Promoting adaptation to changing coasts

Work Package T.2.4.1: Methodology for Engagement and Involvement of End Users and Key Stakeholders in Coastal Climate Adaptation Schemes

Report 2: Stakeholder Interviews, Resident Workshops, and Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change

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Further copies of this report are available here: Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (pacco-interreg.com)

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Contents

Foreword

The Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo) project is a cross-border initiative which is financially supported by the INTERREG VA France (Channel) England programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The broad aim of PACCo is to demonstrate that it is possible to work with stakeholders in estuarine regions to deliver a range of benefits for people and the environment by adapting pre-emptively to climate change. It has a total value of €27.2m, with €18.8m coming from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The project focuses on two pilot sites: the Lower Otter Valley, East Devon, England and the Saâne Valley in Normandy, France.

For more information see: Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (pacco-interreg.com)

i. Report Background

The University of Exeter and Lisode Consultancy were commissioned by the PACCo project to independently undertake a research project, to report back to the PACCo project for the delivery of Work Package T.2.4.1.

The aim of the work package is to develop a methodology for the engagement of end users and key stakeholders in coastal climate adaptation projects, learning from the experiences of the PACCo demonstration projects.

To achieve this aim, the team have undertaken the following research activities for both the Lower Otter Restoration Project and the Saâne Territorial Project:

1. Description and evaluation of the engagement processes undertaken, based upon historical documentation.
2. Workshops with community residents.
3. Interviews with project partners and stakeholders.

Ultimately, the final model for the engagement of end users and key stakeholders in future coastal adaptation projects has been developed by drawing upon the outcomes of these research exercises as a collective. Thus, this has enabled the integration of perspectives from the community, project partners and stakeholders, and historical records into the work package output.

The results have been presented in two companion reports, which should be treated as one whole.

In the first report, the approach towards and outcomes of the evaluation of historical documentation was outlined, along with evidenced descriptions of those processes in chronological order.

This second report details the contributions of stakeholders and residents from the interview and workshop activities, then draws together all findings into the final model for engagement.

ii. Introduction

This report is the second of two companion reports, which should be treated as one whole. The collective body of research reported in these pages seeks to draw learning from a package of research methods, ultimately leading towards the development of a Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change.

As is described in Section ii of the first report, the research team have taken a social learning approach towards this work. This is one which seeks to overcome any 'gaps' there might be between the knowledges of scientists/practitioners and the wider public, with a process that is inclusive of different voices and types of knowledge (Barr & Woodley, 2019; Barr, 2017; Owens, 2000).

In this introduction we provide a brief reminder of the first report, before outlining the aims of the second. The different research approaches are reflected within the division of these two reports; the first report gives an evidenced outline and evaluation of the engagement process undertaken at each PACCo project site(learning from the documentary record), whereas this second report gives voice to stakeholder representatives and local communities and shares their knowledge and perceptions.

This second report then concludes with presentation of the final Model and its component parts. These include five theoretical principles to achieve in the optimal approach to engagement, and an appreciation of elements that relate to engagement as a process through time. There are also challenges and limitations identified that will constrain the ability to achieve the optimal approach to engagement.

ii.1. Report 1: Reminder

The first report from this package provides a detailed and evidenced account of the engagement activities that were undertaken during the development of the Lower Otter Restoration Project and Saâne Territorial Project, in chronological order (Sections 1.1 and 2.1 of the first report, respectively). We then undertook an independent evaluation of the two approaches against four criteria, drawn in an adapted form from Zimmermann et al, 2014.

Whilst we recommend reading the first report for detailed understanding of the evaluation approach and findings, a summary of its conclusions is given in Table 1. (The documentary evaluation method is detailed in Section iii of the first report, followed by findings in Sections 1.2 and 2.2.

Also included in Section 1.3 of the first report were findings of a thematic analysis of public responses to the planning application for the Lower Otter Restoration Project. This identified key themes in the reasons given by the public for supporting or opposing the scheme's proposals during the planning consultation process. This additional analysis was only possible for the Lower Otter Restoration Project and not for the Saâne Territorial Project as different legal and regulatory frameworks apply.

Table 1. Summary of documentary evaluation conclusions (see first report for details).

Criterion (Adapted criteria from Zimmermann et al, 2014)	Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
Credibility of Records: Descriptive understanding of documents provided and their level of comprehensiveness.	147 documents provide a credible and transparent account of engagement undertaken until point of planning approval.	135 documents accurately and transparently reflect on the engagement process during development.
Integration: Involvement of various political and administrative levels in the process.	High level of integration, with involvement of local level authorities, statutory agencies, and national bodies. This includes engagement with Local Parish Councils and their representation on the Stakeholder Group from its first meeting.	High level of integration, with involvement of local level authorities and agencies, decentralised agencies, and community associations.
Legitimacy: Inclusion of stakeholders and end users, and consideration of their interests or views.	Legitimacy was limited in the early stages, but increased from 2016 with specialist resource and efforts to involve publics.	Public events from 2015 onward and involvement of community associations contributed to project legitimacy, but there may be opportunities to increase legitimacy with further involvement of local citizens.
Creativity: Level to which documented outcomes or plans depart from previous ways of thinking for future development.	There are examples of creativity in response to different perspectives, but final plans remained largely consistent with early visions for the project.	There is evidence of creativity where thinking shifted away from an earlier proposal for a new project with a different mindset, encompassing broader objectives.
Further Critical Reflection: Opportunity to researchers to critically reflect on other elements.	- Stakeholder/public engagement can be challenging at any stage, but it may be more challenging at later stages. It is not "too late" to improve opportunities for knowledge sharing and input. - COVID-19 circumstances restricted the ability to hold planned in-person events. There may have been opportunities for enhanced digital engagement.	---

Criterion (Adapted criteria from Zimmermann et al, 2014)	Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
	- Landscape change can be emotive. We encourage sensitive and compassionate discussion during project development.	

ii.2. Report 2: Aims

With the process of engagement in the two projects having been evidenced in the first report, there are two primary aims of this second report.

ii.2.1. To learn from stakeholder and resident experiences

The first aim of this report is to give voice to people who have been involved in the process or live in the vicinity. The research detailed within these pages was designed as an opportunity for the various actors to share their experiences in depth, and for us as researchers to understand how they viewed the engagement process. This involved a package of workshops with local residents, and interviews with stakeholder representatives (methods are outlined in Section iii).

In this report, we provide an evidenced outline of participant perspectives as they were shared with us through these research activities, culminating in transferable learning points from their perceptions and viewpoints, for future projects to apply within their approach to engagement.

ii.2.2. To present a Model for Engagement in future projects

This report draws upon the findings from all the research that has been completed (in *both* companion reports) to inform the development of the resulting Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change.

This final model was agreed between members of the research team (from both the University of Exeter and Lisode Consultancy), integrating together the positive learning outcomes that has resulted from the research experiences from both the Lower Otter Restoration Project and Saâne Territorial Project.

We present a visual representation of the Model and describe its component parts (Section 6). This includes five theoretical principles to meet in the optimal approach to engagement and an appreciation of aspects of engagement that relate to its process through time. There is also a recognition from participant contributions of external influences that will constrain the ability for the optimal approach to engagement to be met (Section 6.5).

Above all, the Model seeks to encourage democratised approaches to engagement that are inclusive of different perspectives and knowledges from both stakeholders and local communities.

iii. Methods: Workshops and Interviews

Here we describe the approaches taken for the workshops and interviews. These were conducted in accordance with the ethical procedure detailed in v. Study Ethics. Workshops and interviews took place between February and September 2022.

iii.1. Workshops

Workshops were intended as an opportunity for residents and the wider community to contribute toward the research. The workshops sought to bring together a group of people with different knowledges and experience. The group membership did not seek to be statistically representative of the wider population, but to instead represent a range of different views and give opportunity for group members to learn from those of different backgrounds. Initial target size for the group relevant to each project was 12-20 people. (Summaries of participants are given in Sections 1.2 and 3.2).

To ensure the groups represented a range of voices, a short online survey was initially developed for individuals to express their interest in taking part. Questions (Appendix 1) asked about: background details; familiarity with and use of the local landscape; current views on the Lower Otter Restoration Project / Saâne Territorial Project; contact details; and logistical questions to help with workshop planning. The survey was advertised with a general invitation for residents in the Lower Otter and Saâne Valley areas. This was issued in three ways, which included both online and offline methods to provide opportunity for both digital and non-digital users to participate:

- A press release written by the research team, targeted towards local press and parish newsletters/magazines.
- A poster erected around the area, such as along local footpaths or in public display boards (for example, see Figures 1 and 2).
- Advertisement in local community Facebook groups and other social media platforms.

In line with the qualitative research methodology adopted, it is important to note that the resultant participant group is to some degree self-selected, consisting of individuals who may have particular interests, biases, or agendas. Accordingly the group did not form a statistically representative sample of the wider demographic of the local area. However, the aim of these workshops was to develop qualitatively rich and deep understandings of people's experiences, and to enable them to listen to and learn from one other in the process of generating knowledge (Barr & Woodley, 2019; Pahl-Wostl, 2006). Hence, the recruitment exercise sought to bring together a group of individuals from different backgrounds, who could bring different perspectives to the table and work towards a collective research output. Overall, this approach was designed to understand the complexity of *how* individual people experienced and articulated their understanding of the engagement *process* with the

projects, rather than seeking to quantitatively represent all views in the local area. Comments expressed therefore need to be interpreted within this context, as very different views and experiences to those articulated here may exist within the wider community. (Quantitative surveys of attitudes towards LORP and PTS are being undertaken by other contracted parties as part of PACCo work packages, with reports to come; these will be available at https://www.pacco-interreg.com/downloads/). The purpose of the research here is not to evaluate, challenge, judge, or ascertain the legitimacy of one view over another. All experiences have been uncritically recorded without seeking to understand the personal or political contexts that might impact on these. As such, this research method does not attempt to validate what actions and interactions may or may not have occurred during the engagement process. Nor does it attempt to arrive at a universal truth regarding the strengths and failings in the engagement process; rather, the research aimed to collectively generate recommendations from participants' respective views, experiences, and knowledge to inform future project engagement processes. (For evidenced outlines of the engagement processes undertaken for the PACCo projects and independent evaluations thereof, see Report 1).

In England, the survey was received positively with a good number of expressions of interest received (see Section 1.2). Invitations with research information forms (Appendix 2) were then issued to individuals who had expressed interest and made available at the first workshop. During the participant recruitment phase in France however, the facilitator received phone calls from citizens with questions about the project. In particular, these sought to clarify the purpose of the workshops and understand who was organising them (in this case, Lisode Consultancy). The facilitator therefore needed to adapt and focused on responding to enquiries to build trust, rather than encouraging completion of the questionnaire. Whilst this means less background information on individuals is known for this group, the adapted recruitment method led to a high number of attendees at the first session. (Further discussion was required in the first session to build trust with participants – see Section 3.3.1 for details).

A series of three workshops was held at each site, with the same group of residents for each site invited to attend all three. A broad agenda for the first workshop applied to the two project sites (Appendix 3), but this was not fixed as it was intended for participants to lead the direction of and discussions within these sessions, with the facilitators enabling focus on engagement within the development of their local project. The agenda was a guide only. Participants were asked what *they* would like to discuss, with workshops planned to respond to these ideas.

Each set of workshops worked towards recommendations to incorporate into the final model. Although they worked towards the same outcome, the workshop format differed between sites within and following the first session, in response to participant questions, contributions and cultural contexts. Where the workshops findings are reported in Sections 1 and 3, an outline of workshops in each respective setting is provided. Matters to include in this report were agreed with each group, which represent the perspectives and understanding of *participating residents* only.

Participants could also bring resources of their own that they would like to contribute or share with the group. These included, for example: photographs, historical documents, artwork, and correspondence. These enabled participants to share knowledge in ways that were meaningful for them, which may not have been possible with discussion alone. A sample of these resources is included within the report where they illustrate and support the findings.

Figure 1. Poster advertisements for LORP Resident Workshops displayed on public footpaths.

Figure 2. Poster advertisement for the Saâne Territorial Project (PTS) Resident Workshops.

iii.2. Interviews

Interviews were undertaken with representatives of key stakeholder groups, to learn from their experiences and perceptions of the engagement process that had been undertaken at each pilot site.

Interviews were targeted towards project leads, representatives of stakeholder groups that had been involved in the development process, or representatives of other key groups that had been identified through the documentary evaluation (in the first report of this work package). The initial invitation list was developed by the researchers, with further suggestions made by project delivery partners (East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust and Conservatoire du littoral). A summary of those who responded at each pilot site is given in Sections 2.2 and 3.2, respectively.

Invitations written by the research team were distributed on their behalf by the project delivery partners with details of the research information (Appendix 4). This was to prevent the sharing of personal contact details without prior individual permissions, so individuals were invited to contact the research team directly if interested in taking part. A reminder was issued after approximately two weeks. Participation was an individual choice so individuals were not required to take part; they could reject an invitation without having to give a reason (see v. Study Ethics).

An initial set of interview questions was developed for the interviewer to ensure adequate coverage of the topic (see Appendix 5). However, the questions were not fixed, and interviews were flexible in format to enable participants to take a lead on discussion and for new areas of interest to be explored in further detail. Interviews ranged between 30 and 90 minutes.

With participant permission, interviews were audio recorded for transcription and analysis. Key themes were identified with an inductive analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This involved first openly coding data by identifying features in the text, then rearranging codes into context with one another and then subjecting the data to a round of axial coding (Cope & Kurtz, 2016). This resulted in the generation of themes in a data-driven process, thereby the findings are strongly associated with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

iv. Clarification on the Presentation of Participant Research Findings

Through Sections 1-4, findings from the workshops and interviews are presented, with Sections 1 and 2 focused on LORP, and Sections 3 and 4 focused on PTS.

Each section will begin with a 'Summary of Outcomes'. These summarise the primary research output from these exercises; the lessons for engagement processes identified from participant contributions that are transferable to other contexts. Hence, it is these recommendations that have been drawn on into the Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change (presented in Section 6), alongside the recognition of constraints on the ability to meet the optimal approach to engagement.

The remainder of each interview or workshop section then presents the perceptions and experiences of research participants, demonstrating how the transferable lessons were identified. These passages outline participants' points of view and discussions as they were shared with the research team. In line with the qualitative methodology adopted, it is important to note that each participant's understanding has been informed by their background, personal values, level of involvement in PACCo projects, and their own individual or organisational biases and objectives. As such, views reported reflect the participants' experiences, knowledge, understanding and motivations. This may mean there is disagreement between participants in their understanding of the 'version of events' in the engagement process.

These are all viewpoints of participants who have committed and engaged with a process, which we encourage to be read with respect for their contributions. The role of the researchers here is to present participant experiences as they articulated them, and to enable listening and understanding of different perspectives between group members, whilst maintaining a focus on identifying transferable points of learning for coastal adaptation engagement *processes.*

Individual experiences may or may not therefore align with another participant's understanding of context, engagement events, project aims, or motives behind actions. Neither do they necessarily represent the view of the wider community. It is not the role of the research team to identify which version of events is 'correct'; the researchers' role is to enable all voices in a group to be heard, to facilitate understanding of different types of knowledge, and through doing so, to identify points of learning for engagement processes in coastal adaptation and landscape change projects.

References are made throughout towards specific events in the PACCo projects' engagement processes. In the first report, a detailed and evidenced account of these has already been given, so these are not detailed again in this report as this is a *continuation* of the work package. A short timeline of events is given in Table 2, but for a detailed and evidenced account of the engagement process at both sites (from points of conception through to planning approval), we strongly refer the reader to the first report of the work package.

Table 2. Summary of headline engagement events in development of the two PACCo projects (see Report 1 for detailed and evidenced accounts).

Year	Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP)	Saâne Territorial Project (PTS)
Pre-2012	2009, 'Haycock Report' commissioned by Clinton Devon Estates, on current drainage and flood management in Lower Otter.	2003-2010, pre-PTS proposal made with hydrological focus; the 're-estuarisation' project. Proposal did not proceed.
2012		'Living with a Changing Coast' (LiCCo) project takes over, under impetus of Conservatoire du littoral. First LiCCo stakeholder workshop.
2013	First meeting of Stakeholder Group. Negotiations open with Cricket Club. First release of information in local association's newsletter.	Copil (steering Committee) and Cotech (technical Committee) set up. Second LiCCo stakeholder workshop.
2014	First public events to share ideas at locations in local area, with some reaction regarding South Farm Road. Includes engagement at Local Parish Council meetings, consultations with specialist groups (e.g. Parish Paths Partnership), and talks to local interest groups.	Discussion of potential scenarios in LiCCo workshop.
2015	Event held for residents of Granary Lane. Continuation of engagement with interest groups (including East Devon AONB) and the holding of further local events. Continuation of direct engagement with Local Parish Councils.	Transition to PTS. Local user association created to gain access to information on the project. Cotech group expands to include consultants. Public meeting held. Workshop with local authorities and study group.
2016	Extension of Stakeholder Group to include more resident representatives, including from South Farm and Granary Lane. First funding attempt made. Engagement with local primary and secondary schools begins.	Workshop at which primary revised scenario is presented to the group for comment.
2017	Series of 'Options Appraisal' events, where the public were invited to ask questions and vote for their preferred option from a choice of four. Initiation of publicised public tours to discuss issues. Facilitated stakeholder visit to Seaton Wetlands.	
2018	Period of technical assessments.	Increase in number of organisational representatives in Cotech and Copil.

Year	Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP)	Saâne Territorial Project (PTS)
2019	Application for PACCo funding.	Application for PACCo funding.
2020	Formal planning application lodged with local authority and opened for public comment, in accordance with UK planning regulations.	
2021	Planning Approval granted.	

v. Study Ethics

The research presented in these two reports has been approved by the University of Exeter Geography Department's Ethics Committee.

This second report outlines research activities that generated new data from participants, in both the workshops and interviews. The following were key ethical considerations for this project:

- All participants were provided with research information prior to taking part and asked to give written consent to indicate they had read and agreed to these terms. This included details about project aims and who was organising and funding this study. (Examples from the Lower Otter Restoration Project are given in Appendix 2 and Appendix 4; the same terms applied between sites).
- Participation was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any time.
- For the purposes of analysis only, participants were asked to give consent for interviews or workshops to be audio recorded. They were informed that recordings would not be shared publicly and would be permanently deleted upon completion of the project.
- Data were stored on a secure site, hosted by the University of Exeter. Dr Auster and Prof. Barr were site administrators and access was only granted to the named authors of this report.
- To enable time for publication in an academic journal - as referenced in the tender application for this project – the data will be held by the named researchers until December 2024, at which point the secure site will be deactivated. (This date can be brought forward if publication is completed sooner).
- We have sought to anonymise participants as far as possible. No personal data has been disclosed within this report. No real names have been given and participants have been assigned fictional pseudonyms.
- Workshop participants were additionally informed that, as the study took part in a specific place with other local people, their participation was likely to become more widely known. We asked workshop participants to agree to confidentiality in the consent form, meaning no one should identify another's participation or discuss what individual people said beyond the group without their individual consent.
- The report includes contributions that some residents brought to such as photos or artwork. A subset is included in this report. Permissions were sought from the original creators (which were not necessarily the participants themselves) for the inclusion of these pieces within this report. Credits have been given in reflection of those individuals' choices.
- Research activities began in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interview participants could choose to be interviewed online. Workshops took place in person in reflection of preferences expressed in the recruitment questionnaire. Masks and hand sanitiser were available for use.

1. Lower Otter Restoration Project: Resident Workshops

In this section we outline the discussion that took place in the workshops with residents in England.

1.1 Summary of Outcomes

In the workshops, participants demonstrated that they cared deeply about their local landscape. They shared their varying knowledges of and associations with the Lower Otter valley and discussed experiences of community engagement during the development stages of the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

The following pages provide an evidenced overview of workshop discussion. We detail participant experiences and views through four overarching engagement-related themes that were identified: Empowerment; Trust; Accessibility of information; Uncertainties.

Although participants held various opinions, there was consensus that the topic was emotive. A strength of feeling could be felt in the room, yet participants contributed constructively in respectful dialogue, taking time to listen to each other's experiences and views irrespective of whether or not they were in agreement with their own.

The participants demonstrated they were ready to engage in a process and co-produced suggestions of how similar projects could further involve and empower local communities when developing proposals for landscape change in future.

In overall reflection of the workshop findings, teams engaging with communities for similar schemes will need to have sufficient knowledge, competence and expertise to work with those publics and establish trusted relationships. We recommend that listening is the primary modus operandi, and the views of the community should be regularly reflected back to demonstrate that project partners have understood and appreciated community opinions. This will require a willingness and ability to situate the project partners' own knowledge and expertise alongside (not above) that of communities, through being able to convey and explain the approach in an accessible way. This may require investment in training or the recruitment of an independent professional facilitator, but above all, a dialogue should be entered with communities on an equal basis, displaying commitment to understanding and incorporating their knowledge and opinions.

Specific learnings from the workshops can be summarised thus:

To empower local communities…

• Engage communities from the start about discussing what 'the problem' is and how to understand it

• Understand 'the problem' through knowledge from the community, alongside scientific understandings

• Ensure there is representation of different demographics, including those who may find it hard to engage in standard ways.

• Invite all groups most likely to be affected (including those living within the immediate proximity).

• Discuss both the potential benefits of a scheme and the potential challenges.

• Be open to exploring alternative solutions raised by community members, potentially leading to changes in design.

• To overcome complacency in a community before a proposal is formally made, make information available and seek to get people interested. Community representatives could help disseminate information within their community subsets.

• Consider how to continue empowering communities in long-term future, post-development. (e.g. volunteer opportunities or recording local experiences).

To build or maintain trust between partners and community members…

• Be transparent, honest, and open throughout about motivations and the uncertainties involved.

• Make information available and clear so the community can understand a project, its motivations, what assessments have been conducted, and why decisions have been made.

• Community empowerment and accessible information are likely to contribute towards increased trust levels.

To ensure information is accessible…

• Involve engagement specialists from an early stage in the project, to facilitate two-way transfer of information and understanding.

• Be clear and refrain from using technical language that the public may be unfamiliar with where possible.

• Share information in multiple mediums - both online and offline.

• Invest in creative or visual aids that can help people understand or visualise what can be complex proposals. (e.g. physical models, clear maps, computer visualisations).

To instil confidence when uncertainties remain…

• Have a clear contact point and be responsive to enquiries.

• Provide opportunities for direct engagement with modelling specialists for residents who may be impacted to explore and understand risk scenarios.

• Recognise differing views within communities of environmental risk (e.g. posed by climate change or flooding) first with discussion and education about the problem, before introducing ideas for the solution.

1.2. Participants

Twenty-two expressions of interest were received through the pre-workshop survey. All who expressed interest were invited to attend the workshops and were included within related email communications.

50% of those who expressed interest were supportive of the Lower Otter Restoration Project, and 36% were opposed. One individual indicated they had a neutral view or no opinion, and one was unsure. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Participant levels of support or opposition to LORP.
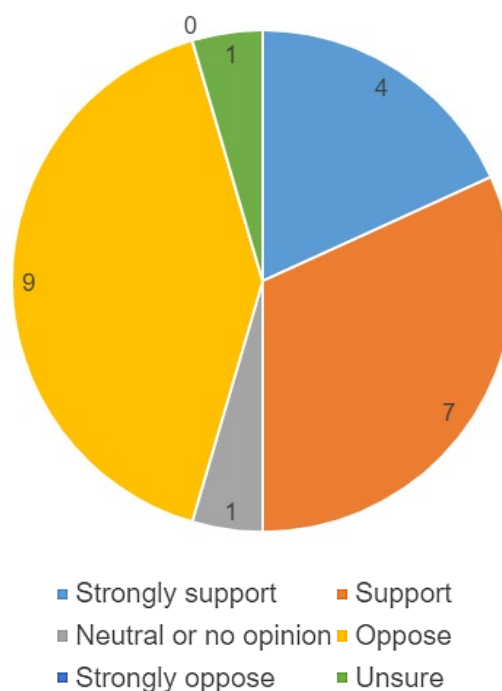
On the following page, a summary of participant details is given in Table 3, with participant identities protected through the use of fictional pseudonyms.

A twenty-third participant is included in this table as the partner of one of the individuals who had submitted an expression of interest also attended the first workshop. Having read the research information document and given their own written consent, they contributed to the discussions and were included in email communications thereafter.

15 participants attended the first workshop, 12 attended the second, and 15 attended the final session.

Table 3. Summary of participants. Names given are fictional pseudonyms to protect participant identities.

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Resident in Lower Otter Valley	Work in Lower Otter Valley
Harry Nielsen	Male	Prefer not to say	Yes	Yes
Ben Elliott	Male	Prefer not to say	Yes	No
Umar Quinn	Male	55-64	Yes	No
Lina Moorhouse	Female	35-44	No	Yes
Nina Taylor	Female	65 or Over	Yes	Yes
Ned Chappell	Male	65 or Over	Yes	Yes
Finley Francis	Male	65 or Over	Yes	No
Charles Cooper	Male	35-44	Yes	No
Eric Cadwell	Male	45-54	Yes	No
Christian Everard	Male	45-54	Yes	No
Quentin Harris	Male	65 or Over	Yes	Yes

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Resident in Lower Otter Valley	Work in Lower Otter Valley
Kyle Irwin	Male	45-54	Yes	Yes
Sean Cerley	Male	Prefer not to say	Yes	No
John Tate	Male	No answer	Yes	No
Noah Ulicsni	Male	55-64	Yes	Yes
Earl Rogers	Male	55-64	Yes	Yes
Nora MacConnell	Female	45-54	Yes	No
James Calvert	Male	65 or Over	Yes	No
Lisa Chase	Female	65 or Over	Yes	No
Corey Xanthos	Male	65 or Over	Yes	No
Simon Campbell	Male	55-64	Yes	Yes
Nicola Ingram	Female	45-54	Yes	Yes
Madelyn Davis	Female	Unspecified	Yes	Unspecified

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how they use the area around the Lower Otter by selecting from a list of options. Figure 4 provides an overview of responses. The most common uses were for walking, viewing wildlife, peace and quiet, and dog-walking. Seven individuals selected 'Other', specified as: walking; people watching; drawing and painting; scuba diving off Budleigh beach; woodland management and voluntary fuel poverty delivery; to teach environmental education; or as a local resident.

Figure 4. LORP workshop participants' use of the area around the Lower Otter.
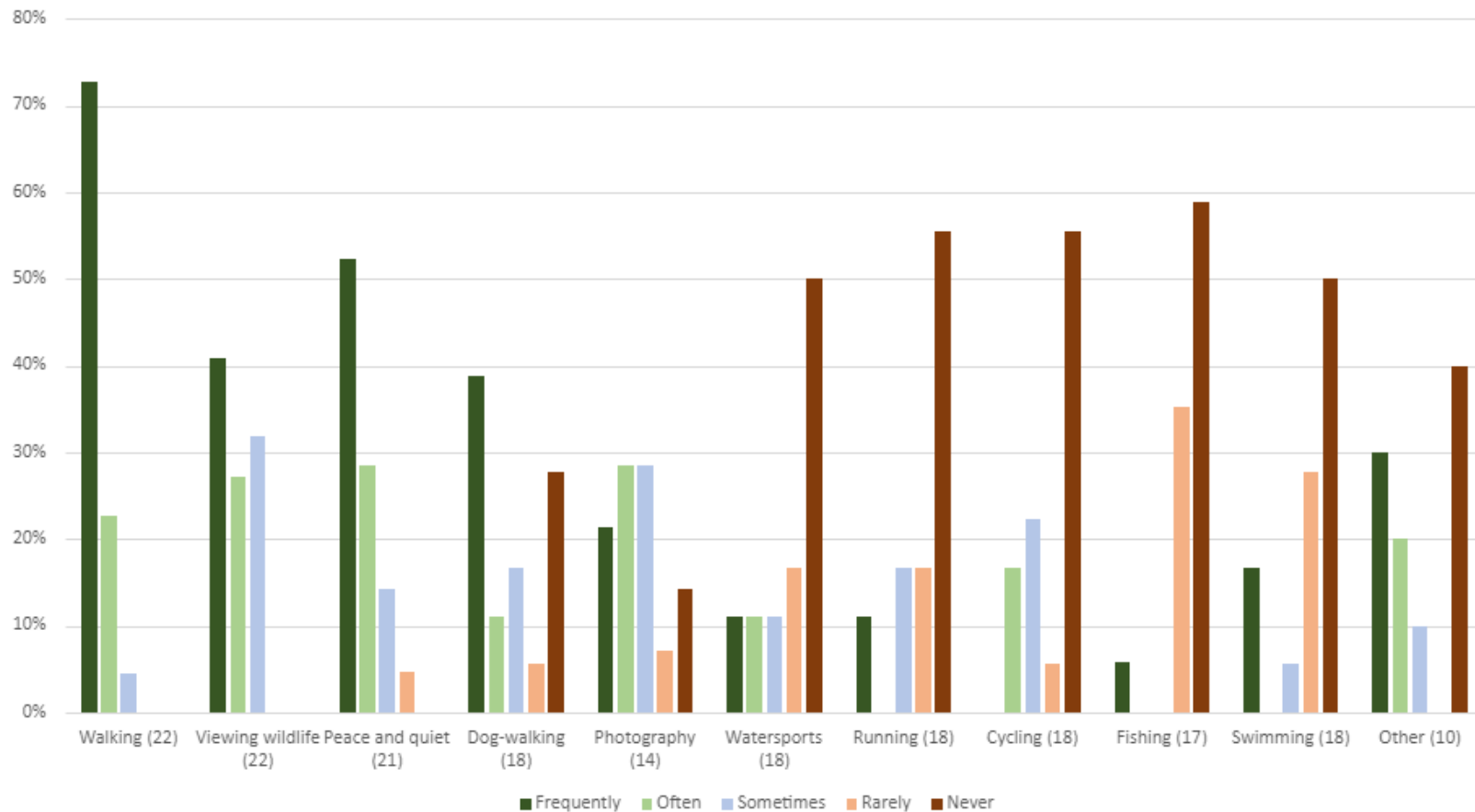
1.3. Workshop Outline

As is referenced in the Methods (Section iii.1), the first workshop was focused on understanding participant backgrounds and associations with the local landscape; the outline for the session is given in Appendix 3.

At the end of the first and second sessions, participants were asked what they would like to discuss at the next. Their suggestions and ideas then formed the basis for subsequent discussions. To achieve this, participants suggested that a proposed outline for the next meeting (drawing in their suggestions) should be circulated among the group for them to comment on ahead of coming back together. This process was then followed for the second and third workshops. The outlines as circulated are given in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7, respectively.

At the end of the second session, participants asked the researchers to bring a summary of themes identified from the discussions for the group to discuss at the final meeting. Hence, key themes were identified in the data using an inductive analysis procedure (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The data were first openly coded to identify features in the text. Similarities or differences in the codes were then reviewed, and codes rearranged into context with one another. Themes identified were then followed in a round of axial coding (Cope & Kurtz, 2016). This data-driven process results in themes that are strongly linked to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A provisional report was then shared with the group – which was an earlier version of what is here presented. In the third workshop, participant feedback and further discussion was incorporated through revision into the final, co-created text which is presented in Section 1.4.

1.4. Discussion of Findings

The four identified themes will here be discussed in turn, outlining the workshop discussion and experiences of the group, and suggestions made by participants for potential future projects to consider.

As described in Section iv, these are the views of real people, which we encourage to be read with respect for their opinions. This discussion represents the views, knowledges and suggestions made by participants, drawing on their personal backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Opinions and understandings expressed here are those of participants only and may not necessarily represent those of the wider community; the role of the researchers is to interpret and articulate these, and not to make a judgement on them. Neither is the role of the researchers to make a judgement on the project engagement process and criticism is NOT implied. Engagement recommendations expressed are those for an ideal project.

Please note: Several participants contributed resources at the workshops, such as paintings, photographs, historical documents, and correspondence. A sample of

these are presented within this document. They may not have been originally produced by participants, but all are reproduced with the permission of the creators.

1.4.1. Theme 1: Empowerment

1.4.1.1. Opportunities for community voice

There was a strong sense that local communities living in the vicinity of a proposed project should have a voice during the development stages, particularly those who may be most directly affected by a proposed project.

In this instance, workshop participants felt that there had been limited opportunity for the community to have input during LORP development. (An overview of all engagement listed in chronological order can be found in Report 1, with a summary reminder provided in Section ii.i of this report).

There was recognition that there had been some engagement effort, with some of the participants having attended an in-person Options Appraisal event or an online meeting arranged by Budleigh Salterton Town Council. However, group members perceived these events to primarily be to tell the community about a single-option proposal which participants felt was presented as a 'done deal', rather than as an opportunity for the community to have meaningful input that could lead to changes in design. This was demonstrated by the following exchange between two participants:

> - "The objective hasn't been to find out what people want, it's to make sure that they want what - " (John) - "They've been told." (Noah) - "- they've been told." (John)

Some participants reported that the first time they heard about the scheme was when the application for planning permission had been made, by which time they felt it was 'too late' to be able to comment in a manner which they felt would have influence in the project design. This was thought to have led to emotive reactions within the community which may have been avoidable had there been earlier opportunity for input.

> "it strikes me that emotions and feelings aren't taken into account in any of this process and when you see the reactions […] emotions and feelings have run pretty high in my view. […] if the start of the process had been completely different, and had been about, let's engage with a group of people, randomly selected or somehow brought together […] I think the whole development could have then been handled much more sensitively, but creatively, drawing on the community, drawing on all these different experiences and actually sharing it, sharing ideas" (Ned)

> "Those most affected should have been engaged right at the beginning. […] Before it was a done deal and they had no chance." (John)

A subset of participants felt the community representation on the stakeholder group had been selective and not included all of the most affected groups. This led to

feelings of exclusion, and questions about whether the proposers wanted to avoid negative comments.

> "I've been looking at the Stakeholder Group's reports from the very first one, and in the very first one Granary Lane were represented, South Farm residents were represented and they produced a paper that was appended to the minutes that says "Frogmore Road is at risk of tidal flooding," and we weren't asked, nobody came near us" (John)

These factors led to feelings of disempowerment and a perception that the views of 'experts' were prioritised over those of the local community, who were not being listened to. This had caused frustration as participants felt they had alternative knowledge that would have been valuable if there had been opportunity to contribute.

> "I can't judge whether this project is value for money, but I can contribute other things about the environment, about the aesthetics, about the atmosphere of the place. […] So there are ways that the non-expert can contribute." (Ned)

The workshop participants said they would have liked to contribute their knowledge and for it to be considered from the outset. These knowledges were shaped by their experiences and values in the Lower Otter valley. For example, there were values placed upon aesthetics of the valley (as represented by a local artist in Figure 5), the wildlife that existed within it, or the recreational opportunities that a valley with public access could provide.

> "we've got a 9-year-old and a 6-year-old. We're always down there, they love looking at the birds and the other wildlife that we see. There's a woodpecker that frequents the trees at the back of our houses, yes. Yes, it's just such a valuable resource to have, isn't it? It really is." (Eric)

> "We get occasional song thrushes and I can just stop and listen, 10, 15, 20 minutes, it's beautiful." (Simon)

> "our whole way of life is kind of embedded with the river" (Nicola)

Figure 5. Painting by a local resident of the Lower Otter valley prior to the LORP works. (Credit: Martyn Brown)

The scheme was viewed by the group as a '*fait accomplis*', and as something that had been imposed upon the community. The change in the valley was therefore associated with a sense of loss where it interacted with the factors participants placed value on or were emotionally attached to, a perception that their loss had not been recognised during development.

> "When I supported the overall scheme, and still do as an all over thing. But it's been the way that it's been done has been utterly ruthless, with no sensitivity whatsoever and utter destruction. […] There was a lot lost, and I think sometimes [sigh] I don't know if it was properly acknowledged. Sometimes it felt like 'Yes, but what you're going to get is going to be so much more'."
> (Nina)

The participant here quoted uses photography to capture features of the Lower Otter valley and has been documenting the change over time. They valued the trees and the wildlife in the Lower Otter valley and felt that the clearance works were taking place in a rapid and destructive manner. The two images presented in Figure 6 were taken by another local resident of the same spot on the River Otter to demonstrate the loss of habitat as they view it (and are reproduced here with their permission).

Figure 6. Photos taken by a local resident documenting the same spot in the valley prior to (left) and after (right) the clearance of vegetation as part of the LORP works. (Credit: Mo Sandford)

These feelings were somewhat influenced by a view that the project was being pushed by external factors (e.g. the funding deadline), and a perception that the project partners were led by powerful interests. A few participants had knowledge of a previous proposal that did not proceed, which had influenced this sense of imposition. It was reported that, to meet a legal requirement to provide compensatory habitat for flood defence works in the nearby catchment of the River Exe, the Environment Agency had proposed a compensatory habitat scheme in the River Clyst. In the participants' understanding of events, this was not accepted by the landowners and, following a locally driven campaign, the Environment Agency turned their attention to the Lower Otter valley where there was a 'powerful supporter' in Clinton Devon Estates.

> "it should be mentioned that prior to this happening here, the Save the Clyst campaign was launched […] because the Environment Agency were intending to do what they're doing here, to the River Clyst […] and so the Environment Agency latched on to us next. […] And the difference here has been Clinton Devon actually wants this, whereas the landowners around the Clyst didn't, and that's been critical a factor. And the Environment agency have just piled into us here because also we had no resistance. We had no organised group of people who were powerful people" (Nina)

Feelings of imposition and powerlessness were then again felt during the formal planning application process (which took place in accordance with UK regulations), where participants reported that there had been several objections from the local community, followed by a series of letters of support from pro-bird groups, many of whom were not resident in the local area.

"somebody emailed in from New Zealand, saying 'I'd love to come over and look at that, I'm all for it.' You think, well wait a minute, I live here and nobody's really given me the opportunity to put in my two cents' worth." (James)

This said, there was nonetheless some appetite to discuss and understand the potential benefits of such a scheme alongside potential challenges and losses.

"[Construction and destruction] do work together. So I think if you only talk about destruction, you are really limiting to any positive outcomes." (Madelyn)

To empower communities in the development process, group members recommended that communities - particularly those who would be most affected - should be engaged with early in the process. They suggested this should be representative of the different demographics in the community, discuss both potential benefits and challenges, and include the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and views in a manner which could lead to exploration of alternatives or changes in design if necessary.

1.4.1.2. Empower into the future

At various points through the workshops, participants raised comments or questions about future management of the Lower Otter valley, once LORP project works have been completed.

"How are we going to go forward? Who is taking control of that? Who's going to manage the estuary going forward, and is there any budget to do that? And all the things that were coming out then about involving young people and that sort of thing, how is all that going to happen? What are we likely to see over the next few years?" (Sean)

Participants expressed the wish for there to be opportunities for community empowerment in future discussions about the valley with some suggestions given as to how local people this might be achieved. For example, inviting local people to get involved as volunteer marshals in the valley.

"I would have thought that whoever owns it, it's in the interests of inspiring a local community to be part of that. Is there going to be some sort of 'Friends of the Estuary' group who look after this?" (Harry)

"…if not actually to participate in its maintenance, at least to do things like monitor what's going on, to record what's happening and to think about the future and what might happen." (Ned)

Should volunteers be recruited, one participant highlighted that they would need support, and this could involve the creation of other job roles.

> "volunteers need to be looked after […] they need somebody to talk to as a point of contact. […] There is also potential for environmental work, proper jobs. There's probably administrative opportunities looking after the voluntary sector in these kinds of situations." (Nicola)

A further suggestion to empower local people was to record local peoples' histories and associations with the valley for local heritage, which could include local artwork and photography.

> "it's the stories of the ordinary people that need to be collected […] And if there's still some money left from this 15 million pounds, a few thousand to go on this community aspect, and it builds that sense of healing and positiveness" (Ben)

Participants demonstrated a continued willingness to engage in a process once the works have been completed, and recommended consideration of local community empowerment in the long-term future, post-development.

1.4.1.3. Complacency until too late

Workshop participants recognised that sometimes community members may be apathetic and not seek to get engaged themselves.

> "Unless you made it your business to actually find out more and take an interest and actually walk around the area, most people would just have no idea and I have to say, not much interest either." (Nina)

Here, it was referenced that those present felt that despite whatever engagement had been undertaken many in the local community had still either not been aware of proposals or had not taken them seriously until the planning application was submitted and then there was a reaction, but participants felt by this time it was too late for the project to consider their views in a meaningful way. Indeed, some of the participants indicated this to have been their own personal experience.

> "I didn't think it was ever going to happen anyway, I thought it was kite flying, and I don't think I really woke up to what was going on until we had the notice up about planning permission. By which stage, as I said earlier, it was too late to actually do anything constructive about it." (James)

> "…widely more people should have been absolutely aware, but then you've got to engage people and make them interested." (Noah)

To overcome this challenge, group members highlight the need to make information available to get people interested (see Theme 3 for discussion of Accessibility of Information). They also suggested that representation of the various community groups from early in the process would mean there are representatives who could also disseminate information within their community subsets, helping to keep them informed and interested.

1.4.2. Theme 2: Trust

There were factors raised by participants that influenced their level of trust in those leading the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

Firstly, feelings of disempowerment (as described under Theme 1) were reported to have led to distrust. Among the participants who felt this way, there was a sense that there had been an imposed agenda. Those who felt excluded from the process were frustrated and believed engagement had been selective, biased towards groups that may be more favourable toward the proposals.

> "But here they've not talked to the people who really mattered, they've constantly avoided them. But they've gone out to the bird [groups] because one of the things, they said 'Look, we need some positive feedback, can you all use your contacts.' You find this is one of the meetings of stakeholders; there's too much negative, can you get some positive?" (John)

Among those who had distrust, there were suspicions. Most commonly, these suspicions were regarding motivations for the project. Prior to the LORP proposals being made, individuals outlined observations of what they perceived as mismanagement of the river and the riparian zone, with examples given of neglecting to clear fallen trees or maintain eroding riverbanks.

> "…the River Otter itself at the moment is being completely neglected. We've got beavers dropping trees into the river and it's going to ramp it up worse and worse and worse. And it just seems to me that it was the neglect in the first place throughout all the sixties and seventies and eighties […] – because of money, I guess – that it became neglected, overgrown and then the flooding started, and in 2008 that's when it all started to go horribly wrong, didn't it?" (Noah)

One individual with experience in local land management had detailed knowledge of the history of the Lower Otter valley and how it has changed over time. They shared historical maps and information with the group (for example, see Figure 7). They held a perception of mismanagement of the river, which was of primary concern for them.
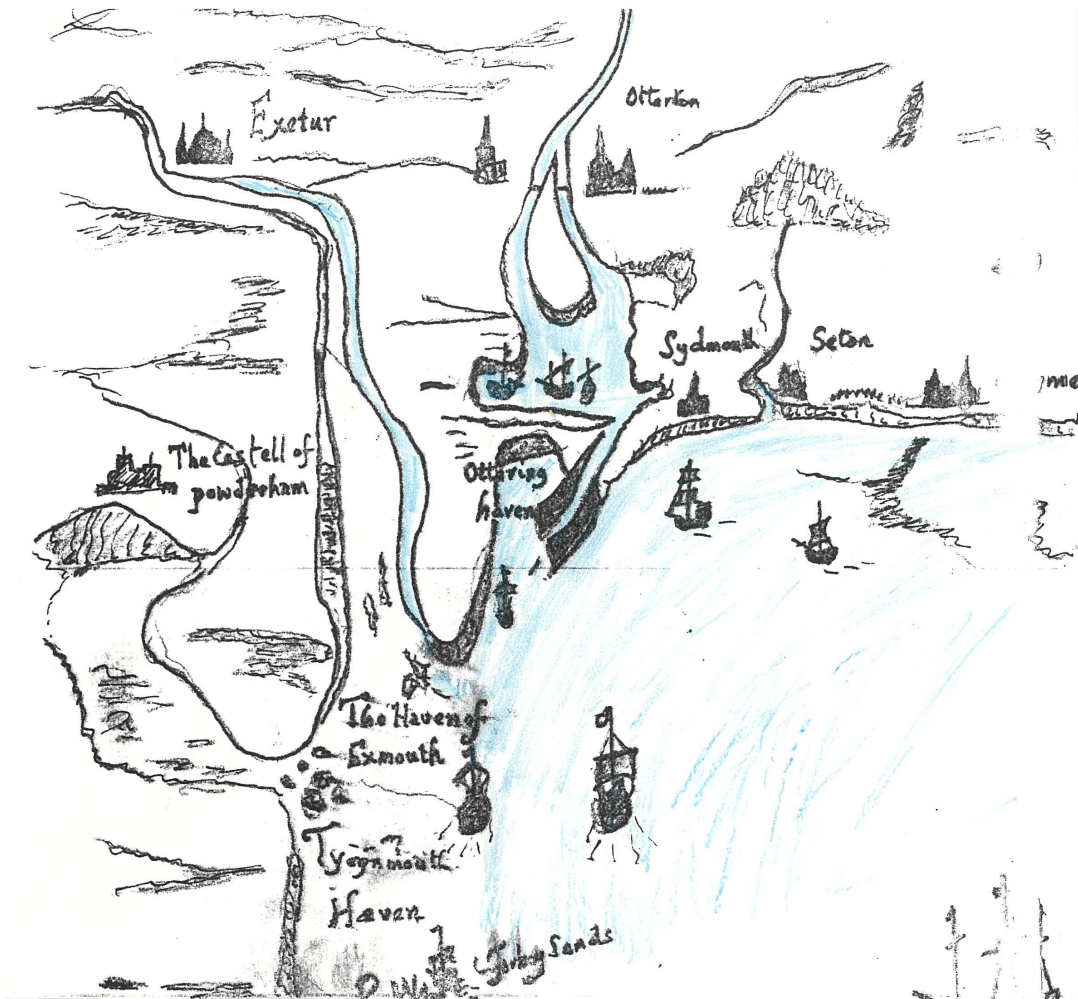
Figure 7. Historical 16th century map of the Lower Otter and Exe Estuary area. This was one of several historical records sourced by a workshop participant and shared with the wider group. This is a corrupted version of a map which originates from '*The Atlas of Lord Burghley*', a public domain document held in the Royal Deposits collection of the British Library.

Among those who believed the river had been mismanaged, there was suspicion that the project had been proposed to avoid cost or avoid responsibilities for river or riparian maintenance.

> "are the motives that it's costing a hell of a lot of money to maintain the valley?" (Harry)

Some of the participants also queried the motivation for the raising of South Farm Road. They were aware that there were businesses at South Farm that were related to Clinton Devon Estates, and the suspicion was that the road was being raised to increase business or development opportunities there.

> "South Farm is a great source of revenue for the estate again and the suspicious side of me, being local, and the locals I speak to are all saying the

same, that it's been an absolute godsend for the estate to […] have South Farm Road rebuilt for them so that all the offices out at South Farm can be maintained." (Noah)

These suspicions may have arisen due to a lack of understanding about what is a visible project in a landscape the local people have access to and know well. This lack of understanding may have been influenced by the complexity of a landscape-scale project and the accessibility of information available, as discussed under Theme 3.

"this is the kind of project that lends itself to multiple rumours and hearsay." (Nicola)

The workshop participants felt that much of the information given had been contradictory to what was taking place, which may have contributed towards confusion about what the project aims and the suspicions that they felt.

"What [they] are doing is putting a ten-foot raised road right across with bridges at each end which is what you've got now, and that's taking it back 200 years? We're not all stupid." (John)

Resulting from the view that information was contradictory, some suggested the project team were being misleading.

"Don't mislead or withhold information from the public, especially those most affected." (Noah)

A similar suggestion was made as a response to changing information.

"They have a question and answer thing that they publicised that said there is no increase in flood risk. They changed that, under the radar. […] [It] changes the answer to 'is there any increase in flood risk?' answer 'no'. It says 'there are a very small number of locations where depth of flooding is slightly increased under some extreme circumstances when climate change is taken account of. The project will seek ways of ensuring that no properties are adversely affected.' That's not 'no'!" (Noah)

This participant brought with them a document that detailed a list of points about which they felt they were being misled. This included similar instances as that described in the prior quotation, as well as descriptions of instances in which they felt information was being withheld from the public. An example extract is given in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Extract from a document contributed by a participant, listing instances of what they felt was misleading or withheld information. The example given is listed under the heading of 'Withheld Information'. (FRA is an abbreviation for Flood Risk Assessment).

> The CH2M pre-planning FRA of August 2018 is referred to in the final FRA. It would give information about the flood risk assessment at that critical time in the project development when (as throughout) we were excluded from the Stakeholder Group
>
> We have asked for a copy of the 2018 FRA. We have not been given a copy

This feeling of being misled negatively affected their trust in the project partners.

> "it's creating the mind this lot don't know what they're doing." (Stephen)

Hence, participants suggested that engagement processes will need to be transparent.

> "If there'd been complete transparency and openness and you could make an informed judgement." (Eric)

To build and maintain trust in the project, participants suggest that projects should be transparent, open and honest about what they plan. This may be made possible through further empowerment of the local community from an early point during the development phase (as discussed under Theme 1), and by ensuring that information related to the project is accessible to different audiences (as discussed under Theme 3). These factors will help to ensure the project aims and its complexities can be better understood in the local community, including understanding of why/how decisions have been taken, thereby reducing the potential for suspicions to arise.

1.4.3. Theme 3: Accessibility of Information

1.4.3.1. Understanding the aims and ambitions of landscape-change

The Lower Otter Restoration Project involves large-scale landscape change. It had multiple facets to it, including the raising of a road, relocation of a cricket club, changes to the hydrology, provision of saltmarsh habitat and adaptation to projected sea level rise. As such, there was complexity which may have meant it was more difficult to understand what the project was aiming to achieve.

> "I think that's one of the problems, was that from the outset it was slightly confused about exactly what the motive was of going ahead. Was it to recreate the historic valley? […] Was it to provide a returning habitat for whatever's going on in Exe Valley, or was it purely a flood defence project?" (Harry)

> "Isn't it funny how we're still talking about some fundamental principles of this scheme? When it's nearing completion." (Stephen)

> - "So they just want a new South Farm Road up there, is that what they wanted?" (James) - "Who knows what the motive was, no-one knows what the motive was." (Harry)

An absence of understanding of the project aims and motivations may have contributed towards feelings of distrust.

> "tell it how it is, don't pretend. And it is tourism, seven new viewing stations, but when Otterton said 'Oh, we're worried about the traffic,' 'Oh, don't worry, this isn't a project for tourism, this is climate change'." (John)

As well as confusion about the project aims, some participants reported that the scale and complexity of the project meant it was difficult to visualise and understand, including the interactions with a separate project proposal made at a similar time for the same area (FAB Link).

> "one of my early problems with the engagement is that I felt it was very difficult for people to apprehend visually, the extent and scope of the project." (Nicola)

At the time of the planning consultation, there were many documents submitted for consideration, such as flood risk assessments and environmental impact statements. In accordance with planning regulations, these were made available for the public to view during the period of public consultation. However, participants reported that the information was difficult to read and comprehend, particularly within the short timeframe that was available before the consultation closed.

> "I know that Covid got in the way and all the rest of it, but we suddenly heard 'look online and then see all the documents, we want your comments in by such and such a date'. The amount of material that was there, that you had to

absorb, to judge, to think about, to think well, wait a minute, I don't see where that adds up to there. What about this? What about that? Where do I get the answers from?" (James)

Information available was also reported to have been technical, which participants felt had made it difficult for lay-people in the community to understand. For example, one participant had attended an Options Appraisal event and felt that the information there had been difficult to interpret.

I actually felt slightly out of my depth with the questionnaires and the opinion […] [It was] A little bit dry, I suppose. I wasn't expecting a great entertainment, but I think as a lay person coming in, I just felt "Hang on a minute, woah, what does that mean?" and there wasn't really enough people around to ask." (Nicola)

A question was raised as to whether the local council (who approved the planning application) had the capacity to assess all the information provided for such a large-scale project with many technical demands. This in turn contributed towards feelings of distrust in the project assessments (see also discussion in Theme 4).

"I felt that [the] District Council, quite reasonably, would not have either the expertise or the capacity to deal with an application like this. You have a massive flood risk assessment, you have environmental assessments, et cetera, et cetera. And you've probably got a team of about three or four East Devon District [officers] who've got all sorts of things on the go. […] some of the issues around modelling and the complexities of the flood risk assessments and other more technical things, which I don't understand on the environmental side, all need expertise. So I asked at the time whether or not they were thinking of hiring in any expertise to check what the Environment Agency has said was right, and they said no." (Sean)

With various levels of understanding about the project aims in the community, it was reported that there were now efforts having to be made by the project partners to counter misunderstandings.

"There's a little sign that went up that we picked on in correspondence […] that says "This is what we're going to be doing and please tell your neighbours, contrary to rumour, we are not putting a footbridge across the estuary." (John)

Some participants reported that they had attended a recent exhibition about the project at the Fairlynch Museum (in Budleigh Salterton), which had been received positively.

"there's a very good exhibition in the Fairlynch Museum now so they're trying to catch up with things, and in that exhibition they've got several people being interviewed on video and giving their opinions." (Quentin)

"I've heard that exhibition's going to run two years – well, concurrently – and […] I thought that may come under a positive piece of public outreach that's happening." (Nina)

It was however suggested that further accessible engagement such as the exhibition could have been done sooner in the project so that people could better understand and discuss the proposals prior to the point of finalising the design and submitting for planning approval.

> "it struck me as a very good way not only of drawing in the community, but also of, over a period of time, period of years, telling the story of the whole project, which I think would have been a really valuable thing to do. That never happened and actually, it's only this year that at last, there is now an exhibition in the museum about the project." (Ned)

> "I think the town as a whole, if they had somewhere to go, where they could have seen the modelling and the modelling working, then we all get it from every age group. You could take a child and say 'well this is where the water's coming in and that's where it's going to go'." (John)

Participants made several recommendations as to how information could be made accessible during an engagement process. (These recommendations are based on the participants' understanding and knowledge of events. It should not be inferred that these ideas were either not understood or implemented by the LORP project team). Recommendations included:

- Recruitment of engagement professionals early in the process.
  - o "ordinary people do like to get the full story and hope that they can stand some science, but it's getting the educationalists and the experts involved in how you present that, so it doesn't come over as arrogant." (Sean)

- Refraining from the use of technical language (or "jargon").
  - o "at those meetings, there was such a lot of jargon. I wrote some of it down here. They wanted to deliver more sustainable management, improve natural functioning, improve the quality of habitats for wildlife, resource natural processes. […] What's that mean?" (Sean)

- Sharing information in both online and offline mediums, as there are both digital and non-digital users to consider.
  - o "The only updates that are available are on Facebook, […] with the prevalence of elderly people around this area, I know a lot of people who just don't look at Facebook. And that's where it's been put out." (Nina)

- Invest in creative and visual aids that will help people to visualise and the proposals. This could include:
  - o A physical model or map of the valley and proposed changes.
    - ▪ - "Do you know what would have been brilliant from Day One, would have been a model." (Eric) - "That would have been brilliant." (Nicola) […] – "Give us a model so that we can see" (Eric).

- A virtual visualisation of proposed changes.
  - "You can do a lot with virtual computer-generated images. I don't know why there wasn't a short film". (Nicola)
- In-person presentations and discussive tours of the site.
  - "I think it would be really interesting to have a tour of the site area […] I'd like to have a tour of that to understand why it is as it is. I'd like to have a tour of the works area, to understand and be able to ask questions about what is being done there and why." (Ned)

Increasing the accessibility of information for complex, landscape-scale schemes may lead to easier visualisation of project aims, leading to higher levels of understanding in the community. This in turn may contribute towards building trust. Methods through which this could be achieved may be: through recruitment of engagement professionals early in the process; refraining from use of technical language; sharing information in multiple mediums (both online and offline); invest in creative and/or visual aids (e.g. physical or virtual models, or in-person presentations and site tours).

1.4.4. Theme 4: Uncertainties

This theme relates to engagement when uncertainties exist within the community. These included uncertainties regarding what they felt were unanswered questions about the project, or uncertainties about the impacts of climate change.

1.4.4.1. Unanswered questions

Several attendees held uncertainties about the potential future impacts of LORP and had questions they felt had remained unanswered. Examples of questions raised here included: impacts of tourism on parking; potential increase in watersport users in sensitive habitat; impact on public access in the valley; erosion impact on the shingle bar at the mouth of the estuary; or impacts on the historic tip and whether it would lead to future pollution incidents.

There were multiple reasons that respondents felt these questions had been unanswered. In some cases, this was related to difficulty in understanding the project and accessibility of the information (see Theme 3).

> - "Does anybody remember in the first planning whether there's a document with a real assessment of the risks around the tip?" (Nicola) - "There's so many documents." (Eric) - "There's so many, isn't there?" (Nicola)

Others felt their questions remained unanswered as it was difficult to identify who to contact, or that there was a lack of responsiveness to queries raised, which had led to feelings of frustration.

> "So you write to the email address and say 'why is this happening?' 'Where did you get that [email address[from? You should go through official channels'. […] and they take two months to answer." (Noah)

> "I think I developed a certain frustration with it from that point because I didn't feel really I'd been listened to." (Ned)

Remaining uncertainties were often associated with feelings of worry or concern, resulting in further queries about future management of the landscape in future, what would happen if things went wrong, and whether there would be accountability for issues.

> "'Well, what's going to happen about maintenance of this thing?' 'Oh it doesn't need maintenance'. 'Well, who pays for it when it goes wrong?' 'It's not going to go wrong'. My house floods, I wouldn't know where to send the bill." (James)

"who's going to say 'Whoops, we expected that to happen but actually, that's happened'. Do we need to take any remedial action or are we happy that (b) has happened instead of (a), or what?" (Harry)

To minimise potential for frustration or worry associated with unanswered questions, participants suggested maximising opportunities for community empowerment from an early stage (and into the future) (Theme 1), that maximising accessibility of information would lead to a better understanding of projects (Theme 3), and that project partners should be responsive to questions raised.

1.4.4.2. Uncertainties about flooding

Some of the workshop participants had personally observed flooding (e.g. at the cricket club), and/or had personal experience of flooding of their own property. Experiences of flooding were shared with the group, which were evidentially personal and emotional, and those affected had undertaken preparatory measures for potential future flood events. One participant whose home had previously flooded (see Figure 9 for a photograph, reproduced with their permission) recounted what it was like to experience a flood.

> "And of course a flood comes in quietly. So you wake up in the middle of the night and you think, oh gosh, the field is full of water. So I'll be sitting there with a torch, watching the water coming up, rising, rising, rising, and the other thing I'm doing is logging into the tide tables, because I know if it's a high tide at Otter mouth, that the water is not going to escape and it backs up and up and up. Sitting there and it comes up to [nearly] getting through my front door. […] I've got various sandbags and things that I go and put out. And we shall retire over the hill, and I borrowed my son's canoe so we can escape." (James)

Figure 9. Photograph taken by a participant from their bedroom window during a flood event in the Otter Valley in July 2012. The image shows flooding across the adjacent fields and road, right up to the walls of their property.

Within this account is evidence of their observations of how flood events may interact with the tides. In their observations, floodwater is unable to drain from the fields adjacent to their property at times of high tide. Multiple participants shared this view and, accordingly, were concerned about the potential impact of Lower Otter Restoration Project upon flooding at times of high tide, when seawater would reach further up the valley. Participants were concerned this may exacerbate the flood risk to their properties when a flood event coincides with high tide, for all water would need to leave via the same exit.

> "If the bucket's already full, you can't put more water in it if the hole's still the same size." (Eric)

These participants reported feelings of exclusion from discussions during the development phase (see Theme 1), and had attempted to raise questions about the flood risk assessment that had been undertaken. In response, they reported being informed that the flood risk assessment had indicated that LORP would not lead to an increase in flood risk to their properties. Having experienced flooding, these participants continued to make enquiries into what modelling had taken place and whether this had included scenarios of fluvial flooding coinciding with a high tide.

These participants felt they had been unable to have a direct communication with those who had undertaken the modelling and felt that the responses they received had not adequately addressed questions.

> "it could have given you the chance to say 'What's going to happen there?'" (John)

> "It's almost a mantra, that where they really will not accept any criticism or suggestions or what have you. It's always 'no. There is no increase in flood risk. It says so in the flood risk assessment.'" (Simon)

> "I suspect that the people we talk to from the Environment Agency – we had a couple of meetings with them – they are not themselves on top of the science. They're relying on what somebody in the back office has been feeding them. So when we tackle them and say 'so and so', 'oh well the model says'. Yes, but 'what about so and so?'" (James)

Consequently, these participants had little trust in the modelling that had taken place and, by extension, the impacts of the scheme itself.

> "what about the accuracy of the modelling? Because of all the variables that are included in the model. The models aren't perfect. […] So that's why I'm a bit sceptical about the scheme from the point of view of what might happen as a result of it." (Simon)

Further to ensuring that those most directly affected would be engaged with (see Theme 1), participants suggested opportunity for direct engagement with any modelling specialists to understand impacts and to model the impact of scenarios built on local knowledge would be of value. This may help to overcome the gap between resident and expert knowledges and instil confidence in flood risk assessments, potentially alleviating concerns.

1.4.4.3. Uncertainties about the impacts of climate change

Participants recognised that climate change is happening and that there will be future impacts for which the community may need to be prepared. One individual who valued the wildlife in the valley and identified as being involved in supporting "environmental movements" was keen to stress the need to adapt to potential future consequences of climate change. They felt that LORP would contribute towards this aim.

> "I have thought for thirty years or more, that climate change and environmental consequences and change is difficult, but you have to trust that vegetation and planting and reconsidering an environment that here I think was manmade with aqueducts and drains and stuff. […] I've always thought, I'm for this. […] I've just said this needs to happen and hopefully it will benefit us, humans and everybody else. So I've been quietly going 'yes, get on with it, let's see what happens', even though I have found it quite devastating the past few months." (Madelyn)

Another individual who supported the scheme was excited by the prospect that it had a long-term vision.

> "I guess why I'm really enthusiastic about this project is that at last somebody's thinking long-term. The problems of politicians, economists, landowners, the academics, they've obviously always been short-termers and just pushed through. But at last, somebody, and this project is thinking of 50 years and looking at data to plan" (Ben)

Whilst the other participants agreed that there will be impacts resulting from climate change, some expressed uncertainty about what those impacts may be and so felt uncertain as to whether LORP was the best approach towards addressing the issue.

> "There are guesses, there are estimates, someone's got to make an estimate, fair dos, but to spend 15 million […] on something that perhaps will happen to a varying degree, and they don't know what that degree is, seemed like it was almost like, 'we've got to do it because […] we want to demonstrate that we care about future and we've been told that our policies are all about climate change and a lot of what we do in the future will be about looking after climate change'." (Sean)

> "they said there won't be any risk and then there might be, depending on future climate change, it's a moveable feast. It's something that's unpredictable." (Stephen)

Hence, whilst there was consensus in the group that climate change is happening, there were varying views on what the risks would be in the Lower Otter and, for some, uncertainty contributed towards questioning as to whether LORP was taking

the right approach. Participants therefore suggested that engagement could begin with discussions about climate change and local environmental risk, before then discussing proposed solutions.

> "One thing that I would have liked is a workshop on climate change, just to start. The next workshop would be climate change and coastal communities, and the next one would be climate change and how it affects the River Otter, and go right back to basics, not to say that we all understand climate change because we probably don't." (Harry)

To respond to different understandings of climate change impact in the community, and in turn to help them understand how the project may help in the face of projected impacts, early engagement could start with a discussion of climate change and local risks, before introducing and discussing ideas or proposed solutions to address them.

2. Lower Otter Restoration Project: Stakeholder Interviews

In this section we outline the contributions of project leads and stakeholder representative interviews.

2.1 Summary of Outcomes

Ten interviews were undertaken with project partners, representatives of stakeholder groups, and organisational representatives. Drawing upon their varied experiences, a series of learnings have been identified which, in many cases, are complementary to the findings of the workshops with local residents (Section 1).

Here, six themes were identified. The first ('Continuous Engagement') is temporal in nature, detailing learning that relates to various phases of engagement as they occur through time. The following four themes relate to general engagement principles ('Stakeholder Group Representation'; 'Ability to Input'; 'Trust'; 'Accessibility of Information'). The final theme ('Negotiating with External Influences') recognises that external influences which may apply limitations on or challenges for the process of engagement, which will need to be navigated. The learning points from these themes are discussed with evidence in the following pages, but can be summarised thus:

Continuous Engagement

• Engagement is a continuous process, requiring commitment from the outset and into the future.

• Prior to the first outreach, reflect on the social context locally, including potential power dynamics and/or pre-existing relationships. Consider whether to allocate resource towards an independent engagement facilitator.

• Engage with key groups early. Recognise the knowledge they may be able to contribute and understand their perspective of the issue, before introducing ideas for the solution.

• Sustain engagement throughout project development, with regular meetings/events and up to date communications. Avoid long time periods between public engagement events where possible.

• Give advance consideration as to how engagement may progress into the future, post-development.

Negotiating with External Influences

• There are likely to be external factors that may limit what is possible in the optimal engagement approach. Influences which may constrain the ability to take the optimal approach to engagement can include: unforeseen events and national circumstances, in response to which engagement processes will need to adapt; financial resource or funder requirements, which may limit what is possible; legal or regulatory requirements that must be met; and organisational factors, such as different objectives or motives between organisations, capacity to participate in discussions as much as would be hoped, or staff turnover resulting in a 'loss' of prior dialogue).

Stakeholder Group Representation

• A Stakeholder Group can be a well-received forum for the exchange of knowledge and feedback between represented groups.

• There should be opportunity for both stakeholders and community groups to be represented. This includes residents living in close proximity to the project site, who may not yet be represented by a designated organisation.

Ability to Input

• Be open to feedback from an early stage in the process, when there is greater opportunity to empower groups in the process of project design.

• There may be groups that are apathetic towards a proposal. Seek to engage their interest (perhaps using creative and varied approaches) and empathise with why they may not have engaged previously.

Trust

• Recognise and account for pre-existing power dynamics between those proposing a project and local communities.

• Demonstrated openness and transparent engagement are likely to result in higher levels of trust between groups and the project partners.

• Where there might be distrust, one consideration to build trust levels may be to consider the recruitment of an independent assessor to review assessments undertaken for a project (e.g. flood risk or environmental impact assessments).

Accessibility of Information

• Make information available through multiple methods, seeking to reach as many different groups as possible.

• Complex schemes can be difficult to communicate, yet information will need to be made accessible for different audiences. Consider breaking it down into smaller parts that are easier to understand or using creative methods to help communities visualise a proposal. There may be greater understanding among groups that have been involved from an earlier stage.

• Respond to enquiries quickly and informatively. Consider having a designated point of contact.

• Establish a formal social media presence for the project from an early stage.

2.2 Participants

Eighteen interview invitations were issued to individuals who represented project partners or stakeholder groups. The latter were defined as members of the Stakeholder Group, or representatives of community groups identified through the documentary analysis. A summary of participants is given in **Table 4**. Ten individuals accepted the invitation (three female, seven male). Of the eight remaining invitations, two were declined and six received no response after reminders were issued. Participants include project leads, and representatives of stakeholder and community groups.

Table 4. Summary of interview participants, using fictional pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Pseudonym	Role	Engaged since
Rick	Project lead	Project initiation.
Larry	Project lead	Project initiation.
Bella	Staff of delivery partner	Project initiation.
Jessica	Staff of delivery partner	Autumn 2015, when individual joined their organisation.
Zoe	Member of Steering Group and Technical Steering Group	May 2019, having taken over from someone who had moved to a different role within their organisation.
Scott	Member of Steering Group	Early stages, following presentations from project leads to their organisation.
Brendan	Member of Steering Group	Early stages.
Cormac	Member of Steering Group	Extension of the Stakeholder Group in 2016, having been nominated by residents in their community.
Peter	Community group representative	No Stakeholder Group involvement. In dialogue with project team since period of planning consultation (late 2019).
Riley	Member of Steering Group	Project team in dialogue with organisation since early stages, who were represented on Steering Group from September 2019 (not by interview participant).

2.3. Discussion of Findings

As described in Section iv, these are the views of real people, which we encourage to be read with respect for their opinions. This discussion represents the views, knowledges and suggestions made by participants, drawing on their personal backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Opinions and understandings expressed here are those of participants only and may not necessarily represent those of the wider community. The role of the researchers is to interpret and articulate these, and not to make a judgement on them. Neither is it the role of the researchers to make a judgement on the project engagement process and criticism is not implied. Engagement recommendations expressed are those for an ideal project.

2.3.1. Continuous Engagement

It became clear through these interviews that engagement will be an ongoing process, requiring commitment from the project outset, throughout development, and into the future. Whilst there are principles of engagement discussed in the following pages, in this first theme we discuss learning that applies to different stages of engagement-through-time: primary understanding of pre-existing social dynamics; early engagement; sustained engagement; engagement into the future.

(To note, although engagement activities undertaken are referred towards, we do not detail the full process of engagement undertaken in the development of the Lower Otter Restoration Project within these pages as a detailed and evidenced record of the engagement story is available in Section 1.1 of Report 1).

2.3.1.1. Primary understanding of pre-existing social dynamics

Whilst planning for the first engagement outreach, participants highlighted there would need to be a degree of preparation to understand the local, social context in which the project is taking place. In particular, it was advised that there should be a recognition of pre-existing power dynamics and/or local relationships that may have a bearing on the engagement process.

In this case, the project partners have an established history that may be perceived in various ways among the community. Clinton Devon Estates has been a major landowner in the area since 1299, and the Environment Agency is a national government body. Interviewees referenced that communities may have a pre-existing view of these organisations as a result, which could influence their perceptions of LORP engagement.

> "When you are dealing with an estate, people come to that relationship or that experience not with a blank page… […] They will come at it with whatever experience they have had of the estate, so […] that just brings a whole caveat of positive and negative experiences. And it is probably the same for the Environment Agency." (Jessica)

In particular, interviewees recognised there may be a perception that the bigger organisations hold greater power in local decision-making.

> "I think they may have felt 'Big organisation, big estate, lots of baggage', [Environment Agency] lots of baggage as well', pretty powerless against what they thought was an inevitable change which whatever they said we weren't going to listen to it." (Rick)

Jessica was a member of staff at a leading organisation and lives locally. She reported having a pre-existing knowledge of social dynamics in the area, which she highlighted gave important contextual understanding for the project.

> "I spent a lot of time trying to explain the subtleties, the nuances of a particular village or a particular person and that seems like a level of detail that a project of this size does not need to worry about, but I would disagree. I think you need somebody who is plugged into local people". (Jessica)

It was suggested that project partners should recognise the local social context into which they will enter, reflecting upon potential power dynamics and the relationships between project leads, stakeholders and local communities, from the outset.

> "I think you have to understand what the landscape is like, so you have got a body or an individual wanting to change something, and you have other bodies who are going to be impacted by the change, so I think one of the first things to do is to say, 'Before you do anything, what is the landscape here? Who are they? Who are we? How do they perceive us?'" (Rick)

If there is a potential power imbalance, one suggestion could be to allocate resources to an independent party to help facilitate the engagement process.

> "There is a power imbalance, of course there is, so we're a big estate, we're perceived as having lots of money, we have control of the land, […] [and it is perceived that we] can do what [we] like and it doesn't matter what the small person says […] Could we have got an independent person to kind of facilitate everything from the beginning – I don't know where the funds would have come from? Maybe but we tried to do that through having […] independent chairing [of] the Stakeholder group." (Rick)

The local social context should be reflected on in preparation for an engagement process, recognising pre-existing power dynamics and relationships with / between partners, stakeholders, and communities.

(See Section 2.3.3 on stakeholder group representation, and Section 1.1.8 of Report 1).

2.3.1.2. Early Engagement

Engagement in the Lower Otter Restoration Project began with an initial meeting, hosted by Clinton Devon Estates and bringing together an initial group of stakeholder representatives who were identified to have potential interests in the area.

> "…thinking about, who are we going to need to get consents from here? Who are the other key players in the location?" (Larry)

The interviewees reported that the project was being discussed as a conceptual idea at this time.

> "I felt the first meeting was very early on, so I think the answers that we were given were nebulous, probably because it was very early and nobody really had an idea of what the formal application was going to look like." (Rick)

Despite being reported as a conceptual idea at this point, Rick expressed that the Stakeholder Group was instigated to "get a formalised process in place". One of the invited representatives described how their invitation to get involved from an early stage had been received positively.

> "we were very pleased that we were involved before the planning application was put in and the design finalised. We were very pleased to be working on that basis, close consultation, regular meetings were going on." (Zoe)

At this time there was no formal engagement plan, but discussions were held about what was possible with the local farms and cricket club and, a short while later, a series of pop-up events were held in the local area. These took what was, in the minds of project partners, an idea to local settings with reported intent to explore the local response.

> "it wasn't really formal and it wasn't really a project as such […] I think you've got the whole suite of when those were done – trying to bounce ideas off, or that's what we thought we were doing: "How would you feel about this?" And we had pop-ups [in several locations]. And to start with it was all quite good, people kind of got it and it was all fine, but I would say there was no engagement strategy, I think we were kind of doing what we thought was best to try… Because in our mind's eye, we were a very long way from actually having any formal project" (Rick)

Some of the reaction to these pop-up events led to recognition that there may be a stronger response in the local community than the proposers had expected, and that engagement would need to be considered more seriously.

> "The first point where we were just bouncing ideas really because we had no idea whether technically we could do it, or even whether it was possible, and it was at South Farm when we were involved in […] very conceptual discussion, like "Well, how would you feel if South Farm Road became tidal?" […] And then it was that meeting when I think there was a very, very strong "No, you can't do that," and it was almost as if "You're going to do that, we don't want you to do that," and it was like "We're not going to do that", and we realised

that maybe we needed to be a little bit more [pause] – I don't know – professional. That was the first warning sign I suppose, that this was getting more difficult than we thought." (Rick)

In our prior documentary analysis, we describe how this event was received by some as one that "told" residents at South Farm about a single-option proposal, rather than as an opportunity to input into project design. A similar tension arose at an event held specifically for Granary Lane residents at which the view was expressed that they had not felt represented during the development of plans so far. These events later led to expansion of the Stakeholder Group to include representation for Granary Lane alongside South Farm Road (see on Stakeholder Group Representation and).

Project partner interviewees recognised these challenges and acknowledged that the early engagement could have been improved, with the expanded Stakeholder Group membership from an earlier stage….

> "the expansion of the [stakeholder] group to include various members of the public, defused a lot of the criticism. Could have done that better, with hindsight, to start with, and perhaps avoided some of the problems that we had." (Rick)

…and by being prepared for emotional sensitivities within local communities that landscape-change proposals may enact.

> "This is, landscape-wise, 200 years of the same landscape, and people's absolute rejection of the project to start with because it was going to destroy what they knew. I think, as a team, we felt… I particularly, from my point of view, when I went onsite and all the vegetation had gone, for me, I had a very emotional response. And actually that just gave me a slight insight to… and I totally get why we are doing it and I'm onboard, but I then kind of really got the passion that was being felt and I think we underestimated… you could sort of think, it's our land, we'll do what we want, it doesn't affect anyone else… and I think we underestimated that." (Jessica)

An interviewee advised thinking carefully about early engagement.

> "think about it early, so have it on your first list of things to do: who is this impacting on; what do they have to offer; what do they know, I think would be a useful thing to start with. How can they support, how can they oppose? It's a bit of a classic analysis but certainly what do they have to offer and what do they know." (Rick)

One consideration may be the employment of an engagement professional to help facilitate an effective process.

> "Knowing what we do now, I think we would have, saying we thought we engaged relatively early, I think we would have probably got more professional advice. I think we would have been a little bit more canny about what might trip us up and really how to do it well". (Rick)

> "I think once we were able to marshal enough resources and to get engagement professionals involved, things went much better. Which I think is an interesting aspect, because it does show that there is a real value to having people who know what they're doing." (Larry)

Finally, it was here reported that initial ideas were received by some as a pre-determined proposal into which community groups felt unable to input. In Sections 1.3.1.1 and 1.3.4 workshop participants expressed a wish to discuss the 'issue', prior to introducing ideas for the solution. The interview findings further supported this suggestion, and we recommend beginning with greater efforts to recognise and understand local knowledge, prior to formalising a proposal.

> "Could we have early on just said 'Okay' to other people, almost blind, 'do you see any problems with this valley at all? And are there any things you would like to see differently? And how you would steer that?' […] Maybe we missed out that phase because we were saying "We think there's a problem, this is what the problem is, we're going to try and fix it."" (Rick)"

Early engagement is likely to be received more favourably than outreach that takes place further down the line. Therefore, we recommend engaging with key groups as early as possible, with an understanding of what knowledge they may be able to contribute and discussions about the 'issue', prior to introducing ideas for the solution. It will be important to undertake engagement carefully and sensitively, with an inclusive tone from the outset.

2.3.1.3. Sustained Engagement

Once engagement has begun, it will need to continue throughout the development of the project. Here, an initial Stakeholder Group was set up in 2013, which then continued throughout development until the point of planning approval (noting that it was extended to include representation of further community groups in 2016).

> "The Stakeholder group I think was a good vehicle, and that went throughout." (Rick)

> "I've remained actively engaged through that group, which has had fairly increasingly frequent meetings." (Brendan)

> "I think communication around the project is key, as it is with anything. […] That's really important with this kind of project. You don't want to leave an information gap." (Brendan)

(Once planning approval was granted, the Stakeholder Group evolved into a Liaison Group for the implementation period. This period is outside of the research scope of these reports, but at the time of writing, details and minutes from the Liaison Group meetings are available at http://lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/resources.html)

Further efforts to maintain regular dialogue with some stakeholders were also reported as important, particularly because the project was developing.

> "keep talking. It's really easy to think that because you are in a conversation everybody else is too. So particularly from an estate management point of view, trying really hard, time allowing, to meet with our tenants, trying to just touch base. […] just keep talking to them and updating them. Because this project isn't fully designed as it's being built, all the designs and the complexities are coming out, so things change. So it's really making sure that we remember to keep them abreast of that conversation." (Bella)

> [A recommendation] for technical stakeholders, if you like, having […] a plan for consultation meetings with dates, or at least draft dates you can put in your diary to say we'll have a meeting every month or whatever, is very helpful (Zoe)

Alongside tenant engagement, the project team reported that they sought to keep online materials as up-to-date as they could for a public audience to access.

> "the [Question & Answer pages] have been really, really important all the way through. So, they are on the website currently, […] and we update them. As more of them come along, we update them so there is probably quite a lot now." (Jessica)

Engagement events were also held for the public, but Peter felt there were long periods of time between them, contributing towards feelings of exclusion in the decision-making process.

> "I think there was a huge gap between the options that were [presented] at the Methodist Church where it hadn't been decided what they wanted to do, and

the planning submission which was advertised in - September 2020, I think it was? […] During the period between 2018/19, whatever it was, and the planning application appearing, [they] had done nothing about having any public meetings. Now, they will claim that this was all to do with Covid […], but it didn't stop them going ahead with the scheme, but it stopped them consulting and talking to people about it. So, they themselves had not organised anything in terms of engagement." (Peter)

This feeling was echoed by Riley, who suggested further public engagement event(s) should have been held between the options appraisal and planning application, whilst plans were still in development.

"I would have appreciated at the halfway stage of the project a kind of an overview town meeting to fully invite the whole locality, invited to a public hall […] I think something which was a mid-stage overview of how's it going, […] what's gone well, what's gone badly, how's the timing, how's the funding and all this sort of thing. So, a high-level meeting at a particular time. […] It could be that it's given a little bit more time between the actual final concept is put together and the application, that there are more meetings at the various sites […] to make sure everybody who wants to go gets the information before the application goes in. […] It's important there is some emphasis given to what the local people really feel, so I think as much feedback as possible from the local residents as you can before the formal application goes in, and it's listened to and if necessary acted upon." (Riley)

Drawing on these experiences, we conclude there is a need for sustained engagement throughout project development, with both the public and stakeholders. This includes: continuity of Stakeholder Group meetings; minimising time between public events; and keeping project communications up to date.

2.3.1.4. Engagement into the future

Although only lightly touched upon here, there were comments from interviewees about engagement beyond the point of planning approval (when the project moved into the implementation stage).

In the first instance, the engagement process during project development may influence the relationships between partners and stakeholders in future once the project is complete, with suggestion that involvement *during* a development process may be more likely to foster positive relations upon project completion.

"the more you involve people, the more they have a bit of ownership, don't they? […] Yeah, you are not going to please people all the time. But by keeping talking and keeping communication open, hopefully at the end of it we can resume a relationship." (Bella)

Other remarks on future engagement related to a desire for continued involvement, and discussion about the future management of the valley. One of the interviewees explicitly demonstrated a desire for continued involvement.

> "we have an ongoing… Well, more than an interest, responsibility really. Because of the European site issues in particular, and the protected site issues, it's important for us to stay engaged. […] We want to be part of the help for the project team, and it benefits us and hopefully would benefit the project as well." (Zoe)

Once the project is complete, there may be ongoing management or maintenance issues. It was suggested there may need to be consideration of this before the project concludes, and to prepare for continued engagement into the future.

> "it's coming back to the now, it's the involvement and engagement with the district council officers particularly, in terms of their aspirations for the site, the long-term opportunity for the site once complete, its function and role – I mean that in a habitat and public way – and how that would all operate. I guess hindsight is a wonderful thing, isn't it, but I know that's becoming an issue for them with the site, in terms of what it is and how it's controlled and managed in a public way, people's movement in and around the site, integrity of the site and its protection from public pressure. I think those are things they're trying to look at at the moment […] I think they'd say by their own admission that's something that […] they could have perhaps thought about that engagement with the district a little bit more, as to what it might lead to in future with the site and how they wanted that to work." (Brendan)

The scope of this research was to explore engagement during the development stages, yet we recognise that interviewees already had a desire to think ahead and be engaged in decisions about future management. This was similarly raised in the resident workshops, where participants indicated a readiness to engage in such a process. We recommend advance consideration of how engagement may progress into the implementation stages and beyond.

2.3.2. Negotiating with External Pressures

Several factors were raised which may place a limit upon what engagement is feasible, or what is physically possible to alter in designs in response to feedback.

> "An important point in the engagement process is, I think, being honest about what is and isn't possible. […] point is, it is important to identify what is and what isn't possible/fundable for whatever reason so the parameters of feasibility are understood. It is easy to suggest something when you are not responsible for funding/maintaining it." (Rick)

External factors raised in the interviews are summarised in Table 6.

Table 5. Summary of limitations on the engagement process that were raised by interview participants.

Limitation	Detail	Example Quotation
Unforeseen events / national circumstances	The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions were reported to have influenced the degree to which face-to-face engagement could take place, and the capacity of the project team to undertake engagement when there were additional pressures on their personal lives.	"As well as not being able to meet face to face, various people involved in the project […] had childcare, so the normal consultations you would've done and conversations you would have had went a little bit out the window. […] so we found long gaps between consultations and not receiving responses to emails and some of them going astray. It took everybody a while to get used to, well, doing things [online], communicating in a different way." (Zoe)
Financial resource availability	There may be a limit to how much money can be allocated to the engagement process, or to enable new ideas to be incorporated into design.	"[The partners] put a lot of resources into making sure that they get the messages out in a highly professional way, quickly and efficiently. That's really important with this kind of project. […] But that's resource hungry, isn't it, that sort of thing? It does take a lot of resource to do that and you need to have committed to those resources for that to work effectively." (Larry) "we didn't have any resourcing, so essentially you've got myself and [name], [name]'s got another job to do and I've got other jobs to do, so you're kind of like, you're trying to do

Limitation	Detail	Example Quotation
		it as well as you can but you haven't got infinite money to put to it so you're trying to be quite canny and economical with it, necessarily." (Rick)
Organisational interests / motivations	Partner organisations also have their own objectives to meet, alongside those of other stakeholders and communities.	"the funders want some things so the project morphs a bit because of the funders' desires. The EA wants things a certain way, and there were funders so the project morphs that way. We need some things done because for whatever reason, and there's all these things shaping the project, which ends it up being maybe less than ideal from any particular person's perspective, but it's that compromise." (Rick) "they listened well and have always been very open […] and you have to try and address the needs of as many people as you can […] But I guess ultimately if you've got a goal you're trying to achieve, you need to actually do a bit of persuasion work as well" (Brendan)
Organisational capacity	There may be a limit to the staff time that can be put towards involvement in a project.	"we didn't have the capacity to also attend the stakeholder meetings, so to start with we tended to concentrate on the technical side of things and just get the notes from the meetings." (Zoe)
Organisational staff turnover	In some organisations, members of staff who had been engaged were reported to have left and been replaced by others, leading to a 'loss' of prior dialogue or understanding.	"Because this process was taking so long […] our parish councils have had so many changes of personnel that there's not that continuity. And therefore quite a lot nuances of conversations that were had at initial stakeholder stage, before the planning application was put in, had been lost. […] it's political timeframes, isn't it? So I think that's been quite difficult." (Bella)
Requirements of the funding agency	Here, EU Interreg funding was required to be spent by a certain date, thereby influencing the timing of planning application submission.	"The reason the planning application went in when it did was because of PACCo funding that Interreg funding, and so we had such a tight timeframe, we had to get it in." (Bella)

Limitation	Detail	Example Quotation
Legal or regulatory requirements	Certain actions or approaches will be required to meet legal or statutory conditions.	"we had to bottom out how the habitat regulations affected the planning application, or not" (Zoe)

We recognise that the engagement process will need to navigate external factors which may constrain the engagement process, meaning the engagement approach taken may need to take a negotiated position between these factors and the desired, optimal approach.

2.3.3. Stakeholder Group Representation

The Stakeholder Group was the primary forum for engagement throughout the project. This was instigated following the initial project meeting in 2013, and was expanded to include further community representatives in January 2016. This included representation from Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club, Granary Lane, and South Farm Road, and well as a high level of integration between various political and administrative levels (e.g. local Parish Councils, East Devon District Council, and national statutory agencies – see Section 1.2 of Report 1). One of the interviewees represented an organisation that had attended the Stakeholder Group from an early stage, prior to its extension. They reported that formation of the group was an important process for the project, as a vehicle to exchange information, understanding, and viewpoints.

> "I guess I recognised it was an important step in setting up the project, in order to share thoughts and ideas about what the possibilities were, but also gain feedback from the various different interest parties. And obviously people don't like change so it's very important you set up those sorts of things, so it was a responsible thing […] to do, in my opinion. I think it was a good thing." (Brendan)

In most interviews the Stakeholder Group was perceived as a good forum for engagement. However, some felt that key groups who should have been represented were excluded until after the extension of the group in 2016. One of the project partners suggested this had been a learning point for them as they had intended for the local community to have been represented having originally relied upon the invitation of democratically elected local representatives.

> "I had this rather naïve idea, I suppose, that by talking to elected representatives, that that would kind of work. [...] We'd done various presentations to parish councils." (Larry)

However, as is referenced in Section 2.3.1.2, Granary Lane was one of the community subsets that lived in close proximity to the project and was reported to have felt unrepresented prior to the 2016 group extension. Thus, following the reaction among residents to early engagement events, Granary Lane was invited to nominate a representative to sit upon the Stakeholder Group.

> "I went to see him in the margins of that meeting and I said, '[…] there are one hundred houses alongside the border of your project and you have not reached out to them.' He asserted he had through the [organisation name]. I said, 'Well, you have not actually because they do not feel you have engaged with them.' Anyway, as a result of that, in late 2015, he responded and he said, 'We would like to invite someone to represent Granary Lane' and also to represent the people on the other side of the river, South Farm, […], so he did that, and with my neighbour's help, we ran a nomination process". (Cormac)

As is described in the first report, the Granary Lane representative brought a position statement with them to the first meeting they attended, and an Issues Log was established to work through questions or issues raised at the meetings – including

those raised by community group representatives. Interview participants were generally favourable towards these moves, and reported feeling that the local representation had improved from this point forwards:

> "I put out regular leaflets to my community, giving them a quick readout from the meetings before the formal minutes arrived. And I made a note at the time because I was quite struck by what [name] said. He said, 'We are glad to have this wider group. This marks a transition from decide, announce and defend to engage, deliberate and decide,' and I was very encouraged by that. And that began the upward trajectory in terms of their engagement with people." (Cormac)

> "[Representation] was very, very wide ranging. It included, naturally, people with very, very personal interests, which is fair enough, like the residents of Granary Lane and a few others […] So there was lots of interest. But it's right to hear them" (Scott)

There was another group however that was reported to have felt excluded from the Stakeholder Group altogether. This was a residents' community that live near to the project site. The interviewee representative reported that they had never been invited to attend and claimed to have never been proactively engaged by the project partners ahead of submission of the planning application. This contributed towards feelings of distrust and resulted in a perception of imbalanced representation upon the stakeholder group.

> "…the Steering Group was likeminded organisations and I'm not knocking those organisations, […] The only outlier who might have been challenging in any way to what was proposed were the people from Granary Lane, and they had a representation. [We] were never invited to that and weren't aware, and if you didn't take the trouble to look on the [project] website or know that there was a [project] website or that there was a Steering Group, you wouldn't know anything about it. And so, the people from [our community] weren't invited to have their ten-penneth." (Peter)

Similarly, Riley thought there should have been greater representation of resident groups that live in the vicinity, including those who live close to an adjoining brook.

> ""my impression, looking at the attendees and the absences, was that it's a bit skewed towards the people who are already committed to it, who might not ask key questions about the pluses and more particularly the minuses of what's going on […] I think I would like to see more of the residents who would have a view, I don't think there's anyone directly involved from this little hamlet of [place name]" (Riley)

It was suggested that residents that live in the vicinity of a project and associate with a landscape will need to be represented in a process.

> "…you certainly need to involve the people who are affected by it or who will reasonably have an opinion about it." (Peter)

Should this result in a large Stakeholder Group, one participant suggested residents could be represented in a subgroup that feeds into the stakeholder group, to ensure there remains a forum for representation.

> "I understand the [stakeholder or liaison] group can't be that big, but there will need to be a balance to ensure all voices are heard. […] Perhaps there may need to be a subgroup for local residents, as an independent group feeding into the [stakeholder] group. That might be an idea to take to other projects." (Scott)

A group to liaise with stakeholder and community groups (such as a Steering Group) can be a well-received forum for representation, but key stakeholders and community groups will need to feel represented. This includes residents that live in the vicinity of the project and associate with the landscape.

2.3.4. Ability to Input

2.3.4.1. Opportunity for input

Alongside having stakeholder and community representation in project fora or hosting community engagement events, the degree to which those involved have an ability to input was identified to be of importance; are those who have been engaged being informed about project plans and/or progress, or are they able to contribute their knowledge and views in a manner which may result in changed ways of thinking (perhaps leading to changes in design?). In the documentary evaluation (under the criterion of creativity), we concluded that there were examples of changed ways of thinking during project development, but that the overall scheme remained consistent with early visions. A similar outcome was reported during the interviews; there were examples given of some changes in design of the project in response to feedback, but it was also reported that the overall project remained consistent with early visions. There were two examples of Creativity here reported, summarised in Table 5.

Table 6. Examples of Creativity reported in stakeholder interviews.

Change	In response to	Example Quotation
Reduction in the level of hard engineering involved	Feedback from a member of the Stakeholder Group	"we felt at that stage that in some of the details that were coming through, there was too much unnecessary engineering, […] Because the whole purpose of the project is to let nature take its course in some respects, allowing the river to basically burst its banks and go where nature would have intended it to be, as much as we possibly can with the constraints that you've got with settlements and houses […] So we needed to raise that with the project team, and the initial response was hard work, I think, making our voices heard at that fairly late stage. But I have to say, after quite a lot of other face-to-face meetings and bringing in more senior people at our organisation and the [organisation] as well, the design was changed fairly speedily. We were listened to and we were happy." (Zoe)
Removal of a proposal for a new cycle path from an early vision.	Limited support from other groups at the time.	"Well, they very quickly said that it wouldn't be a cycle path, it would be a normal footpath along which cyclists would not be permitted." (Scott)

A project lead reported an intent to provide opportunity for representatives to contribute towards project development, through the medium of the stakeholder group.

> "You're familiar with the two alternatives of engage, deliberate, decide, and decide, advise, and defend. And we wanted to try and use the engage version. And so [we] started work on engagement, with key stakeholders […] and we set up a group to talk to these people." (Larry)

For some members of the Stakeholder Group, this was how they felt the group had operated.

> "I got the impression that most of the stakeholders felt they'd been listened to as well, which is probably the most important thing: feeling like you're being listened to. Having the information that you need and being listened to, and acting on it, I suppose, if you need to change your scheme or some of the details." (Zoe)

Other interview participants however reported that either they or their local community felt the project had been proposed as a single-option proposal rather than as something towards which they may be able to meaningfully input into, particularly those who had not been represented on the stakeholder group (as discussed in detail in the documentary evaluation, in Section 1.4.1 in findings from the workshops with residents, and Section 2.3.3 of these interview findings).

It is notable that the view of the project proposers differs here, for they felt that, in the early stages, the project was a conceptual idea that was up for discussion rather than a formalised plan, which they had found to be a challenging notion to convey.

> "What was interesting, from a project perspective, we didn't really have a project that actually we thought "Well, we can do this," until probably very late on, 2018; this was in our minds. But I think in other people's minds, this was a fait accomplis back in 2012." (Rick)

> "it does seem to be a very, very difficult process to get people to accept that you have an idea, but that that idea is not fully worked up" (Larry).

> "I guess you've got different viewpoints, haven't you? From our side it was just like 'We're just trying to understand what's going on,' and from their viewpoint it was like 'What you're suggesting, we don't like it, we haven't been consulted,' and it was like 'Well, we're consulting now,' and I guess it was a kind of when you do that, we didn't really have anything to consult on." (Rick)

As time progressed, ideas became more set and formalised into a proposal, meaning project designs became more challenging to revise later in the development process.

> "And the further you go down the road, the less it becomes about consultation because the less room you have to modify your proposals and because they've already been through a process of options appraisal and eliminating the stuff that's outliers." (Larry)

A similar notion was reflected within an interview with a community group representative who had become involved from the point of the extension of the stakeholder group. The representative felt that, although the engagement process had improved since the early consultations, their community did not think there was the ability to make any changes to the design despite now being better represented.

> "even though in the early days they thought, 'We have been transmitted to,' that improved, consultations became more authentic, but [the residents] did not feel that they were really getting modifications on what was being originally proposed." (Cormac)

As detailed in the first report, options appraisal events were held in 2017, followed by a period of technical assessment and the undertaking of funding applications. Outside of the Stakeholder Group meetings, the next significant public engagement was the planning consultation took place once the formal planning application had been submitted, opening in late 2019. In line with UK planning regulations, the plans were available for public comment (see the first report for an analysis of responses received). In the interviews, it appears that a perception that project designs could not be changed in response to feedback was amplified during this consultation period, with it by now being viewed as a firm plan.

> "I go back to my original thought that it was kind of fait accomplis by that time. It was a consultation but "We wish you to agree to what we've got planned." I think the consultation was a bit… Well, let me say, I think it was embroidery." (Riley)

Peter, who had felt excluded from the stakeholder group, felt the period between public outreach in the options appraisal events and the planning consultation had been too long, and that there was no opportunity to feed back in a manner that could lead to changes in design between the two events. They raised objections and highlighted their feelings of exclusion with East Devon District Council (the planning regulation authority) during the planning consultation period, and claimed that this led to the application of a condition to the planning approval that would compel the project partners to engage with residents in their community. However, the representative felt that the meeting then held (once the planning application was approved) was still not an opportunity for them to input.

> "I do like to look up the definitions sometimes. 'Consultation: the act of exchanging information and opinions about something in order to reach a better understanding or to make a decision.' And there's two ways really, you could say the engagement would be consultation, it's another word for a similar sort of thing, but specifically with regard to the condition on the planning application that was about consultation, we didn't have that exchange of information and opinions, and we didn't reach a better understanding, and we didn't change any decisions that were made, because we weren't listened to." (Peter)

This reaffirms the importance of undertaking effective engagement with openness to feedback, from an early point in the process. In the workshops and documentary analysis, we have observed a clear desire for groups to feel empowered and able to comment in a manner in which they feel could influence design. From these interviews, we can see that such input is more likely to be achievable earlier in the development process when proposals are less firmly set.

2.3.4.2. Overcoming apathy

As workshop participants also recognised (see Section 1.4.1.3 of this report), there was broad acknowledgement among interviewees that it can be a challenge to engage with apathetic individuals or groups, regardless of efforts to reach out.

> "How do you engage the unengaged? […] I said, 'There are some people who are actively engaged in expressing their concerns, there are some people who are actively engaged in supporting, but there is a huge majority of passively engaged in supporting or opposing, but there is this other little group who are actively disengaged.' You know, 'I do not care. I do not care.'" (Cormac)

Apathy was suggested to be more commonplace in the earlier stages of project development when still just an idea as groups may be more complacent about the reality of the project happening. There is then greater reaction when something more concrete occurs (e.g. the submission of project proposals for planning approval).

> "it kind of feels like, it's very difficult to actually get people to engage, until the last minute, somehow. It is, I mean, you can take this right on, this whole process of trying to engage with people, but being only partially successful." (Larry)

> "I think if I'm honest about it, there was probably a sort of 'Oh right, nothing much is going to happen," and then all of a sudden, I don't know quite where it came from, I got to understand that they were trying to push ahead and use the River Otter to provide the inter-tidal habitat replacement'." (Peter)

> "It's often really hard. […] particularly at the early stages of a project, where there is a tendency for people to kind of think, well, this isn't really going to happen, is it? Surely this is all pie in the sky. And therefore not to take you seriously, until later on down the road. […] How do we try and make sure that we get proper buy-in from all the necessary people?" (Larry)

> "I don't know whether that was a reaction to suddenly people realising – or a group of more vocal people realising – 'Oh ****, actually they're serious about this, this is the time to say something.' […] But even towards the end, it's

almost as if when something becomes more certain, and that was the example with the planning; when you bang in with a planning application which was 'This will happen', so people think 'Well, the only chance we have for this not to happen is to have a voice now.'" (Rick)

However, although it was questioned whether it was inevitable that some groups may never engage, it was broadly recognised that engagement efforts should continue to seek ways to connect with these groups.

"you do need to try and connect with them somehow. […] 'If you will not join and I need you to join, I need to somehow entice you to join, how do I do that?'" (Cormac)

"You have to spark their interest somehow." (Cormac)

Jessica noted that individuals have other priorities in their lives also, which should be remembered. She recommended being sympathetic towards those who may only engage at a later stage and making the effort to engage positively with them when they do.

"If you are managing change, recognis[e] that people will be further behind you on that really and that is just normal. That is just natural human behaviour, isn't it, to be further behind as they have not been as engaged for as long, so yeah, I always try and empathise with local people and do not mind that they have not engaged… 'why have you not engaged?' Well, because you have got a life and you are doing something else completely different. 'Why have you not engaged with this before?' So, it does not matter." (Jessica)

There may be groups that are apathetic towards project proposals, particularly whilst they are still being developed. However, project leads should seek to find ways to encourage their interest and participation. This could be through creative and varied approaches to engagement that would appeal to different groups (see Sections 1.4.3 and 2.3.6 on the availability of information).

2.3.5. Trust

As has been observed at various points through this discussion, actions undertaken can influence levels of trust in the project partners. Of particular note, trust was observed to be related to perceived levels of transparency and openness during the engagement process. A transparent approach was reported to have been an aim of the project partners.

> "As an estate, we want to be transparent, open and honest and engage early" (Jessica)

And for some, this was how engagement had been received, which was reported to have resulted in strong partner-stakeholder relationships that could also interact with other potential projects.

> "We've got a very open relationship […] And actually, and because of our engagement through this project, it identified an opportunity […] which we wouldn't have come across were it not for the project." (Brendan)

For others, levels of trust in project partners were lower. This could relate to feelings of exclusion, or pre-existing power dynamics.

> "People who are naturally cautious or who have a negative perception of the estate and would perhaps assume that even though we are saying that it is for this reason or that reason, they are naturally suspicious and just assume that we are going to develop it and put houses on it or something like that" (Jessica)

Lower levels of perceived transparency were linked to distrust. In one interviewee's case, they felt that project partners were withholding information.

> "I think a very illuminating minute of the Steering Group was on the 24th of September 2019. Item 6, Public Engagement; this is minuted, and why they've minuted this to help this I don't know […] 'The importance of not engaging too early when not enough detail is available was noted.' So, don't tell anybody too much too soon because they might not like it. 'A small strategy meeting is to be held prior to the planning application. To avoid misinformed sensational reporting in the press, it was agreed to pre-empt local press engagement prior to the planning application submission.' So don't tell them anything until the planning application goes in" (Peter)

> "they must be more open […] And people respect that." (Peter)

In some interviews, particularly with those who held concerns about the project, there was distrust of assessments that had been undertaken, resulting from a perception of vested interests being held among project partners, and a sense of disempowerment during project development.

> "The response was at the beginning, 'We have taken advice and these are not significant risks.' And the perception grew that their concerns were just being dismissed without any independent, credible research. The engagement was

going on, but people were thinking, 'Hang on, it is all very well meeting with us. It is all very well logging it,' but they keep saying, 'You think it is not a significant concern'" (Cormac)

"maybe if the project had said, 'Look, we have got these… we are willing to have our project looked at by an independent expert […] and we will listen to what they have to say. […] It may be that would have worked." (Cormac)

Trust levels will likely be influenced by pre-existing power dynamics and perceived levels of transparency or openness. Thus, it is important to recognise potential dynamics of power and seek to take account of these in the engagement process (see Section 2.3.1.1). Demonstrations of openness and transparency in the engagement process from project partners is likely to result in increased trust levels.

Where there may be distrust between parties, particularly with those who may hold negative views on the project, a consideration for trust-building might be recruitment of an independent facilitator, or for independent review of assessments undertaken for the project being proposed.

2.3.6. Accessibility of Information

2.3.6.1. Methods of dissemination

Interviewees who had been involved in proposing the project described how they had sought to make information available, with reported intent for the development process to be transparent. A key feature of these efforts was the establishment of the project website in 2016:

> "I think our website, personally I think our website has been pretty informative and has been relatively open. I'd be interested to know what other people think of it. […] I think the website was a good move very early on, and I think that's served quite well as a source of information." (Rick)

The website was referenced by several interviewees as a central source of information, and its establishment was received positively among members of the Stakeholder Group.

> "I think the website was good. They also, at access points, did display notices. So I think that was good." (Scott)

> "Very early on they put together a website with a lot of information around it, and that was seen as the go-to source for information and, once the project's been underway, about its delivery. That's a very powerful and useful thing to be able to point people towards, and also reference and link with things like press releases and everything else. So it provides a coordinated message." (Brendan)

The project sought to disseminate information locally using other communication routes also, which Jessica recommended other projects would need to consider.

> "I would say use all communication channels, I think, and make sure you have got staff to respond to things quite quickly." (Jessica)

Here this included engaging with online conversation on social media.

> "It's an amazing tool. It's absolutely fantastic and we can really get our messages out." (Bella)

(Challenges associated with social media were also reported, see)

Offline, the project sought to use local newspapers and Parish Newsletters, which are sent to all properties within the boundary. Whilst they were unsure how many people will read their local newsletters, they were highlighted by an interviewee as an effective way of ensuring every household has an opportunity to see the information shared - although only where a Parish has such a newsletter.

> "that is the benefit of having village newsletters. They land on the doormat of every household in that village, so you have got complete coverage. You do not know if people are reading it […] but anecdotal evidence and data about reach, certainly distribution, would suggest that it is an effective tool to use. More difficult for [place name] because there is not a single [newsletter] and I

would say that is perhaps a shame. […Other parishes] are probably more… have this information more accessible than [place name] because unless they are buying a newspaper or going to our website, then that information would not necessarily be there for them, so potentially, that is why people could say that they have not heard of things before" (Jessica)

> There are both strengths and weaknesses to different methods of dissemination, with different groups responding to the different approaches. From these experiences and in reflection of findings from the resident workshops, we conclude that information should be made available using multiple outreach methods, to disseminate information as widely as possible.

2.3.6.2. Communicating Complexity

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is a multifaceted landscape-scale project of 55 hectares which has been evolving over time. It includes (among other things): relocation of a cricket pitch; recreation of saltmarsh; raising of a road; managed river realignment; multiple project partners; and a partnership with the Saâne Territorial Project. This complexity is further influenced by interactions with other projects taking place in the same area.

> "the FAB Link project came in, which started to present some challenges […] I think there were some difficulties associated with that in terms of its phasing, likelihood, funding, timing and how that would work with the project as a whole. And then on top of that we were also considering removing these low-voltage powerlines in the valley [...] So we'd been working with [organisation] and more recently in the last year with the project delivery team to try and tie that up and make sure we can synchronise the delivery of that project, alongside the restoration programme." (Brendan)

Numerous interviewees referenced that complexity in a large-scale scheme could make it difficult to communicate project motivations.

> "This is a massive project. Physically, geographically, it's a big project and it's got so many little component parts. And I think, sometimes messaging isn't always clear because it's quite complex, and particularly when you are in a project team, you get the detail all the time and you forget that people don't always know." (Bella)

> "this is a really complex project and I would say that is another big challenge. It is not a single issue. There are many competing agendas, so […] that sense of clarity is really difficult and you start having to have really quite complicated, long conversations and you just wish there was a quick answer that reassured people […] and I think all of us have probably struggled with

breaking that down and sometimes as the project develops, the key messages have maybe not changed, but our focus has changed because obviously things like funding and timelines and priorities shift slightly, so you can frame things in a different way and I think it is sometimes hard not to go back to the very beginning and tell the story." (Jessica)

"you can't talk to people in a language they don't understand because you're not getting your message across. The whole thing about communication, making people understand" (Peter)

Complexity may also mean there are more uncertainties which are challenging to communicate.

"As you may well know, you change one parameter in an experiment and you will effectively change the result, and you will not be able to predict what will happen during the course of the works and as a result of the whole thing." (Riley)

"People always want there to be right and wrong answers. And sometimes, they don't exist. And there's a lot of grey. […] there is an expectation that you can say definitely one way or the other." (Larry)

Jessica suggested communications about complex proposals could be broken down into smaller chunks that may be easier for people to comprehend.

"I think, early doors, we delivered the whole scheme, and I think our learning, particularly, is that we started to break it down and - right, let's talk about the birds and the wildlife, let's talk about the flooding, let's talk about the cricket club, let's talk about habitat mitigation. And actually, if you break it down, give people little bitesize chunks, it's easier to comprehend, get your head around." (Jessica)

Complexity was comparably recognised in the resident workshops, and creative methods (e.g. physical and virtual models) were suggested as a potential route to help communities visualise the scheme as a whole. This was also recognised in these interviews, where it was highlighted that information should be made accessible for different audiences to effectively facilitate the transfer of knowledge and information, and communications about complex projects could be broken down into smaller parts that are easier to understand. Early and sustained engagement through which two-way exchange of knowledge could also help to facilitate understanding between groups and reduce the levels of uncertainty (see Section 1.4.4).

2.3.6.3. Responsiveness to Enquiry

The project team reported that they sought to make information available and to keep it up to date, which was also recognised by a stakeholder interviewee.

> "They put a lot of resources into making sure that they get the messages out in a highly professional way, quickly and efficiently". (Brendan)

Peter however expressed a view that the project teams had not been responsive to enquiries made, resulting in frustration. For example, he reported posing questions about the flood risk modelling to the Environment Agency to which he felt he had not been given answers, or an opportunity to directly discuss it with those who had undertaken the assessment. This led to distrust of the assessments made.

> "they said 'Can you tell us what questions you want to ask beforehand?' And I said 'No, because anything I ask, I would expect you to know the answer to already.' I really wanted to test how much they knew, and when it came to modelling questions and things like that, I was asking questions about the presentation […]. And he said 'I don't know the answer to that because I didn't do the modelling' […] I said 'Well, you represented at the previous meeting with [us], you knew all about this, so I'm disappointed that you can't answer the questions.'" (Peter)

Peter also suggested that responses to their enquiries were slow, again contributing towards a sense of frustration.

> "it dissolved after that into [pause] table-tennis really. "What about this?" "No, that's wrong." "What about that?" Bit-bat-bit-bat. […] And so, that's where we've got to. […] every letter or email we send gets put into the [Freedom of Information]. And so you immediately get a response that says "We've got 20 days to respond to this." So you've asked a question in a sort of debate almost, we don't get chance to meet, and so everything's done by… It's a very slow game of table-tennis going backwards and forwards." (Peter)

Riley suggested that a responsive, designated contact point may be one route through which responsiveness may be possible.

> "I might suggest as well that something like a live chat line is set up which one could feed these things in. You'd have a live chat with a specific person, a person who understands the project. With all due respect to [individuals], they're not scientists and they don't understand this, they're not engineers. So you want somebody who would be able to give the response in a professional way, not a pushback thing." (Riley)

Quick and informative responses to enquiries are more likely to be received positively and minimise potential for frustration or distrust. This could be addressed to some extent with a designated, responsive point of contact.

2.3.6.4. Social Media Challenges

In recent years, use of social media has increased and, during the COVID-19 pandemic and national restrictions, much of the LORP project's engagement was undertaken online. As referenced by Bella in Section 2.3.6.1, social media was a tool used by Clinton Devon Estates for dissemination of information, and it was viewed positively by Bella for that purpose. There were however challenges described associated with social media from which learning can be drawn.

Bella recounted that, in the early stages, some who held negative views of LORP proposals used social media in a manner which was affecting for project staff.

> "in the early days, before the project structure and the PR structure was set up, it was absolutely abhorrent, the social media. Just the amount of flak that the project was getting, that colleagues were dealing with […] And that's been a real challenge because it made it very difficult in the early days because there was so much antagonism and real nastiness, actually. […]" (Bella)

Bella felt that the way in which people commented on social media was different to how they may engage in a discussion in person.

> "People are very happy to type away at 9 o'clock with a glass of wine in their hand, aren't they? If they had to put a stamp on it, put it in the post or come and talk to you at an office… it's a very different world, isn't it, to operate in?" (Bella)

The project team originally sought to respond to reaction on social media, but reported to have learned that this could sometimes escalate tensions and it may be better to leave some comments alone, instead responding by carefully preparing 'Question and Answer' posts.

> "Initially we would really try and defend our position and respond and be really good at thinking we're doing a really good job here. I think it came round to more of – just let it run. Because whatever we say… and then what we'd do is, every so often, put out 'Question and Answers' or we would put out a press release that dealt with something that was really rumbling on in the background. You just stoke the fire, really [by responding directly] and I think, as an organisation, we've learnt - sometimes you've just got to let it burn out." (Bella)

In later stages (and into the implementation phase), LORP has formalised an approach to social media, which was reported to have led to better online interaction.

> "I think, now, the social media platforms, the Interreg, the [Construction Company] website, the Environment Agency […], I think that's really helped" (Bella)

In light of these experiences, Jessica suggested that earlier establishment of a formalised social media presence may have been beneficial.

> "I think I would have liked to have had a project profile. I think having LORP as a social media profile would have helped. […] we could have used all of

that wealth of local knowledge in that forum and it would have been our staff and agency staff, so I think that it feels like a lot more work […] but I think in terms of the project, that would have been useful. […] I think we would have perhaps been minded to go early on." (Jessica)

A project could establish a formal social media presence from an early stage, enabling effective interaction with local communities through online platforms, whilst also reducing potential of personal harm for the project staff.

3. Saâne Territorial Project: Resident Workshops

3.1 Summary of Outcomes

Participants made a series of recommendations for the engagement of citizens in coastal adaptation projects. These can be summarised thus:

To involve local communities…

• Information provided should be aimed at all citizens (not just at stakeholders).

• Consultation processes should be open to all citizens.

• Forms of public participation should be established early, before the scenarios become fixed ideas.

• Record and centralise citizens' questions and actors' answers (for example, in a book or a website).

• Participatory mapping workshops could be one tool to help understand how local people understand their local landscape.

• Recognise and understand the knowledges of local people.

To build or maintain trust between partners and community members…

• There may need to be a profound shift in the culture and posture in the administration to listen to community voices.

• Communicate about ongoing discussions (e.g. dedicated website and planning meeting)

• Communicate more about project funding, so groups can understand who is funding what, and why.

To ensure information is available and comprehensible…

• Set up regular information sessions (e.g. once a year), with a report.

• A project website that brings together all the information would be favourably received.

• The website of the town halls (and community of communes) could provide a signpost to the relevant project website with all the information.

• To help people to understand the proposal, models of different landscapes could be provided in public places (e.g. town halls), or 3D diagrams of possible new landscapes could be provided on a website aimed towards citizens.

3.2. Participants

As was outlined in the Methods (Section iii.1), Lisode's facilitator needed to adapt the recruitment approach in France, thereby abandoning the original expression of interest survey. Due to this necessary adaptation of the recruitment approach, we cannot provide participant details here in the individualised way in which we can for the Lower Otter Restoration Project. We can however summarise the participant group as a whole.

- 30 participants attended the first workshop, followed by 25 at the second and 12 at the third.
- The majority of people who came to the workshop were reported to be unsure what to think of the project (looking forward to having more information – see Section 3.3.1).
- The majority of people in the group were over 40 years old.
- There was no major difference between genders in the composition of the group.
- Approximately a third of the attendees shared their addresses to demonstrate that they lived right next to the River Saâne.

3.3. Workshop Outline

The structure of the workshops here was revised from the original proposed outline (Appendix 3). This was partially because of the additional discussion required to build trust with the group in the first workshop (see Section 3.3.1), but this was also a reflection of the size of the group and the cultural context. It is worth putting forward the following elements to have a general understanding of how the workshops were carried out:

- Suggest an agenda to be displayed on a wall at the beginning of the workshop (make sure people agree with it, if not, consider making some changes)
- Make sure there are times for people to discuss in small groups (ideally less than 12 people)
- Use cardboards and markers so that people can express their ideas and make them visible to others (1 idea = 1 cardboard)
- Write minutes of the workshop based on pictures and exact quotations of what people said and wrote on the cardboards (or the facilitator, with approval of the people in the room)

The workshops therefore had a more rigid structure that those on the English side, whilst still allowing for flexibility. Table 7 below presents the overall approach to the three workshops.

Table 7. Overall approach taken at the PTS resident workshops.

Dates	Workshop 1 25th August	Workshop 2 13th September	Workshop 3 22nd September
Objective (key question the workshop will address)	What role citizens should have in the elaboration of public policies and major landscape projects in general, and in a project of adaptation to coastal change in particular?	What role was given to citizens in the elaboration of the Saane Territorial project and do you find it satisfying (based on criteria established during workshop 1)	What would you recommend in terms of engagement of citizens in similar projects in the future?
Expected outcomes	**General criteria** for evaluating the role of citizens in the design of a project	**Specific evaluation**, from the standpoint of participants of the workshops, of the way citizens were included in the elaboration of the Saane River project, mostly between 2010 and 2018	**Practical recommendations** from citizens

Here will discuss the workshops, leading to the recommendations for engagement in coastal adaptation projects. The results of the first workshop (criteria) fed into workshop two (evaluation), which in turn fed into the last workshop (recommendations). This is why this report puts more emphasis on the last workshop.

Please note: The opinions and recommendations expressed are strictly those of the participants. They are the views of real people, and we encourage them to be read with respect for their opinions. (They may or may not reflect the personal views of the research team.)

3.3.1. Workshop 1

The Mayor of Quiberville (the city in which the workshop took place) expressed interest in these workshops and came to welcome citizens, and to thank them for their participation. An Introduction then followed in which the series of workshops were put into the broader context of the PACCo project. It is important for citizens to know about the general framework and understand the role of the different actors involved (Conservatoire du littoral on the one hand, Lisode on the other).

As this was the first time that people met, there was first an opportunity for people to share what they liked and did not like about the Saâne Valley. The core of the workshop was to make people reflect on what would be an ideal way to involve citizens in public policies and urban planning projects in general, so as to have a set of criteria that could then be applied to the Saâne Valley in the second workshop.

3.3.1.1. Main outcome of Workshop 1

The majority of people who came to the workshop were frustrated that it was not an opportunity to receive more information on the project. Citizens posed a list of questions for the facilitator to take to Conservatoire du littoral. Participants felt like that information was vital for any person living in the area, and felt it was necessary for them to know about the project and how it was carried in order to be able to have an opinion about it.

As a result, significant time needed to be allocated to answering doubts and mistrusts about the independence of the facilitator in the first workshop.

The following is an abridged excerpt from the minutes:

> "Several people questioned the value of the workshop currently underway. Is the citizen participation of today's workshop serving a purpose?

> "Several people asked whether the current workshop would have an impact on the Saâne project and whether the facilitators were truly independent."

> [Facilitator responds, outlining project aims and her independent position]

> "The role of the facilitators is "neither to defend nor to put down" the territorial project, but to summarise the opinions of everyone (institutions and citizens).

> "A participant asked whether the Conservatoire du littoral could touch up the report before publication to change its content. Another participant asked to whom the facilitator was accountable and wanted to know more about the facilitator's relationship with the Conservatoire du Littoral."

> [Facilitator responds, outlining Lisode's role and the relationship with the University of Exeter]

3.3.2. Workshop 2

The second workshop started with a reminder of the general framework (as some participants were not present for the first workshop) and notified that Conservatoire du littoral would hold a public meeting during the first quarter of 2023, to answer technical questions citizens may have on the project.

The facilitator then summarized the process of development of the Saâne Territorial project in a timeline (Figure 10) with the three main stages identified in the Documentary Evaluation (Section 2 of Report 1):

- 1st stage: 2012-2014
- 2nd stage: 2015
- 3rd stage: 2016-2018

In each stage the major events that took place during that time were listed, and for each of them:
- In blue the type of event (workshop, interview, etc.);
- The date (the date and participants appear as they do on the documents sent to Lisode by the Conservatoire du littoral for the documentary evaluation);
- The participants (the participants are designated by category of stakeholder, the details of the institutional stakeholders, which were often numerous, are written on the back of the card);
- The objectives (these correspond to Lisode's analysis after reading the minutes of a particular meeting, where the main objectives were identified).

Figure 10. Project timeline at Workshop 2.
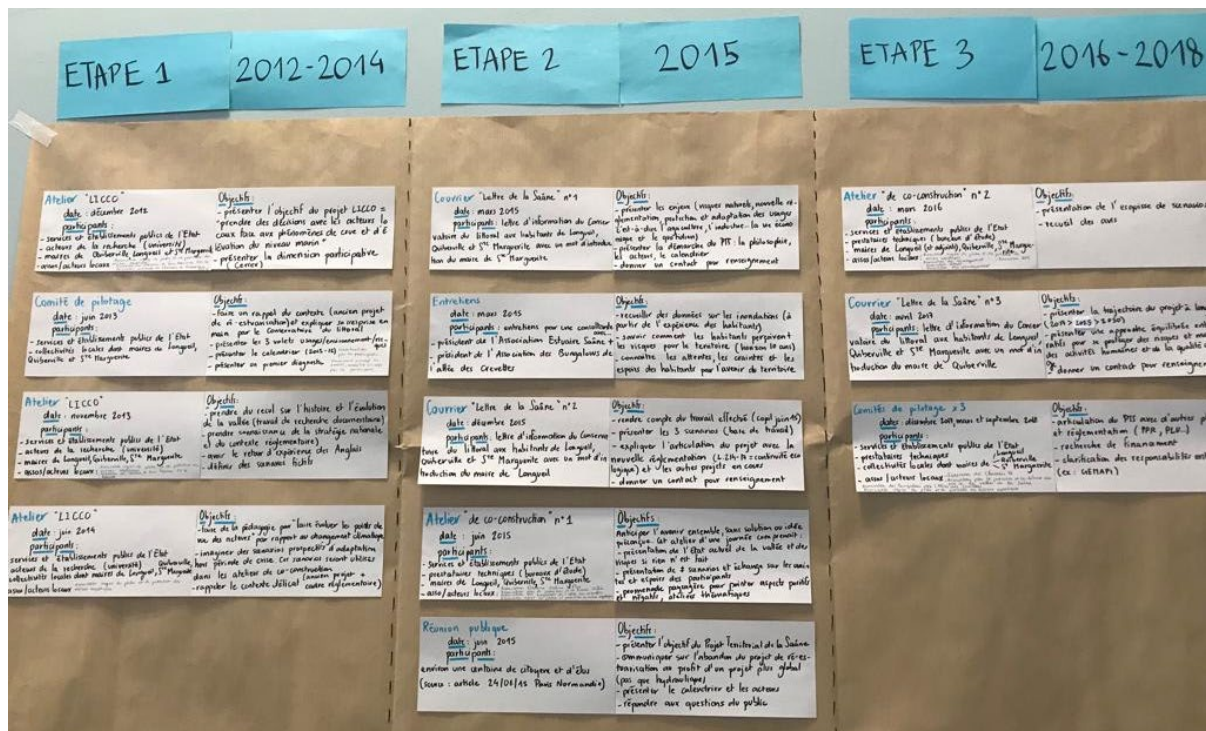
Participants were divided into groups and invited to answer the following questions:
- Evaluation: Were the events useful and why?
- Recommendation: How would you have liked it to have happened? What kind of event? What type of event? With whom?

They were provided with a summary of criteria established during the first workshop; the following was provided at the table for each subgroup:

What should be the role of citizens?

Summary of the ideas expressed during workshop 1 "The place of citizens in the territorial project of the Saâne, what do you think?" on 25.08.22

> *This document includes:*
>
> *-The main ideas that emerged during the sub-group work around the question "Citizen participation: is it useful? (Why? Under what conditions?) ». This synthesis takes up the ideas that came up in the two subgroups.*
>
> *-The main trends that emerged in the participants' response on the desired level of involvement at each stage of a project. This summary lists the steps and levels of involvement for which the majority of participants voted.*

• Above all, citizens want to be informed
The citizens present expressed their preference for a modest involvement (simple information) but followed and continuous - at all stages of the project - rather than a strong involvement (co-construction or co-decision) at a particular stage of the project.

• Citizens want to be involved earlier, from the diagnostic phase.
In both sub-groups emerged the idea that citizens must be involved early. Also, one of the two stages for which participants most strongly expressed their desire to be informed was the diagnostic phase.

• Citizens want a presentation and explanation of the different options available in a project. They want the choice of solutions studied and chosen to be explained and justified from a technical point of view.
In both subgroups, participants expressed a need for technical explanations on the choice of one solution over another. In Group 2, several regretted the fact that the communication focused so much on the need to adapt to climate change, an idea already widely shared. The questions do not concern the merits of the project, but the choice of solutions retained.

3.3.2.1. Main outcomes

Participants felt that direct participation of citizens should have taken place a long time ago. They were having a hard time understanding how so many meetings could have taken place with what they felt was little inclusion of ordinary citizens.

A suggestion was made by participants that they could initiate a Facebook page to express their views on the project and advocate for a better inclusion of citizens in the project.

Participants also underlined their desire to receive the final report which Lisode would contribute along with the University of Exeter.

3.3.3. Workshop 3

Fewer participants attended the final workshop, perhaps because participants would prefer to go to the public meeting being hosted by Conservatoire du littoral in the new year, which will be where practical information on changes to the landscape in the future are to be shared.

At the workshop, the facilitator presented a summary of what would be communicated in the report, based on what had been said in the first two workshops. Participants were invited to discuss these five main points in subgroups, to correct and add important points that may have been missing or were not close enough to what they actually said. Participants then voted for the most important ideas.

A participatory mapping exercise also took place – see Section 3.4.4.

3.3.3.1. Main outcomes

The main outcomes from this workshop were the findings discussed in Section 3.4.

3.4. Discussion of Findings

In this section, we present the conclusions as reviewed and approved by participants during the final workshop (Figure 11), including the recommendations that can be drawn to inform the model for engagement presented in Section 6.

As described in Section iv, these are the views of real people, which we encourage to be read with respect for their opinions. This discussion represents the views, knowledges and suggestions made by participants, drawing on their personal backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Opinions and understandings expressed here are those of participants only and may not necessarily represent those of the wider community. The role of the researchers is to interpret and articulate these, and not to make a judgement on them. Neither is it the role of the researchers to make a judgement on the project engagement process and criticism is not implied. Engagement recommendations expressed are those for an ideal project.

In these pages, there are additional reflections made by the facilitator from Lisode, which are highlighted in grey.

Figure 11. Summaries of points to include in this report, as developed with the participants in Workshop 3.
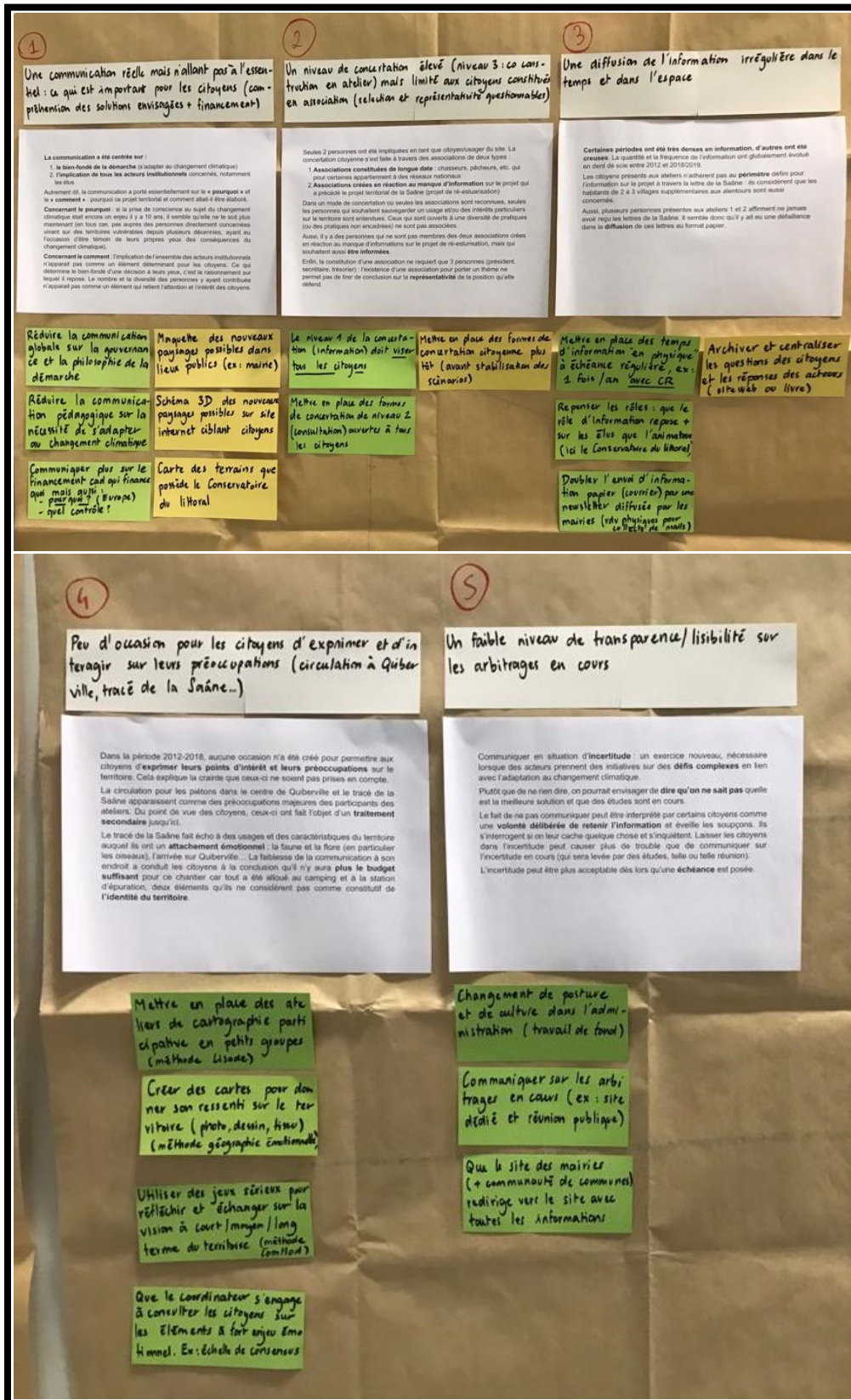
3.4.1. Workshop Conclusion 1

There was real effort in terms of communication, but it was not to the point and was missing what is important for citizens (that is to say explanations of the solutions envisaged and funding)

The communication focused on:
1. The rationale for the approach (adapting to climate change);
2. The involvement of all the institutional actors concerned, particularly the elected representatives.

In other words, the communication focused essentially on the **"why"** and the **"how"**: why this territorial project and how it was developed.

Concerning the why: if awareness of climate change was still an issue 10 years ago, it seems that it is no longer an issue now (at least not among the people directly concerned who have been living in vulnerable areas for several decades and have had the opportunity to witness the consequences of climate change with their own eyes).

Concerning the how: the involvement of all institutional actors does not appear to be a determining factor for citizens. What determines the soundness of a decision in their eyes is the reasoning behind it. The number and diversity of the people who contributed to it does not appear to be an element that really matters to citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferred by the facilitator

> Communicate more about funding - who is funding what, but also why?
> - Why (Europe)
> - What control over the use of the money?

> The people are impressed by the amount of money poured into the project, but it is unclear to them why it is the EU and not local or national institutions paying for something which they consider as "standard" work. For example, the water treatment plant in their eyes is not a special infrastructure whose need is linked to climate change.

Directly expressed by participants (in workshop 1 and 2)

> Models of different landscapes in public places (e.g. town halls)

> 3D diagram of possible new landscapes on website targeting citizens

Directly expressed by participants (comments/additional ideas added in workshop 3)

Excellent idea to create a website that brings together all the information

To note, there has been a website since 2021: https://basse-saane-2050.com/
Prior to this, the only information about the project was in press articles and a page on the website of Conservatoire du littoral dedicated to the project which was created in 2017. It is unlikely that citizens would go on the website of Conservatoire du littoral since the institution usually has little direct connection to the community as a whole.

3.4.2. Workshop Conclusion 2

There was a high degree of involvement (co-construction in workshops) but it was limited to citizens represented in associations (where the selection and representativeness is questionable)

Only two people were involved as citizens/users of the site. Citizen involvement took place through two types of associations:

1. **Long-established associations**: hunters, fishermen, etc., (some of which belong to national networks);
2. **Associations created in reaction to the lack of information** on the project which preceded the Saâne territorial project (re-estuarisation project).

In a mode of consultation where only associations are recognised, only those who wish to safeguard a particular use and/or interest in the territory are heard. Those who are open to a diversity of practices (or unregulated practices)* are not necessarily represented.

> *such as walking/strolling, which is the simplest yet most widespread use. Hunters are very well structured and organised at the national as well as the local level in France. They seem to have an important weight compared to other users when actually not amounting to a very large number of people.

Also, there are people who are not members of the two associations created in reaction to the lack of information on the re-establishment project, but who also wish to be informed.

Finally, the constitution of an association only requires 3 people (president, secretary, treasurer): the existence of an association to carry a theme does not allow any conclusion to be drawn about the representativeness of the position it defends.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferred by the facilitator

Level 1 of public participation (= information) should be aimed at all citizens

Set up level 2 forms of public participation (=consultation) open to all citizens

Directly expressed by participants (in workshop 1 and 2)

Set up forms of public participation earlier (before the scenarios are stabilised)

The different levels of involvement are a reference to the work of Arnstein (1969), who places participation on a citizen decision-making ladder. This is represented in the following Figure 12, taken from page 6 of Lisode, 2017:

Figure 12. Ladder of participation adapted from Arnstein, 1969 (Lisode, 2017)
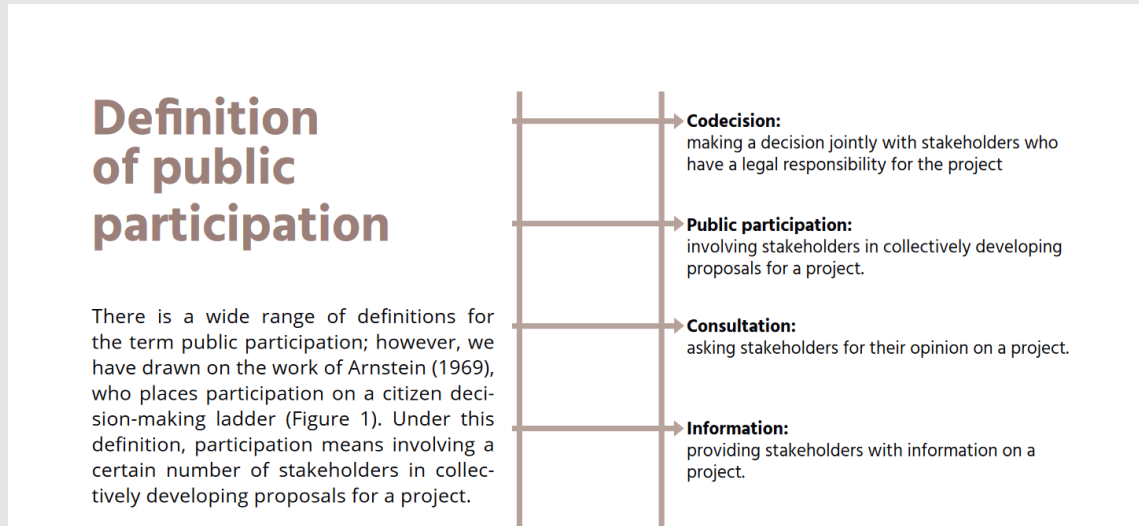
This ladder was presented to citizens in the first workshop and they were reminded of it in the second, so participants were aware of this. The third level ("public participation") was renamed "co-construction" to avoid confusion.

3.4.3. Workshop Conclusion 3

There was uneven dissemination of information throughout time and throughout the territory.

Some periods have been very information-intensive, others have been empty. The quantity and frequency of information has evolved in a jagged pattern between 2012 and 2018/2019.

The citizens present at the workshops do not agree with the **perimeter** defined for information on the project through the Saâne letter: they consider that the inhabitants of two to three additional villages in the vicinity are also concerned.

Also, several people present at workshops one and two stated that they had never received the letters from the Saâne. Participants expressed a feeling that there has been a failure in the **distribution** of these letters in paper format.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferred by the facilitator

Set up regular physical information sessions (e.g. once a year) <u>with a report</u>

Directly expressed by participants (in workshop 1 and 2)

Archive and centralise citizens' questions and actors' answers (e.g. in a book or website)

What is important about that third point is that the challenge is not the accessibility of information, it's reaching out to the people. The interviews then confirmed the "letter of the Saâne" had not been distributed in the mailboxes at that period. It started being distributed around 2019. Before that, they were just accessible in the project manager's office for people who would come to his/her office to ask questions.

3.4.4. Workshop Conclusion 4

There was little opportunity for citizens to interact and express their concerns (e.g. traffic in Quiberville, or the Saâne River route)

In the period 2012-2018, there was no opportunity for citizens to **collectively express their interests and concerns about the territory**. This explains the fear that these will not be taken into account.

Pedestrian traffic in the centre of Quiberville and the route of the Saâne River appear to be major concerns of workshop participants. From the point of view of the citizens, these have been treated as **secondary concerns** until now.

The Saâne route echoes the uses and characteristics of the territory to which they have an **emotional attachment**: the fauna and flora (in particular the birds), the arrival in Quiberville... The perceived weakness of the communication about this led the citizens to the conclusion that there will **no longer be a sufficient budget** for this project because everything has been allocated to the campsite and the water treatment plant, two elements which they do not consider to be part of **the identity of the territory**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferred by the facilitator

Set up participatory mapping workshops in small groups (Lisode method)

"Participatory mapping is a method used to build a graphical representation of an area with local stakeholders. [...] The participants begin by drawing the boundaries of the geographic area concerned. They then add the main landmarks and features (for instance: towns, roads, rivers, property lines, etc.). Once the map outline has been completed, the participants write down on this map all the information they have on the public participation topic (for example: farming practices, access to services, the water supply network, etc.). The participants note what is most important to them on the map and then discuss this to reach a consensus on the depiction of their area." (Lisode, 2017, p.29)

In Workshop 3, a participatory mapping exercise (Figure 13) was used by participants to draw the facilitator's attention to the fact that the organisation that is referred to as representative of those living just by the river does not represent everyone.

Figure 13. Output of participatory mapping exercise.
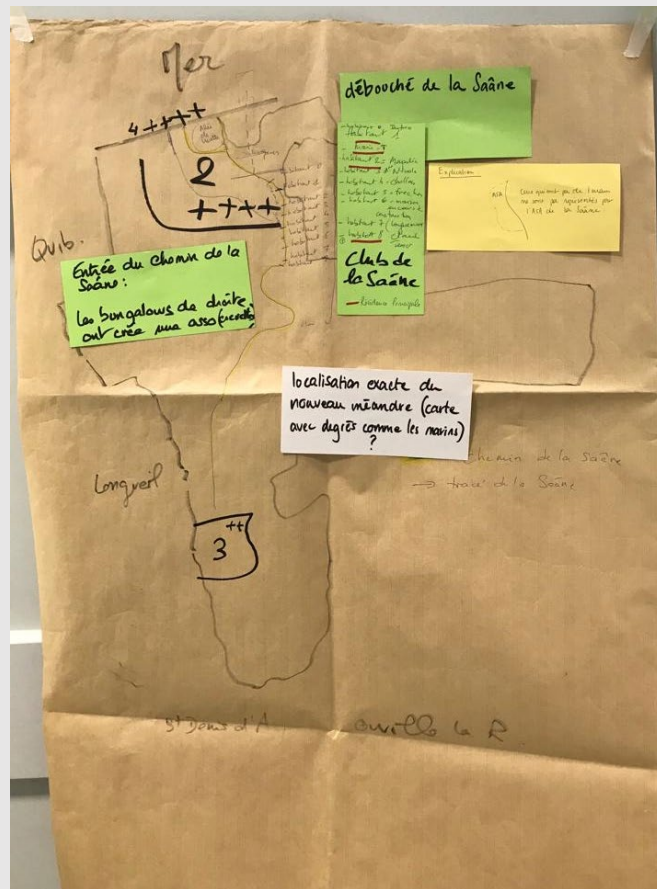
Directly expressed by participants (comments/additional ideas added in workshop 3)

Bringing knowledge of the terrain for 40 years. We know the weather by heart.

3.4.5. Workshop Conclusion 5

There was a low level of transparency/readability on ongoing discussions

Communicating in a situation of **uncertainty**: a new exercise, necessary when actors take initiatives on **complex challenges** related to climate change adaptation.

Rather than saying nothing, one could consider **saying that one does not know** what the best solution is and that studies are underway.

Not communicating can be interpreted by some citizens as **a deliberate attempt to withhold information** and arouses suspicion. They wonder if something is being kept from them and become concerned. Leaving citizens in a state of uncertainty may cause more confusion than communicating about the uncertainty that exists (which will be resolved by studies, this or that meeting).

Uncertainty may be more acceptable when a deadline is set.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inferred by the facilitator

Change of culture and posture in the administration (profound shift)

That the website of the town halls (and community of communes) redirects to the website with all the information

Communicate on current discussions (e.g. dedicated website and public meeting)

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4. Saâne Territorial Project: Stakeholder Interviews

4.1. Summary of Outcomes

Fourteen interviews were undertaken with project partners, representatives of stakeholder groups, user associations representatives. Drawing upon their varied experiences, a series of learnings have been identified.

Communication

• Communications about a project should take place in a way that is meaningful for both actors and local people.

Representation and Inclusion

• An effectively managed steering committee/stakeholder group will enable actors to feel that there is opportunity to speak and that their viewpoints are being considered.

• Institutional actors may have a different perspective on the required level of citizen involvement compared to residents who may wish to engage in a process and be involved from an early stage of development. Where this is the case, engagement approaches that enable citizens to feel represented alongside local actors may require a shift in institutional mindset.

• The personalities, personal backgrounds, and beliefs of local representatives will have an impact. It may require time and effort to build trust and robust relations, particularly with those actors who may be more sceptical.

Challenges

• Regulatory frameworks and budget constraints may pose limitations on what is possible in the development of a project and an engagement process that seeks to respond to the needs of local actors. These could limit for example the ability to obtain the necessary authorisation or funding for the project.

• Developing coastal adaptation projects can be resource intensive and can take a long time to reach fruition. Commitment, stamina, and patience will be needed to overcome challenges during design and to reach the point of implementation.

4.2. Participants

Fourteen interview invitations were issued to individuals who represented project partners or stakeholder groups, identified through the documentary analysis. A summary of participants is given in **Table 8**. All fourteen individuals accepted the invitation (three female, eleven male). Participants include project leads, and representatives of stakeholder groups and user associations.

Due to reasons outside of the research teams' control (health and logistical reasons), two interviews were completed as written questionnaires to provide the opportunity to participate for those two respective interviewees who could not otherwise have taken part.

(Note: "Copil" = Comités de pilotage / steering committee)

Table 8. Summary of interview participants, using assigned participant numbers to protect their identities.

Participant Number	Role	Engaged since
1	Member of copil	20 years or more
2	Member of copil	2 years
3	Member of copil	10 years
4	Member of copil	Possibly 10 years
5	Member of copil	Approximately 5-6 years
6	Member of copil	More than 10 years
7	Member of copil	2 years
8	Member of copil	20 years or more
9	Member of copil	More than 10 years
10	Member of copil	More than 10 years
11	Member of copil	Approximately 5-6 years
12	Member of copil	More than 15 years
13	Member of copil	More than 15 years
14	Member of copil	More than 20 years
15	Member of copil	More than 20 years

4.3. Discussion of Findings

As described in Section iv, these are the views of real people, which we encourage to be read with respect for their opinions. This discussion represents the views, knowledges and suggestions made by a limited number of participants, drawing on their personal backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Opinions and understandings expressed here are those of participants only and may not necessarily represent those of the wider community. The role of the researchers is to interpret and articulate these, and not to make a judgement on them. Neither is the role of the researchers to make a judgement on the project engagement process and criticism is not implied. Engagement recommendations expressed are those for an ideal project.

4.3.1. Narrative of the PTS

4.3.1.1. Process or outputs of the PTS

We identified two ways in which the Saâne Territorial Project was presented by interviewees: as a project including several actions (the relocation of the campsite, the new water treatment plant, and the realignment of the Saâne River) or as a mindset, a philosophy, a way of doing things in a collaborative way. The duality does not seem to be correlated to any characteristics (i.e. type of actor, gender). However, those who have been working on the project the longest (more than 8 years) had a tendency to focus on the way of carrying out the project, rather than specific decisions and actions to be implemented.

Example of focus on action :

> *"There are 3 main dimensions in this project:*
>
> *- Camping*
>
> *- The station*
>
> *- The outlet at sea."*
>
> (Participant N°4)

Example of focus on process :

> *"a project from a different angle, that of the PTS: a multidisciplinary approach with a vision of regional planning by involving different communities"*
>
> (Participant N°1)

4.3.1.2. A return to nature or a multi-faceted project

Then, most importantly, we can identify two main narratives in the way that people present the main objectives of the project. On the one hand, some present it as a return to the natural state of the valley, while others see the main objective was to find agreement on a project which is acceptable to all parties, taking all interests and all dimensions (economic, social etc.) into account. In some interviews both of these narratives can be identified, while others strongly insist on either of these two "reasons of being" for the Saâne Territorial project.

Example of the "back to nature" narrative:

> *"[The territorial project] is part of a global component of management of the river in its territory of influence since taking into account the sanitation of the territory crossed by the river to its mouth to the sea, artificialized fifty years ago, for which the Conservatoire du littoral wishes to make it a pilot site for the renaturation and return to naturalness of this river.*
>
> *The challenge is to return the artificialized areas to their natural appearance with the flow of the river according to its natural circuit and its meanders and redevelop the estuary of the Saâne which is completely artificialized, with the road that passes over a culvert, which limits the exchanges between the sea and the river and the flow of the river to the sea.*
>
> *It is a project of return to nature with the relocation of constructions, including the municipal [camping] and inhabited areas of Sainte Marguerite and the removal of the culvert to re-widen the estuary and promote the flow and spreading of water, whether of marine or terrestrial origin from the rise of the river. That it is more natural since today it is completely artificial.*
>
> *A significant aspect of the entire course of the Saâne is to strengthen and build a treatment plant to allow the quality of the residual water that have washed into this river is satisfactory to restore its natural appearance."*
> (Participant N°2)

Example of the multi-faceted project narrative:

> *"What do we mean by territorial project? For me 2 aspects.*
>
> *We are committed to a project that takes into account different technical fields, that if we had left it as it was, some would have made roads, others birds, others the environment… etc. put end to end it wouldn't make sense, it would have made a mosaic. There, at all stages of design, we look at an area as a whole, in the different services it provides – entertainment, drinking, eating… the ecological functionalities can be reduced to that too – this site is unique because it has to meet all of its aspects there. How do I respond to all these aspects?*

The second side is there are plenty of people to put around the table. It is not a landowner, not a mayor alone, a state service alone.

It's those two aspects."

(Participant N°1)

4.3.1.3. Relationship with the prior re-estuarisation project

Finally, there is also a difference in the way people represent the relationship with the previous re-estuarisation project (see Section 2.1.1 in the first report). Some interviews present the PTS as a continuation, others as a turning point. This can be explained by the fact that it represented a drastic change in terms of ways of carrying out the project (including all stakeholders) whilst building on many of the studies that had been made within the framework of the re-estuarisation project. From an engineering perspective, the project is not of the same scale but of the same nature (seeking to favour the connection and water circulation between the sea and the river).

> *"[The re-estuarisation project] doesn't really have a flop: it has evolved into a spatial recomposition project. In the project of territorial recomposition we take into account the human, we project the territory of tomorrow, as is the living space, the economic activity we are not just on a reorganization of the territory in a strictly geographical way. Talking to people knowing that there is a problem allows you to take off. It was just the beginnings. It's more of an evolution."*

(Participant N°6)

-

> *"[The PTS is] the culmination of much longer, much longer thinking. The first reflections date from the beginning of the 2000s. It was the union that carried out the first reflections."*

(Participant N°1)

Communications mostly focussed on the "multifaceted project narrative", putting emphasis on the inclusion of a wide diversity of actors. Interviewees felt that was indeed a crucial factor of success. Yet the workshops with citizens demonstrated that this didn't mean as much to citizens (see Section 3.4.1).

Great effort was made by technical experts to summarise the technical possibilities with the 'pros and cons', so that local representatives would be able to make an informed decision during steering committees. It would have been interesting to build on that work to better communicate with and inform citizens too.

Authors recommend that communications should take place in a way that is meaningful for both actors and citizens. These may also need to consider whether it is appropriate to use "back to nature" style narratives within each context; here, it seemed during workshops that some participants had heard this narrative and felt it to be one in which human beings are not included (e.g. a framing of human-versus-nature).

4.3.2. The impact of the (French and/or European) regulatory framework

The regulatory framework is presented by many actors as impeding innovation.

> *"We had to be very careful that the State services did not contradict each other, that they went to the end of the trajectory that we had given ourselves. The regulatory aspect is a puzzle. We are asked to innovate and we are in a straightjacket at the regulatory level which is enormously restrictive, which is complicated and even by being transparent and by putting everyone around the table in a copil where everyone claps their hands in saying to ourselves, let's go, and in fact as soon as we want to set up an action, it doesn't happen like that. You have to be super vigilant to have a good network to identify the blocking points before a disaster happens and avoid getting caught up in the sight for 6 months...*
>
> *Like the very compartmentalized state services, the person at the PLU meeting who said "we can do it like that" is not the one who gave their final opinion on the document."*

(Participant N°11)

-

> *"[We] have been in a position of engagement with the contracting authorities to push the most ambitious projects possible, to take charge of adaptation to the climate component for a few years so that for me is engagement, and also engagement with State services, we do not fit into the boxes of water law procedures, therefore in the midst of an engagement process with water police services, etc. Not directly associated with the project but we realise that they have trouble understanding that we are inventing something and that we will have to zoom out from the water police vision, not look bit by bit but look at the global and scalable approach so accept that we don't fit into the current boxes. This is the complex part of the ongoing engagement. There is […] an objective to make the instructing services understand that we cannot speak of adaptation to climate change and integrated management of the coastline with strictly the framework of the regulations, finally in the legislative sense yes but in the sense procedure in services and that sort of thing, it hasn't evolved enough yet."*

(Participant N°12)

-

> *"[There is] the subject of regulatory feasibility, which we have not yet completely overcome and which we tended to underestimate at the start. We spent a lot of time evangelizing the State services on the interest, the fact that something is experimental is difficult to fit into the authorisations in terms of urban planning, we end up getting there but it's time that we had largely underestimated... and not because the representative of X and Y is familiar*

with it and participates in the working group tells you that it is good there will be authorizations says that it is also fluid , it's never fluid..."

(Participant N°13)

It was also sometimes suggested that local representation as impeding motivation :

"I don't get into administration because if we get into that we're finished... it's so cumbersome that we no longer want to do anything."

(Participant N°8)

The administrative and time constraint of the EU is also mentioned, although on a secondary level. It is depicted by one of the interviewees as follows :

"An administrative machine that is afraid of its shadow!"

(Participant N°14)

Regulatory frameworks and budget constraints can together make it difficult for local actors to think "outside of the box", or to obtain the necessary authorisations and funding to carry out and implement an integrated approach to adapt to coastal change.

4.3.3. Time and energy spent for the project to be successful

Almost all interviews put forward the importance of the energy that Conservatoire du littoral and other partners had to put into the project, mostly to overcome the regulatory challenges mentioned above.

> *"Thanks to European funds, we were able to carry out this project together. But what a waste of energy! Why make it simple when you can make it complicated!"*

(Participant N°14)

-

> *"What struck me was the collective energy that we put in for so long, we financed dedicated animation positions to succeed ten years later, it's a first project that comes out so we can be proud of it. What energy and what expenses but the expenses in the end for an FTE for x years, it costs less than building a roundabout... really a lot of human energy developed. Subsequently, there will be less human energy to develop because it will be evidenced. [This type of project] will actually go without saying."*

(Participant N°6)

At the end of the interview, when asked what recommendations they would have for similar projects in future, the majority made reference to the timeframe of such a project, which is necessarily a slow, long-term process.

> *"It took time but it was necessary, to ensure that at the territorial level all the actors engaged with the subject.*
>
> *"There is the subsidy and involvement part in terms of working time, I haven't quantified it. There is a lot more working time on this re-estuarisation project, ecological continuity because of its integrated approach."*

(Participant N°12)

-

> *"Do not underestimate the time needed to undertake this kind of project, that is essential."*

(Participant N°13)

Developing a project such as the PTS is resource intensive and can take a long time to reach fruition. Commitment, stamina, and patience will be needed to overcome challenges during design and reach the point of implementation.

4.3.4. Facilitation and coordination of the project by Conservatoire du littoral: characteristics and outcomes

With one exception, all actors interviewed were very satisfied with the way Conservatoire du littoral coordinated the project and felt they have been included as partners.

> "It's continuous exchanges, we support each other, we support each other, it's a kind of moral support."

> (Participant N°8)

-

> "the Conservatoire du littoral has taken over with a different approach: engagement, awareness, pragmatism."

> (Participant N°10)

-

> "From the moment we were systematically engaged with from the start... It even goes beyond an association, I see it like that. Admittedly, there is the Conservatoire du littoral, it should not be forgotten that the Conservatoire du littoral is not the project owner – it does the coordination and the animation – it is the partner communities who carry the project management. We were more than partners, there is a partnership. In a logic of partnership, everyone finds their place. Admittedly, sometimes you have to rub elbows, but that's normal. It never happened: the Conservatoire du littoral consults, arrives, decides: no. The Conservatoire du littoral arrives because it carries a notion of neutrality in relation to the territory […] We were really in a logic of association. If you want to play the game you listen to the other and the other listens to you. From time to time, we round the corners. It resulted in a concerted project.

> "It's very difficult, given the precedents, the complexity of the project, the play of the actors... if we focus on the engagement part. On the engagement part, I think that in all honesty we can hardly do better."

> (Participant N°1)

-

> "We have been engaged on a regular basis, via department A (my colleague B) by setting up a certain number of consultations, a cotech with a desire to discuss everything in a very free way in a technical way, without mixing politics and the technical, for me it's important to have real cotech, to start from the hypotheses by saying "that's a wrong way" but not to restrict oneself in the lines of investigation, to have times for exchanges with different users of this space (fishing, hunting, tourism), elected officials... there was a desire to engage all the actors, to explain to them, a sociological support that was provided. In the same way, deconstructing the way we think about the layout to encourage us to think differently."

(Participant N°4)

-

"Once I was able to attend the first exchanges, our integration was total. My departments were able to make their contribution."

(Participant N°14)

-

"We were really well integrated by the Conservatoire du littoral, which made the connection really well, with the complexity of the whole with the other players. We were very comfortable, very comfortable.

"What worked very well and which was essential was the work of the Conservatoire du littoral as a pilot umbrella structure which managed to juggle between all the players, all the constraints, whether technical or financial. The complexity of the project required this level of management of skills and presence over the long term and it is the Conservatoire du littoral and brilliantly because it is still a hyyyyper complicated project. Not to mention Brexit, which has made it more complex and increased the risks. For me, the strong point is the ability of the Conservatoire du littoral to have been able to involve the right people at the right time and to have piloted all of this. I didn't even... I couldn't even say what could have been done better, it seems to me that it was done at best."

(Participant N°3)

Stakeholders have been involved from the beginning of the project and considered as partners by Conservatoire du littoral. Many interviewees underline the quality of the relations with each and every one of them within formal steering committees as well as outside of them. Freedom to speak, the consideration of different viewpoints as well as an unaltered motivation in ensuring the project goes forward were appreciated by interviewees and recognized in nearly all interviews.

Taking a step back and considering future similar projects, the authors recommend that steering committees emulate these principles, especially when it comes to receiving and including different interests and possible negative feelings stakeholders may have (or have had) about the project.

4.3.5. Inclusion of Citizens

The interviews showed an important difference in perceptions of the way citizens were involved, compared to the views of those who had attended the workshops. Most of the people interviewed feel like a variety of users were represented thanks to associations representing hunters, farmers etc. Those categories of people, whose activity is strictly regulated, were represented by pre-existing associations that seek to represent their interests. This point was raised by citizens during the workshops (see Section 3.4.2).

There was one association which was the formal representative of the people living most closely to the River Saâne. Yet, it does not resemble an "association loi 1901", which is an association defined in French law as one which anyone can create, join, or refuse to join. This association was an "association syndicale autorisée", one authorised by the Prefet (regional state representatives) for which it is a legal obligation for local property-owners to join and pay the annual fees. Citizens do not voluntarily choose to join it; as landowners in the area they are legally obligated to do so. This association's existence dates to the end of the 19th century. These very old organisations are gradually disappearing, with their missions of maintenance and small work about the river being transferred to other bigger, public organisations (such as the Syndicat de Bassin Versant, for example). The status of this association makes a difference as to whether it can be considered as representative of local people. A number of interviewees consider that the inclusion of this institution in the different meetings (comités de pilotage) can be considered a sign of high participation of local inhabitants in the design of the project. This viewpoint differs from the workshop participants' view for two main reasons:
- The first is that it does not work on a voluntary basis as already stated. ("*Obligation of local residents to be a member of this structure*" (Participant N°15))
- The second is that it was used as a means to diffuse information in a top-down way, on the basis of informal talk with some of the inhabitants. Participation (rather than simple communication) refers to forms and ways in which the people can actually contribute and express their ideas (i.e. not only being told, where they can only listen or simply react to the message of institutions). There has been no such involvement, according to the employee of the ASA who had been working in the organisation for nearly 20 years. "*I relayed to local residents about the progress of the project*" (Participant N°15).

When asked if meetings or workshops were organised for citizens the answer was the following :

> *"No, it's a completely informal, off-the-record communication on a daily basis, but it bears fruit because when we have meetings, people don't come."*

> (Participant N°15)

Rather than abandoning the idea of meetings, the authors of this report suggest investigating why people may not come (if such meetings had been planned). The

help of professional facilitators might be useful to question the mobilisation strategy, the purpose and the format of these meetings.

As the status of and roles within these old organisations were transforming, the new forms of governance which at least enabled a certain transparency of the work of these organisations were being gradually abandoned, whilst an alternative had not yet been invented. As a result, even citizens who asked for certain standard documents to find out more could not necessarily obtain them, as those had not been published during the final years of existence of the ASA.

> *"it's true the ASA has not communicated on its work at the end of its life"*
>
> (Participant N°15)

Also, during the workshops, citizens did a participatory mapping to explain that only part of the territory nearby the river was "represented" by the ASA (see Section 3.4.4). The interviewees, on the other hand, stated that all people living nearby the river (both sides of the river) were represented by the ASA. This disagreement on the exact perimeter of people also makes it difficult to consider this organisation as a body to voice the concerns of the people living directly by the river.

In a number of interviews, citizens were reported to have been considered as an element that could hinder the development of the project.

> *"The objective is to achieve a qualified majority (or a strong minority, I don't know) that is capable... you have to be able to extinguish the active minority "I don't agree I don't agree […] there are always some individuals who are against it. You have some who are against everything. They must be "controlled" or at least ensured that they do not block and destabilise the project."*
>
> (Participant N°1)

-

> *"Citizens: it is essential that there is no local opposition from citizens to the project, but we went through the animation station at the Conservatoire."*
>
> (Participant N°12)

-

> *"We may not have engaged enough. But the more you engage the more questions and problems you have to move forward. Everyone upsets you about the project by saying "it's useless". Those whose subject is of interest don't necessarily come to the meetings, you tend to have the side "I come because I have demands", I want to say that things are not going well [...] We are not going to say what is going well in the life, I'm not going to tell the tax collectors either, I'm glad you take taxes (you either) we don't come to say what's going well, we say what's going wrong. If you want to move forwards sometimes you have to pull the trick a little. [...] If we hadn't taken the bull by*

the horns, we wouldn't have done it. [...] I want to be participatory but there are limits or else it's another mode of operation that I don't know I don't have in mind maybe because I'm too old...... I'm a little categorical, participation is fine for a while... at some point we were elected, it's to make decisions!"

(Participant N°8)

The ideas and vocabulary that emerged from the interviews can help to identify why the form of citizen engagement that was implemented at the beginning of the project took place. People could come and ask questions and share their thoughts to the project officer in charge of the PTS, whose office at that time was based at a nearby city hall. This approach to participation can be considered as a grievance forum: people could come and ask for information on an individual basis, but not think and discuss in a collective way, which is made possible during a workshop for example. People considered "difficult" could then be dealt with individually.

Finally, it seems that the involvement of institutional stakeholders, among other things, did not allow the project officer in charge of the PTS to invest time, design a process and develop the skills to facilitate

"It was necessary to be present on the territory, to be available for communication, to manage rather technical studies such as hydraulic studies, to listen to the interco, to adapt...

"I think there was a small lack of communication and consultation, but there was no time in fact, there was no means to do it when everything had to be articulated for PACCo".

(Participant N°11)

To end with, when asked about public engagement and participation of citizens, many interviewees tended not to make the difference between communication and participation. The following quote is an example of that phenomenon :

"Communication has not been at the top until recently, it is about to improve significantly, especially communication towards the inhabitants, so we are going to enter into better information and engagement so that they understand what is happening. But there is still work to do."

(Participant N°7)

Care and attention was given to the inclusion of institutional stakeholders from the start of the process. Their involvement was seen among interviewees in a positive light. This is different when it comes to the involvement of citizens:

- little action was undertaken at the beginning of the process of the developing the Saâne Territorial project, although this significantly improved from 2016 onwards.

- citizens were considered as a recipient of information, as opposed to a source of information and knowledge, or as people who could contribute to the project (even on a smaller and less ambitious scale as officials).

- There seems to have been a great concern that a minority of citizens could have a very negative impact on the project, and the means of public participation seems to have been designed first and foremost in order to neutralise those (during the years during which the enquiry office was open, it was the same group of less than a dozen people who came multiple times). This might have been done at the expense of the majority of people. The benefits of the inclusion of citizens, with ways for them to contribute and voice their concerns (not only receive information), may have been overlooked.

4.3.6. Evolution of the role and mindset of local representatives (mostly in relation to climate change)

Interviewees commented on both local representatives (at the town level) and regional ones. The regional representatives were not always directly involved but staff from a regional authority were very active. Interviews reveal that at the very beginning of the process, representatives were not as sensitive to and knowledgeable about climate change as they are today.

Climate change awareness came earlier at the regional then at the local level. The evolution of representatives at the town level in relation to climate change is quite significant (see example below).

> *"I changed my philosophy and I had changes in elected officials and 35 years ago we did not ask ourselves this question. For three successive municipalities we have been talking about it, in 99 we were rather 'let's strengthen the defence to the sea' it was the position and the philosophy it has changed for 10 years, I have made the elected officials aware we will not be able to hold the coastline as it is today, it was also the meetings with the Conservatoire du littoral that made me change my ideas on the subject. I listened, I met experts, I am a mayor not a technician, I have my values but not the knowledge and when I heard experts I realised that I tried to share with those around me".*

(Participant N°8)

Finally it is important to notice that the biggest differences in terms of perception and narrative were between the three democratic representatives, who have experienced this project very differently, depending on their personal and professional background. We can distinguish 3 profiles:

1. The "child of the village" who was born and raised in the village where he has been mayor for more 2 decades. His popularity and legitimacy are mostly based on his personal attachment and knowledge to the place. When asked to introduce himself at the beginning of the interview, he is the only one to present the story of the Saâne Valley and his own story as one. His constant re-election is an advantage for the stability and steady progress of the project. He presents the design of the PTS as a difficult yet stimulating experience. He has a very long-term vision of his territory and is willing to take risks for what he considers to be best for future generations (although it might be unpopular in the moment).

   > *"Born in the commune, it is important.*
   >
   > *"If someone else arrives and says no, the priority is the beach before the campsite, we could have had a profound change. For me, the fact that I was born here, that I know the area well, that I know the local context well makes it easier for me."*

   (Participant N°8)

2. The "man of the city" who has experienced the countryside as a place for holidays and retirement. Unlike the first, he is not an experienced politician and is less accustomed to the specifics and difficulties of being a mayor of a small village. His feels his experience of the development stages of the PTS to be quite negative. As a result, at the end of his term, he resigned all local forms of activism whatsoever (as a mayor, as a member of a local association) and chose to mostly dedicate his time to painting, staying as far as possible from local affairs. Having a different emotional connection to the territory, he reported finding it hard to connect and understand people's reluctance to change and attachment to the landscape as it is.

> *"I attended dozens of meetings concerning the project, which did not progress as usual and it is very annoying because in my professional environment (I worked in the clothing sector) where we question talk about what you have learned every 6 months and don't be mistaken… that's the state of mind in which I was.*

> *"I find myself parachuted into mayor I know nothing about anything, you have to learn everything it's a little late there are people who start early there are some who have made law something that brings them closer to the administration me I was into more active things.*

> *"The problem is that we are confronted with rurality and people who want nothing to change. I, who am a Parisian, I completely agreed on the idea [of change]."*

> (Participant N°9)

3. The last profile is less easy to discern as the interview took the form of a written questionnaire. However, we can identify some clear features. His priority is to preserve his village from change. His political programme is based on the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the village and of its unique, quiet, and calm atmosphere. Change is perceived as a threat to the identity and quality of life of the village. Two interviewees stated that he built his election campaign around opposition to the re-estuarisation project and to the Saâne Territorial Project, seeing the latter as a continuation of the former (see Section 3.4.2). Many comments in different interviews lead to the conclusion that the hard work of Conservatoire du littoral and consideration of how his village could also benefit from the project (thanks to the water treatment plant, although its necessity is not particularly linked to coastal change, as many interviews suggest) were eventually successful and led to him changing his mind. Those are his own words:

> *"[I have a] clear vision for my village: to preserve and enhance our built and natural heritage.*

"The Conservatoire has succeeded thanks to a good knowledge of the territory, listening to the different actors, transparency on the issues and actions. Nice job because it was not obvious given the history. Commitments have been kept."

(Participant N°10)

The personalities, personal backgrounds, and beliefs of local representatives are likely to impact on the development of such projects.

When choosing to run for elections in a small village, one does not necessarily anticipate that he/she will have to be involved in such schemes. This may result in difficulties for those who are not "professional politicians" and whose professional lives were not connected to the administration. Also, it might be more challenging for some who have an emotional connection to the place to take risks and embrace change. It also explains why the Project coordinator would choose to dedicate a considerable amount of time and effort to build trust and robust relations with those actors, so that they become partners, particularly with those actors who may be more sceptical at the start. This has been fruitful as some local representatives have then engaged directly with citizens groups who may be strongly impacted (by the displacement of the camping site).

4.3.7. Concluding Remarks

Conservatoire du littoral was ideally situated to coordinate the process as a neutral actor, who took strictly the role of coordination and facilitation, without trying to orient actors towards one solution or another. Interviewees highlighted the freedom of speech they felt they had during the meetings, wide inclusion of a variety of stakeholders, the fact they were on equal footage as partners, and the tenacity of the team, all as key elements that led to taking decisions that were acceptable to everyone in the end. One of the stakeholders concluded at the close of their interview that the person in charge of supervising the PTS at the Regional Level at Conservatoire du littoral was really "the right man to do the job" (Participant N°10).

A lot of time and energy was needed to convince the local representatives about the importance of climate change in the territory, and that the risks inherent to taking action (in terms of budget, regulatory framework etc.) were much more manageable than the risk of inaction in the face of climate change. Given limited resources, it was reported to have seemed impossible to have an ambitious approach towards citizen participation at the same time. Against this context, the lack of inclusion of citizens can be understood. As times have changed, less work may need to be done in relation to local representatives from now on. As phrased by an interviewee :

> "Today, there is no need for all that: there is a collective awareness, the IPCC reports... but at the time, there was not all this awareness, we were very far from all that."

> (Participant N°6)

In the future, it is important that citizens be considered as partners rather than as potential obstacles. Communication and engagement were limited at the beginning of the project, which was actually the moment when it would have been most critical according to citizens who took part in the workshops (see Section 3.4.2). It is important that public actors don't wait until decisions have been announced to organize the first gathering for citizens. The idea that you need to have facts and concrete actions ready to be implemented for ordinary citizens to take interest appears from the interviews to be a strong and widespread belief among institutional stakeholders, which is actually quite the opposite if we look at what people asked in the workshops.

More room for manoeuvre from a regulatory and budget point of view are critical for more projects like this to emerge. The regulatory framework should support rather than deter local actors from addressing the problem in a multidimensional way, which is a key element to lead to realistic and socially acceptable projects (probably even more important than public participation). The budget issue strongly restricts the number of possible scenarios. As stated in one of the interviews :

> "Whatever the cost, it was not a doctrine for the Saâne."

> (Participant N°4)

This sheds light on a quite profound and complex question, that is not limited to the Saâne Territorial Project, nor to coastal change, but more generally to climate change adaptation: to what extent public actors (especially in France, the state has more power and financial resources than local authorities) are willing to fund long term structural transformation, with a view to avoid or limit the probability of extreme events or moment of crisis, as well as the steady degradation of living conditions and biodiversity in territories vulnerable to climate change? Will all villages in need for such a project be able to rely on EU funding in the future? If not, then who should pay? Those are important political questions that emerge from but are not limited to this case study.

5. Reflective Notes on Recent Resources

We have now presented the findings from the various research activities. Prior to introducing our model however, we wish to pause to reflect on two recent (non-PACCo) resources that have been informative for this work.

5.1. The Saltmarsh Restoration Handbook (Hudson et al., 2021)

In 2021, the Environment Agency (one of the Lower Otter Restoration Project leads) published a 'Saltmarsh Restoration Handbook' as part of their cross-agency 'Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef' initiative (Hudson et al., 2014). This document aims to provide "practical guidance on restoring and creating saltmarsh habitat across the UK and Ireland" (page iv).

Chapter 4 of this handbook is focused on 'Communication and Engagement' (pages 50-64). Drawing on a survey of 27 practitioners, the chapter details several points of advice for the process of engagement. It is remarkable that many of the recommendations made within this handbook align with and support the findings we have identified through the course of the PACCo work package.

Most notably, the chapter encourages engagement approaches that seek to empower local communities in the process, with recognition that their own knowledges built from local experience are of value for similar schemes, alongside the scientific understandings of 'experts'.

> "Capturing **tacit** knowledge that local communities, groups or experts may have built up from long-term observations […] and combining this with explicit knowledge, will create a stronger decision-making platform" (page 52).

> "Real participation tries to ensure the local community is at least an equal partner. It empowers them and respects their decisions about their own environment which they are going to live with and manage for the future" (page 55).

Accordingly, the handbook recognises that a top-down approach to engagement which imposes a project upon a local community (referred to as 'Decide-Announce-Decide') is more likely to lead to resentment among local communities, whereas better relationships are likely to be formed where local communities are treated as an equal partner in the process (in an approach referred to as 'Engage-Deliberate-Decide').

To support such an approach, the handbook presents a series of practical recommendations, many of which align with recommendations from findings presented within our own reports. The chapter culminates in a 'checklist' for practitioners (page 63), seeking to encourage approaches that: listen to different voices; engage early and proactively; empower people in development of the project;

open strong communication routes; are honest and build trust; and utilise easy-to-understand information.

5.2. Book: Coastal Wetlands Restoration, Public Perception and Community Development (Yamashita, 2022)

A newly published book (Yamashita, 2022), edited by the author of Chapter 4 in the 'Saltmarsh Restoration Handbook' (Hudson et al, 2021), outlines sociological study of how residents perceive and discuss coastal wetland restoration projects, drawing on learning from case studies.

In Chapter 10, five main discourses are identified through which citizens were found to form their judgement of coastal wetland restoration schemes (Table 10.1, page 135):

- Views of nature;
- Worries about loss;
- Lifestyle choices;
- Fair decision-making process;
- Fair distribution of risks and benefits.

Our research has been particularly focused on the engagement process during project development, so naturally much of the discourse within these pages discusses elements that relate to a 'fair decision-making process'. This said, it was clear that the experiences and views of participants are shaped by factors observed in the other four identified discourse areas, which is perhaps most visibly the case in the discussions with residents that were outlined in Sections 1 and 3, and in the analysis of LORP planning consultation responses described in Section 1.3 of Report 1.

Accordingly, the authors advocate for projects to take time to understand their local community and the perceptions they hold whilst developing such a scheme, to ensure that the resulting proposals result in benefits for local people and respond to local concerns. We support this reflection, and we hope the engagement model proposed will enable community voices to be understood and included on an equal footing to that of stakeholder groups and project partners.

6. Model for Engagement of Stakeholders and Communities

6.1. Introduction

Taking a social learning approach (see Section ii of Report 1), we have undertaken a thorough body of research at both PACCo pilot sites, to: evidence and evaluate the engagement processes undertaken during the development stages (based on *Credible* records of documentary evidence); capture the perceptions and recommendations from stakeholder representatives in a series of interviews; document the perceptions of and recommendations made by residents at in-person workshops; and report upon an additional thematic analysis of planning consultation responses which were available for the Lower Otter Restoration Project (similar responses were not available for the Saâne Territorial Project due to different legal requirements between countries). These research activities have been documented in detail across these two companion reports.

We now draw upon all findings, from across the suite of research, to inform our resulting output from the work package: a **Model for Engagement in Future Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change** projects.

In the following pages we present this model, which is visually represented in Figure 14. We will summarise the overarching learning that can be drawn from the work package, explaining the component parts of the model in turn with reference to evidence from across the work package research.

These pages are focused upon the model. We will not provide specific detail from the project site as this has already been described in detail throughout these reports. This said, in tables at the end of each component's discussion, we include reference to the relevant report sections that provide the evidence, detail, and recommendations which have informed this overall model.

The model was mutually agreed between members of the research team, with the University of Exeter and Lisode Consultancy ensuring it incorporated learning from the package of research undertaken at both PACCo project sites.

6.2. Summary Description

There are three aspects to the engagement model, which together are visualised as a wheel (Figure 14).

1. **Theoretical Principles.** There are five philosophical principles of engagement within this model, represented by the segments in the central part of the wheel. Whilst we have identified practical recommendations which could help to realise these principles in the process, these segments represent core values of the engagement process.

2. **Sequential Process.** There are elements of the model that relate to the engagement process as it progresses through time. These are represented in the wrap-around arrow. There are four phases: preparation; early engagement; sustained engagement; and engagement into the future. Recommendations as to what to include at each of these stages are given in the following text.

3. **Constraints.** There are external factors that will have an influence upon the engagement process, including what is principally, technically, or financially feasible. In the visualisation, these are represented by the arrows that point away from the centre of the wheel. The engagement process will need to navigate the push and pull of these factors, which will pose challenges for, or limitations on, what would be considered as 'the optimal approach'.

The optimal engagement approach is represented at the centre of the wheel where the theoretical principles intersect. The approach is one in which: stakeholders and communities are empowered in the development process; stakeholders and communities are well represented; there is trust between project partners and engaged parties; information is clearly and accessibly available; and uncertainties are worked with.

Figure 14. Visualisation of the Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change.
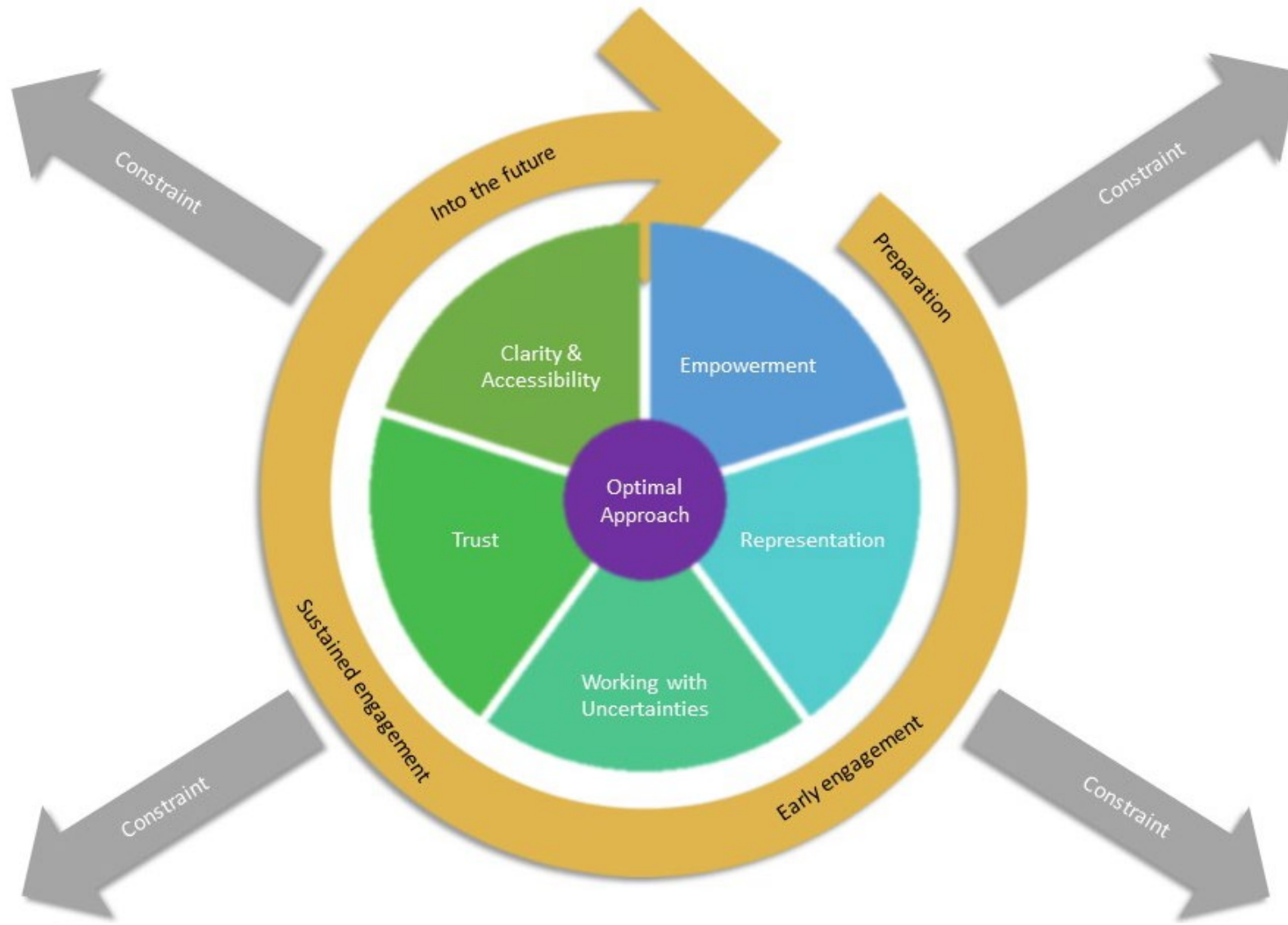
6.3. Theoretical Principles

6.3.2.1. Empowerment

Landscape change and landscape-scale coastal adaptation schemes will intersect with multiple stakeholder interests and social groups, particularly in sites with significant public access. Accordingly, representatives of both stakeholder interest groups and local communities are likely to experience the consequences of landscape scale proposals (whether these be positive or negative outcomes).

Hence, the engagement process should seek to empower stakeholders and communities in the development process, particularly those who are most likely to be affected or are living in the vicinity. It will be important to recognise and understand the different types of knowledge and the opinions that these groups may be able to contribute.

Empowerment in the process will require an openness to their feedback where, if it is necessary, input could lead to changed ways of thinking or changes in design.

- Higher levels of *Creativity* (Table 1) will be observed where documented plans or outcomes depart from previous ways of thinking in response to feedback.

It is recommended that groups are engaged from the outset in an approach where "the issue" is discussed and collectively understood, prior to introducing ideas for "the solution". It will be important for communities and stakeholders to feel able to inform design, and there will be more opportunity for change in response to new knowledge in the initial and early stages (as opposed to in the later stages of development). Discussion should account for both the potential positive and negative effects of a proposed solution, and questions raised (with answers given) should be recorded.

A challenge could be encountered where there is complacency or apathy towards a project, among stakeholders or communities that the project is seeking to engage with. This might mean individuals are less likely to engage themselves, even when there are attempts at outreach. Apathy is more likely when ideas are being discussed, rather than when a firm proposal has been made (i.e. when "something is happening"). However, it is in the earlier stages where there may be most opportunity for *Creativity*. Thus, projects should continue seeking to engage the interest of these groups, whilst being sympathetic towards the reasons why they may not yet have engaged (such as having other personal priorities).

Table 9. Empowerment: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.1. Theme 1: Empowerment	3.3.2.1. Main outcomes (Workshop 2)
2.3.1.2. Early Engagement	3.4.2. Workshop conclusion 2
2.3.4. Ability to Input	3.4.4. Workshop conclusion 4
Report 1, 1.1.14. The Engagement 'Lesson Learned' (September 2019)	4.3.5. Inclusion of citizens
Report 1, 1.2. Evaluation	Report 1, 2.2. Evaluation
Report 1, 1.3.2.4.1. Community disempowerment – lack of opportunity for meaningful input	

6.3.2.2. Representation

As landscape-scale projects will interact with multiple interests, engaged parties will need to encompass a spectrum of interests and groups if they in turn are to feel their interests have been represented in project development. Exactly *who* should be represented will be context dependent on the location, land use, and social dynamics; representation will likely need to include political or statutory bodies, landowners, landscape users, and local communities:

- To achieve a high level of *Integration* (Table 1), there will need to be involvement of various political and administrative levels in the process.
- To achieve a high level of *Legitimacy* (Table 1), there will need to be inclusion of stakeholders and end users, and consideration of their interests or views.

An effectively managed stakeholder or steering group can be a good forum for ongoing, two-way exchange of feedback and knowledge throughout the development of a project. (Should this be result in a very large group, there can be sub-groups in a larger governance structure.)

Residents who live in the immediate vicinity of a project will need to be represented, although the exact area classed as being the "immediate vicinity" will be context dependent on project scale and local social dynamics. This will require careful consideration as they may include residents living outside of the formally designated project boundary, or in areas other than those identified as most affected through technical assessments alone. Residents in these areas may or may not feel represented by existing organisations or bodies so will require a direct approach. Should there be a stakeholder group, consider inviting these residents to nominate their own representative.

Alongside a stakeholder group with community representation, public engagement events will help disseminate information among the wider community. Public engagement will need to represent different demographics, including those who may find it hard to engage in standard ways. Public outreach may yield new information to consider or highlight so far unrepresented groups that will require closer levels of engagement.

Table 10. Representation: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.1.1. Opportunities for community voice 2.3.1.2. Early engagement 2.3.3. Stakeholder group representation Report 1, 1.2. Evaluation Report 1, 1.1.8 Extension of the Stakeholder Group to include resident representatives (January-May 2016)	3.3.2. Workshop 2 3.4.2. Workshop conclusion 2 3.4.3. Workshop conclusion 3 4.3.4. Facilitation and coordination of the project by Conservatoire du littoral: characteristics and outcomes 4.3.5. Inclusion of citizens 4.3.6. Evolution of the role and mindset of local representatives (mostly in relation to climate change) Report 1, 2.2. Evaluation Report 1, 2.1.2.2. Stakeholders and type of interaction described at project start Report 1, 2.1.2.5. Extension of the stakeholders involved and themes to be discussed Report 1, 2.1.3.1. The importance of local representatives in the process

6.2.2.3. Working with Uncertainties

Adaptation to climate change involves actions taken to address future circumstances. Whilst awareness and acceptance of climate change itself may be growing, there can be disagreement about its impacts and levels of local environmental risk. This can result in disagreement about whether proposals may be the "right" course of action to take.

Opening with discussion and education about local (or global) environmental risk, prior to introducing ideas for the solution, may reduce levels of uncertainty and instil confidence in the actions proposed (or at least facilitate understanding between groups with different knowledge).

Development of adaptation projects is likely to involve modelling risk scenarios (e.g. sea level rise or flood risk). Local people may have their own understanding of how their local landscape functions (e.g. the way in which water moves in the landscape) developed from personal experience. This may lead them to disagree with model outputs. Opportunities for residents to directly engage with modelling specialists to share (or even input) their own knowledge and to explore risk scenarios may result in greater understanding, confidence, and trust in the modelling outputs. Consequently, this may result in greater trust in the actions being proposed in response to the modelling conclusions.

There may be day-to-day enquiries about other uncertainties, such as about a project's motivations, decisions, or actions. Alongside making information accessible, quick, clear, and informative responses are more likely to be received favourably by those who are seeking the reassurance.

Table 11. Working with uncertainties: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.4. Theme 4: Uncertainties	3.4.1. Workshop conclusion 1
2.3.1.2. Early engagement	3.4.5. Workshop conclusion 5
2.3.6.2. Communicating complexity	4.3.6. Evolution of the role and mindset of local representatives (mostly in relation to climate change)
2.3.6.3. Responsiveness to enquiry	Report 1, 2.1.2.6. Uncertainty regarding the objectives of LiCCo workshops and regulatory framework

6.2.2.4. Trust

Landscape-scale projects intersect with many interests and community groups, and will involve an acceptance of changes in a landscape those people know. To facilitate social acceptability of these changes, there will need to be trust between groups, particularly between project partners and engaged parties.

Trust levels are likely to be influenced by the other four theoretical values; where stakeholders and communities feel empowered and represented, they can access clear information, and feel their uncertainties have been recognised and understood.

To further enhance trust levels and minimise potential escalation of tensions, partners should seek to engage in a transparent, honest, and open process. Partners should ensure they work with communities in an inclusive way and that they listen to and empathise with community voices and opinions. Clear and accessible information should be available and outline the motivations for planned actions, describe the assessments that have been conducted, list the reasoning for decisions made, explain the funding sources and requirements, and be up front about what uncertainties remain.

Levels of trust may be influenced by prior relationships or power dynamics, which will be context-dependent upon the project location and parties involved. Where this is an issue, one consideration may be to recruit an independent facilitator to oversee the engagement process.

Should there be distrust of the assessments undertaken for a project (e.g. a flood risk assessment), one consideration to build trust may be through an openness to independent review of assessments undertaken.

Table 12. Trust: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.2. Theme 2: Trust	3.3.1. Workshop 1
1.4.4.2. Uncertainties about flooding	3.4.5. Workshop conclusion 5
2.3.5. Trust	4.3.4. Facilitation and coordination of the project by Conservatoire du littoral: characteristics and outcomes
Report 1, 1.3.2.3. Distrust and power dynamics	4.3.6. Evolution of the role and mindset of local representatives (mostly in relation to climate change)

6.2.2.5. Clarity & Accessibility

Landscape scale schemes might seek to address multiple objectives simultaneously, are likely to have a multi-faceted design, will interact with multiple interests, and could relate to other projects. This complexity can make it challenging to communicate project motivations, decisions, or actions. In response, it can be difficult for other groups to understand and visualise. (There may be greater understanding among those who have been more involved or engaged since an earlier timeframe, than among those who have not.)

It will be important to consider how best to make the information accessible to different audiences and help them to understand the project. This could include (but is not limited to):

- Involving engagement specialists to facilitate two-way transfer of information and understanding.
- Being clear and giving information that refrains from using technical or challenging language.
- Using creative methods to help people visualise the project outcome (e.g. physical models or visual simulations).
- Breaking the subject down into smaller parts that are easier to communicate and convey.
- Responding to enquiries quickly and informatively, with a clear and designated point of contact.

Projects should seek to share information through multiple methods, to increase the likelihood of reaching as many different groups as possible. This should include both online and offline methods, to provide opportunity for both digital and non-digital users to engage. Establishment of a formal social media presence early may help facilitate an effective online dialogue.

Table 13. Clarity & Accessibility: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.3. Theme 3: Accessibility of information 2.3.6. Accessibility of information	3.4.1. Workshop conclusion 1 4.3.1. Narrative of the PTS

6.4. Sequential Process

Throughout the analyses, we determined that there are elements of engagement that will need to take place at phases of the engagement process through time, which in turn will help to support engagement that is empowering, representative, trusted, accessible, and responds to uncertainty. Hence, engagement processes require commitment throughout from initial preparation, through project development, and into the future.

Preparation. Prior to the initial outreach, it is advisable to reflect on the local social context. This can include pre-existing relationships between parties; power dynamics between groups; or the effects of projects or proposals that came before. If these variables pose a challenge for the optimal engagement process, consider how they can be overcome. One could consider allocating resources towards an independent engagement facilitator, to enable two-way sharing of knowledge and feedback. Engagement expertise will be valuable for project delivery teams; if not already in existence, this could be gained through appropriate training or the recruitment of professional engagement facilitators.

Early Engagement. Early engagement with both stakeholders and community groups is likely to be received more favourably. The tone will need to be sensitive to their respective positions as landscape change is an emotive subject, with differing opinions on potential gains and losses. At this stage, projects should recognise the knowledge and perspectives that the different groups can contribute. There is likely to be more flexibility in design before project ideas become firmer plans, so there is greatest opportunity for *Creativity* in these early stages of development. Where possible, provide opportunities for knowledge transfer about the issue, before introducing ideas for the solution.

Sustained Engagement. Engagement will need to be an ongoing process throughout the various stages of project development. Communications will need to be kept up to date, and regular engagement meetings or events held. It is advisable to avoid long time periods between engagement events to minimise risk of an information gap. There will need to be a continued openness to include different voices; it may be more challenging to engage with newly identified voices at later stages in the process, but it is not 'too late' to improve opportunities for knowledge sharing.

Engagement Into the Future. There will likely be continued interest in the future of the landscape once a plan has been formed, including issues of future landscape management, post-works. Whilst future engagement beyond the development stage is outside of the scope of the model directly, it is advisable to consider this in advance; give thought to the future and the potential approaches towards continued engagement and empowerment, into the implementation stage and beyond.

Table 14. Sequential process: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
1.4.1.1. Opportunities for community voice	3.3.2. Workshop 2
1.4.1.2. Empower into the future	3.4.2. Workshop conclusion 2
1.4.4.3. Uncertainties about the impacts of climate change	3.4.3. Workshop conclusion 3
2.3.1. Continuous engagement	4.3.3. Time and energy spent for the project to be successful
Report 1, 1.1. Engagement Story	Report 1, 2.1. Engagement Story
Report 1, 1.2.5. Further critical reflection	
Report 3, 1.3.4. Potential controversies	

6.5. Constraints

The optimal engagement approach will be challenged by the push and pull of external factors that may limit what engagement activities are possible, or what feedback is feasible to incorporate into project designs. In the visualisation given in Figure 14, these constraints are represented by the arrows which point away from the optimal approach to engagement that is situated in the centre, so as to represent how these factors could restrict the ability to engage to meet the theoretical optimum. Constraints include (but are not limited to):

- **Unforeseen Events and National Circumstances**, to which planned activities may have to adapt.
- **Financial Resources.** The level of funds available may limit how much investment can be allocated toward engagement activities, or what changes in design will be achievable, particularly in the early stages prior to there being a recognised project.
- **Funder Requirements**. Funders may have an expectation of what a project will need to deliver (and when), or changes requested by engaged parties may not meet the criteria for access to funding sources.
- **Organisational and/or Individual Motives**. Organisations may have objectives they need to meet as the driver of a project or of their engagement. Opportunities for *Creativity* in a project may be limited if suggested changes do not align with, or deviate from, these objectives (or those of funders).
- **Organisation Capacity.** Engagement activity may be limited by the capacity of an organisation to coordinate activities, or of engaged parties (including stakeholders, community groups, or individuals) to participate and contribute.
- **Changing Personnel**. Staff changes or changes in stakeholder/community representatives may result in a need to cover ground that has already been discussed or lead to new questions and dialogue in later project stages.
- **Legal and Regulatory Requirements.** Legislative and statutory requirements may place restrictions on what is possible, or suggestions raised by engaged parties may not be options that would be permissible in law.
- **Technical Limitations**. *Creativity* may be restricted where ideas proposed may not be practically possible to implement.
- **Apathy towards a project**. Whatever efforts are made to engage with stakeholders or communities, stakeholders or individuals within communities may not themselves then engage. Apathy may be more likely at earlier stages when a project is an 'idea', before it becomes a 'proposal'.

It will be a challenge to navigate these factors, and they will apply pressures on the optimal engagement approach. As a result, engagement will require ever more commitment to work through challenges, and project partners will need to be open with engaged parties when such factors apply.

Table 15. Challenges and limitations: Directory for supporting evidence

Lower Otter Restoration Project	Saâne Territorial Project
2.3.6. Negotiating with external pressures (Table 6)	4.3.2. The impact of the (French and/or European) regulatory framework 4.3.3. Time and energy spent for the project to be successful Report 1, 2.1.2.6. Uncertainty regarding the objectives of LiCCo workshops and regulatory framework Report 1, 2.1.3.7. In search of a balance between the regulatory framework and aspirations of local actors.

7. Conclusion

Coastal adaptation can result in landscape change with multiple impacts for local people. Consequently, effective engagement with people is key to the success of adaptation schemes, particularly where projects seek to deliver benefits for people and the environment, whilst responding to concerns and questions.

We have proposed a **Model for Engagement in Coastal Adaptation and Landscape Change**, grounded in learning from the two PACCo sites. This draws on documentary evidence and new interview and workshop data, and is informed by a social learning approach. The Model seeks to describe or characterise an engagement process in which stakeholders and communities are represented and empowered, where there is trust between groups, where information is accessible, and uncertainties worked through. The optimal approach to engagement sits at the intersect between these values and is one which enables the voices of local communities and stakeholders to be heard on an equal footing, in a democratised decision-making process.

Engagement is a task that requires significant commitment and is unlikely to come without challenges. In some cases, these may be externally driven, such as the willingness of funders to resource design changes, or what might be required to meet the requirements of legal frameworks. Other challenges may present themselves on a more human level. Changes to a local landscape which people know and associate with can be emotive, whether through excitement and a sense of gain, or resulting from a sense of loss or grief for a landscape valued for what it has historically been. Thus, engagement must take a sensitive approach from the outset and throughout. This will need good preparation and an understanding of the local social context, early and sustained engagement, and forethought towards continued empowerment of local communities and stakeholders in future landscape decisions.

Projects must listen to diverse voices (including those of both 'experts' and publics) and reflect these back within the approach to coastal adaptation or landscape change. Hence, project teams will need the expertise to navigate the engagement process and the challenges they will encounter. We recommend that delivery teams thoroughly evaluate their engagement expertise prior to initial outreach and, if and where the right expertise may not yet exist and where it is possible, invest in appropriate training or the recruitment of a fair and independent facilitator. This may involve an up-front cost, but strong engagement expertise will foster a sensitive approach to meeting the theoretical values of the engagement Model. It may ultimately save time, effort and even reputation costs, building trust from the outset.

Involving diverse groups in an inclusive way and having an openness to different types of knowledge can seem daunting. For project instigators it may mean an evolution from previous ways of working that have focused on expert-led knowledges. And at times, the views expressed could feel confrontational and discomforting. Yet *Integrated*, *Legitimate* and *Creative* approaches that meet the values of our Model are more likely to foster positive relationships, to empower

stakeholders and local communities more equally, and result in an adaptation project that effectively meets both social and environmental objectives.

List of Abbreviations

CDE – Clinton Devon Estates

Copil – Comités de pilotage (steering committees)

Cotech – Comités techniques (technical committees)

EA – Environment Agency

LiCCo – Living with a Changing Coast Project

LORP – Lower Otter Restoration Project

PACCo – Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts

PTS/STP – Projet territorial de la Saâne/Saâne Territorial Project

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APPENDIX 1 – Workshop Expression of Interest Survey Questions

Lower Otter Restoration Project

Community Engagement Workshops: Express Your Interest

Project information

The University of Exeter would like to invite residents in the Lower Otter area to take part in a project seeking to understand the effectiveness of community engagement undertaken by the team who have developed, and are delivering, the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

Independent researchers from the University of Exeter are seeking to represent the different types of knowledge from people who live in the area, and of their experiences of the scheme. The aim is to identify lessons from community engagement in the project, and to inform potential future projects in Europe.

This form is for residents to express their interest in participating in a series of **three workshops, to be held throughout 2022**. It is expected to take ten minutes to complete. This link will remain open until 9am on Monday 13th December 2021.

The workshops will involve sharing your knowledge and experiences of living in the areas around the Lower Otter, and sharing your views on risks posed by flooding or climate change. No expert knowledge or preparation will be required.

The main thing is that you are willing to attend, participate, listen and respect different views**.** Participants will given a £10 participant payment for each of the workshops they attend.

If you are interested in taking part, your answers to these questions will help the researchers to understand participant backgrounds and ensure that a range of community views on the LORP programme will be represented. This means that we may not be able to ask everyone who expresses an interest to attend the workshops. If you are selected to take part, you will be provided with further project information and a consent form to sign prior to participation.

The findings will be available publicly but no personal details will be shared. Your input will not be directly attributed to you. Anonymised findings will be reported to the 'Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts' cross-border initiative, which is financially supported by the Interreg (VA) France (Channel) England programme.

The study is being independently led by the University of Exeter. It is funded by the EU Interreg (VA) France (Channel) England Programme, through East Devon

Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. The study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter's Geography Ethics Committee.

If you change your mind after submitting this form, or if you have any questions about the project, please contact Roger Auster (r.e.auster@exeter.ac.uk) or Professor Stewart Barr (s.w.barr@exeter.ac.uk) at the University of Exeter.

If you are interested in taking part, please mark an 'X' in the box below and then complete the expression of interest form below.

Your answers to these questions will be stored securely at the University of Exeter, and will only be available to the independent research team. These responses will only be used in relation to this project, and the data will be permanently deleted at the end of the project.

☐ I have read the research information and would like to express my interest in participating.

Background Details

Firstly, please start by telling us a little bit about yourself.

1. What is your name?

2. May we ask how old you are? Please indicate your answer with an 'X'.

18-25		55-64	
26-34		65 or Over	
35-44		Prefer not to say	
45-54			

3. What is your occupation?

4. How do you identify your gender? Please indicate your answer with an 'X'

Male	
Female	
Non-binary	
Prefer not to say	

5. Are you a resident in the Lower Otter area (e.g. Budleigh Salterton, East Budleigh, or Otterton)?

Yes	
No	

6. And do you work in the Lower Otter area?

Yes	
No	

About your use of the Lower Otter area

Here we would like to get a sense of your relationship with the local landscape.

7. How do you use the area around the river in the Lower Otter area? Please indicate your answers using a single 'X' in each row of the following table.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
Walking					
Viewing wildlife					
Peace and quiet					
Dog-walking					
Photography					
Watersports (e.g. kayaking, paddleboarding)					
Running					
Cycling					
Fishing					
Swimming					
Other					

If you selected 'Other', please specify this here:

About the Lower Otter Restoration Project

These questions will help us to understand your familiarity with and experiences of the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

8. At present, how familiar do you feel you are with the aims of the Lower Otter Restoration Project? Please indicate your answer with an 'X'.

Strong familiarity	
Moderate familiarity	
Little familiarity	
Not familiar at all / This is new to me	

9. Have you been engaged at all in the Lower Otter Restoration Project previously? If so, please tell us how. (e.g. responded to a consultation, wrote an email, have been involved with a stakeholder group, etc)

10. At this point in time, are you supportive or unsupportive of the Lower Otter Restoration Project? Please indicate your answer with an 'X'.

Strongly support	
Support	
Neutral or No opinion	
Oppose	
Strongly oppose	
Unsure	

11. Please <u>briefly</u> tell us about your current thoughts about the scheme.

Finally, your workshop preferences

This will help us with the workshop planning.

12. What is your preferred contact email address, or telephone number if you don't use email? *This data will be stored securely and will never be shared or sold. It will only be used to contact you in relation to these workshops, and will only be held for the project duration.*

13. To facilitate arrangement of the workshop schedule, please tell us which of the following times would be most suitable for you? Please indicate your answer(s) using an 'X'. You may select multiple answers to this question.

Weekdays, in office hours	
Weekday evenings	
Weekends, in the daytime	
Weekends, in the evening	

14. We intend to undertake the workshop activities in person, with measures in place to reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission. If the pandemic circumstances or restrictions change, we may need to adapt later workshops into an online format. If this is necessary, would you feel comfortable participating in an online session using virtual technology (e.g. Zoom)?

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These activities have been risk assessed and approved in line with current University of Exeter procedures.

Yes, and I feel comfortable using virtual technology (e.g. Zoom)	
Yes, but I currently do not know how to use virtual technology (e.g. Zoom)	
No, I can only participate in workshops that are held in person	

15. Please use this space to tell us whether you have any access or dietary requirements which the researchers will need to know about.

APPENDIX 2 – Workshop Research Information

LOWER OTTER RESTORATION PROJECT

COMMUNITY LEARNING WORKSHOPS

We would like to invite you to take part in a project seeking to engage members of the local community in the Lower Otter Restoration Project. This information sheet provides details of what the project is about, what commitment we are seeking from participants and how the project will work.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study called?

The project is called 'Methodology for engagement and involvement in coastal climate adaptation schemes' and is part of the 'Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts' cross-border initiative.
What is the study about?

This project aims to provide a more effective way for communities to **adapt to the impacts of climate change**. It will focus on the Lower Otter Restoration Project and act as a way of exploring the potential for joint learning between community members, academic researchers and local agencies to work together and inform the restoration process. In so doing, the project will work towards **community involvement in similar projects** and will seek to represent the different types of knowledge from people in the area. The purpose of doing this is to explore how working together can be an effective way of creating local approaches to environmental issues, which might involve a whole range of responses from local people. In this way, the project is designed to be one that **empowers local people in the development process**.

You are being invited to participate in **three workshops with a group of community residents,** from different backgrounds and with different views. These workshops are designed to allow all interested parties to better understand the project and to work with and learn from each other. This may involve many different kinds of input, from personal memories, photographs and historical records to scientific data and projections of future flood risk patterns.

The workshops will be facilitated by Dr Roger Auster, Dr Ewan Woodley, and Prof Stewart Barr, who will remain strictly independent of the views expressed by group members..

The outputs from these workshops will inform the process of engagement in coastal climate adaptation projects in Europe. As well as these workshops, the research team will be interviewing key stakeholders, and reviewing the history of engagement in the project. The methodology for engagement that will be developed will draw on the findings of all these research activities, at both the Lower Otter and a partner project in the Saâne Valley (France).

More about the Lower Otter Restoration Project
The Lower Otter Restoration Project is aims to adapt and enhance the downstream part of the River Otter, its estuary, and its immediate surroundings in the face of a climate change.

The project is a managed river realignment scheme in the lower River Otter, where the river meets the sea near Budleigh Salterton in East Devon. The existing 200-year-old sea defences are now starting to fail and are becoming increasingly hard to maintain. This is already impacting on public infrastructure, local businesses and homes, and recreational facilities. The project is now underway following planning approval in 2021, with the works due to completed by March 2023.

The major partners in the Lower Otter Restoration Project include Clinton Devon Estates, who own the land around the estuary, and the Environment Agency, the government body which has responsibility for improving resilience to climate change, flood defence, increasing biodiversity and improving habitats and water quality.

For more information about the aims of the scheme and the project's progress so far, please visit: http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/

A similar project is also taking place in the Saâne valley in Normandy. For more information about the French project and its partners, please visit: https://www.pacco-interreg.com/the-sites/saane-valley/

Learning from these two partnered project sites will inform future coastal climate adaptation projects in Europe. For information as to how, please visit: https://www.pacco-interreg.com/

What will my participation involve?

You are being invited to attend a total of three workshop meetings and to participate in discussions at these meetings. This will include sharing your knowledge and experiences of living in the area – **no expert knowledge or preparation will be required**. The main thing that we ask is that you are willing to attend, participate, listen and speak.

The meetings will be held in an appropriate venue, with social distancing measures in place to minimise risks posed by Covid-19 and in accordance with government guidelines. Workshops could be undertaken online if necessary, dependent upon covid restrictions and risk level. Each workshop will last for 2 hours.

The group we are convening will comprise between 12 and 20 people, and each member is treated equally, without prejudice. Everyone's views count as much as another's.

The group meetings will be audio recorded so that the research team can help the group at subsequent sessions and in the construction of the methodology for engagement in future projects. All recordings are securely stored and, as noted below, at no point will individuals be identified by using their name outside of the group setting. Recordings will be permanently deleted when analysis is complete.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. Participation is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form at the first workshop to show you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. This would not affect you taking part in other research in the future.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

As this is a study occurring in a specific place and which includes a number of people living locally, your participation is something which is likely to become more widely known. However, we will ask all members to agree to confidentiality in the consent form, meaning that no one should discuss what individual people have said beyond the group without their individual consent. In reporting the group's findings, we will not mention participants by name. This is to ensure that people can express their views honestly, without prejudice.

Otherwise, personal data will be kept confidential and anonymised (i.e. individuals will not be identifiable in any written reports or other outputs), unless you specify to us in writing you are happy for us to use your name.

All physical data will be kept in a locked cabinet and the voice recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study period. Any digital records or documents will be stored in a secure, password-protected University site, only accessible by the research team. All participants will be assigned a code number or pseudonyms, with only the study scientists being able to link codes to participants.

What will I have to do?

Attend a total of three workshop meetings between February and Autumn 2022, and to contribute as stated previously.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The main purpose of the research is to learn from the engagement process undertaken in the development of the Lower Otter Restoration Project, and to help future projects to engage effectively by working with members of the community. All participants will therefore play a major role in informing the engagement model and the impact of the group's work is likely to be long lasting.

Additionally, as a thank you for participation in these workshops, each participant will be given £10 in gratitude for each meeting that they attend.

What happens if I change my mind?

Please feel free to say no at any time by informing Roger Auster, who is the leading the research project at the University of Exeter, or his supervisor Professor Stewart Barr. Do not worry, no one will contact you and try to persuade you to join/remain on the study. The decision to participate is yours and we are grateful for your time.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the lead researcher and impartial facilitator (Roger Auster, r.e.auster@exeter.ac.uk) or their lead supervisor (Professor Stewart Barr, s.w.barr@exeter.ac.uk). If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University of Exeter Complaints Procedure. Details can be obtained from the University of Exeter.

Who is organising and funding this study?

The study is led by the University of Exeter and is funded by the EU Interreg Scheme, administered through East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. The study is led by Roger Auster, supervised by Professor Stewart Barr, Dr. Ewan Woodley, and Professor Richard Brazier, all based at the University of Exeter. Research activities undertaken in France have been subcontracted to be undertaken by the Lisode Consultancy, who report to the University of Exeter researchers.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter's Geography Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details:

For further information please contact: [Research team details were given]

APPENDIX 3 – First Workshop Guide Agenda

THEME	Time Allocation (Minutes)	Focus	Example topics	Who
Introduction	10	Introduction and Context	-Welcome -Outline of the project aims/intentions (To continue/improve engagement in the PACCo projects, and to inform the development of an engagement model for potential future projects). -How the workshop will work (starting with understanding of participant backgrounds and experiences, before then discussing experiences of the restoration project) -Reference that future sessions can be co-created with participants to cover what they think is important, or things not covered today. Intention to pass lead over to participants over time	All – Led by facilitator
EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGES OF THE LOWER OTTER / SAANE VALLEY	20	Experiences of the Lower Otter / Saane Valley (pre-restoration)	-How have participants engaged with the landscape generally. -Participant values placed on the landscape	Facilitated in small groups assigned by researchers
	15	Understanding of participant knowledges of climate change and local risk	-Knowledges of flooding in the Lower Otter -View of risk level (without PACCo interventions)	Facilitated in small groups assigned by researchers
	10	Feedback to group		All – Led by elected group leader

	10	*Break*	---	---
PRESENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF LORP / STP (OR PACCo)	15	Knowledge of PACCo Projects and their aims	-Participant descriptions of what they know of the project and its aims	Facilitated in small groups assigned by researchers
	20	Engagement and involvement in PACCo project before planning approval	-Level of involvement/engagement so far -Whether participants feel engagement has been appropriate/effective	Facilitated in small groups assigned by researchers
	10	Feedback to group		All – Led by elected group member
What next?	10	Focus of next meeting	Group to determine focal topic(s) for the next meeting	All

APPENDIX 4 – Interview Research Information

LOWER OTTER RESTORATION PROJECT

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

We would like to invite you to take part in a project seeking to interview key stakeholders involved in the Lower Otter Restoration Project. This information sheet provides details of what the project is about and what we hope to achieve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study called?

The project is called 'Methodology for engagement and involvement in coastal climate adaptation schemes' and is part of the 'Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts' cross-border initiative.

What is the study about?

This project aims to understand how engagement with key stakeholders involved in or impacted by the Lower Otter Restoration Project has been received, and what lessons can be learned for engagement in similar future coastal climate adaptation projects in Europe.

You are being invited to participate in **an interview with an independent researcher, expected to last up to one hour**. The interview is designed to allow all interested parties to share their views on and experiences of the Lower Otter Restoration Project and the engagement process you have experienced.

Interviews with a range of key stakeholders involved will be conducted with Roger Auster from the University of Exeter, who will remain strictly independent of the views expressed by all interviewees and the Lower Otter Restoration Project partners.

The outputs from these interviews will inform the process of engagement in coastal climate adaptation projects in Europe. As well as these interviews, the research team will be undertaking workshops with community members, and reviewing the history of engagement in the project. The methodology for engagement that will be developed will draw on the findings of all these research activities, at both the Lower Otter and a partner project in the Saâne Valley (France).

More about the Lower Otter Restoration Project

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is working with local people and partner organisations to adapt and enhance the downstream part of the River Otter, its estuary, and its immediate surroundings for future generations in the face of a rapidly changing climate.

The project is a managed river realignment scheme in the lower River Otter, where the river meets the sea near Budleigh Salterton in East Devon. The existing 200-year-old sea defences are now starting to fail and are becoming increasingly hard to maintain. This is already impacting on public infrastructure, local businesses and homes, and recreational facilities. The project underway following planning approval in 2021, with the works due to completed by March 2023.

The major partners in the Lower Otter Restoration Project include Clinton Devon Estates, who own the land around the estuary, and the Environment Agency, the government body which has responsibility for improving resilience to climate change, flood defence, increasing biodiversity and improving habitats and water quality.

For more information about the aims of the scheme and the project's progress so far, please visit: http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk/

A similar project is also taking place in the Saâne valley in Normandy. For more information about the French project and its partners, please visit: https://www.pacco-interreg.com/the-sites/saane-valley/

Learning from these two partnered project sites will inform future coastal climate adaptation projects in Europe. For information as to how, please visit: https://www.pacco-interreg.com/

What will my participation involve?

You are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview with an independent researcher from the University of Exeter. This will include sharing your experiences and views of the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

The interview will be held in an appropriate venue, with social distancing measures in place to minimise risks posed by Covid-19 and in accordance with government guidelines. The interview could be undertaken online if necessary, dependent upon covid restrictions and risk level at the time of interview.

The interview is expected to last between 30 minutes and one hour. It will be scheduled with you at a mutually convenient time.

With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded to help the research team with analysis and the construction of the methodology for engagement in future projects. All recordings are securely stored and, as noted below, at no point will individuals be identified by using their name outside of the group setting. Recordings will be kept only until analysis is complete and then they will be permanently deleted.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. Participation is voluntary. If you do decide to go ahead, we will ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. This would not affect you taking part in other research in the future.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. We will not share details of your involvement with anybody outside of the research team without your prior written consent. This includes within any outputs from the research.
Personal data will be kept confidential and anonymised (i.e. individuals will not be identifiable in any written reports or other outputs), unless you specify to us in writing you are happy for us to use your name.

All data will be kept in a locked cabinet and the voice recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study period. Any digital records or documents will be stored in a secure, password-protected University site, only accessible by the research team. All participants will be assigned a code number or pseudonyms, with only the study scientists being able to link codes to participants.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The main purpose of the research is to understand the engagement process undertaken in the Lower Otter Restoration Project process and your experiences of it, with the aim of informing future potential projects across Europe. Due to the high-profile of the project and the agencies involved, it is likely this project will have long-lasting impacts.

What happens if I change my mind?

Please feel free to say no at any time by informing Roger Auster, who is the leading the research project at the University of Exeter, or his supervisor Professor Stewart Barr. Do not worry, no one will contact you and try to persuade you to join/remain on the study. The decision to participate is yours and we are grateful for your time.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the lead researcher and impartial facilitator (Roger Auster, r.e.auster@exeter.ac.uk) or their lead supervisor (Professor Stewart Barr, s.w.barr@exeter.ac.uk). If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University of Exeter Complaints Procedure. Details can be obtained from the University of Exeter.

Who is organising and funding this study?

The study is led by the University of Exeter and is funded by the EU Interreg Scheme, administered through East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust. The study is led by Roger Auster, supervised by Professor Stewart Barr, Dr. Ewan Woodley, and Professor Richard Brazier, all based at the University of Exeter. Research activities undertaken in France have been subcontracted to be undertaken by the Lisode Consultancy, who report to the University of Exeter researchers.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter's Geography Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details:

For further information please contact: [Research team details were given].

APPENDIX 5 – Outline Interview Questions

Theme	General Questions	Project Partner Equivalent
Background	1. Please describe your background? 2. Relationship with the Lower Otter valley? 3. General view on the project	1. Please describe your role in the project?
First Engagement	1. How did you first hear about the project? 2. What was your first involvement? (How were you engaged?) 3. How did you feel about the way in which you were first approached/engaged?	1. How did you first get involved? 2. Please describe your first engagement outreach? 3. How did you identify or determine who would be engaged? 4. What is your sense of the response to your initial outreach?
Subsequent involvement	1. Please talk me through your involvement since the initial engagement. 2. How did the project partners respond to your comments/feedback? (Do you feel as though you have been listened to?) 2.1. Were changes made to the project design in response to your feedback?	1. Please talk me through the subsequent process of engagement undertaken. 1.1. Why did you choose to do what you did? 1.2. What challenges did you encounter? 1.3. How did you respond to comments/feedback?
Application to future context	1. What did the project partners do well? 2. What could have been done better? 3. Drawing on your experience, have you any suggestions or advice for engagement in similar future projects?	1. What do you think went well? 2. What do you think could have been done better? 3. Drawing on your experience, have you any suggestions or advice for engagement in similar future projects?

APPENDIX 6 – Agreed agenda for second resident workshop (LORP).

THEME	Time Allocation (Minutes)	Focus	Example topics
Introduction	10	Welcome back	-Brief overview of the aims of workshop 2; this time we will look more deeply into experiences of engagement -Additional chance for participants to comment on the agenda before we start
How Engagement Could Be Improved	15	Further exploration of engagement by the LORP partners (prior to the point of the formal planning application)	-What was your overall experience of engagement prior to the formal application? -What factors contributed to a sense of disempowerment, and why? -What worked well, and why?
	15	Formal planning consultation process	-What was your experience of the formal consultation period (once the planning application had been lodged)? -Were there opportunities for your views to be heard? -What factors contributed to a sense of disempowerment and why? -How accessible were the plans and the information? -Was the planning process fit for this project? -*Note there is a planning application for variation of the planning consent that is currently open for comments.*
	20	What *could* have been done?	-If it were to start again, how would you like to be engaged? -If it were to happen again, do you have any suggestions on how to compel residents to respond, or to ensure there is good representation?
Break	*15*	*Cake*	---
Future Engagement In The Lower Otter Valley	25	What engagement would participants like to see in the next stages of LORP?	-How would you suggest the community is engaged going forwards? -*Note that there is also one more community workshop to come.*
Round up	15	Focus of next meeting	-Group to suggest potential topic(s) for the next meeting, which is likely to be in September.

APPENDIX 7 – Agreed agenda for final resident workshop (LORP)

The following is the agenda that was agreed with participants in advance of the meeting. At the beginning of the session however, participants raised a few more final thoughts they would like to discuss before discussing the findings. Thus, additional time was made for free discussion before the 'Discussion of Findings' section of the agenda.

THEME	Time Allocation (Minutes)	Focus	Example questions	Groups	Notes
Introduction	10	Welcome	-Brief overview of the aims of workshop 3 (discussing provisional workshop findings and report) -Additional chance for participants to comment on the agenda before we start -Brief summary of findings	All – Led by RA	Large maps are available for use during discussions, as requested at the previous session
Discussion of Findings	45	Preliminary report findings	-Are the findings reported a fair reflection of the discussions as you have experienced them? -Is there anything missing you'd like to see included? -Is there anything reported that should be edited, or with hindsight removed?	Facilitated in two smaller groups	Last time, it was requested that we present a summary of themes we have identified from sessions one and two.
Break	20	*Cake*	---	---	---
Final Details	5	Check specific reporting details	-Are image creators or contributors happy with their use, and if so, how would they like to be credited? -Are there any issues with the fictional pseudonyms?	Facilitated in two smaller groups	

Workshop Review	20		-How have you found these workshops? -How could they be improved?	Facilitated in two smaller groups	The aim here is for us as researchers to learn about how the participants have found this process.
Free Discussion	10	Opportunity to raise final thoughts		Facilitated in two smaller groups	
Round-up	10	Round up and close	-Thank you! -Reminder that the final report will be shared with participants on project completion. -We will share the follow-up academic publications in due course (next year)	All – Led by RA	