional situations. For example, a flood defence project which has potential health and other benefits may be rejected by a local community because it lacks information on these benefits (or objects to specific aspects of it). If a community engagement approach were used to persuade it to accept a modified version of the project, that approach could be considered extremely cost-effective.*

*No such examples were found in the literature, but a vignette of an ongoing project in the Teign estuary, Devon, was developed by the NICE team with assistance from the Environment Agency. This found that community engagement would be a very cost-effective use of resources if it led to local agreement for new flood defence barriers.*

This conclusion brings us to another key point. In understanding the cost-benefit of collaboration, there needs to be consideration of the **whole process**. For example, taking the cost-benefit of the Shaldon flood risk collaboration, the 'whole process' included the activities:

- Working with consultants and staff to clarify Environment Agency objectives, prepare materials, and plan the whole approach to engagement.
- Training and development of staff and consultants in collaborative approaches to working with others.
- Personal invitation to take part in the decision-making process on tackling flood risk, and briefing in September 2005 to every household/business in the village.
- Dealing constructively with vociferous objectors to engage them in the process.
- Staffed public exhibition and drop-in (including café style discussions), and public meeting all of which focused on sharing the Environment Agency's view of flooding and finding out how the community felt about the risk/what to do about it. Over 250 people attended (a quarter of the population). Despite the controversial nature of the issue, 87 per cent supported doing more work together to reduce the flood risk (just five per cent were against).
- Establishment of Active Liaison Group, which met 12 times over eighteen months and each time facilitated a meeting for two hours. More than 20 participants (open to all, with volunteers ranging from Chair of the Parish Council to workers in a boatyard and parents of young children) working alongside six staff/consultants from the Environment Agency. The group made all the decisions on how to reduce flood risk, working through all options, working out cost-benefits and uncertainties and proposing a scheme that the whole group could support. The group also changed the initial scope of the work to include all forms of flooding and to include neighbouring Ringmore as well as the village of Shaldon (initially not thought possible by the Environment Agency).
- Subgroups were established to carry out practical work, dealing with surface and sewerage flooding (working with water company and highways); producing flood emergency plans; improving communications; undertaking detailed design proposals; and organising how to manage flood gates. The

Environment Agency supported this work, but much was done by volunteers resulting in actions and cost savings not possible to secure in any other way.

- Public exhibition and drop in held, with walking tour of proposals from the Liaison Group (8 – 12 June 2007). Attended by around 300 people and staffed by Environment Agency, local authority, water company and liaison group members: 83 per cent support for proposals with just four per cent against
- Full support of the liaison group in taking on board the findings of the consultation, and despite changes in the Priority Score/funding priorities putting the scheme 'on hold', with new focus on preparing the village for flooding in the meantime.
- More than 10 good practice guides, and much of the Building Trust with Communities mentor and training materials produced as a result of the work.

To inform the NICE cost-effectiveness study, this project proposed an initial framework for an analysis of health benefits, which could be a useful template for future cost-benefit exercises in the future. See Table 2.3.

The Environment Agency's own assessment of the costs associated with the Shaldon project show an important potential danger in costing collaboration: Although the estimate of the consultant working on engagement did not change at any point in the project, the project applied for a Form G increased budget approval form 'largely due to the costs of engagement'. This is, in our analysis, largely due to the fact that **much of the cost put down to engagement were in fact design costs**. With the liaison group work at the heart of the work, it is almost impossible to separate engagement from what are traditionally the consultant/engineering roles: Analysis and design was done by the liaison group, with the full involvement of the engineering consultants. There was also a tendency to 'blame' additional costs on engagement rather than other issues, for example the hiatus in potential funding due to the changes in priority scores. As a result of this, the 'engagement' costs have been estimated by the Environment Agency/engineering consultants to be as much as £200,000. Our estimate is that the costs (once these and other inefficiencies/costs associated with being a pilot scheme are taken into consideration) are more like £100,000.

However, this needs to be pitched against similar schemes which have been approached with traditional DAD communications rather than EDD-type engagement. An Environment Agency Area Flood Risk Manager has estimated these for two other schemes:<sup>25</sup>

*The costs of troubled engagement (DAD) are very hard to come by. However, I have been through the scheme files and have come up with the following additional costs in dealing with those opposed to the scheme. These have been taken from increased budget approval forms (Form Gs). The forms did not break down the costs between technical and engagement. However, they did give reasons for increases, which I used to guess the additional engagement costs.*

*Scheme 1 (constructed):*

*Internal costs – £120,000 over three years*

*Consultancy costs – minimum £15,000*

*Contractors costs – not quantified.*

*Scheme 2 (put on hold during design, that is, no scheme built):*

*No proper estimate, but could be £40,000. This does not reflect the cost should the scheme not proceed at all, in which case money has been*

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<sup>25</sup> Email correspondence, August 2007

*spent with no result. As the scheme looks likely to go ahead again, some of the work can be re-used. Otherwise the cost would be about £150,000.*

**Table 2.3:** Cost-benefit framework for Shaldon, Devon

Costs	Outcome/benefits
<p><b>Staff/consultant time</b>                      - Staff time on engagement.                      - Engineering consultant time on engagement.                      - Consultant time (LCA) on engagement.</p> <p><b>Volunteer time on liaison group</b>                      12 meetings (say 3 hours to prepare for and attend, for 20 people) 720 hours  <i>[note: some have commented that this could be seen as a donation towards costs of work the Environment Agency would have to do]</i></p> <p><b>Materials/venues costs</b>                      Expenses of hiring community hall, producing exhibition materials, sending out invitations.</p> <p><b>Other costs</b>                      E.g. stress for staff doing things differently.</p> <p><b>Inefficiencies/additionality</b>                      Some areas could be identified for inefficiencies/costs that could be uniquely applicable here because it was a pilot effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Production of materials required nationally (explanation of priority score, probabilities, designing better exhibitions and drop-ins).</li> <li>- Learning required of our staff and engineering consultants.</li> <li>- Including surface water flooding and Ringmore in the work.</li> <li>- Number of staff attending drop-ins/liason group meetings (could probably be reduced).</li> </ul> <p><b>Changed timing-related costs</b>                      Some costs will have been greater earlier on in the project than would be expected, because of the need to bring certain aspects of the process forward (such as scheme design, technical assessment, gate operation).</p>	<p><b>1. An acceptable tidal flood defence scheme – not only for Shaldon but also for neighbouring Ringmore.</b>                      a) Ringmore would not have been included if it wasn't for community engagement.                      b) Shaldon would almost certainly have thrown a scheme out without engagement.</p> <p><b>2. Successful resolution of surface/sewerage flooding</b>                      (this had not been achieved for 10 years despite campaigning by parish council), and would not have been tackled.</p> <p><b>3. Increased community resilience</b>                      a) Raised awareness of flood risk across the community.                      b) Involvement in community response plan/MIP.                      c) People committed to supporting the successful operation of the flood gates and flood defence scheme, and to other practical actions.                      d) Working relationship between Environment Agency, Parish Council, local authority and SWW.</p> <p><b>4. More appropriate scheme design</b>                      a) Scheme more sympathetically designed aesthetically than would otherwise have been (using local preferences).                      b) Scheme more appropriate for users (e.g. recreational use).</p> <p><b>5. Reduced staff stress/time on complaints</b>                      a) Reduced staff stress (e.g. compared to Teignmouth).                      b) Reduced staff time in dealing with complaints/attacks.</p> <p><b>6. Improved future working relationships</b>                      a) within the Environment Agency                      b) with partner organisations (e.g. LA, SWW, Parish Council)</p> <p><b>7. If scheme goes ahead, health benefits generated</b>                      a) Reduced risk to life of residents from tidal flooding (if scheme goes ahead).                      b) Reduced health risk from sewerage/surface water flooding                      c) Reduced stress of having house/business flooded by surface/sewerage water.  <i>[note: there are also possible social, health and economic benefits from improved flood awareness and preparedness even if the scheme does not go ahead]</i>                      AND</p> <p><b>REDUCED COSTS OF FLOODING (£50 MILLION?)</b></p> <p><b>LEARNING/PILOT PROJECT BENEFITS</b> (At least 10 guides, training course and so on, staff, consultants and community with new skills).</p>

Table 2.3 shows the complexity of a cost-benefit analysis of this kind of approach, in contrast to the figures shown in the previous table.

**Indicative budgeting guidelines: An interim solution**

The Floodscape Communication Audit provided an indicative percentage project cost (two to seven per cent) of undertaking engagement/collaborative activity:

*The costs of participation can be one of the hardest areas to predict when planning, partly due to the huge variations in costs for different activities. Within the Environment Agency, a nominal five per cent of project cost is*

normally allocated for public/stakeholder participation for a typical environmental impact assessment and mitigation scheme, although this can vary from two to seven per cent of total scheme costs (Twigger-Ross and Smith, 2000).

It is unclear as to whether these costs are pre-or post the business case PAR. But either way, bearing in mind the problems with simplistic costs as explored in previous sections, and based on the literature/practice review, we suggest that basing initial estimates of collaboration costs as a percentage of project costs **is not an appropriate budgeting procedure**. Instead, there needs to be an attempt to assess and quantify the potential costs versus the potential benefits of different approaches to collaboration.

**Figure 2.9:** Potential costs and benefits of collaborative approaches

	<b>Potential added value benefits of collaborative approach (above minimum required by statutory consultation)</b>	<b>Potential unique benefits of collaborative approach (couldn't be achieved through statutory consultation)</b>	<b>Potential costs of NOT adopting appropriate collaborative approach for this decision</b>	<b>Typical cost of adopting collaborative approach, as set out in Section 2.3.4</b>
<b>Type A context and process</b>	More widely informed individuals, communities, stakeholders Improved reputation.		Risk that those who need to know are not informed and so unable to act	Up to £20,000 over 6 months (e.g. CFMP for River Medway)
<b>Type B context and process</b>	As for Type A plus better understanding by stakeholders; better design; reduced risk of going back to drawing board at late stage.	Ability to design joined-up solutions	Risk of having to redesign scheme/adding engagement later on (Bideford: £120,000)	Up to £60,000 over 2 years (e.g. Humber Estuary FDS)
<b>Type C context and process</b>	As for Type A and B plus reduced risk of scheme being thrown out.	Co-delivery through multiple 'actors' beyond remit of Environment Agency	Risk of scheme being thrown out (Teignmouth up to £150,000)	Up to £100,000 over three years (e.g. Shaldon)

It is also critical when considering costs/benefits is to understand the nature of costs over time. As mentioned in the previous section, EDD type participatory approaches have a different cost curve over time, often referred to as 'front loading'. Engaged approaches may look more 'expensive' at the early stages in a decision making process, but by implementation and maintenance phases it can deliver significant benefits. See Figure 10 which combines the costs over time with the type of decision making set out in section 2.3.1.

Figure 2.10 shows that Type A decision-making situations may be most cost effectively dealt with through a DAD approach, although we and the *Building Trust with Communities* programme would argue that even within the DAD approach, communications can be significantly improved through use of the EDD approach which would result in improved results such as relationships, ownership and so on).

In Type B decision making situations, the EDD approach is likely to deliver slightly more cost effectively and probably with significant added value to DAD (in terms of constructive relationships, co-delivery and so on). It is clear that it is sensible to start out with an EDD approach; if the DAD approach fails, there is usually a shift to EDD to rescue the situation (such as in Teignmouth, Bideford, Blyth), and this is more expensive than using an EDD initially.

Finally, in Type C decision-making situations, the DAD approach is obviously risky over the longer term, with the possibility of spiralling costs in defending or abandoning a particular position or option.

### **Developing cost-benefit frameworks in the future**

Due to the difficulties of conceptualising the benefits/costs set out above, as well as the lack of data available from the Environment Agency, this project was unable to conclusively demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of collaboration. In the future, a framework for doing so needs to be established, as recommended by Involve and NICE:

*A simple framework for capturing the actual practical costs and benefits of participation....to complement the wider thinking needed around broad new analytical frameworks. In this way, simple data can begin to be captured and provide benchmarks against which future activity can be tested (Involve 2006)*

*... it makes no sense to conduct an economic analysis of a form of community engagement compared with no such engagement. However, it may still make some sense to compare two different forms of engagement in cost-effectiveness terms (NICE 2007)*

We recommend that two things need to be done by the Environment Agency and Defra before we can be sure of the cost benefit of different approaches:

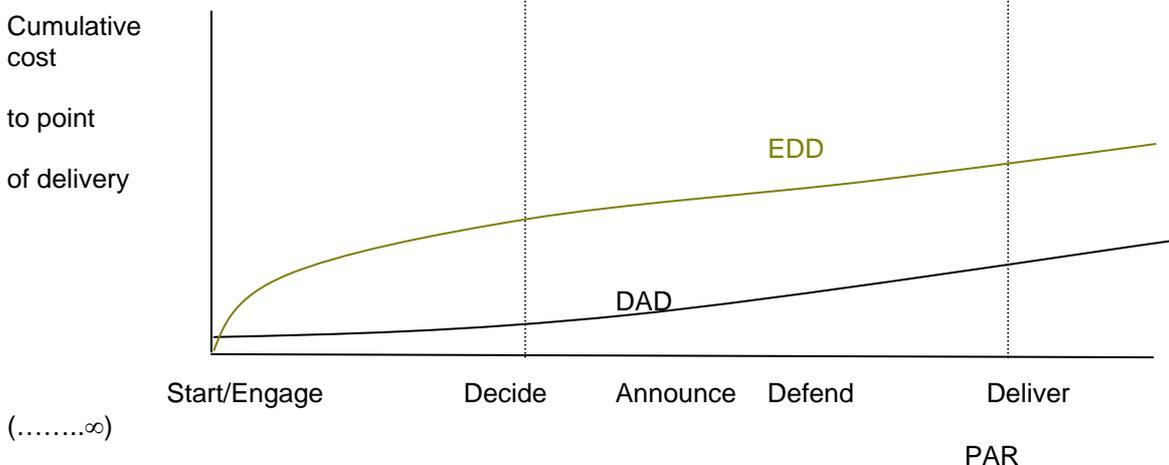
- a) develop some kind of analytical/conceptual framework within which to understand the cost-benefits of different types of approach (building on the ideas set out above);
- b) develop a practical framework that can start to capture the actual practical costs and benefits of one approach (or set of approaches) compared to others.

In undertaking this work, it will be vital to consider not only the one-off costs of one decision tackled in different ways, but also the costs of implementation/maintenance beyond the decision.

**Figure 2.10: Costs of different types of engagement over time**

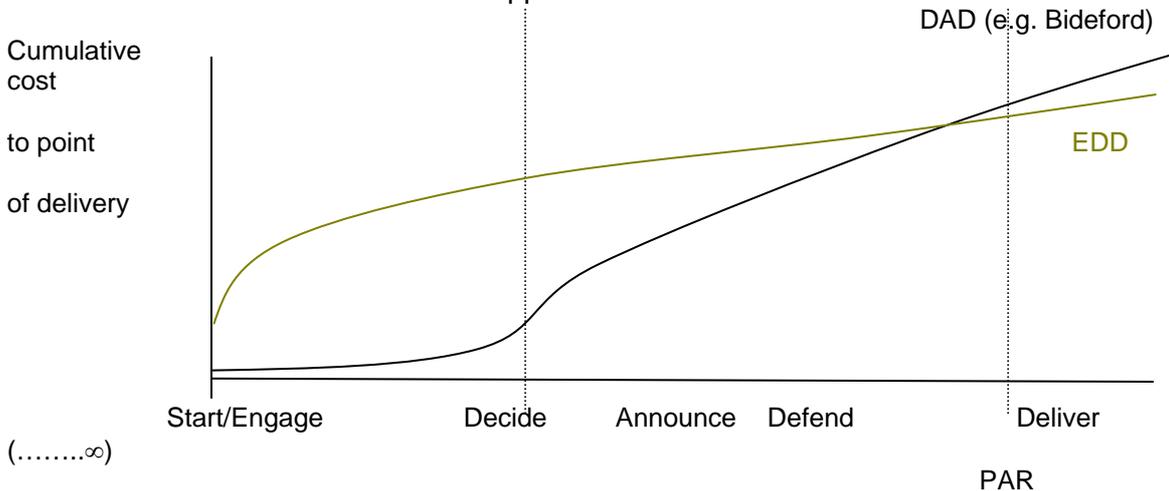
**Classic Type A costs over time for DAD compared to EDD**

Costs show that DAD approach would be more cost-effective throughout.



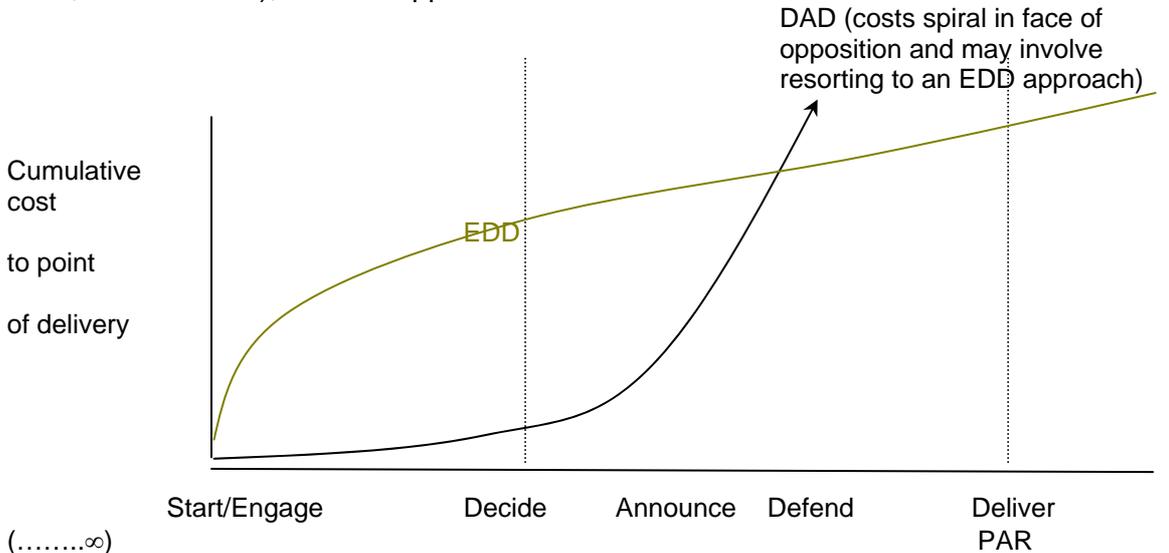
**Classic Type B costs over time for DAD compared to EDD**

Costs show that DAD approach may initially cost less, but over time benefits are demonstrated for the extensive EDD approach



**Classic Type C costs over time for DAD compared to EDD**

Costs show that DAD approach may result in failure (with further costs to get it back on track, or abandon it), so EDD approach is more cost-effective.



# 3 What is required to mainstream collaboration within FCERM?

## 3.1 Introduction

This section sets out an analysis of what needs to change for more collaboration to be undertaken more consistently and more effectively across the Environment Agency. Most of the evidence for our suggestions lies in Appendix 1.

## 3.2 Successful change? Applying the Burke-Litwin model

One of the best established models for change is the Burke-Litwin Change Model,<sup>26</sup> published by George Litwin and Warner Burke in 1992. According to this model, successful change requires the changing of many elements in unison: a ‘whole system’ approach. Whether it’s revamping an accounting process, implementing a new IT system or embarking on a new policy strategy, positive change is revitalising and productive and there is real potential for organisational change on engagement in FCERM.

Failure to consider the interrelatedness of organisational parts can contribute to the failure of change programmes. When one variable is missed, bypassed, or underestimated the whole system fails to change, leaving managers and employees with the unenviable task of putting things back to the status quo. The really brave will attempt the change process over again; others will accept defeat and resign themselves to doing what they’ve always done.

When what people have always done already isn’t working however, the results of failed change can be devastating. That’s why it is so important to understand what needs to be addressed during any change process and why.

- The Burke-Litwin Change Model shows the causal effects of change between 12 key areas of organisational design. We suggest using this understanding to analyse, diagnose and even predict the effects of a change programme for use of collaboration and engagement for FCERM. We have **made an indicative start** in considering the key areas from the point of view of implementing a consistent approach to collaboration for FCERM outcomes below and used a traffic light system to identify areas for further work before all parts of the jigsaw would fit together consistently to deliver the change required.

Where we have not conducted sufficient research, the area is left blank.



Red: this area requires significant attention/change

Orange: this area is progressing but requires further work

Green: this area is largely already in place/addressed

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM\\_90.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_90.htm)

**Figure 2.11:** Burke-Litwin Change Model

**Organisational change design: Questions for the 12 key areas** <sup>27</sup>

1. **External environment:** What are the main external drivers? How are these likely to affect the organisation? Does the organisation recognise these?
2. **Mission and strategy:** How does management view the organisation's mission/strategy? Is there a clear vision and mission statement? What are employees' perceptions of these?
3. **Leadership:** Who provides overall direction for the organisation? Who are the role models? What is the style of leadership? What are the perspectives of employees?
4. **Organisational culture:** What are the overt and covert rules, values, customs and principles that guide organisational behaviour?
5. **Structure:** How are functions and people arranged in specific areas and levels of responsibility? What are the key decision-making, communication and control relationships?
6. **Systems:** What are the organisation's policies and procedures, including reward systems and performance appraisal, management information, HR and resource planning?
7. **Management practices:** How do managers employ staff and material resources to carry out the organisation's strategy? What is their style of management and how do they relate to subordinates?
8. **Work unit climate:** What are the collective impressions, expectations and feelings of staff? What is relationship with work unit colleagues and those in other work units?
9. **Task and individual skills:** What are the task requirements and individual skills, abilities and knowledge needed for the task? How appropriate are the 'job-person' matches?
10. **Individual needs and values:** What do staff value in their work? What are the psychological factors that would enrich their jobs and increase job satisfaction?
11. **Motivation:** Do staff feel motivated to take the action necessary to achieve the organisation's strategy? Of factors 1-10, which seem to be impacting most on motivation?
12. **Individual and organisational performance:** What is the level of performance in terms of productivity, customer satisfaction, quality? Which factors are critical for motivation and therefore performance?

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.childhope.org.uk/resources/oadp-part3.pdf>

### 3.2.1 External environment

Our analysis shows that significant external drivers for delivering greater collaboration between the Environment Agency and others – including communities, civil contingency partners and others **are in place**, include:<sup>28</sup>



Guidance and policies (from Defra, local authorities, central government, Welsh Assembly Government, OECD, RCEP, House of Lords Select Committee, independent reviews such as Pitt)

Legislative requirements (European Convention on Human Rights which could be interpreted as covering the lack or inadequacy of public participation in the relevant decision-making processes; Aarhus Convention/Freedom of Information Act; Water Framework Directive; Judicial Review of UK Government's 2006/7 Nuclear Consultation)

Changing demands of the public (increased interest and expectation that the public will be meaningfully involved)

Enhancing the Environment Agency's image (the need to increase the credibility of the Environment Agency and to build understanding of its role and responsibilities).

In their review of lessons from social science research for improving institutional and social responses for flooding, Watson *et al.* (2008)<sup>29</sup> identify a number of key contextual changes that are particularly significant for the design of future institutional arrangements and approaches for flood management, including:

- recent shifts in government flood hazards management policy;
- lessons from high-profile flood incidents;
- practical experiences and insights gained from national flood exercises;
- new emergency planning arrangements;
- developments in EU environmental policy and legislation.

The authors conclude:

*"[Our] account of changing contextual conditions suggests that future flood hazard management strategies and institutional responses must be designed to work in an increasingly complex and chaotic operating environment... In a turbulent environment, flooding requires a very different type of institutional and social response since no single organisation, no matter how large or powerful, has the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to cope with the situation effectively."*

This appears seem to be recognised by the Environment Agency and Defra. For example, the Environment Agency's *Strategy for Flood Risk Management* states:

<sup>28</sup> Twigger-Ross *et al.* (2002). *Evaluating methods for public participation*, Environment Agency R&D Technical Report E2-030/TM.

<sup>29</sup> In Colbourne (2008). *Collaboration with civil contingency partners and communities for improved FCERM outcomes. Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding. Work Package 3. Appendix 2*

*Only by working together and by being prepared for flooding can we [the Environment Agency] reduce the risk to people, property and the environment... We will adopt a strategic approach to FRM ... This will require greater collaboration with stakeholders.*

There is one proviso, however, as identified by Watson *et al.* (in Colbourne 2008):

*While the need for organisational and cultural change has already been acknowledged in the Delivery Plan for Making Space for Water (Defra, 2005), the specific institutional arrangements and approaches required for effective and sustainable flood management across England and Wales have so far received surprisingly little attention from policy makers or researchers.<sup>30</sup>*

### 3.2.2 Mission and strategy

Continuing the theme of the previous section, the evidence shows that the Environment Agency does – in words at least – recognise the value of collaboration. Indeed, *Creating a Better Place* (2006) states :

*“We will only achieve the goals we have set ourselves if we excel at the way we listen and talk to the outside world as an influential advisor, effective partner and active communicator.”*

A useful summary of the supportive strategy context by Coulthard (2006)<sup>31</sup> is provided in Figure 2.12. However, our findings show that employees view the strategies with suspicion. Close examination of the strategic roles set out in *Creating A Better Place* reveals a possible reason: these roles are framed around the verbs persuade, highlight, explain, advise, put, change. These words enshrine the notion of government **protecting and advising others** (who know less than we do). All that is needed to achieve the Environment Agency’s aim is to do what we’ve always done, but perhaps just to ‘tell others better’.

But notions of governance, of collaboration, of genuinely building ownership and delivering making space for water with others require the Environment Agency to actively want to build **relationships, learn** from others, share views, be influenced, share responsibility, be responsive. These words and ideas are notable in their absence.

On a recent ‘Working with Others, Building Trust with Communities’ training<sup>32</sup> the pervasive notions of ‘telling others better’ shone through every single case study that was worked upon. Again and again, participants (external relations, environmental managers and corporate affairs staff) designed ‘engagement’ processes that were actually about getting messages across, convincing others that the Environment Agency is right, defending positions.

The Environment Agency/Defra’s entrenched ‘**knowing best**’ attitude is very much at the heart of telling others better and although the strategy and policy context is promising, this fundamental block needs to be addressed if mainstreaming of collaboration is to work.

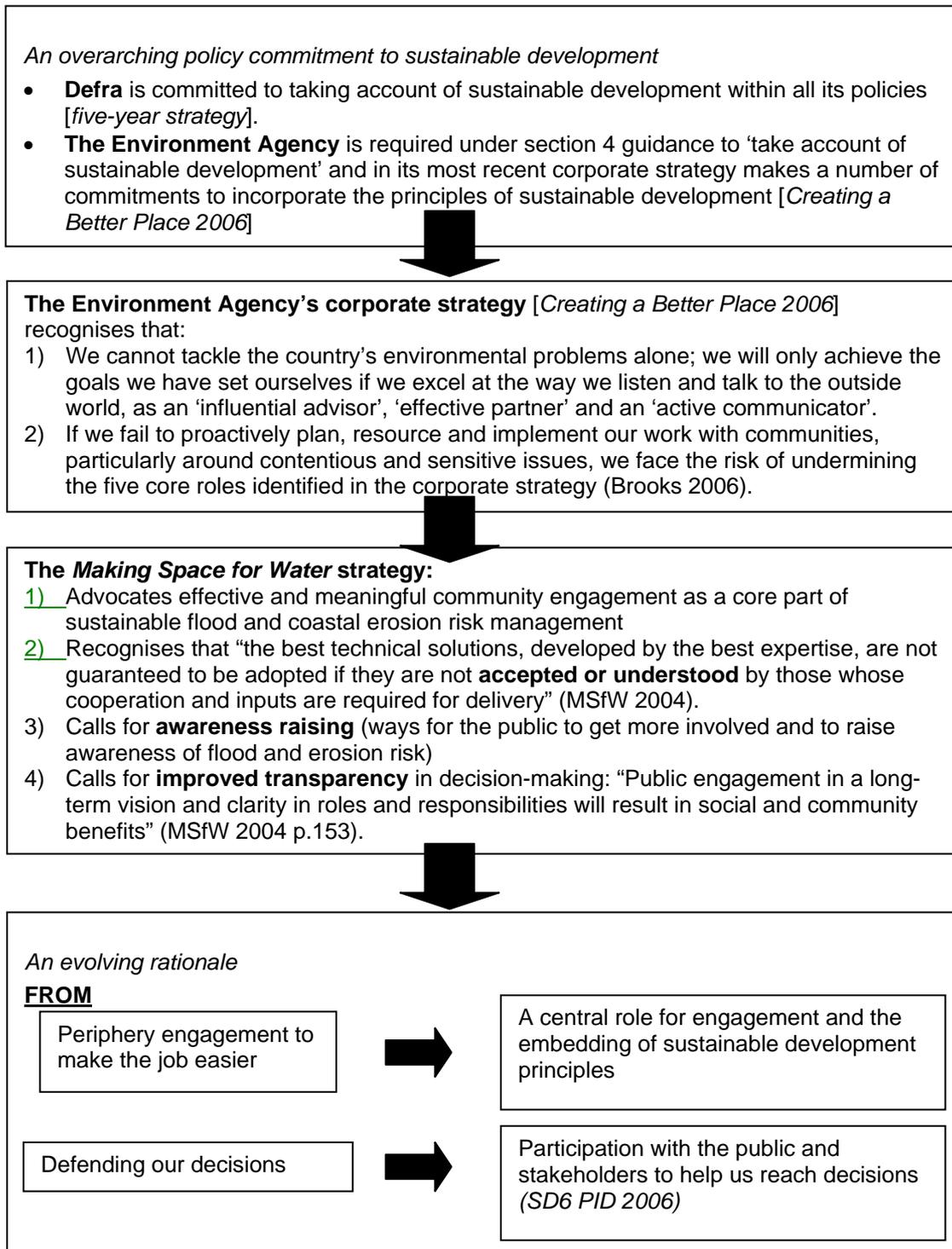
<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Coulthard (2006) *The role of community engagement in delivering sustainable FCERM*. Environment Agency.

<sup>32</sup> *Building Trust with Communities*, two-day design course. Reading, 6-7 March 2007.



**Figure 2.12:** Strategy and policy context for Environment Agency collaboration



### 3.2.3 Leadership

Dealing with flood and coastal erosion is going to require strong leadership – at a political and organizational level in order to:



- **get buy in** (often nationally and regionally and then locally) to the need for **significant change** in the way we manage flooding; – for example in implementing Making Space for Water
- form strong collaborations between a range of actors to **address key causes** of flood risk (for example addressing planning and development issues both nationally in England and Wales, and with local authorities and regional planning bodies, by questioning established elements of the status quo);
- work collaboratively with others to **increase resilience** of communities and individual properties (for example changing the focus from providing flood warnings to enabling effective responses);
- bring in more sources of **funding** (including dealing with political issues such as compensation).<sup>33</sup>

These conclusions are consistent with the work being done by PriceWaterHouse Coopers<sup>34</sup> to identify ways of ensuring clarity and earlier recognition of where funding for flood defence schemes will (and will not) be available. A clearer picture nationally will free (and encourage) regional and local teams to engage in flood risk management rather than a constant battle for flood defences.

It would be useful to undertake a study to understand where this leadership is going to come from. Our work was not designed to analyse this issue, but initial impressions were that leadership was coming from individual members of staff, largely at a local level because they are already facing the limits of what can be done alone. For example:

*We [the Environment Agency] have responsibility for reducing flood risk but we don't have enough money to do this alone over the next 10 years. There is something like a £50 million shortfall, and we need to increase the external cash flow into flood risk management to encourage greater responsibility and ownership of the issue outside the Environment Agency. We also want to ensure that flood risk is considered and incorporated into everything from planning to redevelopment, through to emergency response. Arup are working out the economic impact of flooding as this will help make the case for shared responsibility in reducing flood risk.*<sup>35</sup>

We also found that national level programmes offering leadership in a new way of working were not yet being picked up more generally:

A view needs to be taken on how far [the Building Trust approach] is to become the Environment Agency's way of working, and clear messages on this communicated to staff. Is it to be the default organisational norm? Or can staff take, as now, a 'pick and mix' approach – using those aspects of it that are easier to understand and implement if they wish, but continuing in 'business as usual' ways for the majority of their work with communities?<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 1 for discussion of the need for national leadership on managed realignment issues.

<sup>34</sup> *Streamlining flood risk management development*. PriceWaterHouse Coopers (2007).

<sup>35</sup> Participant from the NE region. *Building Trust with Communities* training course. Wakefield, 2007

<sup>36</sup> Johnston and Wetenhall (2007) *Shaldon Building Trust with Communities Pilot. Lessons Learned and Recommendations*. Environment Agency Bristol.

### 3.2.4 Organisational culture

It is widely felt by staff that this work [on collaborating with others] is discouraged by the *corporate culture and does not form part of their 'day job'*.<sup>37</sup>

Our review identified the following widely held beliefs within the Environment Agency that hold back mainstreaming collaboration:

- Costs - It is too costly in terms of time and money to do this.
- Benefits - It won't give us anymore than a traditional approach would.
- Need - We know the answers so why involve others?
- Professionalism - We will lose credibility/status/this is not our job.
- Loss of control - It may all end in disaster or raised expectations.
- Niche - It is only suitable in some, rare, circumstances.

Jake Chapman<sup>38</sup> concludes that policy making and public sector management is holding onto an outdated set of assumptions. The biggest obstacle to overcoming these, he says, is the assumption that 'we know best', an assumption shared by politicians, civil servants, senior managers and scientists and economists. It is divisive because it closes off any possibility of learning and characterises other views as oppositional, based on politics or vested interests. This echoes our own findings in relation to the Environment Agency:

*The Environment Agency must recognise that it cannot always be inward looking and cannot solve everything. People living in flood risk areas need to be the initiators and creators of alternative schemes rather than be expected to be mere receptors of experts' plans. Extensive liaisons are needed and the time and resources to form these before, during and after a flood event must be allocated and the Environment Agency needs to accept that this is a legitimate and necessary part of its work.*<sup>39</sup>

*In a turbulent environment, flooding requires a very different type of institutional and social response since no single organisation, no matter how large or powerful, has the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to cope with the situation effectively.*<sup>40</sup>

The IISRF Work Package 3 report explores this resistance to collaboration further, and sets out a way of conceptualising the current **resistance** to collaboration, whereby the temptation to stay within the 'understood, controlled, predictable Environment Agency world', and resist all interaction with the messy outside world results in interfaces, such as meetings with CCPs, post flood drop ins and even the way that press relationships are approached, being mostly about one way information giving by the Environment Agency.

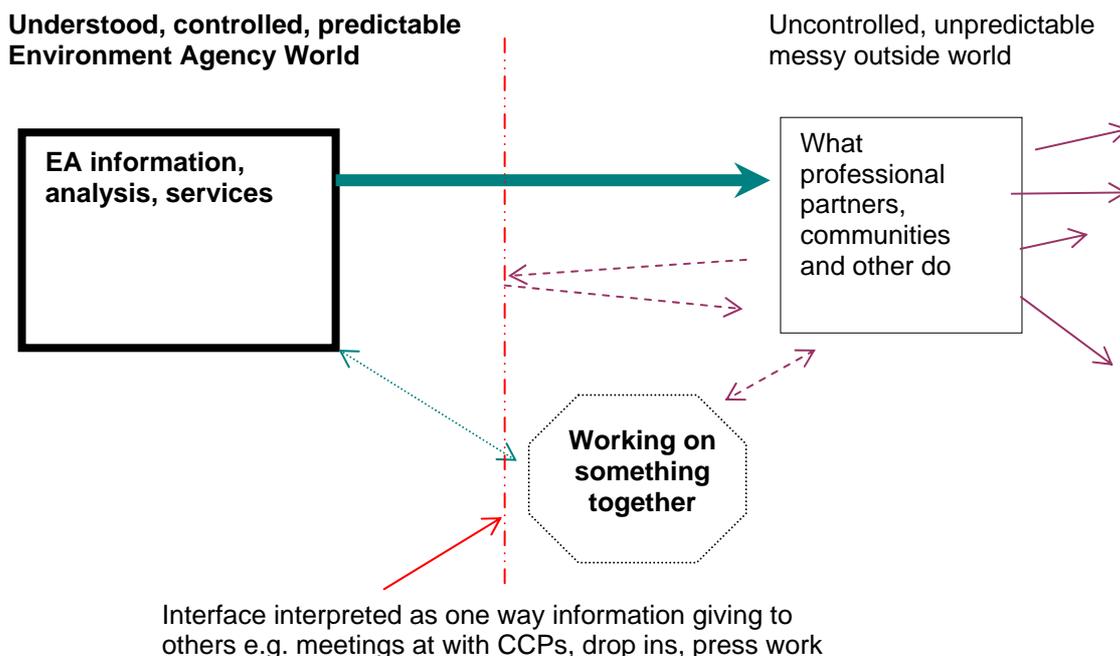
<sup>37</sup> Wilkinson (2008).

<sup>38</sup> Jake Chapman, *Learning to think differently*. PowerPoint presentation. Demos. 2006

<sup>39</sup> Speller (2006) *Improving community and citizen engagement in decision-making, delivery and flood response*.

<sup>40</sup> Watson *et al.* (2008) in Colbourne (2008). *Ibid.* Appendix 2

**Figure 13: The resistance to collaboration**



Another clue to the prevailing Environment Agency view of collaboration can be found through application of the Myers Briggs based ‘Organisational Character Index’ (OCI)<sup>41</sup>. In his submission to this report, Chris Rose argues it may be the best available. His view of the Environment Agency is that it is strongly “ISTJ” which means that it is:

<b><u>I</u>ntroverted</b>	takes cues and draws power from within, is fairly closed
<b><u>S</u>ensing</b>	concerns itself with actualities, attends to details
<b><u>T</u>hinking</b>	depends on impersonal procedures and principles
<b><u>J</u>udging</b>	likes things spelled out and definite, seeks closure

The description of an ISTJ organisation is compelling. This type of organisation is good at delivering in a predictable, efficient and low key way, based on stable and reliable systems: the organisation respects practical experience and hierarchy. This is ideal for many of the Environment Agency’s functions – monitoring, providing data, engineering solutions. But the organisation will also be rather closed to outsiders (protecting its basic stability and reliability of its functional systems), and its internal systems will not be evident to the outside world. The organisation will discourage change and distrust theory or brilliance. In terms of collaborating, Rose suggests that:

- It [the Environment Agency] may find it hard to sufficiently expose its thinking, so that those it wants to work with (or even staff charged with the task) will find it hard to understand where it is coming from.
- Internal ‘silo’ thinking may mean that the Environment Agency is operating differently in various projects, sending different external signals.
- The Environment Agency’s deeply embedded internal processes may be hard to link to or may not be flexible enough to deal with novel external problems.
- The organisation may struggle with tasks that require feeling and perceiving, such as empathising with or establishing a rapport with people outside.

<sup>41</sup> Bridges (2000) Organisational Character Index.

- It may subconsciously or consciously filter out ‘soft issues’ such as politics, emotions or values because they are difficult to measure and instead assign more significance to what can be easily measured as ‘hard facts’.
- The organisation may be more comfortable with established procedures which it is good at (such as flood defence) as opposed to newer ones which are still only at a conceptual or intuitive/visionary stage.
- The Environment Agency will be more at ease with working internally.

This may well explain why examples of excellent collaboration are down to innovation/leadership by individuals rather than a mainstreamed practice.

However, we do not recommend changing the Environment Agency’s culture. Based on Rose’s analysis and suggestions, we endorse an approach of **compensating for it** rather than seeking ‘culture change’. Rose’s argument for this is that:

- Culture change is exceptionally hard to achieve.
- Cultures are built up partly by tasks/experience so, for example the defence>FRM shift will gradually have this influence anyway.
- The Environment Agency has a number of duties such as licensing, inspections, flood defence maintenance, where ISTJ systems are valuable, indeed essential.

### 3.2.5 Structure



Four observations have emerged from our review: The first is that the **area/regional/national structure** should offer significant scope for appropriate collaboration with others. However, it may be the case that some things are being done at an inappropriate level, for example area and regional staff have experienced problems with the centralisation of the electronic distribution of warnings:

*“Before Flood Warnings Direct, that’s a national managed system, before then, we had the AVM, automated voice messages, basically centred here and we managed everything, we recruited people locally, we managed the data locally, we knew people who had been registered and the reasons why they’d deregistered, we knew when people had moved house, we used to do all our local mailings, we did all our own public awareness around recruitment locally.*

*And now what’s happened is we’ve got Floodline Warnings Direct, now it’s managed by a team down in London and we have very little control over the recruitment, they do national mailings once a year, we’re restricted in local activities we’re allowed to carry out because it can sometimes clash with their recruitment campaigns. And I really feel like it’s gone backwards. And that’s what we find now, that they’re trying to centralise everything. First of all we lost our local reception, we lost our local telephone number, it went to a regional call centre, then a national call centre, and that’s what frustrates the public. They just want to speak to their local office. You find all the work you do you’re fighting against all these national systems and regionalised systems all the time but that’s how it’s gone.”<sup>42</sup>*

<sup>42</sup> Collingwood Environmental Planning: Notes from conversation with Environment Agency Flood Incident Management Officer, September 2007.

The second is that the external relations/technical team relationship and communication appears very dependent on individual members of staff making it work – usually where staff value each others' skills and abilities. Otherwise, there can be confusion about who is responsible (or skilled) to do what (and when):

*The trouble is that we [Building Trust mentors/External Relations staff] are only asked to be involved once an issue has become contentious – once relations have really broken down already. There is no way that our being asked to write a bit of a better letter is going to help at that stage.<sup>43</sup>*

Another difficulty we uncovered was that there appears to be a moratorium on meeting to share **learning** and experience between areas or regions. At training events or where we brought staff together (for example to develop the post flood drop in guidance), staff repeatedly commented on how difficult it was not to 'normally' be allowed to do this. Clearly this is an issue that needs to be addressed if the organisation is to build on lessons learned and practice from various parts of the organisation. A classic case is the Environment Agency 'line' on the use of flood wardens - the attitude varies not only between regions but also within regions from actively discouraging it to actively promoting it<sup>44</sup>.

These observations are consistent with predictions of the Organisational Character Index assessment referred to in Section 3.2.4.

*Internally, ISTJ organisations are likely to be organised functionally and to provide people with clear expectations and role responsibilities. In big organisations, this tendency can produce a collection of somewhat isolated domains between which communication is difficult. To get ahead is to contribute to one of these functional domains. Credentials are important, and so is experience. ISTJ cultures are conventional, and they may develop an us-versus-them polarity with whatever is unconventional.*

It is therefore encouraging that we also found evidence that it is possible to implement **new structures and processes** in order to support the mainstreaming of collaboration: For example the evolution of the Building Trust programme which has instigated new roles and job descriptions, KPIs, information sharing and learning opportunities, training programmes and more. And although the new 'mentors' are somewhat marginalised (see quote above), there is also evidence that they are being increasingly accepted.

### 3.2.6 Systems

A strong message from literature review/practice is that although the Environment Agency specialises in processes, processes are not in place to support an engaged way of working within FCERM. Specifically, staff have mentioned the following:

- performance measures do not place (any) value on collaboration;
- project processes do not allow for collaboration, or require collaboration within the DAD mindset (for example consult with statutory consultees before 'locals');
- timescales, budgeting and contracting make it difficult to use the skills/people required to make it work.

<sup>43</sup> Quote from participant on *Building Trust* training course, Wakefield, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> See Colbourne (2008).

In addition, there is a lack of clarity in how plans and procedures fit together:

*“... staff struggled to make sense of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and how it might be implemented. Though they wanted to develop an integrated approach, it soon became clear during the workshops that people felt confused and uncertain about how to do this. There was no clear idea about how the component parts of the WFD could be addressed coherently in river basin plans in the context of various internal and external policy and organisational requirements.”<sup>45</sup>*

There is also evidence of a lack of flexibility at a local level. It is up to individuals to initiate collaboration.

*Currently stakeholders see that the Environment Agency is not engaging them...at all. Many also see that it is narrowly siloed and very hierarchical and therefore unable to move in these directions [towards whole catchment planning]...the problem was not lack of awareness of the needs by the key staff who were involved, it is the inertia that is rigidly built into the system.<sup>46</sup>*

*Locally it doesn't seem as though there is national support or understanding for what we are trying to do here – we need more guidance from the Environment Agency in terms of what we want to do with communities.<sup>47</sup>*

### 3.2.7 Management practices

No assessment has been made of management practices.

### 3.2.8 Work unit climate

No assessment has been made of work unit climate.

### 3.2.9 Task and individual skills

In their contribution to this report, Watson *et al.* (in Colbourne 2008) identified the following skills for collaboration:<sup>48</sup>

- One-to-one skills – building personal relationships, listening, understanding.
- Facilitator skills – running participatory meetings, making clear decisions, working with consensus and common ground.
- Within-organisation skills – influencing, pushing boundaries, making the organisation work for the situation (rather than the other way around).
- Cross-organisation skills – understanding other organisational cultures, establishing relationships, identifying common agendas.
- Public skills – empathising, dealing with anger, being ‘can do’.

However, as reported in the *Making Space for Water* reports (SD1, SD6) these types of skills are not widely recognised; indeed, recruitment and training may neglect such skills:

<sup>45</sup> *River basin planning project: social learning.* Environment Agency (2004). Science Report SC050037/SR1

<sup>46</sup> Wilkinson (2007). Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Flood Incident Manager. February 2007

<sup>48</sup> Adapted from Appendix 2 in Colbourne (2008) op cit.



*SD1 reported that at present the continued emphasis on 'engineering' skills within FCERM as a core skill (emphasised by the need to retain a bar on non-chartered engineers working in certain posts with some of the most significant engagement roles) by default undervalues the skills required to involve people in our work more effectively.<sup>49</sup>*

The accompanying Work Package 3 Report provides many examples of the effects of the lack of these skills, and the positive effect of individuals who do have these skills. In his submission to the IISRF project, Rose (2007)<sup>50</sup> says it is critical to be specific about the skills and intelligences required for this work, and to recruit and assign or enable people with collaborative skills (as in Myers Briggs types ENFP and ESFP) to oversee consultation and outward-facing activities. One such skill is interpersonal intelligence, see Figure 2.13:

Clearly more could be done to both:

- recognise and value these kinds of skills;
- recognise the limits of the Environment Agency's role but in a way that enables collaboration with other organisations; to undertake the work that needs to be done
- provide call-off contracts with consultants skilled in engagement.

**Figure 2.13:** Description of Gardener's interpersonal intelligence

<b>INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE</b>		
<b>- Used for communicating with others (Gardener)</b>		
The ability to work effectively with others, to relate to other people and display empathy and understanding, to notice their motivations and goals. To think about and understand another person. To have empathy and distinguish between people and to appreciate their perspectives with a sensitivity to their motives, moods and intentions. To interact effectively with one or more people among family, friends or working relationships.		
<b>Characteristics:</b>	<b>Likes:</b>	<b>Learning techniques:</b>
✓ Relates to and mixes well with others	✓ Being with people	✓ Learn from others
✓ Puts people at ease	✓ Parties and social events	✓ Work in teams and learn together
✓ Has numerous friends	✓ Community activities	✓ Talk to others to share answers
✓ Sympathetic to others' feelings	✓ Clubs	✓ Compare notes after a study session
✓ Mediates between people in dispute	✓ Committee work	✓ Make use of networking and mentoring
✓ Good communicator	✓ Group activities/team tasks	✓ Teach others
✓ Good at negotiating	✓ Managing/supervising	✓ Socialise during breaks
✓ Cooperative	✓ Teaching/training	✓ Throw a party to celebrate your success
	✓ Parenting	

### 3.2.10 Individual needs and values

No assessment has been made of individual staff needs and values.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas *et al.* (2007). *Better engagement and risk communication – Building stakeholder and community engagement.* Environment Agency.

<sup>50</sup> Rose (2007). For details, see the section on the psychology of change in Appendix 1.

### 3.2.11 Motivation

Many staff we interviewed and worked – those leading on collaborative approaches - were highly motivated by both the relationships with those they were collaborating with, and the need to get the job done:



*There are no KPIs or working structures to support the community-based Incident Plans. This means it is all a bit hand to mouth, and dependent on getting the resources (people/time) to do it. [The Regional Flood Manager] is supporting staff to do this, and in many rural areas there is recognition that it is the only way to do it. On paper it doesn't make sense in terms of the number of properties at risk, but in rural areas it is the only way we can do it.<sup>51</sup>*

Other staff are sceptical about working collaboratively, and planning that collaboration because they:

- don't consider it part of their day job, or consider it someone else's job;
- think they can add it on at the end of a project if necessary;
- think it doesn't fit with what they have to do/the organisation's boundaries;
- believe it costs too much (time/financial budget not available);
- are afraid of contact with the public or communities (bad experience in past, it adds extra work);
- consider it too risky to collaborate (if it goes wrong, they'll be in more trouble than if they hadn't bothered);
- feel unsupported and lack of know-how (including lack of access to consultants).

However, motivations are changing as result of contact with people affected by flooding:

*"I think we've changed our approach a lot since the flooding. I think we've realised locally the impact the floods have had, and we've used our own initiative in a way, you know like the work with the community groups. Before we would sit down and we would issue flood warnings and we probably wouldn't care whether they got it or not or what the impact of the flooding was. We would sit in the incident room and we would get a river level trigger and we'd think we need to issue a warning for that area, press the button to issue the warning and then just think well they'll cope, they'll deal with it, they'll get back on their feet and everything'll be fine.*

*But after the flooding, I think it really hit home to a lot of people how devastating it had actually been for a lot of people. And since then, that's why we've moved more to this community engagement work we've been doing because we really want to find out what the key issues are and how we can help as an agency.<sup>52</sup>*

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Flood Incident Manager. February 2007

<sup>52</sup> Collingwood Environmental Planning: Notes from conversation with Flood Incident Management Officer, September 2007.

### 3.2.12 Individual and organisational performance

This project has not evaluated individual and organisation performance issues relating to collaboration, but there is a clear sense that the ‘customers’ (from individuals to communities and civil contingency partners or other organisations) are not 100 per cent satisfied with the Environment Agency’s approach:



*“The [Environment Agency] is seen by local communities as remote and unfeeling and inclined to take decisions on theoretical understanding without taking local knowledge into account.”* Head of Coastal Strategy at North Norfolk District Council<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, a more engaged approach is not only demanded, but appreciated when offered:

*“The whole village of Shaldon is a conservation area, in an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, so we have to be careful about what gets built here. The Environment Agency has been very good. It’s much better to consult with us rather than impose something on the village... we can all have a fair crack at the whip and people here are very comfortable with what is happening.”* Mike Coley Chairman of Shaldon Parish Council

*“[Our] findings in the Aire and Calder Scoping Study (Wilkinson and Wade, 2005) [showed] what stakeholders and communities wanted was a simple narrative statement from the Environment Agency showing how all these things linked up and how partners could work together on specific flood risk prevention, regeneration, diffuse source pollution problems, improvements in land absorption and porosity and so on. It was seen as important to work together on the diagnosis of issues and opportunities, as well as their remediation. Further, it was far better to be doing this with a shared vision and bigger picture of catchment improvement as a whole.”*<sup>54</sup>

### 3.2.13 Putting it all together – force field analysis

Another way of considering the changes required is to undertake a force field analysis. This provides clues as to the forces which need to be strengthened or mitigated for collaboration to become a mainstream part of the Environment Agency’s work on FCERM.

In an indicative analysis that Lindsey Colbourne Associates conducted for SD6 (2007)<sup>55</sup>, the forces which hold back further collaboration are shown to be strong (see Figure 2.14).

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Taking managed realignment forward as a policy option for coastal management in England and Wales*. CIWEM Briefing Report. October 2006

<sup>54</sup> David Wilkinson’s input to IISRF Work Packages 3 and 4, February 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas *et al.* (2007) Ibid.

**Figure 2.14:** Forces influencing a more collaborative approach

	<i>Driving force which <b>supports</b> or drives collaboration</i>			<i>Restraining force which <b>inhibits</b> collaboration</i>
#		strength		
1	Moving towards <i>Making Space for Water</i> and situations involving uncertainty and complexity	-4	+2	Considering construction of flood defence as core task
2	Innovation by staff at area/regional level	-3	+3	Existing KPIs
3	Whole decision cost benefit analysis	-2	+2	Consideration of early cost only
4	Need for joint funding and/or joint delivery e.g. CCA	-3	+2	Need to demonstrate individual and organisational delivery and competence
5	Reputation damage/failure to deliver contentious decisions	-3	+1	Successful DAD attempts
6	Recognition of the value of whole systems work and partnerships	-1	+2	Familiarity with and belief in reductive science and need to defend one view
7	Low public trust in governments and government bodies of all types; dissatisfaction with service	-1	+1	Belief that EA/Defra will automatically remain the competent authority
8	Right and expectation that people should have a say on issues which affect them	-2	+4	Belief in internal expert decisions (public or others have little to add)
9	Planning engagement from the start as a core part of project planning (with resources)	-2	+2	Adding engagement onto the work at the end (not having resources identified)
10	Learning and training programmes such as BTwC	-1	+3	Existing skills-based recruitment (requirement for engineering skills)
	Total	-22	+22	

### 3.3 Recommendations

We recommend the following in order to mainstream our approach to engagement:

- Do not attempt to change the culture of the organisation; instead, be aware of and compensate for the inward-focused (or ISTJ) tendencies of the Environment Agency when undertaking outward-facing collaborative tasks.
- Work to build up **relevant skills of rapport and planning collaboration** (making it a less seemingly chaotic process) with staff in relevant roles and give them recognized **formats, systems and processes** to execute, including the tool set out in Section 2 of this report.
- **Recruit and assign** or enable people with outward facing and interpersonal skills (such as people with ENFP and ESFP Myers Briggs tendencies) to **support outward-facing activities**, for example through the Building Trust mentor and ‘key contact’ programme. This may have the drawback of separating out engagement from the other roles, but if done in conjunction with spotting, promoting and supporting technical staff with the necessary skills, it would help the organisation value and give permission to do collaboration as part of the day job.
- Work strategically and tactically **with other organisations** who are culturally better equipped to carry out some tasks, and build recognition of what they do (and how the Environment Agency will link to their work).

- **Retain consultancies and agencies** skilled not just in PR and consultation (DAD), but in collaborative approaches (EDD). Make it possible for staff to call on them for assistance in designing and delivering collaborative programmes. To become trusted these would need to be long-term commissions (for example, as in Shaldon).

# List of abbreviations

DAD Decide-announce-defend

EDD Engage-deliberate-decide

FCERM Flood and coastal erosion risk management

IISRF Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding

MSfW Making Space for Water

# APPENDIX 1: A review of the culture and practice of collaborative approaches in FCERM

Improving Social and Institutional Responses to Flooding Work Package 4 Part 1 Report<sup>56</sup>

## Summary/overview

*“Engagement works when you realise you are working for communities, not to put in defences, or to get rid of responsibility onto others...”* Dave Melling, Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council<sup>57</sup>

### Introduction

This interim report for Work Package 4 provides an analysis and a set of frameworks for understanding and implementing engagement and risk communications on flood risk management (FRM) within Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency.

We are not suggesting that Defra and the Environment Agency should work closely with others on everything they do, but that the ability and understanding to do so in appropriate circumstances needs to be better established.

The frameworks provided in later sections of this appendix build on overwhelming evidence of the need for greater participation by others – be it communities, stakeholders, citizens, special interest groups – in work that traditionally might have been seen as the unique sphere of influence and expertise of Defra and the Environment Agency. The term participation is used explicitly to go beyond the ‘default’ position of simply informing and consulting others.

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<sup>56</sup> This report was drafted in April 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Bradford City Council, interview, March 2007

## Key findings

Key finding	Recommendation
<p>There is simply no longer any choice in the matter: FRM solutions can no longer be imposed/delivered by Defra and the Environment Agency alone as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ policy shifts</li> <li>▪ research and literature</li> <li>▪ legislation</li> <li>▪ constraints on resources</li> <li>▪ the significance of politics</li> <li>▪ the rise in complexity and relevance of multiple perspectives.</li> </ul> <p>(Section 1)</p>	<p>Our analysis presents a compelling case for an organisational shift to a more participatory way of working.</p> <p>See following sections for more specific recommendations.</p>
<p>MSfW does not seem to be understood or happening (internally or externally) – there is still very much a flood defence mindset within EA: ‘we build defences for others’. And in that context, the relevance of engagement is reduced because staff may still believe they can pretty much impose their solution, and that they have all the skills required to do so.</p> <p>(Section 1.2.4)</p>	<p>As the shift to MSfW gathers pace (such as in the FRM strategy review), there may be a sudden increase in the relevance of engagement.</p>
<p>The reality of the existing ‘policy shift’ towards more participatory working is more ‘hierarchy in disguise’. This results at best in just telling others better or ‘more sophisticated nagging’ rather than genuine two way engagement. At worst it is resulting in an ‘aggressive transfer of responsibility’ at the community and individual level.</p> <p>(Section 1.2.2; 1.2.4; 1.2.5)</p>	<p>The dangers of this ‘hierarchy in disguise’ may help build the case, especially in the context of the impending shift to MSfW. Work is already underway within Defra on this issue that we could link with.</p>
<p>There tends to be an (unnecessary) three-tier situation in who is engaged, with communities at the bottom, which can result in unexpected conflicts/public inquiries</p> <p>(Section 1.2.3)</p>	<p>Current consultation on the WFD engagement arrangements will be a test case for enshrining this kind of approach. Alternative models which integrate the tiers more effectively may be useful.</p>
<p>Constraints on resources mean that at a community, area and regional level more collaborative approaches are having to happen. This is not only due to the ‘funding gap’ but also due to the nature of flooding and the inability of organizations to provide full ‘protection’. However, staff taking this approach tend to feel they are working against the system not with it.</p> <p>(Section 1.6.2)</p>	<p>Work with those staff who are already building this kind of approach in the next phase of work, and link results to appropriate levels in Defra/ Environment Agency.</p>

Key finding	Recommendation
<p>There is a significant mismatch between the inherently political nature of many flooding decisions and policies (e.g. MSfW) and the existing mindset that it is inappropriate for staff (or civil servants) to engage with politics and human or psychological issues. This results in Defra / the Environment Agency being considered remote and out of touch with people, and in ignoring significant sources of information. (Section 1.6.2)</p>	<p>Raise the need to engage in politics nationally, within the context of an overall 'engagement narrative' in Defra/the Environment Agency</p>
<p>There is significant demand for involvement from communities, stakeholders and the public – not just in refining solutions but in working through the whole decision making process, from problem identification through to implementation (Section 1.6.3)</p>	<p>Use as evidence for the need to shift from the predominant 'telling others' mode to one of genuine involvement.</p>
<p>Engagement and politics around flooding is not something that should just happen at the local level: there are significant gaps in securing 'buy in' to new policies (e.g. MSfW) at a national level which make local level implementation very improbable. (Section 1.6.4)</p>	<p>Ensure the national and regional relevance of engagement is expressed and explored in next stages of the work</p>
<p>There is significant confusion internally and externally about what the various strategies and policies are for, how they relate to each other, how they are kept up to date and who is (meant to be) involved in them (Section 1.7.1)</p>	<p>This is not just a paper exercise – watching how WFD and RBP processes evolve in practice would be informative. And then sharing results</p>
<p>There is an inherent institutional resistance to joined up working on flood issues (silo working), in contrast to the views of communities who look at things in the round, seeking integrated solutions across a range of geographies and organisational remits. This is reinforced by findings in science community that the limits in reductive thinking are being reached, and calls for use of holistic science and values in resolving problems. (Section 1.7.2 -1.7.4 )</p>	<p>Need to build on examples from practice where this has led to 'better' results, and for frameworks/tools that make this possible</p>
<p>Practice shows that the integration of multiple perspectives and systems thinking will result in a better, more informed decision than would be come to by Defra/EA working alone. However, the we know best attitude is still prevalent and underpins the reliance on one way communications (convincing others we are right). (Section 1.7.5)</p>	<p>This is very much the underpinning 'block to genuine engagement... but how to address this?</p>
<p>There is continued scepticism within Defra and the Environment Agency about engagement. This may stem at least in part from the predominant organisational culture which, according to the Organisational Character Index may be strongly ISTJ, an internally focused organisation which concerns itself with facts and details, depends on procedures and principles and likes things spelled out and definite. (Sections 2.4.1-2.4.4)</p>	<p>Work with this predominant culture, seeking to compensate for it rather than change it.</p>

# Frameworks and change

A number of frameworks are presented in Section 2: These include:

- The big picture: what we need to shift to
- The nuts and bolts: decision-making and governance frameworks and tools
- The psychology: how the frameworks sit with the existing culture of the organisation

Specifically we set out the following:

- ✓ a big picture framework of the shifts required to create a co-delivery governance framework (2.2.1)
- ✓ a framework for illustrating the difference between a DAD and an EDD-type approach across all types of engagement (from information giving to devolving power) (2.2.2)
- ✓ a framework for deciding what type of negotiation is required (2.3.1)
- ✓ a framework for defining the type of decision and the amount of engagement required (2.3.2)
- ✓ initial ideas on deciding on the appropriate level of devolution, integration between plans and the role and mechanism of engagement (2.3.3)
- ✓ a framework for deciding when to start engaging and the decision-making phases for that engagement (2.3.4)
- ✓ initial ideas on frameworks and tools for dealing with complexity, politics and multiple perspectives (2.3.5)
- ✓ a framework for conceptualising how to integrate the public and stakeholders in decision-making processes (2.3.6)
- ✓ ideas on noting and accepting the inherently emergent nature of engagement (2.3.7)
- ✓ some ideas on how to build psychology and human understanding into FRM (2.3.8)
- ✓ initial ideas on possible relevance of the concept of 'conditionality' for FRM (2.3.9)
- ✓ a framework for valuing different types of intelligence (2.3.10)
- ✓ a framework for assessing organisational capacity for engagement (2.3.11)

We also put forward some ideas on setting out the cost-benefits of different approaches (Section 3).

## Creating the change: what next?

The final section (Section 4) of the appendix sets out some ideas for creating the changes discussed in this report. These include:

- ✓ strong leadership and good communications around engagement (4.1.1)
- ✓ recognising, recruiting, developing and valuing staff skilled in engagement (4.1.2)
- ✓ developing the tools, frameworks and procedures (4.1.3)
- ✓ consistent policy and decision-making (4.1.4)
- ✓ pathfinding, exploring, pilots, learning by doing – starting with the willing (4.1.5).

# 1. Aims and outcomes

## 1.1 Aims

This report is designed to stimulate debate and interest as a first step towards a practical programme of change within the Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency. The report aims to bring together existing literature and practice, and to add some new ideas to create a coherent narrative on the use of engagement and communications within the context of *Making Space for Water* (MSfW).

The report is interim, but its key points and recommendations can be fed into the deliberation stage of MSfW within the SD6 project report.

## 1.2 Approach

Lindsey Colbourne Associates were hired in mid-January 2007 with the following objectives:

### 1.2.1 Package objectives

To produce a framework and business case for cost-effective engagement and risk communication in flood risk management.

### 1.2.2 Package outcomes

From national level (policy setting by Defra and Government) to ground level (dealing with flood events and building schemes) to have a consistent understanding of:

- ✓ Why and when to apply engagement and risk communications in a cost effective way
- ✓ How to go about it (what changes are required)

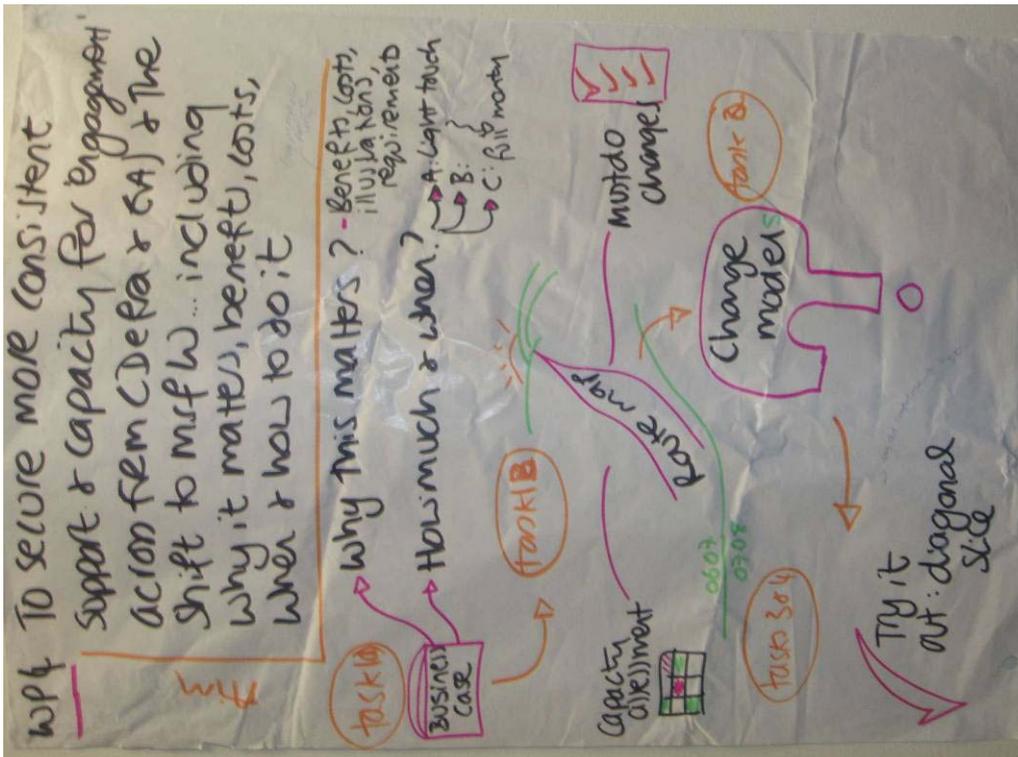
In doing so, to cover work and issues such as the Water Framework Directive and spatial planning system (PPS 25 especially), the different stages in the flood cycle and different levels (so for example there is an understanding and doing of what is needed at the Catchment Flood Management Plan level to ensure management of a flood incident can happen).

### 1.2.3 Package success criteria

The framework successfully applied, including: a change in attitudes across Defra and the Environment Agency on the role of engagement and risk communications within FRM; acceptance of the value of this way of working.

The focus is on the Environment Agency and Defra who are funding this work, but there will be a need to encourage similar changes in partner organisations such as local authorities. For flood incidents, this will be dealt with through WP3. For the wider FRM, MSfW will be the channel for this but may require further work and influencing such as of Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

## 1.3 Overview of approach to the work



## 1.4 Tasks to undertake

Work closely with Environment Agency and Defra staff (largely through face-to-face interviews, meetings and workshops) to:

- a) Make the case for why and when to apply engagement and risk communications in a cost-effective way.
- b) Make the case for how to go about it (what changes are required)

## 1.5 Acknowledgements

This report builds on the work of many others, through reports, workshops and other indirect means. In particular thanks to the following for their direct development of ideas and suggestions:

Mark Russell, South West Area  
Adrian Rushworth, South West Area  
Dave Melling, Bradford Local Authority  
David Wilkinson  
Nigel Watson, University of Lancaster  
John Colvin  
Ruth Johnston

# 2 Is there a need for change?

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## 2.1 Introduction

Drivers or requirements for change towards a more participatory way of working have previously been divided into four types:<sup>58</sup>

- **Guidance and policies** (from the Environment Agency, Defra, local authorities, LA21 organisations, central government, OECD, RCEP, House of Lords Select Committee)
- **Legislative requirements** (European Convention On Human Rights' which could be interpreted as covering the lack or inadequacy of public participation in the relevant decision making processes; Aarhus Convention/Freedom of Information Act; Water Framework Directive; Judicial Review of UK Government's 2006/7 Nuclear Consultation)
- **Changing demands of the public** (increased interest and expectation that the public will be meaningfully involved)
- **Enhancing the Environment Agency's image** (the need to increase the credibility of the Environment Agency and to build understanding of its role and responsibilities).

Yet there is a rather more convincing argument for change that may provide insights as to why the shift to participation (rather than just better communications and consultation) is required. And that argument is that there is simply **no longer any choice in the matter**: Research, policy and practice shows that flood risk management solutions *can no longer be imposed/ delivered by the Environment Agency/Defra alone*<sup>59</sup>.

*"The time of going out to stakeholders and telling them what's good for them has gone! So the Environment Agency needs the skill of engaging effectively."* Peter Bye, Environment Agency Board Member<sup>60</sup>

*"The very title of Making Space for Water suggests that, rather than trying to hold back floods and defend people from them, a more cooperative approach should be taken whereby people 'learn to live with floods' and communities become flood resilient."*(Twigger-Ross 2005).

*Only by working together and by being prepared for flooding can we [the Environment Agency] reduce the risk to people, property and the environment... We will adopt a strategic approach to FRM ... This will require greater collaboration with stakeholders.*<sup>61</sup>

*Research has shown that FRM solutions only work if they are accepted by the local population. The need to involve at-risk communities in the decision-making process using deliberative*

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<sup>58</sup> Twigger-Ross *et al.* (2002). *Evaluating methods for public participation*.

<sup>59</sup> Colbourne (2005) *Literature review of public participation and communicating flood risk*. Appendix 1..

<sup>60</sup> Peter Bye, 17 November 2004

<sup>61</sup> *Strategy for Flood Risk Management*

*techniques is irrefutable.*<sup>62</sup>

The recognition that **government is unable to deliver alone** is not unique to the work of Defra and the Environment Agency. The public sector, and the citizens it serves, are increasingly having to face the reality that government is unable to protect and deliver all that is required to ensure a secure future. It is an uncomfortable reality for all concerned. Current 'crises' such as the future of health care, energy/climate change or road pricing are all examples of where the shift from government-focused solutions have been unable to deliver the public support and action required. They have resulted in polarization of views, highly successful 'anti government' campaigns. However, there are inklings of 'better' ways of doing things, and the way that the pensions crisis was handled, mixing expert and public deliberation is a useful example.

What to do about flooding in the future is just one of many of these types of issues. If the UK is to learn to live successfully with flooding, there is an urgent need for the Environment Agency/Defra to build on the pockets of good practice to work smarter with others – not just at a community level, but at the scheme, plan/catchment and national levels. And not just with organisations and groups, but with individuals and households.

*The Environment Agency must recognise that it cannot always be inward looking and cannot solve everything. People living in flood risk areas need to be the initiators and creators of alternative schemes rather than be expected to be mere receptors of experts' plans. Extensive liaisons are needed and the time and resources to form these before, during and after a flood event must be allocated and the Environment Agency needs to accept that this is a legitimate and necessary part of its work.*<sup>63</sup>

This is a big change in mindset for the Environment Agency and the public:

*The default... mode in terms of threat is to want it eliminated (that is, eliminate all possibility of a flood). Flood defence and the many dimensions that go with it, is a typical [response]. If it is not possible to eliminate a threat then [people] may flip to saying "we will all die then" and "there's nothing we can do about it". That, of course, is a recipe for disengagement.*<sup>64</sup>

A range of attitudes to and experiences of engagement and risk communication exist within the Environment Agency. The most common, however, is to restrict conceptions of the 'shift' required to just telling others better – to improving communications and at a push, doing consultation a bit better. There is good evidence that this approach simply cannot deal with the pressures and requirements facing the Environment Agency.

But even within the narrower conception of 'engagement', some are highly pro, can't do our job without it. Others are highly anti, we can't afford to do it. Some hold both opinions. There is a gap between policy or rhetoric and the underlying beliefs and practice - the reality of delivering engagement in the context of making space for

<sup>62</sup> Speller (2006) *Improving community and citizen engagement in decision-making, delivery and flood response*.

<sup>63</sup> *Improving community and citizen engagement in decision-making, delivery and flood response*

<sup>64</sup> Twigger-Ross et al. (2008) *More targeted flood warnings: A review. Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding. Work Package 1..*

water.

This confusing and divisive situation really must change if the Environment Agency is to lead the way for the UK to learn to live successfully with flooding. What is clear is that engagement can no longer be limited to telling others or to limited consultation. And it can no longer be considered a 'fluffy' or expensive add on, but encouraged and supported as a core component of delivering the day job:

*The UK's successful realignment schemes have happened where the drive for environmental protection or wetland restoration was at least equivalent to the desire for improved flood management (reducing the costs to the state of flood defence infrastructure).*

*Over time, realignments have taken longer to implement and become more costly (eastern regional workshop, Halcrow/CSERGE/CCRU 2002) as more stakeholders are involved in the multiple iterations of the planning and implementation process. Nevertheless, the realignments to date may be regarded as uncontentious compared with what is required for sustainable FRM in future: they are mostly very small-scale schemes; the land used tends to be low-value, low-grade agricultural land; the communities involved – if any – have low-to-modest flood risk (otherwise the sites would not be considered in the first place); and there has therefore been little urgency.*

*Of course, realignments also offer communities some degree of increased flood protection over the alternative 'do-nothing' option, the 'unspoken possibility' as long as flood defence provision is a permissive power. Under these conditions, stakeholders have a fair degree of scope in optimising the benefits as flood management solutions are designed and implemented. However, operating on a larger scale, as catchment-consciousness requires, cannot be accompanied by rising costs and longer lead-in times.*

*The challenges for the future transition towards more sustainable FRM infrastructure are clearly serious (HR Wallingford 2005). Recent experience demonstrates that despite broader stakeholder engagement and a theoretical consensus of the need to reverse past (unsustainable) policies, practical action can be stalled through controversy and political tension – as Cley-Kelling has demonstrated.<sup>65</sup>*

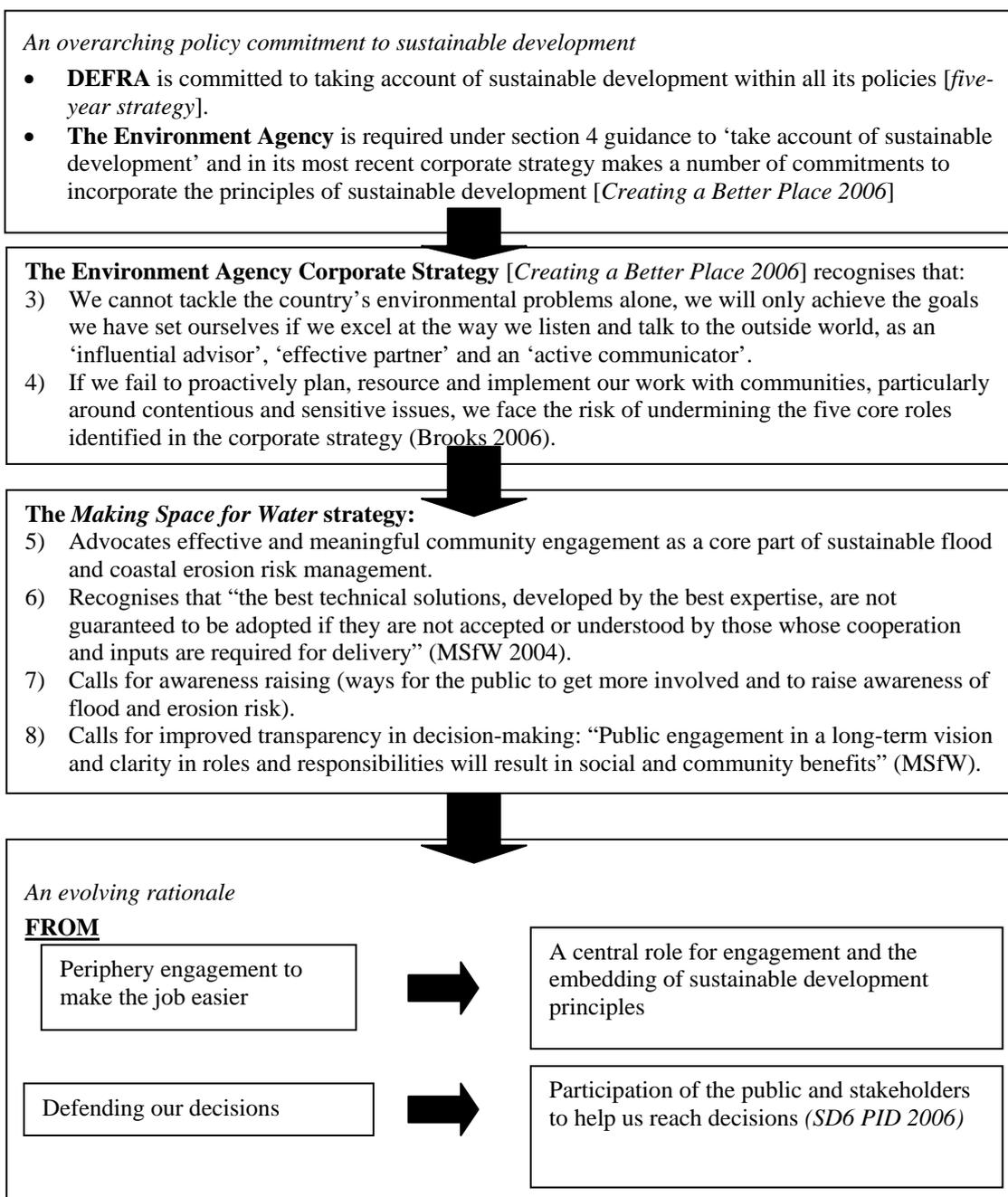
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<sup>65</sup> Cornell (2006) *Improving stakeholder engagement in flood risk management decision-making and delivery.*

## 2.2 Need for change in policy

### 2.2.1 Evolving rationale

A great deal has been written about how engagement ‘fits’ with current policy. We do not attempt to synthesise it in its entirety here. A useful summary by Coulthard (2006)<sup>66</sup> is provided below:



<sup>66</sup> Coulthard (2006). *The role of community engagement in delivering sustainable FCERM*.

Coulthard concludes that the ways in which flood risk is managed in the UK are changing. MSfW and earlier policies<sup>67</sup> are moving away from flood defence towards flood management, and developing social capacity to live with changing flood risk. Driven by a need for future sustainability, longer term strategic planning, and climate change, FCERM policy now advocates, where possible, working with a natural river catchment or coastline. In some areas, this will mean abandoning or removing flood and coastal defences to allow natural flooding or erosion of land. Focus has shifted to building social resilience in the community by encouraging greater awareness, safer responses, behaviour change and adaptation to flood and coastal erosion risk.

The Environment Agency is committed to the government's parallel commitments to sustainable development and to achieving a better quality of life for all.<sup>68</sup> These commitments are reflected in the new Environment Agency corporate strategy *Creating a Better Place*,<sup>69</sup> which states five strategic roles:

*"We will work directly and effectively as an efficient operator to tackle environmental problems and work with business as a modern regulator to help industry reduce its impact on the environment. But we cannot do it all ourselves. We also need to be an influential adviser and an effective partner, persuading others to act and to work with us. And we'll highlight the problems facing the environment and explain the need for action as an active communicator. And as an environmental champion advise on sustainable development, taking account of economic and social issues. That way, we'll change attitudes, behaviours and policies of the public, business and government and put the environment at the heart of everybody's decisions."*

Coulthard (2006) concludes that *"To realistically achieve any of the above, we need a firm commitment to meaningful engagement with the public, creation of fair partnerships and shared responsibilities, and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and trust."*

This recommendation is very much about collaboration, in which engagement is two-way, and decision-making and responsibility is shared. Others have interpreted the situation in similar ways. For example, Cornell (2006)<sup>70</sup> provides a historical view of the issue, and outlines four current drivers for change:

- ✓ The shift to a catchment-scale focus in policy and practice
- ✓ The value of streamlining engagement processes to avoid stakeholder fatigue and ensure better links with others' planning processes
- ✓ Rights to stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making – Aarhus; Human Rights Act; WFD Directive; SEA Directive
- ✓ The shift from 'government' to 'governance'.

Building on the idea of a shift from government to governance, Cornell contrasts the Environment Agency's current approach to engagement on flood risk management – based on a top down 'government' model (decide – consult – defend) - with a co-

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<sup>67</sup> *Directing the Flow* (2002), *Strategy for Flood Risk Management* (2003), both Environment Agency.

<sup>68</sup> Defra (2005). *Securing the future*

<sup>69</sup> Environment Agency (2006). *Creating a Better Place*

<sup>70</sup> Cornell (2006) *Improving stakeholder engagement in flood risk management decision-making and delivery*.

delivery model which is much more in line with Coulthard's analysis and emerging policy within river basin planning.

## 2.2.2 Is the shift towards collaboration or 'sophisticated nagging'?

Close examination of the strategic roles set out in *Creating a Better Place* reveals a possible mismatch in the communications-led intentions and the collaborative governance interpretations of commentators such as Coulthard and Cornell.

**The ladder of participation<sup>71</sup> – what are we aiming to achieve?**

<b>Devolve</b>
<b>Decide together</b>
<b>Involve</b>
<b>Gather info/Consult</b>
<b>Inform</b>
<b>Manipulate</b>

The Environment Agency's strategic roles are framed around the following verbs: persuade; highlight; explain; advise; put; change. These words enshrine the notion of government protecting and advising others (who know less than we do). All that is needed to achieve the Environment Agency's aim is to do what we've always done, but perhaps just to 'tell others better'.

But notions of governance, of collaboration, of genuinely building ownership and delivering making space for water with others require the Environment Agency to actively want to build relationships, learn from others, share views, be influenced, share responsibility, be responsive. These words and ideas are notable in their absence.

On a recent 'Working with Others, Building Trust with Communities' training<sup>72</sup> the pervasive notions of 'telling others better' shone through every single case study that was worked upon. Again and again, participants (external relations, environmental managers and corporate affairs staff) designed 'engagement' processes that were actually about getting messages across, convincing others that the Environment Agency is right, defending positions.

This entrenched perspective, of the Environment Agency/Defra '**knowing best**' is very much at the heart of telling others better. We return to this in later sections (see sections on politics and complexity).

Clearly the policy context is somewhat ambiguous – in the following sections we consider what light practice and literature can throw on the 'collaboration and building relationships or telling others better?' question.

## 2.2.3 A tiered approach?

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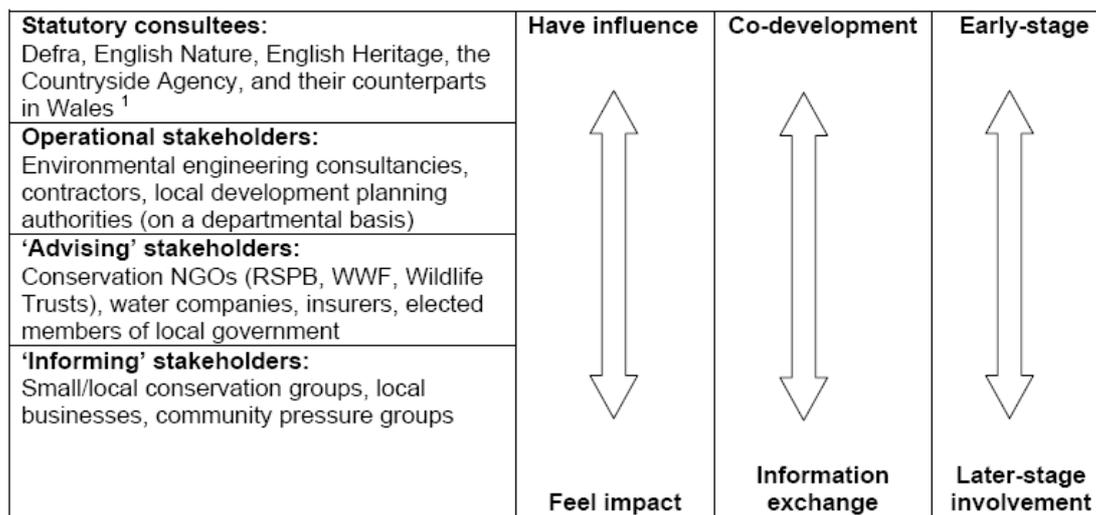
<sup>71</sup> Originally conceived by Sherry Arnstein in the 1960s

<sup>72</sup> *Building Trust with Communities*, two-day design course. Reading, 6-7 March 2007.

Sarah Cornell<sup>73</sup> argues that as the Environment Agency other public bodies attempt to increase engagement, there is a danger of a ‘three-tier situation’ developing (see her box below) which can result in:

*“unexpected conflicts or public inquiries – the very expensive means by which the bottom tier can affect the top-level decision makers.”*

These three tiers actually reflect three levels of engagement: manipulation and/or information-giving; consultation; and shared decision-making.



**Figure A1.1:** Three tiers of engagement (taken from Cornell, 2006)

Cornell argues that there are valid historical, regulatory and pragmatic reasons for a tiered approach to engagement, but that it struggles in addressing the contentious issues that increasingly relate to flood risk management. The problem does not necessarily lie with the tiers themselves, or with the use of different engagement mechanisms for different groups in society – FRM decisions will always be made at multiple geographical and political scales, from local to regional and national (see later sections). Much of the problem lies in the current interfaces between tiers – at present these are often gaps rather than interfaces.

Information flow is one problem. The costs of managing bottom-up information flow through the tiers can become substantial. It is also not a straightforward process for a decision maker ‘at the top’ to compile and aggregate the multiple inputs from stakeholders and society. Yet, without this information, suboptimal solutions can be proposed for difficult decisions. We turn to this again in the section on complexity and multiple perspectives.

Cornell sees the **balance of power** in the tiered system as particularly problematic. FRM decisions are increasingly complex (Evans *et al.* 2004), and what appear to be rational top-down decisions can sometimes be held up by unexpected conflicts or public inquiries – the very expensive means by which the bottom tier can affect the top-level decision makers. We turn to this again in the costs/benefits section.

The involvement of the statutory stakeholders in the top tier itself has some constraints. The authorities and agencies are increasingly being expected to work together, but in contexts like flood risk management, at the interfaces of the natural and human systems, the **rigidity of their operational remits** is exposed. Public

<sup>73</sup> Cornell (2006) op cit.

bodies in the UK are bound by the ultra vires rule, which means that they must be given authorisation to act, and they must act only in accordance with their authorisation. Working together demands a degree of flexibility that sectoral operations previously did not need. We look at this in the section on constraints and demands, complexity and multiple perspectives.

The current consultation on Water Framework Directive engagement arrangements<sup>74</sup> will be a test case for enshrining this kind of tiered approach. It sets out four options:

- Option 1: Working through existing Environment Agency engagement processes (advisory committees and groups involved in Flood Management Plans).
- Option 2: Working through existing stakeholders-led forums and engagement processes (such as local authority-led initiatives).
- Option 3: Working through a combination of existing Environment Agency and stakeholder-led forums and engagement processes.
- Option 4: Creating new forums (tailor-made processes to ensure stakeholder input is timely and appropriate).

The preferred option is Option 3, with some limited application of option 4 (e.g. stakeholder workshops). In addition the activities outlined indicate a wider 'consultation [at key stages] with all stakeholders and the public'. This enshrines the tiered approach described above by Cornell. It will be interesting to see, over the next years whether it works and how the different regions approach it. Some are not particularly optimistic:

*The River Basin Planning managers in the Regional Strategic Units are responsible for developing an engagement plan consistent with the RBP Strategy but on the whole are focusing on the River Basin District liaison panels where a reasonably good analytic deliberative process is emerging. But the wider process of engagement (including at catchment and local levels) as set out in the strategy is pretty much entirely missing, even though I am sure there is enthusiasm from some area teams.<sup>75</sup>*

#### **2.2.4 In practice – Environment Agency and consultants still in DAD mode**

It is clear from the literature and from interviews that potentially cooperative partners have found the Environment Agency difficult to engage. For example, in Bradford, one member of staff interviewed<sup>76</sup> described how the council was 'all lined up' to work on flooding issues, through the joint operational group 'Bradford District Water Management Advisory Group. This includes environmental health, highways, drainage engineers, regeneration officers, countryside land management teams, asset management teams, emergency planners, neighbourhood support service and land use planning.

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<sup>74</sup> *River Basin Planning: Working Together* (2006). Statement of steps and consultation measures for preparing RBMPs.

<sup>75</sup> John Colvin, in conversation. 2007

<sup>76</sup> Dave Melling, Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council. March 2007

Despite this, in developing the strategy for River Wharfe, the Environment Agency employed consultants who did a two-hour interview with one or two council staff [their approach was to point on a map at particular problem areas to solve rather than risks to manage], then worked on the plan for two years and presented it finished and glossy (although still not a public document). Bradford Council submitted a response in January 2007 (to which no response had been received by mid-March 2007). Below is an extract from their *briefing for chair of scrutiny committee, March 2007*

*The council's response to the strategy [a draft River Wharfe Flood Risk Management Strategy, October 2006] highlighted a number of concerns:*

- *Consultation had been minimal and the Bradford District Water Management Advisory Group had not been consulted at all...*

*It is recommended that Bradford Council press the Environment Agency for clarification/action in a number of areas:*

- *How the Environment Agency proposes to work with the Bradford District Water Management Advisory Group.*
- *How the Environment Agency can support a programme such as the Bradford FLAPS (Flood Action Plans) and thus facilitate a partnership approach to community involvement and stakeholder engagement...*<sup>77</sup>

There are similar stories at the other levels identified in Cornell's tiers. One comprehensive review of practice<sup>78</sup> concluded that at the community level:

*Surprisingly, [in the lessons learned reports from 2000 floods] there is no mention of engaging local communities in FRM. Indeed, the report is primarily about flood defence in terms of technical and engineering solutions ...Recommendations... ignore engagement of the local communities and focus on other matters... The ethos of the recommendations is top-down, with the Environment Agency and government making decisions.*<sup>79</sup>

There are also concerns about an 'aggressive transfer of responsibility' at the community and individual level:

*The Environment Agency and civil contingency planners see it as a public responsibility to look after themselves – there is a transfer of responsibility. Want to drop an idea on others/tell others it is their responsibility and walk away - not going to work with them on anything, and no recognition of any humanity issues.*

*Classic view (it isn't just the Environment Agency, councillors say this too) is that 'it's your fault/problem now we've told you... you shouldn't have chosen to live there'. And yet until PPG25 five years ago, no one was told anything. Affordable housing was being built in the flood plain. So people with financial difficulties are now in more trouble, as insurance goes up/becomes unavailable. Or, as in Stockbridge, only half the houses are insured because it is against religious beliefs to insure against 'what god decides'.*

<sup>77</sup> *Briefing for chair of scrutiny committee, March 2007. Chris Pilkington, Rural Services Development Officer*

<sup>78</sup> *Speller (2006) Improving community and citizen engagement in flood risk management decision making delivery and flood response.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

*This 'aggressive transfer' can't work because the Environment Agency has:*

- a) not got the connectivity (networks, people, human relationships)*
- b) not got the overview/rationale*
- c) not got the humanity.<sup>80</sup>*

The BTwC pilot in Shaldon suffered a similar reaction from Environment Agency staff when funding cuts meant that the desired flood defence scheme (designed with a community liaison group) might no longer be viable. The initial reaction of staff was to stop all work, including cancelling all pending meetings of the liaison group. It was only through pressure from an external facilitator and a Head Office member of staff that the next meeting went ahead, and that a flood plan was developed with the community. The natural tendency was for the Environment Agency to just 'walk away', despite having successfully raised awareness of flood risk.

Chris Rose:<sup>81</sup>

*An issue which the Environment Agency needs to resolve is its ad hoc responsibility for post-flood recovery. The Environment Agency needs to either take this on systematically (or to define a systematic role, if not a comprehensive one), or to cause the resolution of it so that other 'active stakeholders' clearly take on the role.*

*This can't just be left to others who have thought less about it. If the Environment Agency does want to divest itself of this de facto role then it also needs to do some politics – crudely, for example, a conference or series of conferences to 'sell in' the best achievable solution.*

It is very possible that what is trapping the Environment Agency in the 'DAD' mode is that **there is no significant shift to any Making Space for Water type thinking amongst staff, and so no need to engage**. This point has recurred again and again in our interviews:

*"If the Environment Agency still sees its reason for existence is to put in hard defences, and Environment Agency staff are no longer able to do this, then they will see no need to engage. They will just need to tell others it is their responsibility to deal with it. There is no challenge to the engineering grip. And yet if you look more broadly at managing flood risk across the UK, the engineering professionals don't have the answers, just the tools to deliver some solutions. There needs to be honesty about what the Environment Agency can/can't do.*

*Engagement works when you realise you are working for communities, not to put in defences, or to get rid of responsibility onto others...<sup>82</sup>*

*"What has happened to the whole Making Space for Water thing? Last I heard of it was the Defra consultation document."<sup>83</sup>*

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Bradford Council employee, March 2007

<sup>81</sup> Rose (2007), *Ibid*

<sup>82</sup> Dave Melling, *ibid*

<sup>83</sup> Environmental Assessment Officer, National Environmental Assessment Service

*“There are all these project managers now with nothing to do because there’s no money. We have certainly never thought of shifting what we are doing to supporting communities dealing with the flood risk rather than building defences.”<sup>84</sup>*

This lack of shift towards MSfW has been identified elsewhere. For example, MSfW programme, SD1 states:

*“There is still some lag between the old flood defence ‘culture’ and the new holistic flood risk management approach ... Effective internal and external communications will be needed to support the dissemination of a new FRM strategy. The new strategy, complete with an effective launch plan, workshops etc, would help to indicate a new era to all staff. A multiple benefits ‘strap line’ may be needed to sell the new idea. The new strategy and communications plan needs to incorporate plans for the roll-out or implementation phase of MSfW and reflect any new responsibilities and roles from the Strategic Overview.”<sup>85</sup>*

## **2.2.5 Early signs of a shift? Some insights from the literature**

Kickert *et al.* (1997)<sup>86</sup>, in reflecting on the history of public sector governance since the 1940s. He has identified three models which help to place the above rationale within the ‘network model’. It also highlights a potential danger (‘in avoiding the drawbacks of the ‘multi-actor approach Government actors may over-react and revert back to a closed ‘steering model’ characteristic’) that Defra and the Environment Agency may currently be facing, as described in the following sections.

### **The steering model**

*“Governance was characterised by the division between politics and administration... After authoritative decision-making, the implementation phase is considered a non-political, technical and potentially programmable activity.”*

Criterion for success/failure: the attainment of formal policy goals.

Drawback: process of implementation does not involve stakeholder or customer needs. Government actors have a central top-down approach.

### **The multi-actor model**

*“Public policies and governance can be improved by increasing the discretion of local policies, providing more resources and strengthening the autonomy of these actors, leading to greater collaboration.”*

Criterion for success/failure: balance of power and influence evenly distributed.

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<sup>84</sup> National Capital Project Management Service

<sup>85</sup> Thomas and Blackmore (2007) *Barriers and incentives to the delivery of better environmental and social outcomes* (Project SD1)

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Joining up (in and out) of Defra Water Directorate. Karl Hardy 2007.

Drawback: inconsistency in decision-making and a one-sided approach if power lies with a larger actor or an alliance that is not a government actor, to the detriment of smaller or local/less powerful actors.

## **The network model**

According to Kickert *et al.* (1997) , the network approach considered public policy making and governance to take place in networks of various actors, none of which possessed the power to determine the strategies of other actors. The government was no longer seen as occupying a superior position to other parties, but as being on equal footing with them.

Criterion for success/failure: realisation of collective action in order to establish a common purpose or avert common threats.

Drawback: in avoiding the drawbacks of the multi-actor approach, government actors may overreact and revert to a closed 'steering model'.

Hardy (2007) has also developed a 'notion of autonomy, governing mode and engagement' which casts further light on what Defra and the Environment Agency are experiencing – the rhetoric and policy may be implying network governing (his terms), but the reality is 'hierarchy in disguise' (see Figure A1.2 below). His ideas are currently being tested and the results may be highly pertinent to the next stages of this work.

**Figure A1.2:** Autonomy, governing mode and engagement (from Hardy, 2007)

	Network Governing	Hierarchy in disguise	Hierarchy in disguise	Hierarchy by default
Policy network	Full policy network autonomy	Partial policy network autonomy	Limited policy network autonomy	Negligible policy network autonomy
* Governing mode	Continuous structure, horizontal links	Structure more hierarchical in some areas	Structure hierarchical in many areas	Structure hierarchical, top-down
Nature and scale of engagement in policy making	Engagement in full policy process	Limited engagement across all stages of policy process. State dominated agenda setting.	Limited engagement on some parts of the policy process. State dominated agenda, and no reciprocity.	Negligible engagement, rubber stamping exercise, order taking from a top-down approach.
Example	E.g. many groups in the network engage in the whole process	E.g. only a limited number of groups in the network engage in the whole process	E.g. most groups identify problems at the start and consult on proposals at the end	E.g. opportunity to design the process limited, only called upon to consult at the end.

Similar conclusions have been made in different arenas. For example, a recent Demos report<sup>87</sup> stated that:

*As part of the move to a new governance of science, the last decade has seen a growing interest in the idea of public dialogue with experts... This is a genuine change. But as with other changes in governance, there is a lingering suspicion that this form of openness is more about communication and trust than the core business of policy... The old model of expertise – truth to power – talks to the public. It does not listen.*

*The new model of expertise needs to listen and learn to listen differently... There can be many reasons why technical experts and policy-makers struggle to hear the voices of outsiders... 'Non-experts' can shout too loudly, ignore professional codes of behaviour and make it clear that they care very deeply about the issues. Public groups will define the issues in their own way: what's at stake can appear very different from varying social standpoints. The exchange of expertise and experience may not be straightforward. It is all too easy for insiders to become dismissive, to think that the public is failing to recognise the real issues or that the quality of debate is too low, that we knew all this already and so on. Learning to listen means suspending the tendency to dismiss what appears irrelevant, anecdotal or ill-informed until a real effort has been made to hear how the issues appear from a different point of view and to see what lessons might be learnt.*

There needs to be greater clarity of rationale and of whether this shift is being pursued or not within the Environment Agency.

<sup>87</sup> Received wisdom, opening up expert advice. Demos 2007

## 2.3 Need for change according to literature

An extensive literature has been published on the subject of engagement and risk communication. The literature casts light on concerns highlighted in the previous section: is it just about ‘telling better’, or is it about changing notions of relationships?

A characteristic review drew the following conclusions.<sup>88</sup> The messages chime with the conclusions of Cornell and Coulthard explored in previous sections:

*1 Flood risk management solutions can no longer be imposed; they only work if they are accepted by local people and this requires effective participation.*

*2 Participation can help meet policy requirements for involving people at the heart of decision-making. Traditional ‘end of pipe’ consultation methods are no longer sufficient.*

*3 You can no longer rely on technical/expert knowledge alone. The quality and acceptability of decisions depends on the inclusion of social science and lay knowledge and ideas.*

*4 It is no longer acceptable to work within traditional institutional, geographical or issue-based boundaries. Participation can enable joined-up thinking and working across a range of geographical scales and on complex and uncertain situations.*

*5 Government can no longer assume trust – it is earned, not given, and once lost it is hard to regain. Participation – especially if longer term and deliberative - can help build trust.*

Most significant is the overwhelming evidence that engagement is most powerful when it goes beyond ‘end of pipe’ consultation and genuinely seeks to engage people in decision-making and action.

## 2.4 The need for change according to constraints on resources

Possibly the most compelling reason for the shift towards governance and collaboration rather than relying solely on the government mode and ‘telling others’ is that **it is already happening**. On the ground staff are finding there is no other way of delivering what is required. As shown below, some staff feel they are going it alone to do so – running the gauntlet in an absence of national understanding and policy.

### 2.4.1 The funding gap

Staff at a regional level are already finding that an EDD approach is required to deliver what they need to deliver:

*“I need to work out how to get the whole region to own Making Space for*

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<sup>88</sup> Colbourne (2005) *Literature review of public participation and communicating flood risk*

*Water! We [the Environment Agency] have responsibility for reducing flood risk but we don't have enough money to do this alone over the next 10 years. There is something like a £50 million shortfall, and Arup are working out the economic impact of flooding as this will help make the case for shared responsibility in reducing flood risk. We need to increase the external cash flow into flood risk management; to encourage greater responsibility and ownership of the issue outside the Environment Agency. We also want to ensure that flood risk is considered and incorporated into everything from planning to redevelopment, through to emergency response.*<sup>89</sup>

It is similar at scheme level. The *Building Trust with Communities* pilot in Shaldon was hit in 2006 by a freeze in spending on flood defence schemes and rising priority score. The Environment Agency, confused by the possible lack of funding for a scheme, considered immediately stopping all work, even cancelling the impending liaison group. This classic DAD approach would have left the village at risk of flooding with no increased resilience or FRM, and significant damage to the reputation of the Environment Agency. In the end, input from consultants and Ruth Johnston resulted in the liaison group going ahead. The statement released by the liaison group at the end of the meeting shows what can be achieved with an EDD approach on FRM:

*The Shaldon and Ringmore Tidal Flood Risk Liaison Group, together with the Environment Agency, are very disappointed to learn that funding for the development and construction for the proposed scheme is unlikely to be available between April 2007 and March 2009. The group and the Environment Agency have been working very diligently for more than 12 months to evolve a scheme to defend Shaldon and Ringmore against the risk of tidal flooding. All concerned, while being bitterly disappointed at this potential set back, are determined to work together to progress the scheme so far as they can in order to be in the greatest state of readiness for when funding becomes available.*

*In the meantime, the Shaldon Parish Council in conjunction with members of the Liaison Group will be refining the Parish Flood Plan to best equip the village to deal with any emergency situation that might arise in the interim.*<sup>90</sup>

There are similar cases elsewhere<sup>91</sup> where 'preferred options' are actually not affordable in the way that the Environment Agency traditionally works.

## **2.4.1 It is just not possible to do it on our own**

*"Civilians are the true first responders and first line of defence...."* Bill Durodie, Kings College London.<sup>92</sup>

*"It was one hour 15 minutes before the first helicopter came. Meanwhile local people cleared the hotel which spanned the valley and water came in at first floor level and collapsed the floor just half an hour later. Local people and their*

<sup>89</sup> Participant from the NE region. *Building Trust with Communities* training course. Wakefield, 2007

<sup>90</sup> Minutes of Shaldon and Ringmore Flood Risk Liaison Group. October 2006.

<sup>91</sup> Examples known to Lindsey Colbourne Associates include the Blyth Estuary, Conwy Valley

<sup>92</sup> Quote from Extreme Flood Conference, November 2006

*knowledge/involvement saved lives". Boscastle<sup>93</sup>*

A year ago, Devon County Council with the advice of the Environment Agency, decided to look at the 40-50 locations across Devon which need to have Incident Plans (IPs) because they are *likely to be on their own* if a flood comes. Floods in these rural locations will have too little lead time for civil contingency partners (CCPs) including the Environment Agency to respond (as in Boscastle) or if a flood comes, emergency services will be too busy with the urban focused Major Incident Plans to attend to them. These communities are very vulnerable to long term effects of a flood on their viability – if houses/shops/services are shut down – and yet there simply are not the resources to protect them.

So the emphasis is on community self help – lead by parish council with CCPs in support. Currently piloting with communities where there has been some flood defence work, or where the community/parish council has invited the Environment Agency. The IPs include what the community can do to reduce the impact (community volunteers checking on vulnerable people, operating flood boards) and risk (operating flood gates).

But interviews with key staff involved reveal that they feel there is the national support, understanding or guidance in terms of how Defra and the Environment Agency want to work with communities. There are no KPIs or working structures to support the community based Incident Plans. This means it is all a bit hand to mouth, and dependent on getting the resources (people/time) to do it.

Some regional managers (as in Devon) are supporting staff to do this, and in many rural areas there is recognition that it is the only way to do it (e.g. Wales): 'on paper it doesn't make sense in terms of the number of properties at risk, but in rural areas it is the only way we can do it'.

### **2.4.3 Pressure is on the increase**

It is clear, for example from the Foresight Future Flooding project<sup>94</sup> that the inability of DEA to deliver effective FRM through a reliance on flood defence and top down 'rescue' will just become more and more acute:

*Flooding issues will be on the increase, and will most affect the already disadvantaged: The number of people at high risk from river and coastal flooding [in the UK] could increase from 1.6 million today, to between 2.3 and 3.6 million by the 2080s. The increase for intra-urban flooding, caused by short-duration events, could increase from 200,000 today to between 700,000 and 900,000.... The socially disadvantaged will be hardest hit. The poor are less able to afford flooding insurance and less able to pay for expensive repairs. People who are ill or who have disabilities will be more vulnerable to the immediate hazard of a flood and to health risks due to polluted floodwaters.<sup>95</sup>*

Interviews and literature repeatedly show that engagement is required to:

- ✓ convince others (nationally, regionally and locally) of the need for change in the way we manage flooding

<sup>93</sup> Extreme Flood Conference, op cit

<sup>94</sup> Foresight report (2004) *Future flooding*. Executive summary.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

- ✓ work collaboratively with others to address key causes of flood risk
- ✓ work collaboratively with others to **increase resilience**
- ✓ bring in more sources of **funding**.

These conclusions are consistent with the work being done by PriceWaterHouse Coopers<sup>96</sup> to ensure clarity and earlier recognition of where funding for flood defence schemes will (and will not) be available. A clearer picture nationally will free (and encourage) regional and local teams to engage in FRM rather than a constant battle for FDS.

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<sup>96</sup> PriceWaterHouse Coopers (2007) *Streamlining flood risk management development*.

## 2.5 Significance of politics

### 2.5.1 Changing relationship between citizen and state

“The rise in post-modern values brings declining respect for authority and growing emphasis on participation and self-expression... they are making the position of governing elites more difficult”.<sup>97</sup>

We have already noted in the policy section that Making Space for Water in itself is a call for a shift from government to governance, in order to successfully live with flooding. This can be considered part of a shift occurring across the whole of the public sector:

“In the world of modern governance achieving many desired changes requires that governments do not simply act on their own but instead in concert with other governments or with citizens or specialist and sectional interests....Given the complexity of modern governance, citizen input is often not only required in the development phase of policies but also in the implementation phase. Environmental change, more healthy lifestyles and better education are all areas that require an input from both government and from the citizen if positive change is to be achieved”<sup>98</sup>

Chris Rose<sup>99</sup> points out that useful work has also been done on this by Andy Stirling, at University of Sussex. Stirling’s paper<sup>100</sup> is a composite of researches by several authors looking at how to ‘consult’ or effectively do the politics around the introduction of new technologies and how to discuss and ‘handle’ ‘risk’. As part of the background he cites Ulrich Beck’s ideas about risk politics (made famous in *The Risk Society*). Beck noted that risk is not simply a ‘technical’ issue but an inherently political one. Stirling argues:

- *The creation and distribution of risks is a fundamentally political issue* – who has the *right* to do it, how are they *distributed* (many govt policies have fallen over this, typically when govt has treated risk as technical and advanced new technologies under a cover of DAD, only to go to DADA when the political nature of the risk has emerged). Few British politicians have yet got to grips with this.
- In our society novel risks have overtaken in importance older risks such as ‘natural’ diseases, starvation and industrial risks such as acid fumes or machinery accidents. These were *identifiable, understandable and attributable*. In contrast many modern ‘post industrial’ risks are not identifiable / detectable or understandable and cannot be assessed without *science*. This gives science a new highly political and central role. Climate change is an example because without *models* we could not detect its ‘real’ meaning. Thus this is relevant to Defra and the Environment Agency. Arguably the same applies to part of ‘floods’ because modelling gives us information that would otherwise be outside our understanding (of risks).

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<sup>97</sup> Inglehart, quoted in *Why politics matters, making democracy work*. Gery Stoker (2006)

<sup>98</sup> Stoker (2006) *ibid*

<sup>99</sup> Rose (2007) *ibid*

<sup>100</sup> *On science and precaution in the management of technological risk*. Andrew Stirling SPRU University of Sussex.

- Finally these novel risks, argues Beck, have become the dominant factor in the anxieties of society, creating a 'risk-conscious society'.

Whether you accept this final point or not, the first two points are clearly applicable to the problems faced by Defra and the Environment Agency. Rose (2007) concludes:

*If you take any sort of 'Aristotelian' view – his belief that citizens must actively participate in politics if they are to be happy and virtuous – then it follows that the Environment Agency must try to inform citizens about decisions that may affect them, and their views ought to determine the outcomes/choices. The extreme counter view is more like Plato, who thought that society should be run by civil service guardians watched over by absolute rulers, a select few who know what is best for society. [We] might as well take [our] cue from British tradition of having a bit of both.*

*Implicit in the government's mixture of positions are the ideas that:*

- *the market will decide (on a lot of things, broadly as much as politically possible);*
- *'people' should decide (or more precisely perhaps, what 'public opinion' wants is right, with a few exceptions like war).*

*Both of these positions, however ill-formed, are departures from the older 'settler' society age in which an elite did tend to think that it knew better and this was what was expected as the 'natural' outcome of elections, that is, once elected you governed without much let or hindrance.*

*Both of these have some bearing on what the Environment Agency may be expected to do in relation to public consultation – in its execution and style, in its architecture (the overarching options or possibilities ruled in or out) and in the underlying strategy or intent.*

*For instance the modern political style of politicians competing to be in line with public opinion is a relatively recent development, charted in books like *The Permanent Campaign And Its Future*, by Ornstein and Mann. This style assumes a constant effort to stay in line with 'public opinion', keeping any gap as narrow as possible by moving 'policy' or moving 'opinion' or both. Clearly this is relevant to [our] public consultation work.*

## **2.5.2 Participation is, by definition, political**

As this shift occurs, governments, stakeholders and citizens must be able to express and resolve differences, and to find ways of cooperating to achieve collective aims.

*"Because we are human we disagree and seek different things and we need politics not only to express but also to manage those disagreements and if possible find ways to cooperate... to understand politics, one must above all understand the inevitable partiality of judgement."<sup>101</sup>*

Yet the prevailing culture within the *Environment Agency* is that it does not 'do' politics. The culture is of an independent and objective force for 'right'. This leads to

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<sup>101</sup> Stoker (2006) Ibid

the language of 'vested interests', 'difficult people', 'special interest groups' that used to justify marginalisation and exclusion from decision making. Tellingly, there is "no politics in Making Space for Water"<sup>102</sup>, despite the fact that there so obviously is.

*A de facto political reality is that the government [Defra], Environment Agency's sponsor, expects it to deliver with the minimum amount of political fuss - the real political criterion of success is avoidance of serious controversy. Serious in this context includes anything which causes significant political difficulties, at the top of which is losing elections or being forced to call one, and beneath which comes ministerial resignations, working down to incurring unwanted costs, using up parliamentary time and unpleasant appearances in the media.*

*To this extent an unwritten government expectation is that the Environment Agency will deliver possibly painful changes to some, with the least fuss possible. As Colbert said of taxation, its art lay in "so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest possible number of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing". Or as Herman and Chomsky said about the mass media, "the manufacturing of consent".*

*However this isn't the whole picture. The government at least vaguely reflects popular changes in culture over the past twenty years, in which deference has declined and questioning has increased. 'People are less willing to be led'. Dade's value modes data show this value change in detail. Settlers are those willing (wanting to be) led, happy in Plato's republic run by 'them'. The rest of us are Aristotle's lot, wanting a say, if only to complain (this the government doesn't seem to have grasped – they seem to think nobody now wants to be told what to do).*

Similar issues are raised by Demos:<sup>103</sup>

*Public engagement is not a stage of governance that can be completed, tidied up and filed away. It raises more troublesome questions about how to take into account a greater diversity of voices, how these relate to scientific forms of expertise, and how decisions should be made in conditions of social and technical uncertainty. Public engagement is only the start of a discussion.*

*To its credit, government has picked up arguments about public engagement and been willing to experiment with them. For policy-makers, it has been a struggle. The outcomes of engagement processes have not always been as straightforward and applicable as they had hoped. And in opening a conversation between government and the public, policy-makers have been surprised by growing social and political argument. This discomfort has led some in government to become frustrated with public engagement.<sup>104</sup>*

There is a compelling argument underpinning the need to continue with, or to become more involved with, politics with a small p, despite its difficulties. And that is because people will turn to other mechanisms where conversation isn't offered. As Bernard Crick says in his classic work, *In Defence of Politics*:

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<sup>102</sup> Chris Rose, in conversation. 2007

<sup>103</sup> *Received wisdom*, Demos, ibid

<sup>104</sup> *Received wisdom*, Demos op cit

*“Politics is simply... that solution to the problem of order which chooses conciliation rather than violence and coercion, and chooses it as an effective way by which varying interests can discover that level of compromise best suited to their common survival.”*

### 2.5.3 Politics, psychology and participation in demand

Coulthard (2006)<sup>105</sup> makes the point that where people are excluded from influence, the result can be unexpected conflict and public inquiries:

*“The [Environment Agency] is seen by local communities as remote and unfeeling and inclined to take decisions on theoretical understanding without taking local knowledge into account.”* Head of Coastal Strategy at North Norfolk District Council<sup>106</sup>

By contrast, a more engaged approach is being increasingly demanded. And stakeholders and communities are pleased when they are able to take part:

*“The whole village of Shaldon is a conservation area, in an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, so we have to be careful about what gets built here. The Environment Agency has been very good. It’s much better to consult with us rather than impose something on the village... we can all have a fair crack at the whip and people here are very comfortable with what is happening.”* Mike Coley, Chairman of Shaldon Parish Council

*“[Our] findings in the Aire and Calder Scoping Study (Wilkinson and Wade, 2005) [showed] what stakeholders and communities wanted was a simple narrative statement from the Environment Agency showing how all these things linked up and how partners could work together on specific flood risk prevention, regeneration, diffuse source pollution problems, improvements in land absorption and porosity and so on. It was seen as important to work together on the diagnosis of issues and opportunities, as well as their remediation. Further, it was far better to be doing this with a shared vision and bigger picture of catchment improvement as a whole.”<sup>107</sup>*

### 2.5.4 Dealing with politics from national to local level

The Environment Agency will increasingly find (and in fact is already finding) that it is unable to deliver acceptable flood solutions at a scheme or catchment level if there hasn't been 'buy in' at a regional or national level. Too often engagement is considered to be purely local, putting This risks death of national policies by a thousand cuts, as individual schemes fail to deliver. This is already happening around MSfW, as the report by CIWEM<sup>108</sup> points out:

*Managed realignment is not universally popular... it has been variously described as ‘giving into the sea’ and the ‘messages the public don’t want to hear’. Even the Defra Managed Realignment Review describes it as a ‘politically less acceptable coastal management option’ (Defra 2002). As*

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<sup>105</sup> Coulthard (2006), op cit

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in *Taking managed realignment forward as a policy option for coastal management in England and Wales*, A CIWEM briefing report. October 2006

<sup>107</sup> David Wilkinson's input to this report, February 2007

<sup>108</sup> CIWEM (2006) Ibid

*long as managed realignment is seen in this manner, it will remain out of favour with the public and it is very unlikely to be endorsed and implemented by democratically-elected local authorities.*

Others have said similar, for example, Chris Rose<sup>109</sup>:

*My main comment on this is that there is a 'political deficit' around MSfW. Until this is resolved, the Environment Agency will constantly be trying to consult over options (to build consensus around choices) at a level below the political one which needs to be talked through and resolved politically. This will cause:*

- *Confusion and despondency and mistrust where people feel they are being forced to chose between options which lack legitimacy.*
- *Disengagement (resulting from above).*
- *Controversy that cannot be put to bed where the big political issues get played out only in a small local frame.*  
*These (above) mitigate against [EDD (engage, deliberate, decide)].*
- *A tendency by the Environment Agency to resort to authority-measures (e.g. get an Act of Parliament or other powers to force through what it considers optimal) - a retreat to DAD.*
- *Stress amongst Environment Agency staff confronted with dilemmas that cannot be resolved, and public hostility.*
- *A tendency to present inappropriately technical information as a defence (unintelligibility e.g. engineering and hydrographic data) because it elicits no response.*

Lindsey Colbourne Associates, in advice to Blyth Estuary, state:

*The big question is: How much can/should be handled locally or even regionally when key issues, policies, influences and uncertainties are mostly national (e.g. managed retreat policy, compensation/adaptation packages, priority score system)? The need for managed realignment is a national, not just a local problem. Currently there is no national buy in from key stakeholders or the public to either the problem, or to the constraints on dealing with the problem (e.g. the costs that would be associated with holding the line throughout Britain as outlined in the Foresight analysis). The problem is on a similar scale to other major national choices such as the future of pensions and health, both of which have been recently subject to large scale national consultations and debate....<sup>110</sup>*

It is clear that this situation is not going to deliver the MSfW solutions required, and that engagement and communications needs to be tackled at all levels.

## 2.6 The rise in complexity and relevance of multiple perspectives

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<sup>109</sup> Chris Rose, Contribution to IISRF Work Packages 3 and 4. March 2007

<sup>110</sup> Advice to Blyth Estuary team. Lindsey Colbourne Associates, 2005

## 2.6.1 Multiple, inter-related policies and plans

It is becoming difficult to keep track – even from a perspective within the Environment Agency and Defra - on of how various plans and policies (and the stakeholders involved) relate to each other in theory and in practice. For example, the planning context of flood risk management reveals an overwhelming complexity.

Current consultation on the Water Framework Directive<sup>111</sup> shows that staff are already grappling with its complexity:

*“For the RBMP [River Basin Management Plan] to bring changes to the management of the water environment, we need to understand the ways in which other plans and strategies could create or add to pressures on the water environment or could provide measures to achieve the RBMP’s objectives. We then need to identify the best ways of influencing those plans effectively... in the case of planning processes due to start after 2010 when the RBMP will already be in place, we will communicate the RBMP and influence planners to include the measures needed to achieve its objectives.”*

The existence of appropriate skills and processes for dealing with this level of complexity is questioned by many, both within the Environment Agency and Defra and outside. How policies are kept up to date and interrelating is still unclear:

*“Staff struggled to make sense of the WFD and how it might be implemented. Though they wanted to develop an integrated approach, it soon became clear during the workshops that people felt confused and uncertain about how to do this. There was no clear idea about how the component parts of the WFD could be addressed coherently in river basin plans in the context of various internal and external policy and organisational requirements. In response to this perceived complexity and uncertainty, staff were keen to ‘focus down’ on the detail. This was at the expense of understanding the systemic implications for river basin planning in particular. They tended, for example, to focus on ‘how’ to do something before first getting a clear picture of ‘what’ needed to be done.”<sup>112</sup>*

*“Issues that need to be tackled are the process of engagement and the shift to systems functions at the catchment/coastal cell scale. This physical system scale crosses administrative boundaries, adding tension to today’s locally negotiated partnership protocols. Regional institutions do not currently mesh with regional land and water resource use planning. Sources and causes of flood risk are dispersed across the catchment, so trying to tackle them all individually spreads available resources very thinly. Many participatory stakeholder groupings exist for various aspects of coast/catchment/estuary planning relevant to FRM...”<sup>113</sup>*

New ways of thinking and new tools are required to make sense of this complexity.

## 2.6.2 Dealing with different scales and geography

Another level of complexity commonly raised relates to the nested levels from strategy to plans. A view is emerging that Defra and the Environment Agency are

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<sup>111</sup> *Working Together* WFD consultation document, 2006

<sup>112</sup> Environment Agency (2004) *River basin planning project: social learning*.

<sup>113</sup> Cornell (2006) op cit

unable to deal with the joining up required:

*“Our findings in the Aire and Calder Scoping Study (Wilkinson and Wade, 2005) [showed] what stakeholders and communities wanted was a simple narrative statement from the Environment Agency showing how all these things linked up and how partners could work together on specific flood risk prevention, regeneration, diffuse source pollution problems, improvements in land absorption and porosity and so on. It was seen as important to work together on the diagnosis of issues and opportunities, as well as their remediation. Further, it was far better to be doing this with a shared vision and bigger picture of catchment improvement as a whole.*

*“Currently stakeholders see that the Environment Agency is not engaging them in this way at all. Many also see that it is narrowly siloed and very hierarchical and therefore unable to move in these directions. Certainly this was just a case study of two rivers. But there was no reason to think that these were problems that existed only for these catchments or only in this area. A positive indicator was that the Area Flood Manager was keen to initiate and support this project.*

*In the case of the Aire and Calder study, the two flood managers moved on and the obvious next steps were never taken up. It is what a number of our interviewees anticipated. Again, the problem was not lack of awareness of the needs by the key staff who were involved, it is the inertia that is rigidly built into the system.”<sup>114</sup>*

Similar conclusions were reached in the Shaldon *Building Trust with Communities* pilot, where the community wanted to consider ‘whole estuary solutions’ rather than just one village, and to consider all sources of flooding rather than just tidal flooding:

*“Shaldon revealed ... that communities see things in the round, not in the neat boxes that organisations work with. In Shaldon, ‘flooding’ included not just potential tidal flooding, but the surface water and sewerage flooding [that they regularly experience].... And they wanted to look at whole estuary solutions (or at least with neighbouring Ringmore). Dealing with all flooding in an integrated way was an important issue to the local community. With considerable persuasion, staff were convinced [by engagement consultants] of the need to take on this wider view, and to engage with other relevant organisations. This was clearly a challenge ... There was very little in place to support cross-agency working, and an organisational culture that was about keeping your head down and doing the Environment Agency work.”<sup>115</sup>*

These findings echo that of the literature, for example:

*The sectoral authorities and agencies are increasingly being expected to work together, but in contexts like flood risk management, at the interfaces of the natural and human systems, the rigidity of their operational remits is exposed. Public bodies in the UK are bound by the ultra vires rule, which means that they must be given authorisation to act, and they must act only in accordance with their authorisation. Working together demands a degree of flexibility that sectoral operations previously did not need.”<sup>116</sup>*

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<sup>114</sup> David Wilkinson, contribution to IISRF for Lindsey Colbourne Associates. 2007

<sup>115</sup> *Shaldon Building Trust with Communities Pilot. Lessons Learned and Recommendations.* Johnston and Wetenhall (2007)

<sup>116</sup> Cornell (2006) op cit

Clearly to meet the demands of WFD and MSfW there is a need for change to enable actions that span traditional organisational and geographical boundaries.

### 2.6.3 Increasing need to work with values

It is fairly well established that people's experience of floods and their values very much affect their response. This is being explored in WP1 and is not considered further here. What is, however, relevant is that working with values is increasingly recognised as central to decision-making, even when uncertainty and complexity is involved. Chris Rose (2007), in analysing work by Andy Stirling, concludes:

*In other words, the prominence or value placed on 'facts and figures' and hard data, economic or monetised or otherwise in an appraisal or consultation imparts a largely illusory certainty which has more to do with the choice of assumptions, our culture and expectations than with an independent truth or logic. Looked at like this, the case for doing what 'people want' as opposed to what modelling and appraisal methodologies suggest is the 'right answer' seems somewhat greater.... Stirling concludes: "In the end, the justification for the adoption of any particular framing assumption in appraisal must lie in the degree to which this is defensible in wider social, political and ethical discourse."*

### 2.6.4 Reaching the limits in reductive thinking

The authors of *Holistic Science in the Environment Agency*<sup>117</sup> argue that by looking at whole systems, holistic science can provide a new way of working with specific issues which is particularly useful for dealing with sustainability issues which are often embedded within complex environmental, social and economic systems. They quote the work of Chapman (2002) which shows that policy-making is becoming more complex, facing public bodies such as the Environment Agency, particularly because:

- communication technologies and the resulting growth in interaction between organisations and agencies;
- a more diverse range of organisations involved in public service delivery;
- blurring of the boundaries between domestic and international policy and its impacts.

They warn us that the use of reductive thinking to solve policy issues in our emerging culture will result in unintended consequences, alienation of professionals involved in delivery, failure of organisations to improve performance and, as we have seen above, an increasingly cynical and distrusting public.

Instead, they argue, a new intellectual underpinning is required for policy-making. Sole use of reductive, linear and mechanical approaches will fail seriously because their assumptions fail to reflect how the modern world operates. A more holistic paradigm is needed to guide us into a new era of thinking.

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<sup>117</sup> *Holistic science in the Environment Agency: A scoping study*, Draft Report, Fleming *et al.* (2005)

**Table A1,1:** Comparison of principles of holistic and traditional science

Holistic Science	Reductive Science
Whole is greater than the sum of the parts	Whole equals the sum of the parts
Non-linear, network relations with dynamic feedback	Linear cause and effect relations
Rich inter-connectedness and inter-dependent relationships are primary.	Component parts are primary. Trade-offs between the parts are possible.
Participatory: scientific observer is a participant in the act of inquiry	Non-participatory: strict separation of observer and observed
Different sources of knowledge included in scientific method	Analytical, objective knowledge is primary
Values and qualities are integral	Subjective values and qualities lie outside scientific method
Unpredictable & creative	Known or knowable relationships
Emergence: Characteristics of the whole system cannot be predicted from a knowledge of the component parts	Knowledge of the whole system is derived from a knowledge of the component parts
Self organisation: Learns, adapts and co-creates new order and behaviours	Does not take account of learning and adaptation although simple self regulation within known parameters is possible

The need for more holistic working is often raised by communities and groups. In the *Building Trust with Communities* pilot in Shaldon, communities pushed for solutions to ‘all flooding across the whole estuary’ that the Environment Agency initially found difficult<sup>118</sup>. Many commentators have raised the need for whole catchment planning:

*Currently stakeholders see that the Environment Agency is not engaging them in this way at all. Many also see that it is narrowly siloed and very hierarchical and therefore unable to move in these directions [towards whole catchment planning] ...the problem was not lack of awareness of the needs by the key staff who were involved, it is the inertia that is rigidly built into the system.*<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Johnston and Wetenhall (2007)

<sup>119</sup> Wilkinson (2007) Ibid

## 2.6.5 Learning to value multiple perspectives

Jake Chapman<sup>120</sup> concludes that policy making and public sector management have outdated assumptions. The biggest obstacle to overcoming these, as identified by Chapman, is the assumption that ‘we know best’, an assumption shared by politicians, civil servants, senior managers and scientists and economists. It is divisive because it closes off any possibility of learning and characterises other views as oppositional, based on politics or vested interests.

Chapman goes on to conclude that there is:

*“compelling need to shift to systems thinking and the way to do so is through engagement of stakeholders, thorough evaluation and learning by doing.”*

This view is reinforced by the Lancaster University literature review for Work Package 3 of this programme. Their conclusions included:

*In a turbulent environment, flooding requires a very different type of institutional and social response since no single organisation, no matter how large or powerful, has the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to cope with the situation effectively.<sup>121</sup>*

The power of multiple perspectives and learning by doing has been observed in Shaldon, where a scheme has been developed in conjunction with the community. The following were key learning points for staff:<sup>122</sup>

- *that simply stating things as scientific facts does not mean they will be believed by local people;*
- *the sheer difficulty of conveying meaningful messages around flood risk;*
- *that people want to be properly listened to, not just ‘talked at’ with the Environment Agency’s viewpoint;*
- *that people see ‘flooding’ as a holistic issue, (in Shaldon, including surface water flooding) and will not accept simply being told that this is another organisation’s problem;*
- *that listening to what people want to say provides valuable intelligence – from avoiding potential ‘showstoppers’ at a public meeting, to staff gaining some important local knowledge that they didn’t know;*
- *that people who may initially or throughout a process be seen as ‘extreme’ can also have valuable knowledge and/or play a productive role.*

Similarly, examples are coming to light which show that other opinions, originally considered ‘uninformed’ to ‘difficult’ and ‘outright wrong’, have been proven correct:

*“A striking example of subjective quality analysis within the Environment Agency comes from a study on a chalk stream in Hampshire. Local people insisted that the watercourse had “chalk stream malaise” despite the fact that Environment Agency staff could not find any quantitative evidence to support this. All GQA samples were within acceptable limits and sewage treatment works were complying with consents. The public concern prompted more detailed investigations which eventually showed that a change in upstream*

<sup>120</sup> Jake Chapman, *Learning to think differently*. PowerPoint presentation. Demos. 2006

<sup>121</sup> Watson et al. (2007). *Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding: Review of partnerships and inter-organisational working*

<sup>122</sup> Johnston and Wetenhall (2007) op cit

*land use to cereal growing was causing diffuse pollution and a change in the character of the stream. This would not have been picked up using the traditional reductive approach and without the subjective quality measures of those living in the vicinity.” (Huggins, personal communication)<sup>123</sup>*

Our (LCA) direct experience has been similar. In one flood defence scheme the views of a vocal local resident, concerned about the capacity of surface water drains, were initially rubbished by staff. By the end of the project, the capacity of surface water drains – and the ability of the company to deal with it – was one of the critical limiting factors to the flood defence scheme. In another (a managed realignment), the views of a local resident who was regularly monitoring sediment flows in an estuary, and labelled as a trouble maker, were found eventually to have merit and had a profound impact on the estuary modelling.

Once more, the literature supports the practice. Andy Stirling<sup>124</sup> notes that matters like floods and FRM cannot be resolved by science alone:

*It remains the case that the disciplines of risk assessment, economics and decision analysis have developed no single definitive way of addressing the problems of multidimensionality and incommensurability discussed here. Even the most optimistic of proponents of rational choice theory acknowledge that there is no effective way to compare (or aggregate) utility across individuals or different groups in society. Indeed, even where social choices are addressed simply in ordinal (or relative) terms, the economist Arrow went a long way towards earning his Nobel Prize for demonstrating formally that it is impossible definitively to aggregate preferences in a plural society.*

As the author says, “*there can be no analytical fix for the problems encountered in the social appraisal of risk.*” He notes that:

*The typical practical response to these problems of multi-dimensionality and incommensurability of technological risk on the part of regulatory authorities is (as with the different classes of impact) to reduce and simplify – focusing on those aspects which are held to be most tractable.*

The prevalent ‘we know best’ attitude, focusing on the most tractable aspects well known to the decision-making organisation is very much part of the old ‘expert government’ paradigm. The good news is that it can be benign, and can be easily overcome, as in pilot projects such as Shaldon:

*“One of the most striking lessons I’ve learned is that when we tell people something, like the flood risk, they won’t necessarily believe us.”<sup>125</sup>*

If this attitude prevails, not only does it damage the reputation of the Environment Agency, it can also prevent the use of information and so support the making of ‘wrong’ decisions.

Perhaps a shift within our organisations from ‘we know best’ to valuing a range of perspectives is the first practical step in systematically developing the willingness and skills to work in a more engaged way.

We explore this in more detail in the next section.

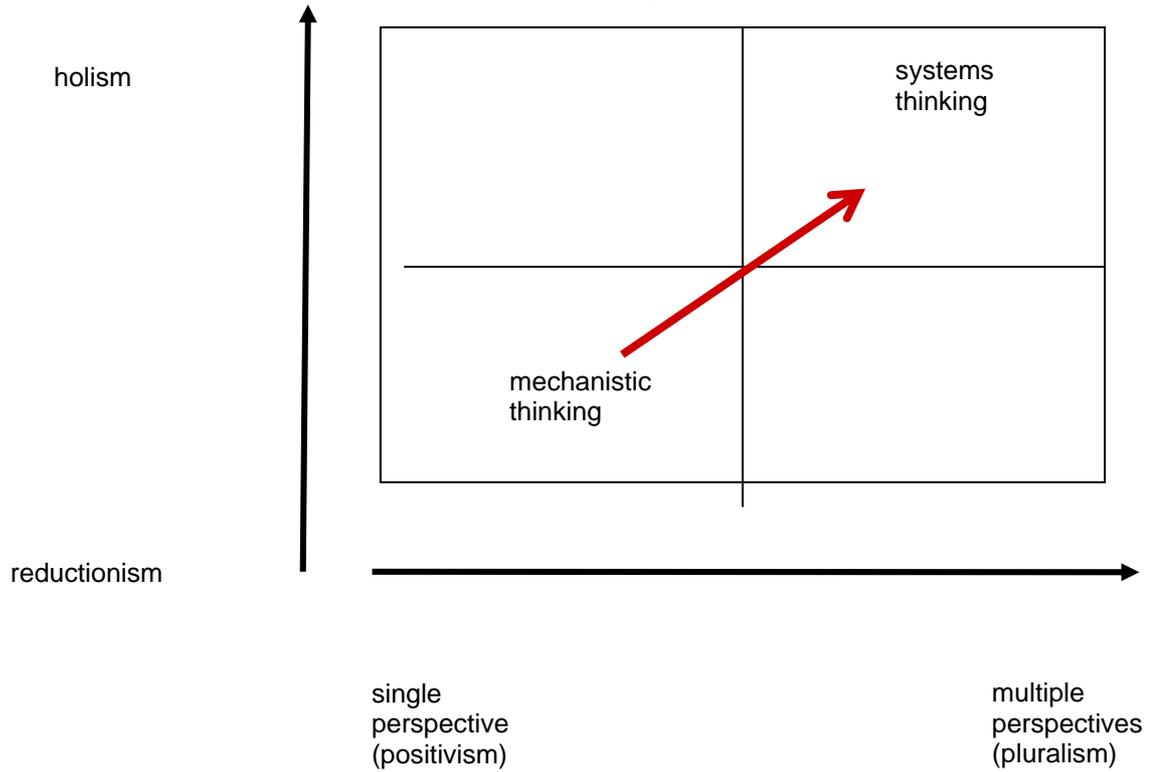
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<sup>123</sup> *Holistic science in the Environment Agency: A scoping study.* Ibid

<sup>124</sup> On Science and Precaution, op. cit.

<sup>125</sup> Quote from member of staff in the Shaldon BTwC learning log.

**Figure 2.15:** The role of multiple perspectives in enabling a shift to systems thinking



# 3 Working smarter with others – from government and telling others better to governance and collaborative intelligence

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## 3.1 Introduction

This section attempts to set out a framework for Defra and the Environment Agency to work with others on flood risk management and *Making Space for Water*. The framework – applicable at all levels from Head Office to scheme level - aims to provide consistency across engagement and communications, enabling the releasing of what might be termed ‘collaborative intelligence’, replacing the existing top-down government model (decide-announce-defend) across the four linked stages of the flood cycle.

This section is divided into three parts:

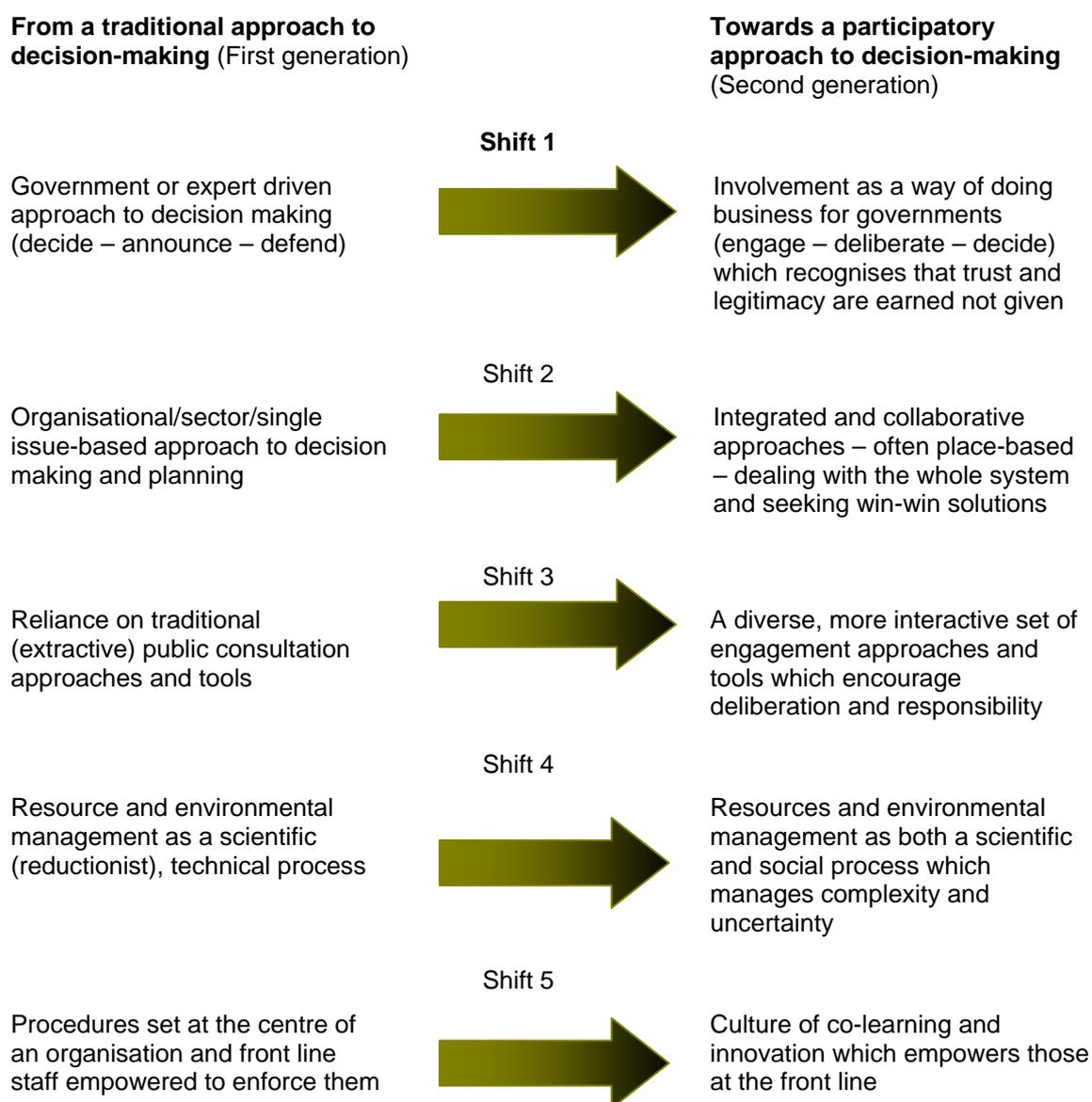
- ✓ **The big picture:** What do we need to shift to?
- ✓ **The nuts and bolts:** Decision-making and governance frameworks and tools
- ✓ **The psychology:** How the frameworks sit with the existing culture of Defra and the Environment Agency

## 3.2 The big picture

### 3.2.1 Key elements

The key elements of EDD or a co-delivery governance framework (or a participatory approach to decision-making) are well articulated by the Sustainable Development Commission:

**Figure A3.1:** The big picture: What do we need?<sup>126</sup>



These ideas underpin the recommendations in the following sections.

### 3.2.2 Consistency is key

Enabling the shift from government to governance, or from DAD to EDD, will require compelling narrative and consistency in the way that engagement is done, that truly reflects the shift in emphasis from ‘expert telling others’ to ‘working with others’ on best way forward. This approach is not new to the Environment Agency. The *Building Trust with Communities* programme is based on a similar idea:

*Put simply, building trust is about improving the way we communicate with each other, being more open and working together. Naturally, we tend to confront or challenge proposals and ideas. If you present someone with an idea, you will almost certainly end up defending it, rather than negotiating.*

<sup>126</sup> Sustainable Development Commission, 2006

Traditionally, most public organisations have followed this ‘confrontational’ approach in most of their planning and decision-making. We have followed this ‘decide, announce, defend’ (DAD) approach, which has meant we have made decisions, let people know what we plan to do and then had to defend our decisions against those who don’t like them.

The DAD approach risks:

- interest groups throwing out our preferred decision, and having to go back to the drawing board;
- relationships and trust breaking down, which makes our work more difficult in the future;
- making decisions without fully understanding relevant issues and reactions, which means they will not be appropriate or introduced.

Building Trust follows a different approach known as ‘front-loading’, or ‘engage, deliberate, decide’ (EDD). This involves working with communities early on to understand their concerns, what they want and why, and working closely with, rather than against, them to decide how best to move forward. We may still make the final decision, but we will have worked with others to come up with the best solution. At the very least, communities will understand the reasons for our decision, and will be less likely to oppose it.<sup>127</sup>

There is evidence that consistency of approach is not in place. For example:

*A view needs to be taken on how far BTwC is to become the Environment Agency’s way of working, and clear messages on this communicated to staff. Is it to be the default organisational norm? Or can staff take, as now, a ‘pick and mix’ approach – using those aspects of it that are easier to understand and implement if they wish, but continuing in ‘business as usual’ ways for the majority of their work with communities.*<sup>128</sup>

### 3.2.3 Different levels of engagement

In proposing an EDD co-delivery model of governance we are not suggesting a ‘one size fits all’ approach. We recognise the requirement for a range of ways of engaging with others, be they individuals, customers, organisations or partners. We also recognise that in different situations different parameters will determine how much can be done with others.

In section one, we suggested the following:

<b>Devolve</b>	}	The implications of the words and policies?
<b>Decide together</b>		
<b>Involve</b>	}	The reality of understanding and practice (doing these things a bit better)?
<b>Gather info/consult</b>		
<b>Inform</b>		
<b>Manipulate</b>		

If a co-delivery model of governance were to be applied, it would apply to each of these types of engagement. This is very different to suggesting that the aim is always to ‘decide

<sup>127</sup> Building Trust with Communities: Supplementary information. 2007

<sup>128</sup> Johnston and Wetenhall (2007) op cit

together' and that other forms are necessarily less 'good'. It is this that often underpins the overuse of the word 'partnership', raising expectations of the amount of influence others have. What is needed is an appropriate approach in each situation, and whatever the approach is, to enable EDD rather than DAD.

**Table A3.1:** Type of engagement and DAD/EDD model

DAD government model	Type or level of engagement	EDD governance model
Telling others it is not our responsibility/budget ...so they have to do it themselves. <i>Motivation: reduced responsibility</i>	<b>Devolve</b>	Convening/supporting others to understand and do what they need to do. <i>Motivation: more resilient communities</i>
Formal agreements bounded by organisational considerations. <i>Motivation: clear responsibility/accountability</i>	<b>Decide together</b>	Process of negotiation, boundaries determined by what is appropriate. <i>Motivation: greater capacity to deliver</i>
Formal structures. Tightly controlled. <i>Motivation: Bring others along with us</i>	<b>Involve</b>	Flexible continuous negotiation. Evolving. <i>Motivation: shared learning and better decisions</i>
Discrete activity at arms length from the 'core' decision-making. <i>Motivation: due process</i>	<b>Gather information (consult)</b>	Continuous process feeding into decision-making. <i>Motivation: more informed decisions</i>
Telling/educating. <i>Motivation: bring others round to our view; shed responsibility</i>	<b>Inform (at worst, manipulate)</b>	Explicitly meshing our views/needs with those of the target audience. <i>Motivation: shared understanding and increased capacity</i>

### 3.3 The nuts and bolts: Towards a coherent decision-making and governance framework

#### 3.3.1 Framework 1: Deciding what type of negotiation

Rose<sup>129</sup> has pointed out that the Environment Agency needs to be clear what its negotiation strategy is in entering a consultation. He suggests that:

*Before deciding on a consultation (exercise or choice of system) the Environment Agency should decide its underlying (appropriate choice of) negotiating strategy. Without this it cannot know what is 'right'. E.g. if it/some in it assume that "we know the right answers" this may lead them always to implicitly go for win/lose when in fact another strategy may be more suitable (either because the desirable outcome is different, or because they are wrong: they don't already know the best outcome).*

The win-lose assumption is what underpins the DAD approach outlined above, and is described as Type 1 below. In future, it is vital that we consider which of the five basic negotiation strategies are appropriate in each situation:

<sup>129</sup> Rose (2007). Ibid

**Type 1: Competing (win or lose). Apply DAD** (but still an opportunity to communicate better, with politics and psychology in mind):

- When quick decisive action is required, such as in an emergency.
- When unpopular actions have to be taken.
- With vital issues (such as a flood risk with possible widespread impacts).
- In high certainty (of unacceptable outcomes, for example).
- To stop worse outcomes (that may be implemented).

**Type 2: Collaborating (win/win). Apply EDD:**

- To find integrative solutions.
- When the basic objective is to learn from sharing.
- To gain commitment for the implementation of decisions.
- To have better understanding with the participants.
- There is no time pressure.
- When the best/optimal outcome is unknown and may be uncovered by negotiation, or is defined as the negotiated outcome.

**Type 3: Compromising/sharing (split the difference). Apply EDD:**

- When the issue is technically divisible like land disputes (or perhaps land or asset trade-offs in an area-wide scheme).
- When both parties are equally powerful/influential.
- When immediate temporary solution is required due to time pressure.
- When collaboration and competition fails to operate.

**Type 4: Avoiding (lose/lose). Apply neither:**

- When there are other important issues to be dealt with than the one under dispute.
- When the Environment Agency is unsure of its competency to deal with the issue and there are other competent players to solve the problem. When there are other important issues to be dealt with than that under dispute.
- When there is more chance of disruption than of finding a solution or when status quo is to be maintained (such as non-urgent changes to flood defences).
- To provide cooling off time.
- When the issue is only symptomatic of an underlying problem.

(Avoiding may be used as a substitute for competing)

**Type 5: Accommodating (yield/yield). Apply EDD:**

- When the Environment Agency is sure it (or another) has made a mistake.
- When issues are very important to an 'opponent'.
- To build social credits for later use.
- To minimise losses.
- When one is sure that the other is wrong and to create a 'lesson'.
- When maintaining or building the relationship is more important than the issue at hand.

The next section attempts to provide a decision-making tool linked to these ideas.

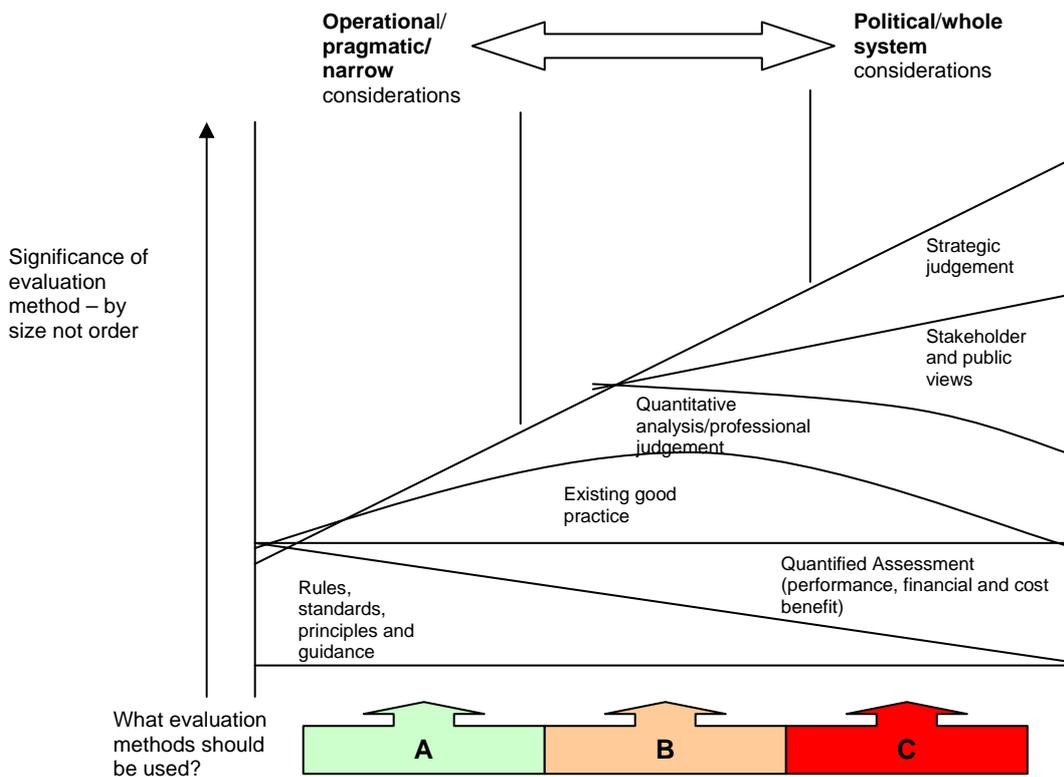
### 3.3.2 Framework 2: Defining the type of decision and how much engagement is required

Some staff in the Environment Agency consider that ‘engaged’ initiatives (in the section above, those opting for negotiation strategies 2 – 5) including pilots such as Shaldon cannot become the ‘usual’ way of doing business as they take too much time and effort. We hope this paper sets out the reasons why this is not the case. However, clearly there are situations (e.g. where decisions have already been made) where there can be little engagement, just as others where engagement needs to be central to the work.

This section sets out a framework for making decisions as to ‘how much’ engagement to use in a particular situation. It is based on work done by Arthur D Little for the Rail Safety Standards Board<sup>130</sup>, itself based on the UKOOA’s<sup>131</sup> framework. We identify three decision making scenarios and the appropriate approach to engagement for each.

What should influence Environment Agency/Defra decisions within FRM, and what should be their relative ‘weights’ within different types of decisions?

**Figure A3.1:** Choice of decision-making type



<sup>130</sup> Little (2005) op cit

<sup>131</sup> UKOOA, op cit.

**Table A3.2:** Deciding the type of decision

Characterise the ‘decision type’ by circling the most applicable words:

Decision type	A	B	C
<u>Feature 1: How affected will others be by the decision</u> The decision has ___ affect on ___ public interest, health, livelihoods	Very little Few people’s	Some Some people’s	Severe Many people’s
<u>Feature 2: Multiple perspectives</u> There is likely to be _____ different perspectives on the issue and _____ politics	No significant No/containable	A number of Some	A wide range of Significant
<u>Feature 3: How much support or ownership of the decision or implementation by others is required</u> The ‘best’ decision is _____ and we can implement _____	Known Alone (with or without support)	Open to influence, but limited options More easily if others work with us	Unknown Only with sufficient support, or only with others
<u>Feature 4: Risk and uncertainty</u> Risk and uncertainty relevant to the decision is _____	Low	Medium: understood by us but not by others	High: poorly understood
<u>Feature 5: Speed</u> Actions or decisions need to be made and implemented _____	Immediately/very quickly	Over months	Over years

If mostly type C is circled, characterise **type C**  
 If mostly type B is circled, characterise **type B**  
 If mostly type A is circled, characterise **type A**

**Figure A3.2:** Negotiation strategy and engagement required for each type of decision

<p><b>Type A decisions:</b></p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Low conflict/controversy/uncertainty and/or little control over situation and/or decision/decided by others/procedure/few resources/crisis (including emergencies).</p> <p><i>Negotiation strategy:</i> Type 1 (win-lose)</p> <p><i>Type of engagement:</i> Light touch. Do what would normally do, but in a 'more effective' way, for example ensure clarity of purpose internally/externally, better communications materials, encourage conversations rather than defensiveness, improved questionnaires.</p>
<p><b>Type B decisions:</b></p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> Need for buy in/understanding to reduce risk of non delivery through resistance</p> <p><i>Negotiation strategy:</i> Type 3 (compromise) or Type 5 (accommodate)</p> <p><i>Type of engagement:</i> Precautionary. Add time early on in the process to secure buy in to the problem (before looking at solutions) and to gather and use social intelligence to maximum effect</p>
<p><b>Type C decisions:</b></p> <p><i>Characteristics:</i> High conflict/controversy/risk/need for shared ownership of solution or significant risk of non-delivery.</p> <p><i>Negotiation strategy:</i> Type 2: Collaborating (win-win)</p> <p><i>Type of engagement:</i> Fully collaborative. Business as usual fits around an extensive engagement programme.</p>

## What type of engagement, for each type of decision?

A possible framework for further working in this way of thinking would be as follows:

**Table A3.3:** Engagement activities for different types of decisions

What to do	How to do it			
	Business as usual	Building trust approach		
		Type A decisions	Type B decisions	Type C decisions
Planning the project				Full team
Decide who to involve	Statutory/ reactive	Statutory/ reactive	Stakeholder analysis	Stakeholder Analysis
Public meetings	Chaired	Facilitated		
	Plenary	Drop-in/round table discussion		
Exhibitions				
Questionnaires and feedback forms				
One-to-one meetings				
Leaflets/information				
Problem/risk analysis				
Generating long list of solutions				
Appraising solutions				
Deciding way forward				

### 3.3.3 Framework 3: Initial ideas on appropriate level of devolution, and linkages between various ‘scales’

There is a dimension not covered in the frameworks so far; the scale at which engagement takes place and how one scale links to another.

#### Engaging nationally

Proponents of the more engaged (Type B and C) way of working have experienced difficulty at a national level where engagement is conceived to be applicable only at a scheme level, usually reactively to contentious issues. The *Building Trust with Communities* programme is a good example of this.

The full benefits of the EDD approach on Type B and C decisions can only be gained if it is applied across all levels of our work -from national to scheme level - and on all issues, whether or not they have become contentious. The framework we are proposing explicitly requires application across all levels, from head office to areas.

For example shift to FRM from flood defence, and managed realignment:

*The need for managed realignment is a national, not just a local challenge. Currently there is no national buy in from key stakeholders or the public to either the problem, or to the constraints on dealing with the problem (e.g. the costs that would be associated with holding the line throughout Britain as outlined in the Foresight analysis)... This makes your job selling realignment as a solution locally almost impossible.<sup>132</sup>*

*In my advice to the Environment Agency on the Thames Estuary project I suggest setting up two projects, one a 'science conference' drawing in regional universities etc in a modelling-driven exercise, and the other a political (politicians) conference to do the big-picture politics.*

*My suggestion is that to encourage release of internal collaborative potential Environment Agency should create external science and political processes regionally, in order to increase public discussion and debate...so that there is a more politically robust context for the specific consultations Environment Agency needs to run, particularly where there are 'winners and losers' in FRM, e.g. on defended and undefended areas in realignment. In other words a programme of public science and politics to get a working political and social settlement for MSfW.<sup>133</sup>*

## **Level of impact: a case for devolution**

The second aspect of the 'levels' issue is that there also needs to be consideration of the 'impact' of the decisions being made, from local to international. As Chris Rose<sup>134</sup> proposes, there needs to be consideration of whether a decision will have a 'meta system impact':

*If they do not so already then the Environment Agency should identify and sieve for installations and economic or social systems in floodable areas with potential metasystem impacts.*

*In terms of public interest ... a case can be made that where there are strategic metasystem impacts, the basis for consultation should be around a prior top-down decision to avoid or mitigate (e.g. by relocation if appropriate) the flood, and public funding should reflect that.*

*Where a community or region may be expected to be able to recover without such larger knock-on effects then there is a greater case to use scenario analysis to inform public consultation and option identification, and for 'communities' to even be given the choice of (a) opting to retain amenity at the expense of flood protection, or (b) divert additional funds into flood protection. The latter is not well developed. At Happisburgh last week the 'community' gave £40,000 to North Norfolk District Council to finance 10 years of 'protection' (rocks on the beach) for homes threatened by erosion. An alternative would be for councils at some level to be able to trade off fund diversion from another purpose to enhanced flood protection.*

Rose goes on to propose a more radical 'devolved' model:

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<sup>132</sup> Advice to Blyth Estuary. Lindsey Colbourne Associates, 2006.

<sup>133</sup> Chris Rose, contribution to IISRF Work Packages 3 and 4. March 2007

<sup>134</sup> Rose (2007) Ibid

*These issues hinge partly on self-determination. At what levels and in what circumstances should individuals, communities or other groups be able to opt for particular choices, and by what means can those choices be generated?*

*Essentially these are purely political problems. For example if Hampstead-Next-The-Sea decided to avoid a wall being built along its quay in order to maintain the view, and instead itself raised the money to build a barrage along the barrier beach a mile out to sea, that might affect the national heritage and amenity, that is, the wider public interest. However the issue of self-determination and of devolution – devolving decisions to the appropriate level – is embedded in the system and [is] a latent issue which will increasingly emerge, given the progressive values shift to prospectors and pioneers who all consider “what ifs” and are curious and questioning in a way that settler-dominated communities are not.*

*Clearly the freedom of an individual to decide to avoid or bear a risk (e.g. “I will not be moved and I will not have a wall at the end of my garden”) can affect others at a micro-scale. Natural justice dictates that this cannot be left to an individual alone. But what is the appropriate scale for such trade-offs? It seems to me that here there is a case for devolving this as much as possible, with the Environment Agency as a facilitator and eventually part of the delivery system. That then throws up the question of consultative and political capacity. For example, of parish councils, district councils and area partnerships (increasingly favoured by the government as a vehicle to conduct such things). Here there is another deficit, this time simply in resources. This is disguised by bland reference to ‘communities’.*

*In my view at a local, scheme and area scale where metasystem impacts are not probable, Environment Agency should have a strategy of devolving consultation and decision-making to the most local scale possible.*

*This would necessitate finding ways to try and maximise understanding of the science about flood risk in the area concerned. Before a decision was reached or tried for, based on consensus building, the process of discussion should be as exhaustive as possible.*

This proposition is very much in line with work by PriceWaterHouse Coopers on reducing the upfront costs of flood defence schemes on the one hand (national level decisions), and the Shaldon *Building Trust with Communities* Pilot at the other (local determination, based on analysis of all the options).

## **WFD, SMPS, CFMPs**

The final aspect relates to the scale of the multitude of plans. For example a framework does exist within the MSfW documentation on what needs to change where, although there is currently:

- little clarity on the level of involvement/influence over decision-making through the various means;
- no indication of how each means links to the others;
- no indication of how each level links to the others;
- no indication of the specific engagement output/outcome in the ‘purpose of output’ column (currently focuses on the corporate requirement only);
- a lack of focus on anything other than ‘regularised forums’ as the means.

**Table A3. 4:** Stakeholder engagement at different levels of FRM planning (table from Making Space for Water consultation document)<sup>135</sup>

Level of plan	Output	Purpose of output	Means of stakeholder engagement
<b>National level</b>	<b>National policy:</b> England-wide assessment of flood and coastal erosion risks and management arrangements	To inform high-level policies and levels of national funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Management Stakeholder Forum: run by Defra for key stakeholder organisations</li> <li>• Meetings of the Environment Agency's Regional Flood Defence Committee Chairs</li> <li>• Meetings of the Coastal Forum for Coastal Group Chairs</li> <li>• National consultation exercises related to flood and coastal erosion risk management</li> </ul>
<b>Catchment level:</b> river catchment/ coastal sediment cell or sub-cell	<b>Regional policy:</b> catchment flood/ shoreline/estuary management plans	Define risk, identify regional priorities and management objectives, short and long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Flood Defence Committees (RFDCs)</li> <li>• Consultative forums led by Environment Agency, with involvement of local authorities and Internal Drainage Boards and local interests</li> <li>• Coastal Groups</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-catchment level:</b> linked groups of major sub-catchments/ coastal process units	<b>Appraisal of options:</b> long-term strategy for the area	Further refinement of risk assessments and of management options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFDCs</li> <li>• Consultative forums (Environment Agency, local authorities, IDBs and local interests)</li> <li>• Coastal Groups</li> <li>• Local stakeholder engagement forums</li> </ul>
<b>Scheme level:</b> management units/individual schemes	<b>Implementation:</b> decisions on individual schemes	Further refinement of risk and selection of detailed management solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFDCs</li> <li>• Consultative forums (Environment Agency, local authorities, IDBs and local interests)</li> <li>• Coastal Groups</li> <li>• Local stakeholder engagement forums</li> </ul>

Further guidance on using engagement at different levels is provided in *Characteristics of participatory processes in different decision contexts*<sup>136</sup>. As for the table above, there are useful insights to be gained here, but little on how to overcome the difficulties, or to link engagement at different levels.

<sup>135</sup> Defra (2004) *Making Space for Water: Developing a new government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England*. Consultation Document. Available from: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waterspace/>

<sup>136</sup> From *Participatory risk assessment: involving lay audiences in environmental decisions on risk*, Table 5.1 R&D Technical Report E2-043/TR/01. Environment Agency.

**Table A3.5:** Characteristics and challenges of the participation process<sup>137</sup>

Decision context	Characteristics of the decision and participation process	Challenges to overcome
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often timescale of work is lengthy with different elements of risk assessment process not definable elements</li> <li>• Process may be iterative, involving different agencies and organisations</li> <li>• Likely to be key interested and affected stakeholders</li> <li>• Lay public interest likely to be lower</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay public may not be interested</li> <li>• Questions over who is representative of public view</li> <li>• May need to involve people from different parts of the country</li> <li>• Timescale of involvement may be extended</li> <li>• Key stakeholders may have vested interests</li> <li>• Questions over what influence people can have on decision</li> <li>• Point at which decision is taken often difficult to define</li> </ul>
<b>Plan/ programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More locally oriented</li> <li>• Likely to be key interested and affected stakeholders</li> <li>• Local public will have interest if issue directly affects them</li> <li>• Timescale of process may be extended</li> <li>• May relate to other plan making functions: e.g. in local authorities</li> <li>• Likely to require communication/information provision as well as participation</li> <li>• May be volatile situation with already contentious issues in the public domain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions over who is representative of public view</li> <li>• If decision is not open to change (i.e. 'has already been taken')</li> <li>• If definition of the problem is not open to public influence</li> <li>• Overlap with participation activities by other authorities</li> <li>• If public want to discuss other issues relevant to decision which are not part of the assessment</li> <li>• Identifying appropriate roles for stakeholders and lay public</li> <li>• Timescale of involvement may need to be extended</li> </ul>
<b>Site-specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often Environment Agency not the only decision-maker</li> <li>• Participation activities may be organised by other parties</li> <li>• Can be highly volatile situation where issue is contentious or of concern</li> <li>• Multiple interests can be identified</li> <li>• Likely to require communication and information provision as well as participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions over who is representative of public view</li> <li>• If decision 'has already been taken'</li> <li>• If definition of the problem is not open to public influence</li> <li>• Overlap with participation activities by other authorities</li> <li>• If public want to discuss other issues which are not part of the risk assessment process</li> <li>• Need to integrate participation with information provision</li> <li>• Timescale restrictions</li> <li>• Private sector may be opposed to extended consultation but their cooperation may be required</li> <li>• Who should pay?</li> </ul>

Another example is the Water Framework Directive.<sup>138</sup>

*The River Basin Planning managers in the Regional Strategic Units are responsible for developing an engagement plan consistent with the RBP Strategy but on the whole are focusing on the River Basin District liaison panels where a reasonably good analytic deliberative process is emerging. But the wider process of*

<sup>137</sup> From *Participatory risk assessment: involving lay audiences in environmental decisions on risk*, Table 5.1 R&D Technical Report E2-043/TR/01. Environment Agency.

<sup>138</sup> *Involving stakeholders in river basin planning*. Orr, Colvin and King 2007

*engagement (including at catchment and local levels) as set out in the strategy is pretty much entirely missing, even though I am sure there is enthusiasm from some area teams. The main reasons for this are 1) that the RBP managers are under-resourced and 2) there has been very poor leadership on this issue from the top ... [and a sense that] we don't need to engage widely on this issue."*

### **3.3.4 Framework 4: Deciding when to start engaging, and the decision-making phases for that engagement**

Central to the EDD or co-delivery model is the need to engage with others right from the start - from defining the problem to selecting the solution and implementation.

The managed realignment issue illustrates the point well: unless people buy into the need to change how we deal with flooding, no solution will be accepted, especially when individuals have so much to lose from the change.

The need to engage from start to finish also applies to more traditional flood defence decisions. In the BTwC Shaldon pilot, the first stage of the work was to involve the community in considering the Environment Agency's view that flood risk was sufficiently serious that something needed to be done. An overwhelming majority (98 per cent) supported the need to 'do something', a clear mandate for moving on to consider solutions. In neighbouring Teignmouth, where a FDS was rejected, the Environment Agency went in and involved people in deciding whether or not an FDS should be built.

Applying the approach from start to finish will require a change of mindset from the use of external relations/corporate affairs staff to sort out problems once they have arisen, to using them proactively in a piece of work:

*The trouble is that we [Building Trust mentors/external relations] are only asked to be involved [in applying the Building Trust approach] once an issue has become contentious – once relations have really broken down already. There is no way that our being asked to write a bit of a better letter is going to help at this stage.<sup>139</sup>*

There are synergies with Work Package 3 on working with civil contingency partners, and the need to involve partners throughout the flood cycle<sup>140</sup>, especially on defining the problem. Cornell<sup>141</sup> also emphasises the need for involvement from start to finish within her governance model:

*Partners and stakeholders would be involved together from the outset of the planning process, with transparency and accountability to the wider public.*

Finally, there are synergies here with the *Building Trust with Communities* toolkit, specifically when to start engaging and 'classic phases in a decision-making process. Both are offered here as possible ways of linking up this work with the BTwC.

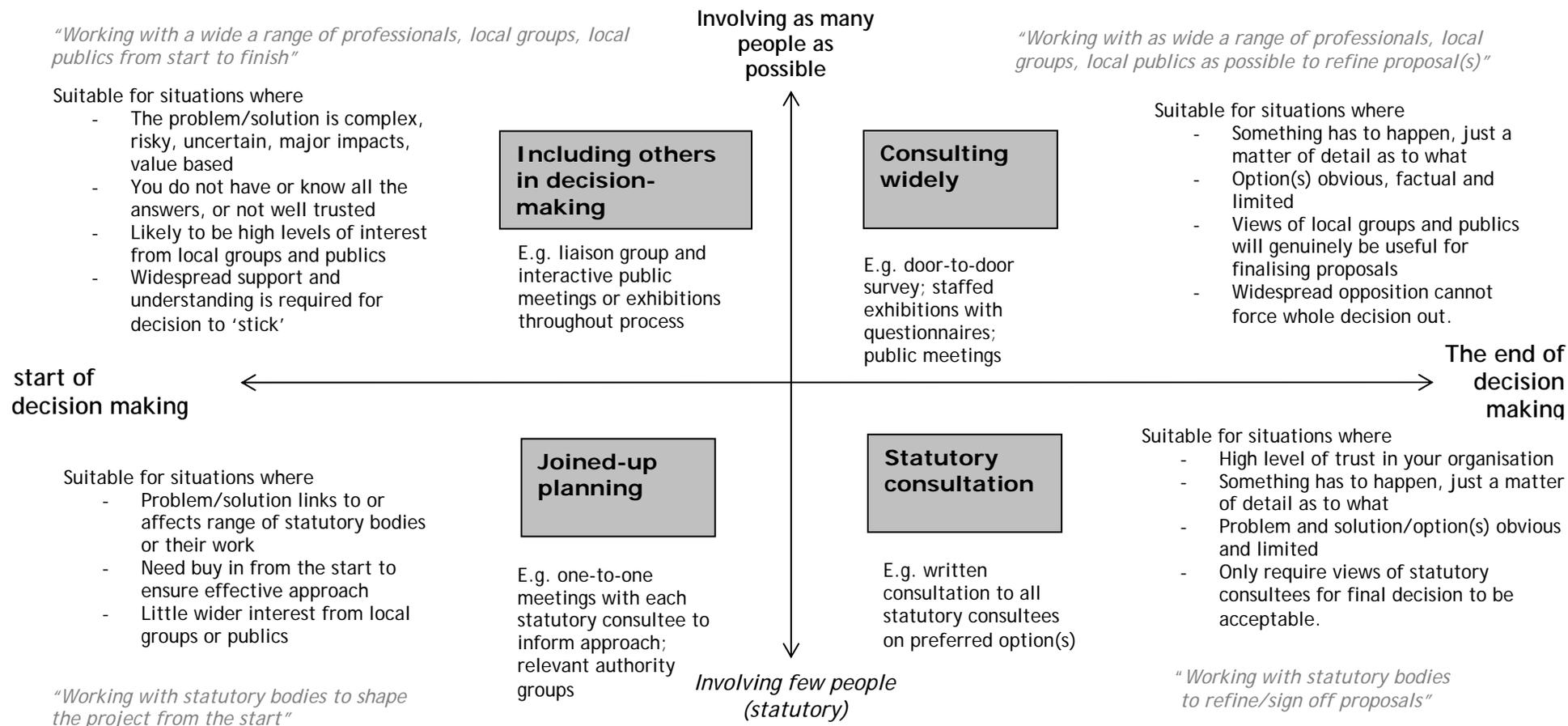
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<sup>139</sup> Quote from participant on *Building Trust with Communities* training course, Wakefield, 2007

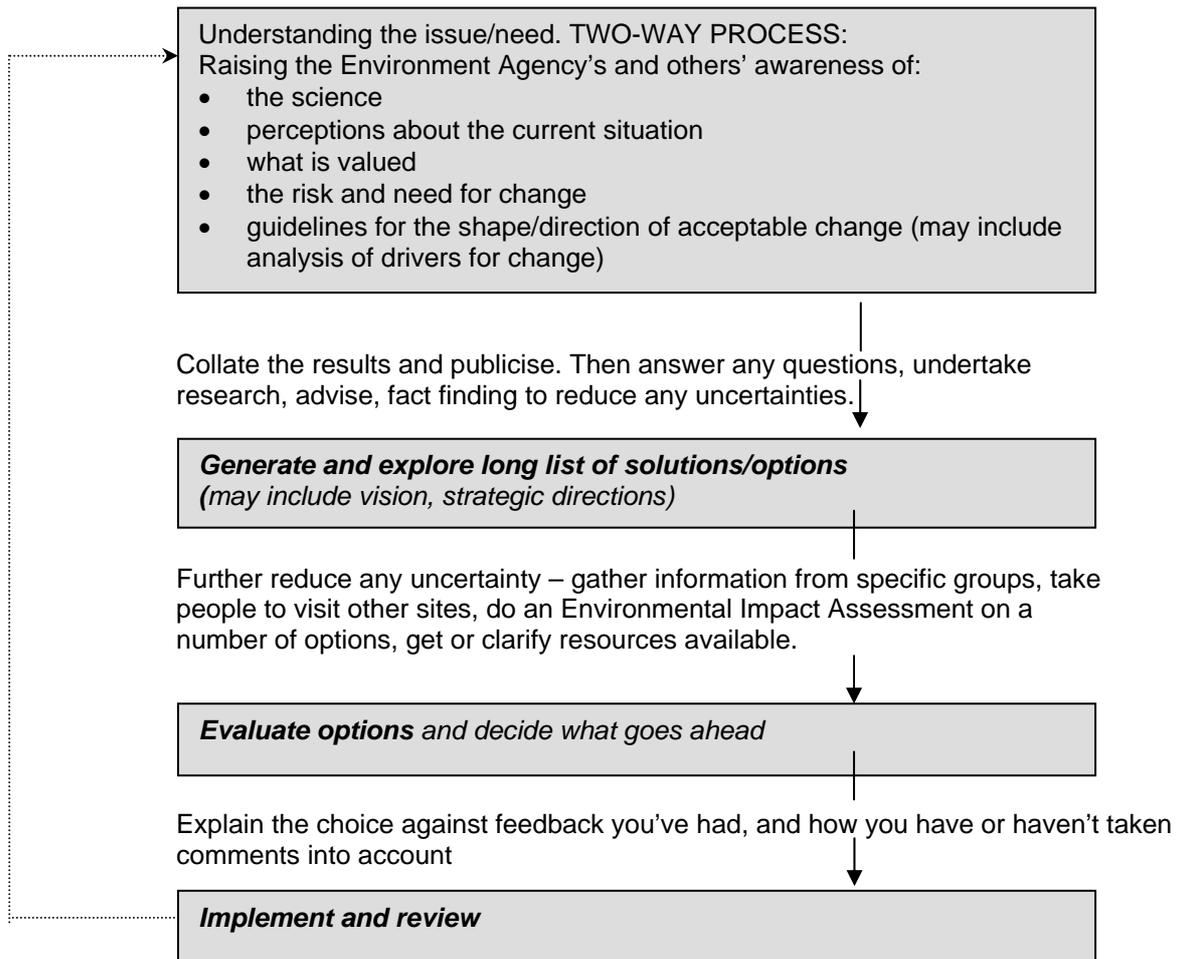
<sup>140</sup> Developed by Gray, quoted in work done for WP4 by Watson *et al*, Lancaster University

<sup>141</sup> Cornell (2006) *op cit*

**Figure A3.3:** When should we start involving others, and how many should we involve?



**Figure A3.4:** Working with others: defining problems to implementing solutions



### 3.3.5 Framework 5: Initial ideas on frameworks and tools for dealing with complexity, politics and multiple perspectives

#### Multi-criteria decision analysis tools

Much has been written on the use of multi-criteria decision analysis tools, but there is some danger in these 'analytic processes' that Andy Stirling<sup>142</sup> argues for floods and FRM cannot be resolved by aggregating preferences:

*It remains the case that the disciplines of risk assessment, economics and decision analysis have developed no single definitive way of addressing the problems of multidimensionality and incommensurability discussed here. Even the most optimistic of proponents of rational choice theory acknowledge that there is no effective way to compare (or aggregate) utility across individuals or different groups in society. Indeed, even where social choices are addressed simply in ordinal (or relative) terms, the economist Arrow went a long way towards earning his Nobel Prize for demonstrating formally that it is impossible definitively to aggregate preferences in a plural society.*

#### New concepts of shared modelling and debate

For example, Chris Rose has suggested:

*...setting up two projects, one a 'science conference' drawing in regional universities etc in a modelling-driven exercise, and the other a political (politicians) conference to do the big-picture politics.*

*My suggestion is that to encourage release of internal collaborative potential the Environment Agency should create external science and political processes regionally, in order to increase public discussion and debate...so that there is a more politically robust context for the specific consultations Environment Agency needs to run, particularly where there are 'winners and losers' in FRM, e.g. on defended and undefended areas in realignment. In other words a programme of public science and politics to get a working political and social settlement for MSfW.<sup>143</sup>*

CIWEM adopt a similar approach on the engagement of scientists in getting messages across in their recent report on *Taking Managed Realignment Forward*.<sup>144</sup>

*"Scientists, the media and non-governmental organisations also have an important role in raising public awareness about managing coastal risk. Whilst the public are increasingly distrustful of government information (Ipsos MORI 2005), two-thirds of adults generally trust scientists to tell the truth. It is therefore important that scientific research is more widely disseminated to the public (in an appropriate format) so that the public can evaluate the evidence in forming their own opinions....[for example] computer simulations have been used to aid consultation processes with real-life survey data from the [Suffolk] Estuaries. Local Model Review Groups were established and comprised local estuary users nominated by local consultation groups. The purpose of involving local people in model corroboration was to prevent local suspicion of external experts imposing their technical solutions for the future of the estuary ..."*

<sup>142</sup> On Science and Precaution, op. cit.

<sup>143</sup> Chris Rose, contribution to IISRF Work Packages 3 and 4. March 2007

<sup>144</sup> CIWEM (2006) Ibid

### 3.3.6 Framework 6: Conceptualising the integration of the public and stakeholders in decision making processes

One of the difficulties we have encountered is the perceived wisdom of separating out ‘the public’, ‘communities’, ‘special interest groups’, stakeholders and so on. As our work for *Building Trust with Communities* has shown, it is vital to think in terms of dealing with ‘everyone’ in an integrated way.

A framework developed by Richard Harris, InterAct and the Sustainable Development Commission (2005) highlights:

- How to bring engagement to the heart of decision-making (rather than as an add on), while explicitly leaving the responsibility for the final decision with the decision-taker.
- How to manage the risk and uncertainty inherent in the policy making process on difficult issues.
- How relations and interactions between the decision-taker, stakeholders and the public (unaffiliated, as yet not motivated by the issue) are conceptualised and managed successfully in order to build the credibility of the decision-making process from the outset.
- The timing and phasing of the engagement process to enable consideration of results and new information.

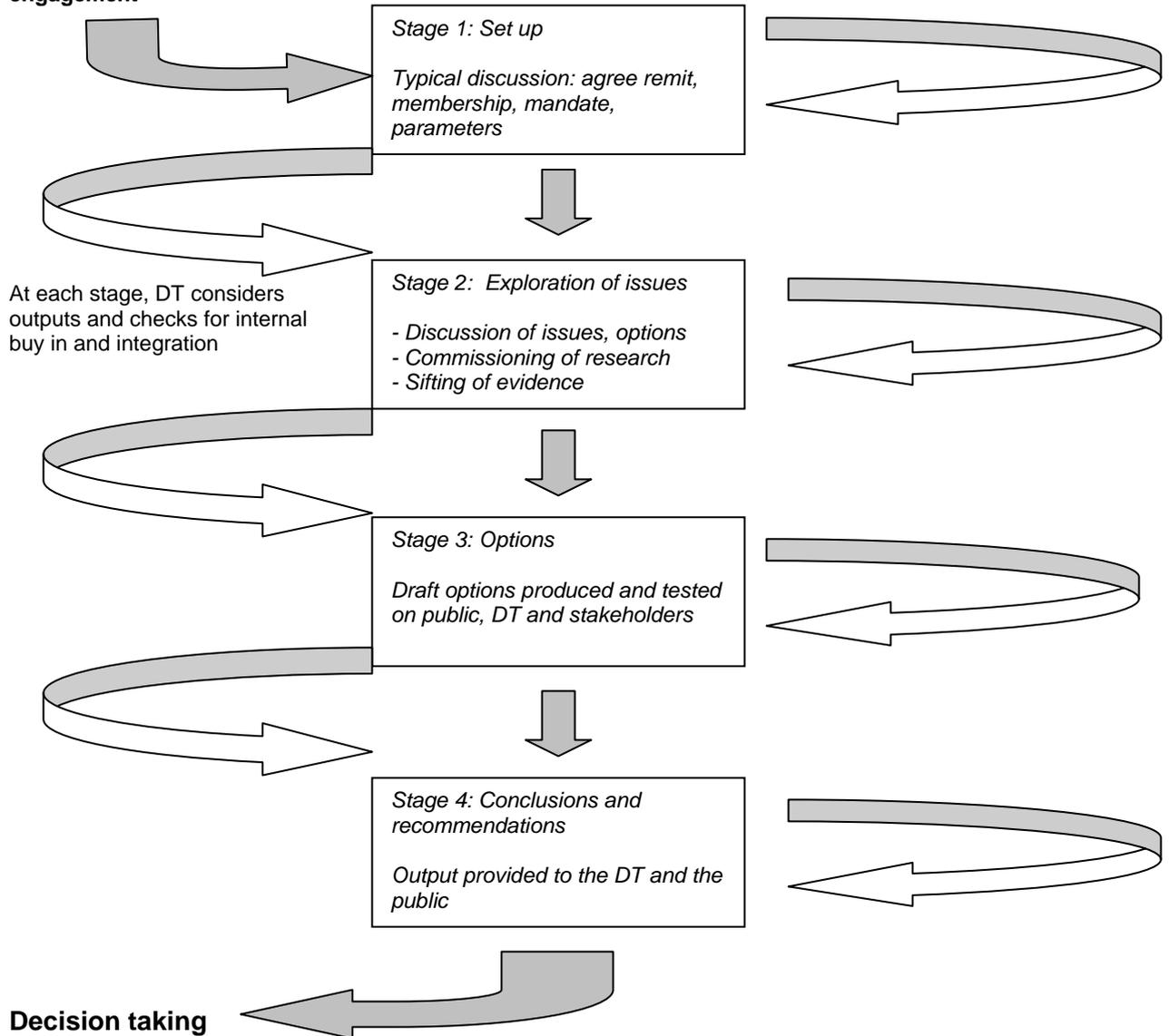
1 How a range of different interventions (from awareness raising and education to consultation, participation and dialogue) can be brought together to form a coherent whole.

This is not a prescriptive model, but a tool to aid consideration and integration of various elements. It can be used to assist the review of past engagements, or the design and management of future ones.

The model can be represented as follows:

DECISION TAKER (DT)	STAKEHOLDERS	WIDER PUBLIC
The Decision Taker maintains decision-making power, as in existing political/ system. They are involved throughout the process, ensuring at each stage that engagement is/will be genuinely informing the decision-making process.	Core group of key interests, working through a deliberative process which takes into account the view of the public and scientific/other evidence. The process can range from one meeting to six months or be an ongoing process. Stakeholders are responsible for keeping their 'constituencies' informed. Stakeholders include decision-takers.	Engagement of much larger numbers of people, using various approaches and techniques, chosen for the specific purpose. These could include education, market research, consultation and deliberative dialogue.

**Commissions/convenes engagement**



**Figure A3.5:** Model to aid integration of engagement in decision-making (adapted from Sustainable Development Commission, 2008)

### 3.3.7 Framework 7: Accepting the emergent nature of engagement

It is vital in considering the issues set out here to recognise that it is not possible to set out a step by step approach to effective engagement. This is a challenging conclusion (see section 2.4 about the psychology and nature of the organisation), and yet an important one.

*Public engagement is not a stage of governance that can be completed, tidied up and filed away. It raises more troublesome questions about how to take into account a greater diversity of voices, how these relate to scientific forms of expertise, and how decisions should be made in conditions of social and technical uncertainty. Public engagement is only the start of a discussion.*

*To its credit, government has picked up arguments about public engagement and been willing to experiment with them. For policy-makers, it has been a struggle. The outcomes of engagement processes have not always been as straightforward and applicable as they had hoped. And in opening a conversation between government and the public, policy-makers have been surprised by growing social and political argument. This discomfort has led some in government to become frustrated with public engagement.<sup>145</sup>*

Our conclusion for Work Package 3 is similar; for example, the literature review by the University of Lancaster (in Colbourne 2008) states:

*What is clear from the social science research is the need to acknowledge, and indeed work with, the complexity of partnership working, to maintain an understanding of both the broader context and local conditions that enable and/or hinder partnership working, and to recognise that their successes and failures in terms of developing and implementing policies, programmes and projects cannot be accounted for by referring to a list of essential conditions or 'ingredients' (Medd 2001).*

*The American conflict and negotiation expert, Barbara Gray, has written extensively on the subject of multi-party collaboration. [In] her work...collaboration is characterised as an emergent and iterative process rather than a highly structured and linear arrangement. Gray's theoretical and empirical work demonstrates how collaborative initiatives develop over time as a function of external pressures and the dynamics of inter- and intra-organisational relationships. ... collaboration is viewed as a highly unpredictable ('messy') process.*

Working with the EDD or co-delivery model involves becoming comfortable with the unknown rather than the more usual engineering approaches.

### 3.3.8 Framework 8: Values modes - Building psychology and human understanding into FRM

#### More supportive approach

Chris Rose has suggested that 'resilience', i.e. the ability of communities to bounce-back to an as-good-or-better-position, depends very largely on the starting conditions. He argues that this means that pre-flood work is critical. Communications work is needed to increase resilience in terms of trust, identity (home + place), community cohesion. It will then ensure people emerge post-flood with

- ✓ homes not just houses

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<sup>145</sup> Received wisdom, Demos op cit

- ✓ trust in others intact or increased
- ✓ retained identity linked to home
- ✓ greater sense of community

This is as much about context, messengers and channels as it is about ‘messages’ or information. This implies a development in Environment Agency messaging from data and information-driven use of direct marketing to ‘instrumental’ communication which is as much about doing and people and relationships.

This resonates with feedback from Bradford Council (in terms of what is not being done):

*Finally, the Environment Agency is very focused on marketing and communication: formal communications between agency and public when not actually in flooding situation is done through marketing teams. Problem is they are marketing and tokenistic e.g. each year just before Christmas, we get a calendar with pictures of flooding, a torch and a plastic bag to put your personal items in. They are on TV, in the press. But again all about handing over responsibility, not working in support of others.*

## Using value modes

This section is lifted directly from advice provided by Chris Rose for the project. It is based on the work of cultural dynamics and ‘value modes’ (which segments the public into ‘settlers’, ‘prospectors’ and ‘pioneers’) to better understand the needs of different population groups. This understanding enables more effective engagement based on meshing Environment Agency interests with those of the recipients.

### **Settlers (need security, identity, belonging, safeguard) require:**

- Face-to-face communication with active stakeholders: these stakeholders (such as the Environment Agency) need to become known and familiar to the settlers. Straight away this tells us that the use of mass media advertising can only be a secondary channel. Indeed, it may be read as a cynical act if done without face-to-face.

The key here is that the Environment Agency<sup>146</sup> needs to establish a community system to reach and engage these people, face-to-face. They need to be involved with routines. Anything new needs to be made into a routine.

- Because of their innate fatalism settlers will not prepare if left to themselves. They need leadership/instruction and help. They need a system with known routines, points of help and people to turn to.
- Settlers will need to have things (and people) put back as they were, and the best outcome that can be expected is something like “it was bad, it could have been worse but I knew where to go for aid and comfort”. This may imply conducting detailed inventories e.g. with visual audits<sup>147</sup> building by building, place by place, involving the community, in advance of a flood, to help reference and evidence reconstruction (this needs proper researching).
- In the recovery phase, the same faces need to be involved as intermediaries or leaders.

<sup>146</sup> Or someone else in a comprehensive plan

<sup>147</sup> These are already done for history and memory projects and for fear of crime.

- The history and who-helped needs to be recognised and acknowledged – e.g. flood marks, memorials, talking projects.
- The scale of ‘community’ needs to be small, nested e.g. post-code and up.

## Prospectors (esteem-driven)

This larger group (40 per cent nationally) are searching for success, which is defined by being *seen to be successful*. They are quite likely to predominate in new mid-market homes built on flood plains. Their needs mean:

- The main problem pre-flood with prospectors is that they are busy doing other things and will not want to know about their houses getting smelly or damaged, or their cars being washed away. They will filter out ‘bad news’ possibilities as ‘doom and gloom’.
- Secondly, prospectors will tend to discount mention of global issues such as ‘climate change’ or ‘community’ as unappealing and ‘too worthy’. This will also apply to messengers, channels and contexts with this connotation.
- They need applicable aspirational models such as high performance. This could be researched in relation to ‘surviving’ floods, for example ‘be the one who succeeds’ and ‘beat the flood – come out on top’ or ‘when the going gets tough, the tough get going’ [not literal suggestions for messages], and they need devices or mechanisms which they can quickly get hold of. This suggests product development and associated marketing, for example, for anti-flood, escape or communications devices. The Environment Agency should commission a research project to develop products for prospectors around flood preparation.
- Ideas could include ways to be the first to know, ways to secure your life (in terms of like-for-like insurance). The Environment Agency should research the possibility of working with house-related industries such as insurers to develop engagement devices that relate to preparation and recovery (emerge with a *better* house).

## Pioneers

Inner-directed pioneers are psychologically the most capable of ‘bouncing back’ from impacts that disrupt their lives, and are most likely to lead in initiating new behaviours.

Their outlook means:

- They are most open to invitations to take a role in help with coordination and could be targets for this.
- They are questioning and inquisitive and would be most likely to take up offers to ‘get inside’ Environment Agency thinking: Environment Agency should research and develop consultative mechanisms designed to invite pioneers to ‘come inside’ its thinking on specific FRM actions such as realignment, local flood schemes, community preparation.

## Communication options to reach value modes segmented audiences

The Environment Agency could go **door to door** with trained staff (they can be trained in quickly identifying prospectors, settlers and pioneers) with three action options available. Or, the Environment Agency could This could be done to every door in a flood risk area

and/or

use **segmented channels** chosen so that prospectors, settlers and pioneers self-select from three options, for example around stuff/insurance for Prospectors, face to face and small local groups/ trusted groups for Settlers, and an online/new (and segmented media) strategy offer for Pioneers (offering a role in local FRM actions, for instance.) Either way this implies **developing three different ‘platforms’ for FRM action and communications**

This would probably be **made more effective if all homes (and buildings) were offered a basic service**. Ideally this would be required by statute. This should run with the building not with the person.

Psychologically this distances it from the person’s identity and is less challenging (particularly to Prospectors). This also avoids the accusation of treating people differently (because these psychological distinctions are not yet well enough known to be used in political/media debate, though there are short-hands which could be used).

Ideally, this would take the form not of information but of an installation, something like a wall mounted (emergency-removable with mains recharged built-in battery) paging device to give: (1) basic reminder information on preparation; (2) warnings; (3) call for help (like disabled people’s pagers).

### **Environment Agency should research an installation system**

The public are already familiar with burglar alarms, thermostats, gas/ water/ electricity meters and fire alarms. It would also establish which buildings were in high flood risk areas, and thus alert visitors and others who might otherwise not be aware.

This in turn could act as a PR platform and hook for associated information campaigns. It could complement the Floodline system.

In this way the offer to Settlers would be something like “the government says you should have this” (from a trusted source), to Prospectors “everyone gets these but you can also get ...” and to Pioneers “everyone is getting these and the Environment Agency is looking for people to help ...”

### **3.3.9 Framework 9: Need for conditionality?**

Conditionality is a new idea being developed by Ed Straw, PriceWaterHouse Coopers.<sup>148</sup> Is it relevant to collective responsibility for MSfW? Broadly, conditionality has been applied in three ways:

- action/incentive
- inaction/loss
- behaviour/avoidance

The action/incentive model is the most straightforward: if the recipient does X then he/she will receive Y. Under the inaction/loss model, if the person fails to do something (for example, look for a job) then benefit is withdrawn. The behaviour/avoidance model requires some form of treatment or course to be followed intended to change behaviour in order to avoid, typically, imprisonment or a fine.

<sup>148</sup> *Opportunities for further conditional responses*. Ed Straw, PriceWaterHouse Coopers, unpublished, 2003

Conditionality is not a panacea for all social ills, but it does have its place and, at times, an important place. It is part of a wider movement to empower citizens and communities to take more control of and responsibility for their lives. The old way of government providing services and allocating resources, with citizens as passive consumers or recipients, is evidently on its way out. The average citizen has more influence over Pop Idol than over the NHS. Conditionality, rights and responsibilities, active citizenship and deliberative democracy are all part of the same thrust to re-motivate and re-engage, and to redistribute power. But with power comes responsibility. Conditionality is also about putting the responsibility alongside the power.

### 3.3.10 Framework 10: Valuing different types of intelligence

In 1983, Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University, developed the theory of multiple intelligences. This suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence based on IQ is too limited. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These are:

- ✓ Linguistic
- ✓ Logical-mathematical
- ✓ Visual-spatial
- ✓ Bodily-kinesthetic
- ✓ Musical
- ✓ Naturalist
- ✓ Interpersonal
- ✓ Intrapersonal

The IQ test predominantly measures an individual's ability with linguistic and logical-mathematical challenges as well as some visual and spatial tasks. Most of our institutions reward and measure IQ type intelligences, particularly linguistic and mathematical. Unfortunately, as well as not capturing the full range of human 'intelligence', and not helping educate or develop many people, these skills do not account for the range needed for many organisations to succeed.

Civil servants are making progress in finding ways to invite the public into governance. But they need to develop new skills, and learn patience, in working with uncertainty and disruption. They need to think about how they can develop a more open policy culture. They should stop expecting a simple solution to public scepticism, as if public scepticism is a social problem rather than a legitimate stance.<sup>149</sup>

Chris Rose<sup>150</sup> argues that when it comes to the ideas in this report and working with others, there is for example, an obvious premium on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

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<sup>149</sup> Received wisdom, Demos, op cit

<sup>150</sup> Chris Rose, 2007. Ibid

## INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

### - Used for communicating with others (Gardener)

The ability to work effectively with others, to relate to other people and display empathy and understanding, to notice their motivations and goals. To think about and understand another person. To have empathy and distinguish between people and to appreciate their perspectives with a sensitivity to their motives, moods and intentions. This involves interacting effectively with one or more people among family, friends or working relationships.

#### Characteristics:

- ✓ Relates to and mixes well with others
- ✓ Puts people at ease
- ✓ Has numerous friends
- ✓ Sympathetic to others' feelings
- ✓ Mediates between people in dispute
- ✓ Good communicator
- ✓ Good at negotiating
- ✓ Co-operative

#### Likes:

- ✓ Being with people
- ✓ Parties and social events
- ✓ Community activities
- ✓ Clubs
- ✓ Committee work
- ✓ Group activities/team tasks
- ✓ Managing/supervising
- ✓ Teaching/training
- ✓ Parenting

#### Learning techniques:

- ✓ Learn from others
- ✓ Work in teams and learn together
- ✓ Talk to others to get and share answers
- ✓ Compare notes after a study session
- ✓ Make use of networking and mentoring
- ✓ Teach others
- ✓ Socialise during breaks
- ✓ Throw a party to celebrate/reward your success

This way of thinking has wider uses in engagement and communications. The more intelligences involved in engagement, the more successful the effort is likely to be:

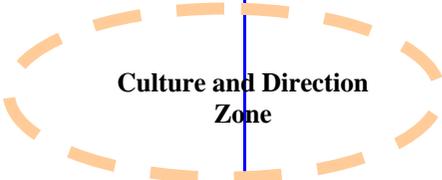
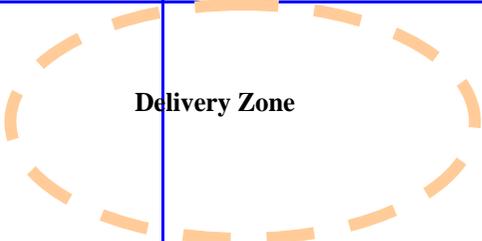
For example:

- ✓ words (*linguistic intelligence* – offer speech or text)
- ✓ numbers or logic (*logical-mathematical* – offer numbers, classifications)
- ✓ pictures (*visual-spatial* – offer visual aids, colour, art, visual organisers)
- ✓ music (*musical* – offer music or environmental sounds)
- ✓ self-reflection (*intrapersonal* – self-discovery, self-analysis, setting your own goals – offer choices and evoke personal feelings or memories)
- ✓ a physical experience (*bodily-kinaesthetic* – ‘hands-on’ – involve the whole body)
- ✓ a social experience (*interpersonal* – for example a party or exhibition – offer peer or cross-age sharing or cooperative work)
- ✓ an experience in the natural world (*naturalist* – relate the subject to ecology)

By putting on multi-intelligence events, the Environment Agency can exploit a range of opportunities internally and externally. Reliance on words and numbers is likely to be less effective than a more holistic approach, and this has proven to be the case by innovations in drop-ins and exhibitions (such as at Shaldon).

We suggest the use of events which can act as communication platforms, such as 3-D models, site visits, take-away gizmos; songs and aural histories; films and videos.

**Table A3.6:** Assessing organisational capacity and barriers within Environment Agency/Defra in terms of using engagement in delivering Making Space for Water)

<b>Levels of decision-making</b>  <b>Challenges</b>	<b>Directors, Board, Minister (for Defra)</b>	<b>Senior Management Team (Area Managers/ Heads of Function)</b>	<b>Middle Management (AFRM, Head of Section)</b>	<b>Operational Staff (team members)</b>
<b>Culture and direction</b>  1. Culture 2. Commitment 3. Space, time, support	 <b>Culture and Direction Zone</b>			
<b>Process management</b>  4. Know your stakeholders 5. Joined-up programming 6. Take risks and learn		 <b>Process Management Zone</b>		
<b>Delivery</b>  7. Skills and confidence 8. Route map to the right place			 <b>Delivery Zone</b>	

## 3.4 The psychology: How frameworks sit with the existing culture of Defra and Environment Agency

*This is what the evidence suggests:*

- ✓ *Full partnership engagement with stakeholders is at the heart of realising Government/Defra policy on water and flood risk management.*
- ✓ *The Environment Agency is to be at the forefront of leading this across MSFW, CFMPs, SMPs and WFD. Indeed this role is to be progressively extended up to 2009.*
- ✓ *Stakeholders are calling for this, but some evidence suggests that they despair at getting it.*
- ✓ *Staff across the Environment Agency have awareness of the need for this because it makes sense as the constructive way to get better outcomes. This applies across all the functions, not just to those dealing with water.*
- ✓ *Some Environment Agency staff have developed appropriate knowledge and skills through partnership working.*
- ✓ *It is widely felt by staff that this work is discouraged by the corporate culture and does not form part of their 'day job'.<sup>151</sup>*

### 3.4.1 Continued scepticism

Our review has identified the following areas of continuing scepticism on engagement and communications in FRM. The next section provides an analysis to help explain why the scepticism is so persistent, and some pointers on how to address it.

#### **Culture and direction**

- ✓ Costs (it is too costly in terms of time and money)
- ✓ Benefits (it won't give us anymore than a traditional approach would)
- ✓ Need (we know the answers so why involve others)
- ✓ Professionalism (we will lose credibility/status/this is not our job)
- ✓ Loss of control (it may all end in disaster or raised expectations)
- ✓ Niche (it is only suitable in some, rare, circumstances)

Even at this level, scepticism often comes from very personal concerns.

#### **Process management**

An overwhelmingly strong message from the literature review/practice is that processes are not in place to support an engaged way of working within FRM, in terms of:

- ✓ reporting
- ✓ performance measures
- ✓ policy
- ✓ project processes
- ✓ timescales/budgeting/contracting

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<sup>151</sup> Wilkinson (2007). Review of policy, literature and practice for this work package, February 2007.  
**Science Report:** Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding – Work Package 4

## Delivery

Reviews of practice show that people are sceptical about delivering engaged ways of working because:

- ✓ it's not part of their day job
- ✓ it's someone else's job
- ✓ you can add it on at the end if you need to
- ✓ it doesn't fit with what we have to do/the organisation's boundaries
- ✓ it costs too much (time/financial budget not available)
- ✓ fear of contact (bad experience in past)
- ✓ it is too risky (and if it goes wrong, I'll get into more trouble than if I hadn't bothered)
- ✓ lack of support/know how (including consultants).

### 3.4.2 Organisational Character Index (OCI)

Although it is a relatively approximate tool (because it looks at the whole organisation when in reality there are organisations within an organisation, and there is an interaction between where it is and 'wants to be', and between leaders and led), Chris Rose argues that the Myers Briggs-based Organisational Character Index (OCI) is a useful way to look at the Environment Agency's culture/character. His view of the Environment Agency is that it is strongly ISTJ. The classification of the ISTJ organisation is:

<b>Introverted</b>	takes cues and draws power from within, is fairly closed
<b>Sensing</b>	concerns itself with actualities, attends to details
<b>Thinking</b>	depends on impersonal procedures and principles
<b>Judging</b>	likes things spelled out and definite, seeks closure

### Bridges description of the ISTJ organisation:

The ISTJ is the most stable of organisations, although when hit by a big unexpected change it can be knocked for a loop. The basic stability and reliability of the organisation's functional systems – which it creates and protects quite un-self-consciously – is magnified by the fact that the organisation is likely to be rather closed to outsiders. Thus, its internal processes are not very evident to the outside world. The same closed quality, however, may make it difficult for anyone but an insider to spot internal problems early. Therefore problems occasionally get out of hand before they are acknowledged.

The spirit of the organisation is likely to be efficient and low-key. The ISTJ organisation considers it bad taste to brag. For that reason, its power is sometimes underestimated by those not in the know. ISTJ organisations move rather slowly and deliberately and seldom enter a new situation without careful thought. They don't often make blunders or build up expectations that they cannot fulfil. They don't amaze but they don't disappoint either. Their word is their bond.

These organisations focus on turning out their own services or products, and under decent circumstances, they do this very well. They live by schedules and meet their deadlines. Staff are expected to work hard, and people drawn to them usually do. There is no type of organisation that is so reliable when it comes to getting all the details right. If the organisation is involved in financial matters, it is likely to focus on the preservation of capital rather than the generation of large incomes. This same spirit governs ISTJ conduct when it comes to non-financial materials.

It takes care of things and sees to it that they aren't lost or damaged.

ISTJ organisations subdue disorder wherever they find it, and they protect against disorder when they cannot subdue it. They guard and nurture – and they inspect to see that they are doing it right. Because of their protective tendency, ISTJs are often drawn to efforts that involve the preservation of community capital in the form of human resources or historical heritage or traditional knowledge. In so doing, they form the keel of the community ship, by keeping it on course and discouraging drift.

By the same token, these organisations discourage rapid change and don't take chances comfortably. They may, therefore, lose contact with their market if it changes quickly, and they don't really belong in markets that do. Even in less rapidly changing situations, they can lock onto a once-productive way of doing things and lose out on changes that could benefit them.

ISTJ organisations are at their best when they have a plan to implement or a clear design to follow. They do less well coming up with that initial design. It is not that they do not have ideas and plans. It is simply that how things are done is so important to them that they are on their own home field when the time comes to carry out any undertaking.

ISTJ organisations tend to distrust theory or brilliance; they put their money on hard work. They respect experience and tend to assume that hierarchy embodies it and should be honoured. Their values are not marginal or unusual – they are mainstream. ISTJs are clear about what they believe and may preach it to others. They can even become intolerant and dogmatic.

Logic and good sense appeal to these organisations. Intuition and radical innovations make them nervous. They tend to prefer written documents and distrust oral communication. They are likely to have generated and preserved little rituals, often harking back to the organisation's origin.

Internally, ISTJs are likely to be organised functionally and to provide people with clear expectations and role responsibilities. In big organisations, this tendency can produce a collection of somewhat isolated domains between which communication is difficult. To get ahead is to contribute to one of these functional domains. Credentials are important, and so is experience. ISTJ cultures are conventional, and they may develop an us-versus-them polarity with whatever is unconventional. But those who qualify as "us" are rewarded with a powerful sense of belonging and feel great loyalty toward the firm.

The traditional old-line corporation that does things logically and follows time-tested ways is likely to be an ISTJ organisation. This type dominated the steel industry, the telephone business, the utility industry, and the world of most public bureaucracies for decades. Sears and GM are both ISTJ, though like most such organisations, they are trying to evolve. Inside any company or institution, finance and administration are very likely to be ISTJ departments.

### **3.4.3 Possible implications for this work**

Rose suggests that if the Environment Agency is indeed ISTJ, a number of issues will emerge in this work. His analysis bears remarkable synergy to our review of practice and literature (documented in earlier sections of this report). For example:

*In some ways to take on tasks which require the Environment Agency to be outward looking (E) consulting, listening (F, P), empathising (e.g. around flood victims/damage) (F), and involve dealing with unknowns, unknowables and uncertainties (requiring N rather than S, e.g. climate change and realignment*

*or allowing communities to decide directions (E, F and P)) throws up across the board challenges for the Environment Agency.<sup>152</sup>*

Rose suggests that if the Environment Agency decides it needs to consult (which after all, is the most basic level of what we are proposing here):

- ✓ It may find it hard to sufficiently expose its thinking so that consultees (or even the staff charged with the task) fully understand where it is coming from.
- ✓ Internal 'silo' thinking may mean that the Environment Agency is operating differently in various projects, sending different external signals.
- ✓ Its deeply embedded internal processes may be hard to link to or may not be flexible enough to deal with novel external challenges.
- ✓ It may struggle with tasks that require feeling (F) and perceiving (P), such as empathising with or establishing a rapport with people outside.
- ✓ It may subconsciously or consciously filter out 'soft stuff' such as politics, emotions or values because they are hard to measure (T, J) and instead assign more significance to what can be easily measured as 'hard facts'.
- ✓ It may be more comfortable with established procedures (such as flood defence) as opposed to newer ones which are still only at the conceptual stage.
- ✓ It will be more at ease working internally and with other familiar insiders (I) than finding energy from outside (E).

Another major challenge is that FRM implies a shift from being a deliverer to an enabler, working with others and perhaps even at their behest, possibly to provide bespoke solutions that the Environment Agency might not conceive itself. This does not sit well with the ISTJ organisational character.

David Wilkinson<sup>153</sup>:

*"The body corporate appears to be still trying to figure out whether partnership working is a good idea and what the possible benefits are. Is there indeed a business case for it? ... Maybe, because of its insularity from its 'business environment' including Defra, it can continue to maintain its current ultra cautious and ostrich-like posture. It is ironic that executive government agencies were set up in the first place (at arm's length, detached from the old civil service) with the intent of enabling the flexibilities needed to innovate managerially. In the case of the Environment Agency this does not appear to be the corporate approach towards the implementation of policy or the needs of stakeholders at the moment."*

#### **3.4.4 How to approach change?**

Rose suggests working with a basic ISTJ template and compensating for it rather than seeking a change in culture. His argument for this is that:

(a) culture change is exceptionally hard to achieve;

(b) cultures are built up partly by tasks and experience so, for example, the shift from flood defence to flood risk management will have this influence anyway;

<sup>152</sup> Letters refer to the I – introvert; E – extrovert; S- sensing; N – intuition; T – thinking; F – feeling; P- perceiving; J – judging functions of the Myers Briggs analysis):

<sup>153</sup> Wilkinson, D. *An example of response and recovery: Stockbridge revisited*. In Fernández-Bilbao, A and Twigger-Ross, C (eds.) (2008) *Improving response, recovery and resilience. Improving Institutional and Social Responses to Flooding Science Report (SC060019) - Work Package 2*. EA/Defra Science Report.

(c) the Environment Agency has a number of duties such as licensing and flood defence maintenance where ISTJ systems are valuable, indeed essential.

We very much endorse this approach, and similarly support his suggested 'compensations':

- ✓ **be aware** of and work against dysfunctional tendencies when given the necessary outward-looking tasks;
- ✓ work to build up **relevant skills of rapport and communications planning** (making it a less seemingly chaotic process) with staff in relevant roles and give them recognized **formats, systems and processes** to execute
- ✓ recruit and assign or enable people with **ENFP and ESFP** tendencies to **oversee consultation and outward-facing activities** (this has obvious drawbacks but in playing into the natural silo tendency it may make change more acceptable)
- ✓ work strategically and tactically with other organisations culturally better equipped to carry out some tasks– **retain agencies** in PR/ communications to assist by facilitating community communications. To become trusted these would need to be long term commissions.

He also notes that his ISTJ assumption may be wrong and there almost certainly will be a S-N tension in the organisation. It seems likely that a number of key directors or senior staff, particularly in the science, foresight roles and in the SMT are intuitive – INTJ or, amongst leaders perhaps, ENTJ. They may become frustrated by what they see as a the slow 'nit picking' approach to change implementation by others. This is relevant to change issues but not so much to engagement technicalities, although they are likely to see a need for change and to translate that into '**so let's try this**'.

Work to **investigate these internal issues** with MBTI-expert management consultants might be helpful. A similar situation arises where leaders with a vision have a different Maslowian need from the managers charged with delivering on the vision. Unless they convert it into terms that enable the managers to meet their needs in delivering, problems arise (in that they resist change). The common case nowadays is inner directed Pioneer visions not translated into achievable targets for success-oriented esteem-driven outer-directed Prospector managers. Running a value modes survey in the Environment Agency itself would be a useful exercise.

# 4 Benefits/costs

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## 4.1 Summary

Research and practice shows a co-delivery model of governance (operationalised through effective engagement and risk communications) can and has delivered substantial benefits in terms of resources, delivery and reputation. Indeed, at the regional and area level it has often become the *only* way to deliver successful interventions, as the scale of change required, resources, low levels of trust and the strength of opinion have made a single delivery model unworkable. Often however, these benefits have been delivered despite rather than as a result of prevailing culture, policy, process and practice within Defra/Environment Agency.

## 4.2 The benefits in summary

*We have come to recognise that for integrated catchment management to work, we need to work with stakeholders: to build better, joint understanding of river management problems; and to build better, joint understanding of potential river management solutions; so that we can ensure effective co-delivery of jointly agreed solutions.*<sup>154</sup>

The following summary list of benefits was collated for ComCoast<sup>155</sup>:

1. Delivery: improving the ability to deliver both practical and educational objectives, ensuring smoother implementation of policies.
2. Better informed plans and policies: more robust, higher quality, more creative plans and policies based on broader expertise and experience, ensuring they are fit for purpose and creating sustainable solutions for cross-cutting and complex problems.
3. Improved quality of services: more efficient and better services that meet real needs and reflect community values.
4. Support: preventing crises from developing, broader and/or increased support, reassured public, more understanding of and/or less resistance to projects, less litigation, fewer delays.
5. Governance and democracy: strengthening democratic legitimacy, accountability, stimulating active citizenship, narrowing the gulf between government and the public, the restoration of confidence and trust.
6. Social cohesion and social justice: building relationships, ownership, social capital, equity, empowerment, fair distribution of costs and benefits, people have the right to make decisions about issues that directly affect their lives.

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<sup>154</sup> *Involving stakeholders in river basin planning*. Orr, Colvin and King. 2007

<sup>155</sup> Collated from ComCoast WP4 – learning from participation, building trust in local communities final interview paper, local outreach, ATSDR primer on health risk communication principles and practices, participatory processes, a tool to assist the wise use of catchments, communicating risk

7. Capacity building and learning: providing opportunities to influence others and to learn from them, mobilising resources to deliver, greater understanding of and more appropriate reaction to a particular risk.
8. Reputation and openness: increasing accountability, transparency, credibility and trust of government and institutions and the services and information they provide.

*What are the impacts?*

- *The Environment Agency's reputation can be damaged by failure to participate in meetings following a flood. Conversely, community relations can be improved by participation in drop-in centres and by working with the community.*
- *Poor community relations will impact upon our ability to collect post flood-event data, and may impact upon the degree to which people trust the Environment Agency and take action on our information and messages (e.g. flood warnings).*
- *Poor aftercare can have an impact on the ability of the economy, environment and the community to recover.*<sup>156</sup>

## 4.3 Examples in practice

There are many case studies and stories of good practice. We provide below a few examples, including a table format which could be adapted to directly compare engaged versus non-engaged work (see example from InterAct below)

### Example

In two small communities where flood management schemes have been implemented, Paull Holme Strays (Thorngumbald) in the Humber and the Brancaster realignment on the north Norfolk coast, an effective mechanism was the development of committed community forums – very local stakeholder groups. These forums were effective, simultaneously, for two key processes: first, informing and educating the community about the motivations for the change in flood management policy and the expected outcomes of the project and, secondly, informing the statutory decision makers about the local specifics, and helping to optimise the implementation. In part, they were effective because they were ongoing processes, with the communities and the stakeholders taking the necessary time to understand and incorporate the information they were giving each other<sup>157</sup>.

#### Example:

Because the Norfolk Broads is a national park and also home to close-knit and conservative communities, one of the main challenges for Broadland Environmental Services Ltd (BESL) was the interface with the planning process (Halcrow/CSERGE/CCRU 2002). BESL tackled the task early on with a wide-ranging and ongoing process of stakeholder engagement (about 600 stakeholders plus 500 local landowners and residents were contacted), and the group developed sophisticated modelling and visualisation tools for education and awareness (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/~e313/virtual.html>). This open and democratic process was intended to facilitate the implementation of the various schemes. BESL reported that in the early stages of BFAP a typical scheme took 18 months or longer to pass through the planning process (and it is worth noting that the first schemes were those where communities had already been assessed as having serious flood risk), but this more engaged process, with greater community buy-in, is expected to reduce that timeframe.

<sup>156</sup> Aftercare Think Tank, 2006. Ibid

<sup>157</sup> Sarah Cornell, March 2006. Ibid



**Table 4.1:** Example of comparison of DAD versus EDD (taken from InterAct<sup>158</sup>)

<b>DECIDE/ANNOUNCE/DEFEND MODEL</b>	<b>INVOLVE/AGREE/IMPLEMENT (Collaborative Model)</b>
City council A, aiming to expand its city centre controlled parking zone, commissioned consultants who then presented their results as a fair accompli. Residents and businesses totally rejected the proposals and the plan were scrapped.	The adjacent council B wanted to expand its parking zone, initiated up-front and coherent community and stakeholder involvement and ended up with a fully agreed scheme, implemented only 10 months later.
Several Coastal Management Plans for protected areas were commissioned in the 1990s. Most plans were developed totally in-house, failed to gain stakeholder support and went almost nowhere in practice.	In another case a thorough and wide-ranging stakeholder dialogue was established, an agreed plan emerged and, even before it was formally published, a medley of local collaborative initiatives were underway.
All AONB teams have struggled with conflict and dissent on issues around access to the countryside. Most early plans failed to address the issue or included policies that were eventually not implemented.	In another case, access officers and representatives of ramblers, farmers, CPRE and horse riders worked together to literally write agreed policies, now supported through to implementation
Many local planning authorities spent upwards of £500,000 each on their plan Inquiries, mostly to pay for barristers. It was common for key policies to change as a result of this lengthy process.	In authority C, the team developed a complex collaborative process that involved the potential key objectors from the outset and reached agreement on many aspects. The result was a dramatic reduction in the number of objections and significant reduction in the cost and time of the Inquiry.
In authority D a supermarket company tried for several years to drive a proposal through against the wishes of the community, the planning authority and the Council as a whole – all without success and at considerable cost to all involved	In authority E a different supermarket company and local planning authority shared cost and commitment to an engagement process that so speeded progress towards an agreed solution and an acceptable application that the company saved many months interest charges – which it contributed to the community in the form of a high quality local facility.
In authority F a small community (of barely 350 people) raised the largest objection to their area's local plan because it proposed 26 new houses for their village.	Further work on a Village Design Statement with the village community generated an agreed plan for the village that included an additional 42 houses!
In an area of some 500 houses, 17 <sup>th</sup> century stone mines close below the surface threatened extremely damaging subsidence.	A new team was brought in, rebuilt confidence in all parties, brought them together and helped to generate a new,

<sup>158</sup> <http://www.interact.org.uk/>

# 5 Creating the change

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## 5.1 What might be required?

The shift to a governance model, operationalised through effective engagement and communications will require some clever footwork, not just more ‘top down’ dictat. As David Wilkinson says:

The one thing [*the Environment Agency*] absolutely needs to stop wasting time on is for a set of ‘experts’ based at HQ or external consultants to write detailed guidance for work they have little successful experience in (how could they if this is innovation?) and pass it down to the front line who probably have more practical ideas in the first place. ... [This] really brings into question the whole idea of *tools/kits, or at least raises the need for interim tools then into practice.*<sup>159</sup>

We have already covered the likelihood that top-down support or understanding may be difficult given the predominant ISTJ-type culture. We strongly recommend that any proposed change *works with* or *compensates for* the predominant organisational culture and characteristics rather than attempts to change it. This section sets out the range of types of tools and approaches that could usefully be adopted.

### 5.1.1 Strong leadership and good communications around the ‘engagement story’

We need a compelling narrative (both internally *and* externally) to explain what the Environment Agency is aiming to do, and why and how it needs to work with others. Many components of this story are presented in this analysis. To be convincing internally (and consistent externally), the story needs to be versed in terms of:

- ✓ Requirements of established systems and accountability/targets that mandate this.
- ✓ History of the Environment Agency and even its component bodies – parallels from days of yore, lessons of the past applied to the future.
- ✓ Systems/procedures that will be used to do this, preferably drawn up internally. Karen Thomas’ report for SD1 suggests that project appraisal guidance and outcome measures should help stakeholders’ understanding of our decision-making process and create a more transparent and accountable process.
- ✓ Specifics of the situation – for example, how MSfW fits with WFD fits with SMP/CFMPs, and how different stakeholders can get involved, where and when.
- ✓ Evidence (that it works, cost benefit).

There is clearly an opportunity to influence/build on the Strategic Overview internally. The Strategic Overview is also an opportunity for a national engagement process to deal with climate change, managed realignment and so on.

Another opportunity identified in the SD1 report is to use away-days and the Defra Environment Agency Joint Conference (summer) to raise awareness. When Simon

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<sup>159</sup> David Wilkinson’s contribution to this report. February 2007

Hughes presented the shift to MSfW at the Extreme Flood Conference in November 2006, feedback forms indicated a major shift in the way participants were thinking.

Finally, it may be useful to establish a definitive answer to the values modes and Organisational Character Index questions, as a basis on which to develop the engagement story.

### **5.1.2 Recognising, recruiting, developing and valuing staff and consultants skilled in engagement**

To have an impact, there will be a need to emphasise experience and expertise in an itemised way, and the measurable processes that will be used (targets, timetables and so on). Having key performance indicators and accountability for engagement within performance management measures is essential. It will also require:

- ✓ Being aware of and working against dysfunctional tendencies when given the necessary outward-looking tasks.
- ✓ Building up skills of rapport and engagement planning (making it a less seemingly chaotic process) with staff in relevant roles.
- ✓ Revise capabilities dictionary, job profiles and resource capacity to ensure we can meet resource demands and ensure staff have appropriate new skills.
- ✓ Provide staff with recognised formats, systems and processes to execute.
- ✓ Recruit and assign or enable people with public skills and tendencies to oversee consultation and outward-facing activities (this has obvious drawbacks but in playing into the natural silo tendency it may make change more acceptable\*).
- ✓ Work strategically and tactically with other organisations culturally better equipped to carry out some tasks. Retain agencies in PR/communications to assist in community communications. To become trusted, these would need to be long-term commissions.
- ✓ Limited use of classroom-style training programmes which recognise the limited value of such processes and their role in establishing initial interest. For example, the BTwC programme has engendered significant support and recognition, and is now turning into more of a supported learning programme (see below); and the foundation degree
- ✓ Development of a 'safe' network for sharing practice, including the use of the intranet to share experiences (good and bad), guidance, mentoring support and so on (again, building on BTwC approach of the national community relations team).

\*A more radical proposal might be to consider establishing new structures to 'do' engagement. There is some evidence to suggest that the nominated BTwC external relations/corporate affairs mentors are not well placed to support the shift to a more engaged way of working.

Another way of increasing capacity for engagement will be through the use of framework consultancy contracts which a) enable engagement expertise to be used b) require consultants to reflect engagement aims (currently there is simply a KPI which requires the consultant to compile and maintain a project consultation plan, provide clear material for leaflets and displays and engage with key stakeholders).

Finally, Thomas *et al.* (2007) writes: *A number of responders to the original report queried the need to retain a bar on non-chartered engineers working in certain posts.*

*Further discussions highlighted that people feel that the modern role of project manager required a whole host of skills in communication, budget and financial management, the ability to work with external partners effectively, vision, leadership as well as technical skills. It was felt that these skills were not necessarily unique to professional engineers, and that people who had delivered projects successfully in other fields could be good candidates, with the right support from qualified engineers.*

### **5.1.3 Developing the tools, frameworks and procedures**

Section 2 of this report sets out some candidate tools and frameworks. We recommend the approach is to sell these (corporately) along the lines of 'cutting down the confusing array' of ad hoc approaches and decision making influences and 'replacing them with a measurable standard set of approaches'.

In terms of adopting pilot/pathfinder approaches, it may be that staff volunteering to take part in the programme will by definition be more naturally inclined to a learning/evolving approach. This is essential to the further development of processes and tools (before fuller roll out).

We recommend a two-stage roll out process: development, learning and pathfinding followed by standardising. In doing, so we must not lose the inherent emergent nature of engagement. During the development phase for each framework, we would need to:

- i) check that the proposed framework makes sense, or refine it;
- ii) check/illustrate by retrofitting examples of situations/decisions to see if/how the framework might have added value;
- iii) fully test in a number of pathfinders/pilots.

We also recommend close links with the MSfW PAG Review Project (SD3), and the use of approaches such as multi-criteria analysis.

### **5.1.4 Consistent policy and decision-making**

The current FRM Strategy runs to 2008; revisions due for 2007/8 have been delayed for a year to allow incorporation for MSfW objectives, changed funding responsibilities and the needs of the WFD and Floods Directives. This is clearly an opportunity not to be missed in terms of ensuring a clear and consistent policy which will reduce confusion internally and externally (for example, a joint Defra-Environment Agency FRM strategy would make more sense)<sup>160</sup>.

Specifically, others<sup>161</sup> have suggested:

- ✓ Resolving the relationship and accountability barriers between the area FRM client and national services like the National Capital Programme Management Scheme (NCPMS) and National Environmental Assessment Centre (NEAS). NCPMS/NEAS are consultants to the area client and yet can fail to respond to other organisational pressures, initiatives and local politics that the area client has to face.
- ✓ Ensuring NCPMS/NEAS follow the policies and processes like the rest of the organisation, rather than inventing their own.

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<sup>160</sup> THOMAS *et al.* (2007). *Making Space for Water - Better Engagement and Risk Communication*. SD6 Final Report. Environment Agency, Bristol.

<sup>161</sup> Ruth Johnston, 2007. *Ibid.* Karen Thomas. Op cit

- ✓ Ensuring MSfW Adaptation Toolkit project (SD2) reflects and feeds into the ideas in this report. It is currently exploring coastal planning and the integration of SMPs into LDF through a CMP and community strategy approach.
- ✓ Ensuring close links to the *Building Trust with Communities* programme.

### **5.1.5 Pathfinding, exploring, pilots, learning by doing – starting with the willing.**

It was noted in earlier sections that although the predominant organisational culture may not recognise or value externally facing or innovative approaches to engagement, there will be a number of key directors, senior and operational staff that are increasingly frustrated by the slow ‘nit-picking’ approach to external engagement and change implementation by others in the organisation. They are likely to see (or already be advocating or implementing) change and very much ‘let’s try this’. It makes sense to work with the willing in the next stages of taking this work forward.

David Wilkinson recommends:

- ✓ Look at the many local collaborative projects and learn how the ‘how’ of doing these was linked to the ‘what’ of successful outcomes. Then network and spread this professional ‘know-how’ as an integral part of the professional role.
- ✓ Learn from what goes on in the outside world and what works in the management of change, especially in developing collaborative working.
- ✓ Set up pathfinder projects to apply this learning and create new learning through action and implementation. These have to be given priority support from the top to prevent them ‘drowning’ in the present corporate culture. These pathfinders need to be the start of a longer-term culture change where the focus switches to learning through doing.
- ✓ Set up interactive learning processes (action learning, coaching, facilitated networks, whole systems processes) and learning frameworks to support these new ways of learning and knowledge creation.

In setting up pathfinders, Wilkinson says these need to operate at a number of levels:

- ✓ National and regional policy connections and a single overall framework with clear visible top leadership.
- ✓ A strategic overview at Environment Agency area level that focuses on coherent narratives at individual catchment level (every catchment is unique).
- ✓ Pathfinders at the whole catchment level. These establish the overall partnership framework and strategic holistic overview for the whole. These then support...
- ✓ Localised partnership-driven improvement projects that encourage a full range of water and flood risk management improvement.

Key to this being successful is that the Environment Agency has to listen to and understand the priorities, pressures and governance systems of its stakeholder partners and something of the cultures and social changes in the communities it is working with. At the moment it consults (not involves) from its own internal departmentally-driven questions – and probably to get the corporate boxes ticked. It simply cannot achieve partnership working from this position. It also has to engage with the socio-psychological aspects of the four linked parts of the flood cycle).

The Improving Poor Environments 3 (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2007) report makes virtually the same point. The following is based on what a number of senior line managers said:

*“This new strategic approach is very different from the way the Environment Agency has often worked in the past. There are four imperatives underlying this new approach:*

- ✓ *to engage (not consult) with all relevant stakeholders early – “ahead of the game”;*
- ✓ *to understand the world through their eyes, agendas and priorities;*
- ✓ *to tell coherent and joined-up environmental narratives that relate to these issues as seen by the outside world – rather than from the internal territorial maps within the Environment Agency;*
- ✓ *to bring all the organisation’s resources and expertise to bear on the key strategic issues in an integrated way.”*

With this framework of support and the starting points above, good guidance and templates/protocols would be highly functional. They should be part of the learning outcomes of pathfinders and be authored through experiences of those taking part.

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