



Innovate
UK



Citizen engagement on Net Zero:

Local Authority self-assessment questionnaire



March 2025



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Innovate UK's £60 million, three-year Net Zero Living programme aims to help regional authorities and businesses accelerate the transition to net zero, across the UK and internationally.

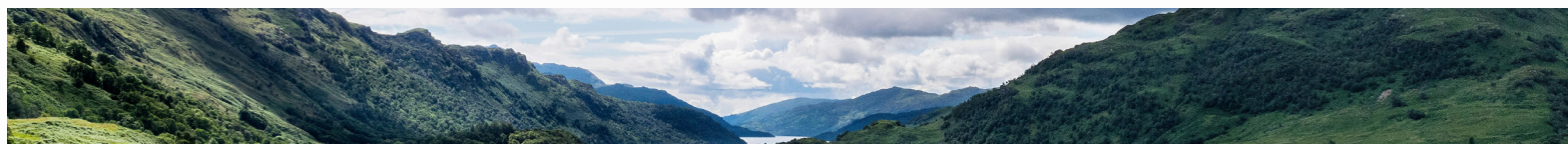
Ipsos and Involve have designed a self-assessment questionnaire. The aim of this is to provide local authorities with a way to assess and enhance their citizen engagement strategies and practices. The questionnaire is based on existing Ipsos and Involve best practice guidance on deliberative engagement, and draws on prior research, the OECD's good practice principles for deliberative engagement, and the Involve standards for deliberation.

There are five core elements of this questionnaire:

- Context and strategy
- Clarity of purpose and scope
- Responsiveness and commitment to act
- Accountability, transparency, equity, and inclusion
- Sufficient time and resources

To support gathering insights around engagement activities, and to help local authorities position themselves on this questionnaire, this document contains some questions about your organisation, the strategies you have around net zero and citizen engagement, how engagement events are being organised and their impacts accounted for. Please answer as succinctly and clearly as possible and feel free to add links to publicly available sources of information.

Ipsos are leading on gathering evidence for UKRI Net Zero Living Technical Assistance Partner on visioning and citizen engagement. This is part of generating insights into the programme of work to support learning and monitoring. Ipsos is MRS Certified, and adheres to MRS code on GDPR, data protection and privacy laws. All information provided will be held in strict confidence, and if any quotes are used, we will seek your consent. All quotes and information will be anonymised.



Section A: Introduction

What is the name of your project, and what local area is it taking place in?

Please provide a brief summary of your project.



Section B:

Context and strategy

This section explores how engagement activities connect to overarching council/local authority strategies on net zero, climate change, and citizen engagement, as well as any place-based vision that exists.

Essentially, this section aims to understand the context in which citizen engagement may be occurring, and how citizen engagement relates to this context.

At the moment, what strategies does the local area have for Net Zero / climate change?

How integrated are these into decision making?

↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority.

Yes: The local area/local authority has agreed upon strategies/plans to combat climate change and/or to meet net zero.

Work in progress: The local area/local authority is currently working on agreeing and publishing strategies/plans to combat climate change and/or to meet net zero. **OR** The local area/local authority has a plan/strategy for one of these, but not the other.

No: The local area currently is not working on plans to combat climate change/net zero.

If answered yes, continue below...

And to what extent, if at all, are these plans/strategies currently integrated into decision-making processes across the local authority?

Below is a scale. Please put tick the box that you feel best applies to your local authority. If 1, 3 or 5 isn't quite right for the scale, you can use 2 or 4 to add wording that better suits your situation.

1: Net zero and/or climate change plans or strategies are not at all integrated into wider decision-making processes.

2.

3. Some elements of Net Zero and/or climate change plans or strategies are integrated into some decision-making processes, but not in a systematic way.

4.

5. Net Zero/climate change plans or strategies are fully integrated into decision-making processes across the LA.

Please add any comments on this section.

Is there any action to be taken?

Section B:

Context and strategy

<p>To what extent, if at all, does your local authority have a strategy/plans for citizen engagement?</p> <p><i>This may include planned engagement as part of the Net Zero Living Thriving Places programme.</i></p>	
<p>↓ Below is a scale. Please put tick the box that you feel best applies to your local authority. If 1, 3 or 5 isn't quite right for the scale, you can use 2 or 4 to add wording that better suits your situation.</p>	
1: The local authority currently has no plans or strategy for citizen engagement.	
2.	
3. The local authority has conducted citizen engagement before, but this has been ad hoc or not joined up.	
4.	
5. The local authority has an agreed upon strategy and/or plans for citizens engagement, and has either previously done engagement, or is planning on doing so in the near future.	
<p><i>Please add any comments on this section.</i></p>	
<p><i>Is there any action to be taken?</i></p>	

Section C:

Clarity of purpose & scope

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

<p>To what extent are there clearly defined goals for citizen engagement you are doing?</p> <p><i>Please put tick the box that you feel best applies to your local authority.</i></p>	
1: Limited, or lacking clear, documented goals or a strategic for citizen engagement. Engagement events may be ad hoc or not aligned with wider local authority actions.	
2. Basic goals have been defined but are broadly stated and without specific/measurable outcomes, with limited integration into wider local authority intentions.	
3. Goals are more clearly articulated, and have some measurable outcomes. There is a connection between engagement activities and overall local authority strategy.	
4. Goals are clearly defined and measurable. There is a demonstrable connection between engagement activities and local authority goals, with efforts being strategically aligned.	
5. Citizen engagement goals are measurable and fully integrated into local authority's strategic planning and decision-making processes, with a strong feedback loop between citizen in-put and local authority actions.	
<p><i>Please add any comments on this section.</i></p>	
<p><i>Is there any action to be taken?</i></p>	

Section C:

Clarity of purpose and scope

<p>Have you identified the relevant community actors and organisations community groups who need to be involved in citizen engagement ?</p> <p><i>This may include planned engagement as part of the Net Zero Living Thriving Places programme.</i></p>	
<p>↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority</p>	
<p>Yes: Relevant groups have been identified, with the process used to do so being clear and transparent. The local authority has mechanisms in place to ensure that identified groups are effectively reached and engaged.</p>	
<p>Work in progress: The process of identifying relevant groups is underway. Some initial steps may have been taken, or the groups may have been identified but methods of engagement have not yet been decided.</p>	
<p>No: The local authority has not yet identified the groups of publics, actors, and community groups to involve in citizen engagement.</p>	
<p><i>Please add any comments on this section.</i></p>	
<p><i>Is there any action to be taken?</i></p>	

[Only ask if engagement events are planned/have been executed in the past]

<p>Is there independent advice and/or facilitation in place?</p> <p><i>This may include planned engagement as part of the Net Zero Living Thriving Places programme.</i></p>	
<p>↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority</p>	
<p>Yes: Independent advice and/or facilitation for engagement events is fully established and operational, with roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines clearly defined and transparent.</p>	
<p>Work in progress: Steps are being made to ensure independent advice/facilitation (e.g. identifying potential advisors/facilitators, exploring funding options, recruiting, or training). Support is not currently fully operational, but will be in line with the timeline for engagement events</p>	
<p>No: Currently there are no independent facilitators/advisors in place, and steps have not yet been taken to recruit them. If this is due to existing expertise in the local authority, please note this.</p>	
<p><i>Please add any comments on this section.</i></p>	
<p><i>Is there any action to be taken?</i></p>	

Section D:

Responsiveness, accountability, and commitment to act

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

To what extent, if at all, are there plans for how your local authority will respond to citizen input?

These include both learning and improvements to citizen engagement itself, and how feedback is integrated into wider decision-making processes in the local authority.

→ Please put tick the box on the right that you feel best applies to your local authority.

Please add any comments on this section.

Is there any action to be taken?

1: Feedback will be collected and reported on, but there is at present no established process for reviewing, analysing, and responding to it.

2. Responses to citizen input occur on a case-by-case basis, without a consistent approach and dependent on individual staff or departments. There is, at present, no systematic method for incorporating it into policy or service delivery.

3. There is a basic plan for responding to citizen feedback, but this may lack details or clear procedures.

While there may be an individual or team reviewing the feedback, the processes of doing so may not be fully developed.

4. There is a well-defined plan in place, with clear procedures for collecting, analysing, and responding to citizen input.

There are specific timelines and methods for incorporating feedback, although wider plans may lack the flexibility to fully adapt to citizen's feedback if needed.

5. Citizen feedback is fully integrated into the local authority's strategic planning around climate change and Net Zero.

The plan is comprehensive, covering feedback collection, implementation, and evaluation. There is a strong and transparent feedback loop between citizen input and local authority actions.

Section E:

Transparency, equity, and inclusion

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

How will your planned citizen engagement events ensure clarity and transparency with participants?
↓ Please answer below.

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

Has the LA considered and implemented measures to ensure engagement is accessible and inclusive for those voices that are heard less often?	
↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority	
Yes: The local authority has planned, or executed, measures to ensure they hear from diverse groups and those particularly impacted by climate change. Engagement materials and events have been designed with accessibility and inclusion in mind, and allowing for a variety of accommodations to meet different needs.	
Work in progress: The local authority has begun to consider and implement some measures to improve accessibility and inclusion, but the process is not yet complete or are not yet implemented.	
No: The local authority has not yet considered specific measures to ensure accessibility and inclusion for diverse groups.	
Please add any comments on this section.	
Is there any action to be taken?	

Section F:

Adequate time and resources for engagement

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

At present, have sufficient resources (time, money, and technology) been dedicated to engagement?	
↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority	
1: Current resources have inadequate resource allocated e.g. lack of dedicated staff time, limited budget, and no training or upskilling occurring.	
2. Some resources are available, but sufficient. Staff have some time but this is limited, budgets are tight, and training and upskilling opportunities are not yet provided.	
3. Resources are sufficient for undertaking some engagement activities, but limitations exist. Staff time is allocated, but may be stretched. Basic training/ upskilling opportunities may be available but are not comprehensive.	
4. Resources are sufficient to support a range of engagement activities, with dedicated staff time, and budgets that allow for necessary expenses. Regular training and upskilling opportunities are provided to enhance staff expertise and ensure best practice is followed.	
5. Citizen engagement is fully resourced. Dedicated staff have ample time, with sufficient budgets for planned activities and there is ongoing training and upskilling. Resources are allocated for evaluation and continuous improvement of engagement processes.	

Please add any comments on this section.

Is there any action to be taken?

Section F:

Adequate time and resources for engagement

[Only answer if the LA has some plans or intentions for citizen engagement].

<p>Do you have support structures in place, like resource libraries, networks, and communities of practice, to support citizen engagement?</p> <p><i>This could be resources developed by the LA itself, or can be support structures created externally that staff in the LA have access to.</i></p>	
<p>↓ Please tick the statement that best applies to your local authority</p>	
<p>Yes: Comprehensive support structures are in place and actively utilised. There is a well-maintained resource library with relevant materials and tools, as well as a robust network facilitating connections and information sharing.</p>	
<p>Work in progress: Support structures are being developed, which may involve initial discussions about what is needed and what this resource library and networks should look like.</p>	
<p>No: Support structures do not yet exist, and there is limited plan to develop such resources.</p>	
<p><i>Please add any comments on this section.</i></p>	
<p><i>Is there any action to be taken?</i></p>	



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