

Significant Water Management Issues Public Dialogue Process

Project Evaluation – Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

Background

This report sets out the key learning points and related evidence from the evaluation of the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) public dialogue process which took place toward the end of 2013. The project was commissioned by the Environment Agency and co-funded by Sciencewise¹. The project work involved deliberative public dialogue on water management issues to enable public views and concerns to be fed into the Environment Agency's plans and priorities for River Basin Management Plans and other Water Framework Directive (WFD) commitments.

Round 1 workshops were run in seven river basin districts across England and had the broad objective of *identifying public views of the priority issues around strategic water management on a national level*. A further workshop was held at the end of the process where a sample of the round 1 participants were invited to a more in depth event in London to further develop participants' understanding of water management issues, and to provide additional feedback to the Environment Agency on management and policy options. In addition an Omnibus Survey was carried out by Ipsos Mori. The intention was to run this concurrently with the workshops to add quantitative data to the qualitative evidence generated. However this did not prove possible due to the timings of the Omnibus and instead it took place after the workshops had been completed. One benefit of this change to the timing was that the survey provided the opportunity to follow up particular issues considered to be of relevance as a result of the dialogue process, reaching 867 panellists from Ipsos MORI's Online Access Panel.

Significant Water Management Issues are the most significant issues affecting water. They include over-abstraction, chemical pollution, agricultural pollution, and the destruction of natural habitats. These issues impact on the benefits received from the water environment such as clean water, availability of water, amenity benefits, business benefits, fishing, recreation and biodiversity as well as the costs and sustainability of those benefits.

River Basin Management Plans are the cornerstone of the WFD and set out how the Environment Agency and its partners will deliver against a shared ambition for the water environment in England. The first plans were published in 2009 and updated plans will be published in 2015.

¹ The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre (Sciencewise) is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate.

Overall conclusions

The dialogue process has achieved a wide range of learning both in terms of process and content. It has been a particularly rich learning experience for the Environment Agency in appreciating the potential of public dialogue and the value of doing this through a well-designed, delivered and reported process.

This report outlines a wide range of learning across all dimensions of the work. However there are a number of particularly significant areas that are worth emphasising as they have had implications for the value of the entire process.

It is apparent that the initiative would have benefitted from more time and focus at the start of the process to set out very clearly, and develop a mutual understanding across the project partners and contractors, the desired outputs and outcomes of the initiative. There is a need for an iterative process at this stage to reference the project's objectives against the resources, time and expertise available and to then design a process that has the best opportunity to satisfy those objectives.

Having undertaken the design of the process the project planning group agreed that the process should go ahead as designed even though it appears that not every organisation represented was convinced that the design was the best way to achieve the objectives. This concern didn't translate into a significant shift in either the project's objectives or the process design. However, this highlights some learning about governance, where there are different organisations with different objectives and levels of experience in public participation.

Given these points about the relationship between setting objectives, process design and governance it is the evaluators' view that this process was worthwhile and there were significant useful outputs, outcomes and learning. The process particularly appears to have instilled substantially more confidence within the Environment Agency to work with the public as water management policy and practice develops at both a national and catchment level. Given the emphasis on partnership working embedded within 'A Catchment Based Approach' this is particularly significant.

Since there is increasing public awareness of water related management issues (due to the flooding events of winter 2013/14) it will be important to continue assessing the value and influence of this dialogue process and the potential for developing and refining on-going public engagement in relation to water management.

Dialogue objectives

The project had four key objectives.

1. To allow a sample of the public to engage on, deliberate and, alongside other evidence (such as environmental, technical, economic), feed into key decisions within plans for the water environment.

2. To demonstrate an open and objective approach to river basin planning which can help create greater commitment to actions from business and other stakeholders.
3. To encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future.
4. To link across various water planning cycles (e.g. abstraction plans, flood risk plans) to ensure we (the Environment Agency) have a customer focus and avoid silo mentality.

Evaluative approach

The learning and evidence set out in this report has been drawn from the collation and analysis of data from the following sources.

- Observation of 3 of the 8 dialogue workshops – Worcester, Manchester and the reconvened event in London.
- Collated feedback from the end of workshop evaluation sheets from all 8 events.
- Follow up phone interviews with a sample of participants from all 8 workshops (43 in total).
- Interviews with key project stakeholders from the Environment Agency, 3KQ, Ipsos Mori and Sciencewise (9 in total).
- On-line ‘aspirations’ base line and post reporting survey to Reference Group members.

The collection of data was directed by an ‘Evaluation Framework’; this provided the terms of reference for, and closely guided and structured, the evaluative questioning. It was structured in four parts – Impact, Inputs, Process and Context. Within each of these sections key evaluative questions were set out and an indication was given regarding the source of data and the evaluative methods to be used. The evaluation report references the framework and its questions to structure the reporting on evidence.

Summary of key learning points

A. Impacts and outcomes (evaluation framework questions 1a – 1h):

Achievement of the project’s objectives

Analysis of the current evidence available would suggest that the 4 project objectives were partially achieved. Certainly a sample of the public was able to engage with and deliberate on a range of evidence in relation to water management issues (objective 1). The findings will enable the Environment Agency to use these findings in relation to water management decision-making; however there was not a wealth of robust and substantive public opinion that could be applied to ‘key decisions’.

Objective 2 was achieved in part as an open and objective approach was demonstrated. This may contribute to an environment where business and stakeholders can commit more to actions within the water environment, but there does not appear to be a direct and measurable relationship between the dialogue outcomes and this aspiration.

Objective 3 was also partly achieved. The workshops did encourage and deliver a frank and evidence based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by the water environment but provided only generalised feedback on how this could be best be managed into the future.

Objective 4 remains a work in progress but internal debate has been informed by the dialogue process. Much depends on the Environment Agency's commitment to continue referencing and embedding the findings of this project in their on-going work.

Use of the findings

Findings are being used effectively within the Environment Agency at both strategic and catchment levels and have been disseminated through briefings to key teams and initiatives. They are being shared across the relevant functions within the Environment Agency, for example, River Basin Programme Managers, Pressure Leads, Catchment Coordinators and the Environment and Business Directorate. There is also an action plan for wider dissemination to appropriate parts of the business that would benefit from hearing about the findings and appreciating the potential and approach to public dialogue. In particular the challenges and benefits of public engagement need to be communicated to staff within communications and engagement functions as this (deliberative public dialogue) is an area where the Environment Agency lacks experience.

The impacts however are likely to be more focussed on engagement processes rather than the content of policies although feedback is helping enrich planning and deliberations within some catchment partnerships. The reporting will also help inform the design of the River Basin Management Plans consultation in September 2014 by informing the language used, how it is communicated to the public and in supporting the framing of issues and options.

Participant satisfaction

The majority of participants found the workshop experience positive, educational and a good use of their time. There was also a high expectation and a reasonably high degree of confidence that the Environment Agency will take account of the workshop findings; there is however an acknowledgment that decisions are made within the context of expert knowledge, politics and tight budgets.

Unplanned and / or unexpected impacts

There have been a wide range of unplanned and / or unexpected impacts from the process. Notably for the Environment Agency, the enthusiasm and good will of the public to engage positively in deliberations about water management. Much of the contact the Environment Agency has with the public is unplanned and often contentious and combative. An appreciation that a well-planned, designed and facilitated approach can develop good understanding about the role and challenges the organisation faces and constructive debate has been an extremely positive learning experience for staff involved. It has potentially opened up a new dimension to a range of work areas and given insight into how plans and options can be 'road tested' in a managed and constructive environment rather than deploying the more traditional 'decide and defend' approach that is often used in decision-making. In addition it has been interesting to see the extent to which participants have taken what they have learnt and discussed in the workshops further in terms of personal research, discussing water management issues with others and changes in the way they use water and products that affect water quality.

Future participation in dialogue

A large majority of participants indicated that they would welcome participating in future dialogue initiatives. This is a testament to the good facilitation and organisation of the workshops.

Future commitment to dialogue by the Environment Agency

There is a feeling that this engagement of the public could be usefully replicated as decision-making and policy development moves forward both in relation to water management and other environmental management issues. Lessons have been learned about process design, scope and the capacity for the public to engage in sophisticated dialogue about significant water management issues and the technicalities and trade-offs needed when developing policy. This experience now needs to be shared widely and learning embedded so that future dialogue initiatives have the best opportunity to realise their potential.

Meeting partner expectations

An important issue and learning point relates to the recognition that the Environment Agency and Sciencewise have different levels of satisfaction in relation to the degree to which some of the objectives were achieved. In particular the first objective:

"To allow a sample of the public to engage on, deliberate and, alongside other evidence (such as environmental, technical, economic), feed into key decisions within plans for the water environment".

It was felt by Sciencewise that the potential for the public to feed into policy and decision making had not been maximised.

This difference in satisfaction with the findings between the Environment Agency and Sciencewise may reflect the two organisations' relative experience in public dialogue work. It would have been helpful to have explored expectations and relative experience to a greater extent at the start of the process and built this understanding more robustly into the project's objectives and in turn into the methodology and outputs. It should be used as learning for future dialogue initiatives where the Environment Agency and Sciencewise are working together of public participation initiatives.

B. Inputs (evaluation framework questions 2a – 2d):

Project objectives

More time given to scrutinising, firming up and clarifying the desired outcomes would have helped give the process more certainty about what was required. This may also have impacted on methodological decisions and process outputs, for example, decisions about the numbers of, duration and locations of workshops and the number of significant water management issues under discussion.

Resources

The overall resources for this project, as designed, were sufficient.

Process design

A question remains about whether the design was the most appropriate to achieve the project objectives within the available resources. It may have been beneficial to focus on fewer significant water management issues in more detail. Or that fewer round 1 workshops were held, with all of them reconvened. Either of these options would have given more scope for detailed deliberation on the issues and would have potentially provided more progress against the objective of enabling the public to feed into water environment policy areas. This approach however was not supported by the project planning group who preferred to address the breadth of issues rather than a more limited sample of pressures in more detail.

Workshop interpretive materials

While the technical water management issue handouts were very successful, the potential to use visual material particularly was largely overlooked in this project. Quality photographs of the issues in a real, local setting, and the use of good case study / scenario examples to prompt debate would have helped understanding and dialogue.

Project management and the planning group

Project management was good and there was good representation on the planning

group. More time however should have been allocated to the planning phase.

One member of the planning group did not believe that their comments were sufficiently taken into account, and that the decision not to do so ultimately impacted on the effectiveness of the workshops. It is not clear how this could have been dealt with differently. One option would have been for a **protocol** to establish how comments would be dealt with, whose views would take precedence should there be differing views, and at what point the funder (the Environment Agency or Sciencewise) would intervene and halt progress should they be unhappy with how the project was proceeding.

C. Process (evaluation framework questions 3a – 3e):

Facilitation and running of the workshops

Facilitation was good. The separation of roles between facilitators, recorders and technical experts ensured that the workshops remained focused and participatory, with technical expertise on hand as required. Team working within the workshops was good.

Small group working was used well and is a valuable technique for providing an environment where members of the public feel comfortable. It helped maximise participation and contributions.

The presence of Environment Agency staff members from each workshop area helped provide a local flavour to the events, and their presence was of significant value to participants.

Participants fed back that the friendliness, openness, tone, atmosphere, hospitality, good venues and catering all helped them feel comfortable and able to engage with the issues. It was important that these elements were deliberately designed into the process.

Content of the workshop

Given the agreed requirement to cover seven significant water management issues, there is a sense that the workshops went as far as they could in terms of deliberation on management options. Good session design meant that non-experts (the general public) were able to contribute their views on complex and technical water management issues. Scope existed however to improve the session where participants were walked through the water management issues handout – this was on occasion laborious and it was ambitious to expect that it would lead to a substantive discussion on measures.

Programming

The time lag between the round 1 and reconvened workshops was too long for some participants. This was as much as two months in some instances and their recollection of the content of the first workshop was not fresh.

Reporting back to participants

It is positive that individual workshop reports were made available on-line to participants. However it will be equally important to ensure that the outputs report, or a summary, is also made available to them.

D. Context (evaluation framework questions 4a – 4b):

The learning from the dialogue process has the potential to enhance outcomes across the Environment Agency's business areas. In many areas of strategy and operational activities the public can, and need to be considered, as an additional resource at a time when the organisation increasingly works in partnership and collaborative arrangements with others. It is also important that the effects of seeking the public's opinion on the organisation's reputation is considered and learning is shared across the business in terms of how best to engage with and use public opinion. For example, the management of water, across WFD and FCRM outcomes, can have significant positive or negative repercussions in terms of how the public view the effectiveness and value of the work the Environment Agency undertakes.

It will be worthwhile to analyse where the key findings need to be shared to maximise the benefit and value of the SWMI public dialogue initiative.

2. Overview of the project and the approach to evaluation

This is the final evaluation report for the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) public dialogue process which took place towards the end of 2013. The project was commissioned by the Environment Agency and co-funded by Sciencewise².

This report provides an overview of the extent to which the public dialogue process achieved its objectives, and highlights the learning for similar dialogue processes in the future.

2.1 Background to the dialogue process

The purpose of the public dialogue process was to “carry out deliberative public dialogue on water management issues to help ensure public views and concerns could be fed into final plans and priorities for River Basin Management Plans and other Water Framework Directive (WFD) commitments³.”

The project had four key objectives.

1. To allow a sample of the public to engage on, deliberate and, alongside other evidence (such as environmental, technical, economic), feed into key decisions within plans for the water environment.
2. To demonstrate an open and objective approach to river basin planning which can help create greater commitment to actions from business and other stakeholders.
3. To encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future.
4. To link across various water planning cycles (e.g. abstraction plans, flood risk plans) to ensure we (the Environment Agency) have a customer focus and avoid silo mentality.

Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) are the most significant issues affecting the water environment – as determined by the Environment Agency (using evidence) and others who use or care for the environment. They include over-abstraction, chemical pollution, agricultural pollution, and the destruction of natural habitats. These issues impact on the benefits received from the water environment such as clean water,

² The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre (Sciencewise) is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Sciencewise aims to improve policy making involving science and technology across Government by increasing the effectiveness with which public dialogue is used, and encouraging its wider use where appropriate.

³ Project description from the evaluation contract ITT.

availability of water, amenity benefits, business benefits, fishing, recreation and biodiversity as well as the costs and sustainability of those benefits.

River basin management plans are the cornerstone of the WFD and set out how the Environment Agency and its partners will deliver against a shared ambition for the water environment in England. The first plans were published in 2009 and updated plans will be published in 2015.

Nationally (England-wide), the Environment Agency had already started a dialogue with key stakeholders such as water companies, local authority representatives and environmental NGOs to better understand what their 'significant water management issues' are. The public dialogue process was intended to build on this to identify 'fault-line' areas where there are conflicting views relating to (a) ambition or (b) actions that are difficult to resolve. The dialogue process needed to resolve these fault-line areas by early 2014 so that they could feed into draft river basin management plans ready for consultation in June 2014. The outputs from this project were to complement the stakeholder dialogue and consultation processes underway.

This is part of a complex landscape where managing the water environment is a high profile issue which needs to be handled openly, objectively and with a clear understanding of trade-offs and alternative scenarios. Among the sectors that the Environment Agency engages with they foresaw (perceived or real) 'winners' and 'losers'. They wanted to be able to draw up national level recommendations based on what the public said, to help understand what the public wants, and to be used as a reference point when making trade-offs. The Environment Agency was particularly interested to find out about what the public thinks about paying for all of this, because ultimately the public both benefit and pay for costs – as residents, consumers, taxpayers, ratepayers and environmental citizens.

There are also a number of other water planning processes which are being increasingly integrated with WFD and which had the potential to be informed by the public dialogue process, complementing local community conversations in catchments.

- Flood risk plans.
- Water abstraction plans.
- Price Review for water companies (PR14).

Two companies working in partnership delivered the dialogue process:

- 3KQ - with overall responsibility for event facilitation and reporting.
- Ipsos MORI - with overall responsibility for production of SWMI stimulus materials, participant recruitment, venues and the Omnibus Survey.

The work was co-ordinated by a project planning group (including Environment Agency staff, the delivery contractors and Sciencewise), with assistance from a Reference Group of external stakeholders. Further detail about the content of the dialogue process is included below in section 2.4.

2.2 The evaluation process

The aims of the evaluation were:

- To provide an independent assessment of the dialogue project's credibility, effectiveness and success against its objectives, covering both the dialogue processes and their outcomes (including an assessment of impacts on policy and those involved).
- To contribute to increasing the effectiveness and use of public dialogue.

The objectives for the evaluation were:

- To gather and present objective and robust evidence of the activities, achievements and impacts of the project in order to come to conclusions.
- To identify lessons from practice to support capacity building across Government, and the wider development of good practice in public dialogue.

The learning and evidence set out in this final report builds on an internal, interim report produced by Icarus and has used the collation and analysis of data from a number of sources.

- Observation of 3 of the 8 dialogue workshops – Worcester (5.10.13), Manchester (12.10.13) and the reconvened event in London (9.11.13).
- Collated feedback from the end of workshop evaluation sheets from all 8 events, summarised in Appendix 1 (135 forms in total representing 100% of participants).
- Follow up phone interviews with a sample of participants from all 8 workshops (43 in total).
- Interviews with key project stakeholders (9 in total)
 - Emma Collyer, Environment Agency, Project Manager (project planning group member)
 - Jeremy Bailey, Environment Agency SW River Basin Programme Manager (representing River Basin Programme Managers and project planning group member)
 - Dave Baxter, Environment Agency, Head of Catchment Management, Project Sponsor (project planning group member)
 - Jim Ratcliffe, Environment Agency NW RB Programme Manager
 - Dave Freeman, Environment agency, Analysis and Reporting Team Leader Anglian Central Area

- Richard Harris, 3KQ, process design, facilitation, reporting
- Jenny Willis, 3KQ, process design, reporting
- Daniel Start, Sciencewise, Dialogue and Engagement Specialist
- Antonia Dickman, IPSOS Mori, Associate Director.
- ‘Aspirations’ base line survey to project planning group and Reference Group members (18 respondents – summarised in Appendix 2).
- On-line survey to Reference Group members post project delivery (2 respondents).

An evaluation framework was developed and agreed with the Environment Agency and Sciencewise (see Appendix 3). This reflected the evaluation aims and objectives set out above and seven key evaluation questions set out in the brief. The framework provided the terms of reference for, and closely guided and structured the evaluative questioning through the feedback forms, the workshop participant interviews, the observation of the workshops, stakeholder interviews and the Reference Group survey.

2.3 How this report is structured

This report starts with a summary of the public dialogue process and the approach to the evaluation (section 2). It is then structured into sections (3-6) that reflect the four key areas of the evaluation framework.

- The impact and outcomes of the dialogue process.
- The inputs to the dialogue process.
- The design and delivery of the workshops.
- Context

These main evaluative areas are further broken down into individual topic areas. At the end of each of the evaluation framework areas ‘summary learning points’ are set out in the shaded boxes to provide the key messages from the evaluation. These ‘summary learning points’ are structured against the relevant questions in the evaluation framework question for each section.

2.4 The dialogue workshops

Round 1 workshops overview

It was agreed by the project planning group that round 1 workshops would be run in seven river basin districts. This geographical spread was decided upon reflecting the strong view among some planning group members that there would be regional differences emerging from the workshops, and that these would be interesting to note.

Table 1: Round 1 workshop location

Workshop location	Date and time	River basin district	Number of participants
Brighton	14 th September 2013 10am-4pm	South East	16 participants
London	28 th September 2013 10am-4pm	Thames	18 participants
Peterborough	28 th September 2013 10am-4pm	Anglian	18 participants
Worcester	5 th October 2013 10am-4pm	Severn	15 participants
Manchester	12 th October 2013 10am-4pm	North West	18 participants
Exeter	19 th October 2013 10am-4pm	South West	16 participants
Leeds	26 th October 2013 10am-4pm	Humber and Northumbria combined	18 participants

The round 1 workshops had the following objective. This was developed and agreed by the project planning group, and with input from Reference Group members, to reflect the overall dialogue process objectives and policy context (as described in section 2.1 above).

Round 1 workshop objective:

To identify public views of the priority issues around strategic water management on a national level.

To this end, to find out:

- What do people identify as issues?
- How do the public value benefits around water, and what are the trade offs and complexities?
- What measures do the public think should be taken to manage water issues, who should take these measures?
- How do the public want to pay for water management? What are the trade offs?
- What are their different priorities locally and nationally, and what drives these?

Two of the overall project objectives are prominent in these intentions for round 1 workshops: *to allow a sample of the public to engage on, deliberate and, alongside other evidence (such as environmental, technical, economic), feed into key decisions within plans for the water environment; to encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future.*

The links to the two remaining objectives are less significant in terms of the round 1 workshop purpose, and relate more to the way in which the Environment Agency would use the results from the dialogue process: *to demonstrate an open and objective approach to river basin planning which can help create greater commitment to actions from business and other stakeholders; and to link across various water planning cycles (e.g. abstraction plans, flood risk plans) to ensure we (the Environment Agency) have a customer focus and avoid silo mentality.*

Structure of the round 1 workshops

The workshops were structured to address the agreed objective and its constituent parts as summarised below. This table also includes a description of how the findings of each session were recorded.

Table 2: Round 1 workshop structure

Workshop session	Content	Note taking
Session 1:	Thinking about environments important to individuals / picking up the degree to which this means a water environment for many people. Full group activity / discussion.	Notes taken but not shared with the group*.
Session 2:	Exploring how participants value the water environment, and the benefits derived from it. Two small groups, water issue cards as prompts, post its for participants to record their views.	Participants' inputs on post its stuck on flipchart paper to prompt discussion.
Session 3:	Challenges facing the water environment. Full group discussion, brought together with a slide summarising the significant water management issues.	Notes taken but not shared with the group*.
Session 4:	Examination of the significant water management issues. Participants working through a set of handouts summarising each significant water management issue; in pairs, small groups, or individually.	In group work, notes recorded onto flipchart paper.
Session 5:	Ranking the challenges with participants using voting stickers to select the top 7 issues they felt should be resourced.	Results of the exercise visible to the group.
Session 6:	Looking at the fairest ways to pay. Small groups discussed payment options.	Notes taken by the small group facilitator.

* There were recorders present at each workshop who made notes on laptops as the workshops proceeded. These notes were not shared with the group at the time but fed into the summary reports that were produced after each workshop, and posted on-line. Where participant inputs were recorded in a more visible way they are noted in the table above.

The issues discussed at the workshops were those determined by the Environment Agency as the most nationally significant, using their evidence base.

- Abstraction and flow.
- Chemicals.
- Faecal indicator organisms and sanitary pollutants.
- Invasive species.
- Phosphates and nitrates.
- Physical modifications.
- Sediment.

Each workshop was staffed as follows.

- Two facilitators from 3KQ.
- Two recorders from 3KQ.
- One Ipsos MORI officer to welcome participants and complete the necessary paper work with them.
- At least two Environment Agency officers.
- One Icarus observer at two workshops (Manchester and Worcester).

Participants were told that a summary report of their event would be published on-line and were given a slip of paper outlining where this could be found.

Web link where report from today's event will be published:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/150057.aspx>

Web link for Challenges and Choices consultation:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33252.aspx>

or Google search 'Environment Agency Challenges and Choices'

or if you don't have access to the internet please telephone Jenny Willis: 07775 770190

Reconvened workshop

A further workshop was held at the end of the process where a sample of the round 1 participants who had indicated an interest in attending were invited to a second and more in depth event in London. This event was also held on a Saturday but for a slightly shorter duration to accommodate participants' travel to and from London.

Workshop location	Date and time	River basin district	Number of participants
London	9 th November 2013 11.30am-3pm	Representative sample across all river basin districts	16 participants

This reconvened workshop had the same objective as that for the round 1 workshops: *to identify public views of the priority issues around strategic water management on a national level*. However the intention was to further develop participants' understanding of water management issues, and to provide additional feedback to the Environment Agency on management and policy options.

As a result, the workshop was structured to create a more detailed level of debate, as summarised below. This table also includes an explanation of how the findings of each session were recorded.

Table 3: Reconvened workshop structure

Workshop session	Content	Note taking
Session 1:	Reconnecting with the content of the round 1 workshops. Reflecting on the benefits noted, what stood out from the discussions, and what are the notable challenges facing the water environment.	Notes taken but not shared with the group*.
Session 2	Choices and values exercise. Two sub groups examined three scenarios: urban river, rural catchment and coastal town. Groups decided how to spend their 'Groats' allocation (proxy monetary measure) to address the challenges for the three scenarios, and considered why they had made these choices.	'Groat' allocation noted onto scenario flipcharts.
Session 3	Comparing the choices of the two groups. Large group exercise / feedback discussion.	Flipchart sheets of scenarios / Groat allocations used as stimulus material.
Session 4	Open discussion led by Environment Agency, summarising what has come out of the process, answering outstanding questions, explaining how the information will be used.	Notes taken but not shared with the group*.

* There were recorders present at the workshop who made notes on laptops as the workshop proceeded. These notes were not shared with the group at the time and were used to inform the contractors' output report. Where participant inputs were recorded in a more visible way they are noted in the table above.

The workshop was staffed as follows.

- Two facilitators from 3KQ.
- Two recorders from 3KQ.
- One Ipsos MORI officer to welcome participants and complete the necessary paper work with them.
- Three Environment Agency officers (including Dave Baxter, project sponsor).
- One Icarus observer.

2.5 Recruitment to the workshops

The project planning group developed a recruitment brief which set out the targets for workshop participant recruitment. This aimed to reach a cross section of the public by age, gender and social grade, reflective of the population in each workshop area, applying the following quotas.

- Gender - minimum of 8 female and 8 male participants.
- Age – minimum of 3 participants in each of the following age groups, 18-24, 25-34, 35-54, 55-64, 65-74 and 75+.
- Social grade – minimum of 3 participants from social grades AB, C1, C2, D and E.

People would be excluded if they or an immediate family member worked in particular organisations (e.g. local authority, Environment Agency, Met Office, National Farmers Union, Rivers Trust), had water based hobbies (e.g. angling, kayaking, boating), or volunteered for a political party. These exclusions existed because the planning group felt they were parties that would be engaged via other mechanisms co-ordinated by the Environment Agency.

Trained Ipsos MORI fieldwork staff undertook 'on street' recruitment in the localities selected for each workshop. 20 members of the public were recruited for each workshop, and, of the 140 recruits, 119 attended the seven round 1 workshops. Each participant was paid an incentive of £65 for attending the workshop.

63 of the round 1 attendees expressed an interest in attending the reconvened workshop. The above quotas were used again for the reconvened workshop, with the additional requirement to recruit at least two participants from each of the round 1 workshops. This proved more difficult than expected due to the varying travel times into London from the various locations, but 16 people did attend the reconvened event. The

overall quota (described above) was again achieved, although it did not prove possible to recruit the minimum of two people per round 1 workshop that had been the intention.

2.6 The Omnibus Survey

The purpose of the Omnibus Survey was to carry out quantitative research that would add context to, and aid interpretation of, the extensive qualitative data generated through the dialogue workshops. It was undertaken after the completion of the workshops and reached 867 panellists from Ipsos MORI's Online Access Panel; all respondents were aged between 16 and 75 and were from England. This was not a random sample of members of the public, but the results were weighted to the known England profile population.

The questionnaire was developed by Ipsos MORI, as a result of an initial scoping document and discussion with the project planning group. The final draft was also shared with the Reference Group for comment, and the agreed version was subject to the Ipsos MORI internal verification process.

Some initial questions were designed to provide a context for other findings, such as how often respondents visited the water environment and asking them how they felt about the current quality of the water environment in England. Subsequent questions related more specifically to issues discussed in the public dialogue workshops, such as the most important reasons for protecting the environment. Two questions were included to establish respondents' willingness to consider household measures to protect the quality of the water environment, and their opinion about the effectiveness of these measures. Finally, a question sought views about the preferred approach to making difficult decisions about where to protect and to what level of quality.

The original intention was that the Omnibus Survey would be carried out concurrently with the dialogue workshops. However this did not prove possible and instead happened after the workshops had been completed. One benefit of this change to the timing was that the survey provided the opportunity to follow up particular issues considered to be of relevance as a result of the dialogue process.

3. Impacts and outcomes of the dialogue process

At this stage there is still an incomplete picture of the outcomes and impacts of this dialogue process as the findings are just starting to be disseminated and used in the different strands of water planning (see 2.1 above). The findings that are more developed relate to the intended use and perceived value from a stakeholder perspective; examples of where influence is already being brought to bear; and the public's opinion as to the value and use of their participation in the dialogue. In addition there are also some unplanned impacts for stakeholders and the individuals who took part in the dialogue process.

Reporting in this section relates to the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

- *Evaluation question 1a)* To what extent has this dialogue process delivered its planned outputs and outcomes, and met the initial expectations from project partners?
- *Evaluation question 1b)* To what extent do the findings from this process have the potential to influence policies, planning or decision-making?
- *Evaluation question 1c)* Is there anything else that has, or will, be done to make it more likely that the findings will be impactful?
- *Evaluation question 1d)* Have there been any unplanned or unexpected impacts from the dialogue process?
- *Evaluation question 1e)* To what extent have public participants:
 - Taken value and benefit from their participation?
 - Learnt about SWMI, river basin management plans and other WFD commitments?
 - Developed confidence in the process and feel that their views will be impactful in developing plans and policy?
- *Evaluation question 1f)* Having taken part in the dialogue, are participants more or less willing to be involved in future dialogue initiatives?
- *Evaluation question 1g)* What are the lessons from the dialogue process, and how will those lessons be disseminated and used to improve future dialogue processes?
- *Evaluation question 1h)* Having been involved in this dialogue, to what extent are the Environment Agency and stakeholder partners willing and able to use public dialogue in the future?

3.1 Influencing policy, planning and decision-making

Stakeholder perspective

Feedback from the Environment Agency has been positive about the value of the findings in influencing and informing their policy development, planning and on-going consultation in relation to water management issues. Given the findings of the dialogue

process it is likely that the impact will be greater on the development of future consultation material and processes than in the direct influence of policy.

The dialogue work does however provide some indication of priorities across the management 'challenges' discussed during the workshops however these appeared to be mainly based on personal concerns or interests rather than on any substantive understanding of the issues.

"Participants identified some issues as being of greater interest than others, notably chemicals, faecal indicator organisms and sanitary pollutants, but also phosphates and nitrates. When giving these issues comparatively more 'weight' of significance participants acknowledged that this reflected personal fears or interests rather than any great understanding of the issues". 3KQ, Ipsos Mori, Public Dialogue on Significant Water Management Issues, final report, 2014 p. 2.

There is also a degree of insight into how the public feels management activities should be paid for although no clear recommendations emerged. Rather the conclusion was that it was important for the public to be more aware of these issues so that they would be more likely to support particular decisions or they could influence action themselves through their own behaviour.

"When considering the fairest way to pay for the cost of addressing the issues participants considered general taxation, water bills or increased cost of food/goods as the essential choices we face as a society. Discussion typically ended with an acknowledgement that it doesn't really matter, the general public all have to pay in the end, somehow". 3KQ, Ipsos Mori, Public Dialogue on Significant Water Management Issues, final report, 2014 p. 2.

This evidence, although not overly focussed, will however help senior managers input into strategy such as through the Environment Agency's Water and Land Senior Executive Team.

"We will be saying in this group in March, OK guys, now what? This work will be informing us about whether we've got our focus right." Project planning group member.

Overall the evidence suggests that the most significant impact of the work will be with regards to the better implementation of on-going consultations and public / stakeholder processes regarding water management. For example, the Environment Agency's consultation on the updated River Basin Management Plans in September 2014 will be an opportunity to implement the learning from this dialogue process. It will also contribute to informing and supporting the work of more local Catchment Partnerships that are being driven by the engagement requirements of 'A Catchment Based Approach'.

“What we want from our land and water needs society’s views, not just the views of an expert. In the first phase of River Basin Planning we didn't write documents that connected with people at all. When we're writing consultation questions for the formal consultation on options over the summer it will inform how we construct the consultation. Usually the consultation would set out a set of principles that the EA is going to use to manage the water environment. Now we are able to say our weight of evidence suggests we should do it like this, we know you're concerned about that therefore we think there are a couple of options. We will be able to talk more explicitly about what concerned the public - the feedback from these workshops”. Project planning group member.

A number of River Basin Programme Managers are already sharing the findings with their River Basin Liaison Panels and Catchment Hosts / Partnerships, using the individual workshop reports for their catchment area. As the ‘Catchment Based Approach’ starts to empower local partnership decision-making with regard to water management issues, a wide range of stakeholders at different levels of understanding and experience will be drawn into the process of significant water management issues planning. This SWMI dialogue process will help inform the Environment Agency about both the public’s priorities / concerns and the way in which the public can be engaged. An appreciation of the potential for public and community involvement in planning at a catchment level has increased the confidence and ability for the Environment Agency to proceed with on-going consultations and engagement work both nationally and at a catchment level with regard to water management.

“For Defra the Catchment Based Approach is the way they are going and these findings will need to be linked into this at some point. One idea is that each liaison panel hears about the outputs of this work. Ultimately catchment hosts working through a Catchment Based Approach will be empowered to make decisions - so this information could be used to influence decision making at a local level as well. It needs to enrich discussions rather than being used to say - thou shalt. Public opinion blended with expertise of catchment hosts and liaison panels at a local level”. Project planning group member.

“I'm trying to promote this through River Basin Liaison Panels and Catchment Partnerships. They are not under the instruction of the Environment Agency but I hope to work through Catchment Coordinators to try to ensure that these recommendations are promoted to the Catchment Partnerships. It's food for thought for those guys. The hosts of Catchment Partnerships tend to be Rivers Trusts and Groundworks but they're all at different stages of development. There's a couple of very developed ones, 10-15 years, but there's also some new guys who are just around a few months and they're still finding their way - these findings could give them some sign posts re. what communities are interested in

and ways of engaging with them.” River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency.

Not all members of the project planning group were satisfied with the quality of some of the findings, feeling that the data gives only limited insight into the public’s preferences and priorities and were unclear in what ways the findings would influence the development of River Basin Management Plans. It is suggested by Sciencewise that there was a difference in expectation between themselves and the Environment Agency. The fact that the Environment Agency are broadly positive about the findings may reflect their relative inexperience of public dialogue processes and their low expectations of the potential outcomes of engagement of this type. Sciencewise on the other hand have a greater experience and expectation of the public’s ability to engage and give opinions relating to priorities and policy development. It is clear that some Environment Agency staff were uncertain about the degree to which public dialogue can contribute to decision-making on policy recommendations.

“Developing policy recommendations from the pressure discussion [the afternoon exercise that focussed on specific water management issues – session 4, see table 1. above] was one thing that really didn't work. People could develop an opinion about what the key pressures were but that policy decision stuff people didn't feel comfortable about that. A repetitive comment was that it was the government's job to develop policy, I can't. We need to reflect whether that objective was too ambitious and are we doing the wrong thing in expecting the public to make comments on that. Are we not better off expecting that there are interested parties who will want to say something about it and the feedback will be in the hundreds not thousands. It's something we need to reflect on for future engagement”. River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency.

It has to be recognised then that there are differences of opinion about what could be achieved through this process and different levels of satisfaction with the outcomes.

The facilitators and process designers recognise that if the focus had been more specific, for example, selecting and addressing just three issues per workshop, it may have enabled a more in depth understanding to emerge and more time to focus on planning / policy development in relation to these management issues. Even with this more focussed approach however it would be challenging, with just a few hours of workshop time, to achieve the insight necessary to deliberate decisively on policy with a group of people who were starting from a very low level of information and understanding. Ultimately the project planning group decided that the workshop should keep the approach more general and cover a wider range of issues in less detail and it has to be recognised that it was a decision that ultimately impacted on the level of detail it was possible to each during the workshops.

Participant perspective

As part of the 43 one to one evaluation interviews, participants were asked to feedback the key standout points arising from the workshop/s they attended that they thought should be taken forward by the Environment Agency (or others). For some people this was too difficult a question to answer, and they made reference to their own lack of knowledge, their confidence in the experts, and the complexities and challenges that the Environment Agency faces in terms of prioritising its activities.

Where answers were given the responses were diverse and reflected both individuals' personal areas of interest, learning from the workshop and / or topics that had been a clear focus of debate in the event they attended. Two suggestions that recurred time and again were **the need to raise awareness with the general public** and **more education about water related issues** (especially for young people i.e. the next generation). Other suggestions ranged across a broad spectrum.

- Making water meters mandatory.
- Requiring producers of cleaning products to use less harmful chemicals.
- The need to work in partnership with local authorities and local organisations as they know better what needs doing.
- Information campaigns about water and workshops like this rolled out much more widely.
- Considering the role and ownership of water companies.
- Encouraging manufacturers and supermarkets to make, stock and promote more water-friendly detergent and cleaning products.
- More fixing of leaks by water companies.
- A higher profile for water issues to rival education policy and the NHS. People were really surprised, once they had learned about the seriousness of the issues, how low a public profile water management had.

"More of this should be brought into schools." Participant, Peterborough.

"In schools it should be part of their education as everyone needs it. Even the younger age, in primary schools it's everyday life, isn't it, and we all need it for the future otherwise we wouldn't be here." Participant, Leeds.

"Think of education – there's a role for this in schools but also across all age groups as it surprised me how ignorant I felt." Participant, Brighton.

"Issues of water management might link with health and education policy."

"More public access to rivers and canals." Participant, Worcester.

"Female hormone tablets getting into the water supply and damaging animals – a way to address this." Participant, Leeds.

“Population control Saw an article by a pundit recently that said that he next major world scale conflict will be water sources” Participant, Worcester.

“Need someone like David Attenborough to popularise the issue to raise awareness among the public.” Participant, Brighton.

“Given the important contribution the environment agency makes to the quality of life and the environment they should be better known. They should market themselves better so people understand their role and how they are funded. What they do around access is magnificent and people should be aware of that.” Participant, London (reconvened).

A number of comments related to the work that the Environment Agency is already undertaking on behalf of the public; participants didn’t realise it was so extensive and were impressed at the breadth and depth of what the Agency was doing and the expertise it has..

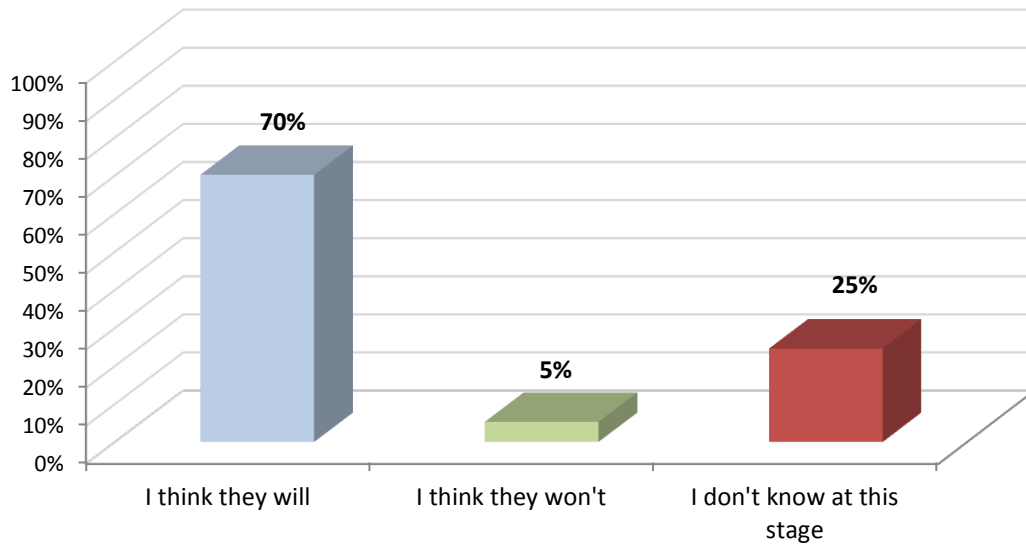
“I was very surprised to hear about the things that are being done.” Participant, Exeter.

Further evidence in this regard is included in the facilitators’ outputs report which collates the key priorities that were identified at each workshop. This was done by asking participants to ‘vote’ for key priorities using a consistent set of challenges.

3.2 Public perception on how the evidence will be used

The majority of participants (77%) felt reasonably clear how the results would be used. Equally, a high percentage (70%) felt confident that the Environment Agency would take account of the public’s views from the workshops in their future planning around water management issues. This is a testament to the workshop design in creating a process that demonstrated the commitment the Environment Agency was making to this project, and to the application of its results.

To what extent do you think the Environment Agency will take account of the public's views from this workshop in their future planning around water management issues?



In interviewing participants in more depth after the events there was a little more ambivalence with regard to the question of the Environment Agency taking account of the public's views. Interviewees' attitudes generally reflected hope rather than an expectation that their views would be influential. There was a sense among many respondents that these events would not have taken place if there were not an intention to use the data generated in some way but they recognised that political and economic pressures as well as the application of the Environment Agency's expertise would also influence policy and practice outcomes.

"They wouldn't have a workshop if they didn't want to know our views and improve the systems in place." Participant, Peterborough.

"Before the workshop I thought there wouldn't be much point in going along but as the day went on it became clearer that the public's views would be taken on board." Participant, Exeter.

"You've got to take the chance, you have to put your faith in them. They asked us so they must want to know our views. It's really important as it's not about people sitting in ivory towers. They need to find out people's views in order to make decisions. Everyone has a view to be taken into account." Participant, Worcester.

“They will be taking our evidence on board, but they have their own ideas and the issue will be if our ideas support theirs.” Participant, London (reconvened).

“A lot will depend on finances. That’s the deciding factor for how far they can go with the public view. I reckon about 40% of what we said will be taken note of and about 60% will depend on government finances.” Participant, London (reconvened).

“I know from my own work that it is sometimes good to hear others confirm / affirm your own thinking. What we have contributed may not change their thinking but it may be helpful in presenting arguments to government etc. [to say] this is what the public thinks too.” Participant, London (reconvened).

Although nearly everyone who fed back was positive about the experience of being consulted on a personal basis there was some questioning of the usefulness of the exercise given that the Environment Agency has expert professional staff who are working on all of these issues. Certainly the process served to enhance the understanding and perception of the work of the Agency in the public eye.

“They are dealing with it anyway.” Participant, Leeds.

“They should perhaps listen a little less to us.” Participant, Peterborough.

“The issues that we prioritised as a group were not the same as the Environment Agency thought were the most important. This gave me pause for thought - why do we put so much time and energy into these people, putting them through university, working for the Environment Agency and having them be expert on a subject if we favour the opinion of Joe and Jane Blogs who are more interested in their weekly shop than the ins and outs of water management? As a member of the public I’m more than happy for them to hear my opinion loud and long but the end word has to go to the experts, and at the end of the day they are the people who are going to make, break or save the area they are working on. We might be stopping them from being the most effective they can. As an advocate of direct democracy I do believe that the opinion of the average voter is important. Nice dichotomy there!” Participant, Peterborough.

A minority view, but one that was articulated across most of the workshops, was doubt or scepticism that the views of the participants would be taken into account. Some respondents were more sceptical feeling that their contribution was unlikely to make a difference to outcomes and / or would be ignored.

“Very little confidence, this is a technical discussion. To expect people to make a meaningful contribution is wishful thinking. It seems slightly like a box ticking exercise. The government can’t make the public’s views a priority and I wouldn’t expect them to.” Participant, Exeter.

“I’d say the likelihood of this is 50:50. This will come down to politics and finances in the end.” Participant, Exeter.

“I am a bit cynical. They say they intend to use the findings but will there be any action once there is political influence and the input of big business? Political power always gets in the way.” Participant, London.

“Will listen but feel it will come down to economics.” Participant, Manchester.

“I really hope so. I’m cynical by nature so I’d be surprised if they really took it on board, but I hope they do.” Participant, Brighton

Nearly everyone interviewed indicated that they would like to get feedback regarding the outcomes from the consultation process and hear about how the views from the workshops are used and the difference it made.

Feedback from the reconvened workshop interviews gave a slightly less clear picture of this question. Some felt that the flaws in the scenario exercise diminished the validity of the results. They understood that in this more detailed workshop they were examining complex decisions, and as a result were concerned that this had not been done robustly enough.

“We were discussing really important issues but we didn’t really have enough information or enough time to do this properly. If I was a politician I wouldn’t have any confidence in the results of this workshop as a reliable source of information about what the public thinks.” Participant (reconvened).

Understanding and confidence in the Environment Agency

The presence of Environment Agency staff, and their role during the workshops was beneficial in building participants’ confidence about the degree to which the results will be used and taken into consideration in developing policy around water management. They provided technical expertise as it was needed, but otherwise allowed the facilitators to manage the discussions in way that elicited the maximum amount of participant input; they did not dominate in any way, nor did they intervene unless asked to do so. Many people commented positively on their role and the confidence that it built in the process.

“There were a lot of people putting some good points across and the two Environment Agency representatives genuinely seemed interesting in listening.” Participant, Peterborough.

“The two men that were there [from the Environment Agency] seemed genuinely interested in listening. They didn’t seem like they were there because they had to be there, they were genuinely interested in what people were saying.” Participant, Leeds.

The workshops certainly enhanced understanding of what the Environment Agency does, and participants were impressed with the scope and expertise of the work undertaken by a government agency. The Environment Agency staff in attendance were very impressive, not only in their knowledge and expertise but in the way they related to people, listened carefully and genuinely to their views and in the eyes of most people took opinions and concerns on board.

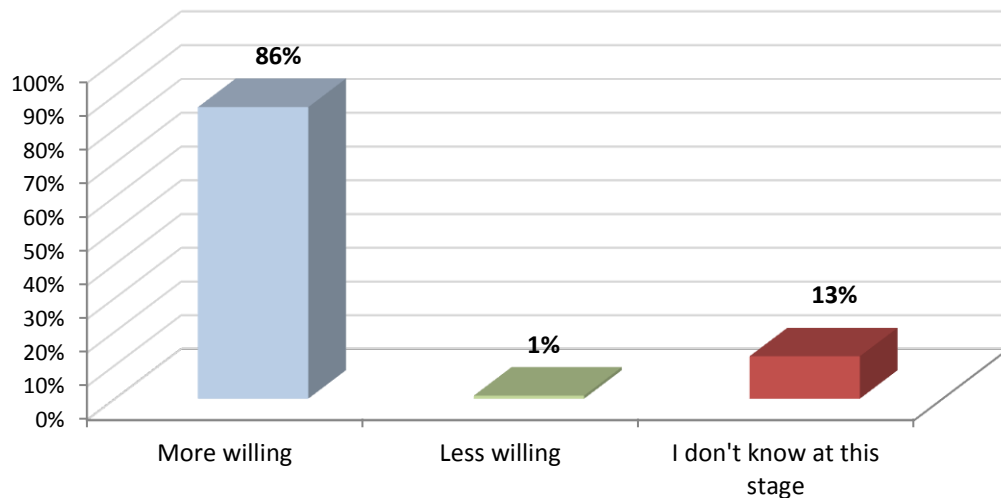
“I was fascinated with the depth and breadth of what the Environment Agency does, I has pigeon holed them as being predominantly environmental policemen - going after big businesses who are illegally dumping into rivers etc. To find out the more scientific research angle was really fascinating - the amount of fighting they do against invasive non-native species for example. It's always good to be more aware of what people are doing on our behalf out there.” Participant Peterborough.

“Things like this help the public understand what the Environment Agency does. It also helps if the Environment Agency if people understand what they do and the challenges they’ve got.” Participant, Worcester.

3.3 Willingness to participate in future dialogue workshops and events

Participants were very positive about being part of the public dialogue process and participating in the workshops, and a large majority indicated that the experience has made them more willing to come to an event like this in the future.

Having taken part in the workshop today, are you more willing or less willing to come to an event like this in future; to respond to public consultations on water management issues; or take further interest in water management issues?



Reasons for being more willing to attend future events fell into four broad categories.

- That it was interesting and they had learnt a great deal.
- The issues discussed were important and need addressing.
- It was their duty as a citizen to contribute to the planning of important issues such as water management.
- That it was a positive, enjoyable experience, participants felt they were listened to and their views would make a difference.

Of these reasons the most common reason given was that the day had been really interesting and they had learnt a lot about water management.

A sample of the responses included:

"I think it a civic duty"

"I have identified it as a serious topic that should be considered more"

"Because there is clearly a large agenda and it is important!"

"I have learned much and hope I've contributed something!!"

"I think this is an important part of democracy"

"because I enjoyed today and I gained knowledge and hope to be able to put some things into practice"

"I found the event very helpful and has helped educate me"

"I learnt such a lot and enjoyed the discussions"

"I feel that it is very important to give the public a voice and to ensure wider awareness of issues"

"It makes one feel part of the community"

"I feel responsible for the world I live in and want to make a difference or at least try. It might sound naive but people in this country should allow themselves to express their opinion more often, not just complain"

"A very informative, enjoyable and mutually rewarding day"

"It would not feel so intimidating in future, and it is good to have an opportunity to learn, think and give feedback"

"I want to help safeguard the world for future generations"

3.4 Unplanned and additional outcomes

There were a range of important and interesting outcomes that were not specifically planned for when setting out the project's objectives. They do reflect however the way in which the workshops were designed and facilitated and provide good learning for future work in terms of what can be achieved and expected from dialogue initiatives of this kind.

Personal behaviours - thinking and acting differently

Thinking differently

Many participants reported that the workshop had changed the way they thought about water and the management of it as a resource. Indeed a lot had not thought about the need for water management at all before participating in the day. Common responses were that previously they had taken water for granted, it came out of the tap and that was it. Many people were surprised at scope of water management and the wide range of issues involved. Some workshop participants commented that it had really made them consider their own lack of understanding, not only about water but about all sorts of systems and resources that are managed on behalf of the public.

"We take it for granted, you don't realise how much effort goes into getting water into your house. It made me appreciate more what the Environment Agency does." Participant, Leeds.

"Even at a domestic level one takes water for granted. It does raise awareness that there's lots of side issues." Participant, Brighton.

"It begs the question that if my understanding of the Environment Agency's role within British society was flawed, how many other departments do I have a flawed impression of? That for me is a big question as there's tens of thousands of people working on our behalf in government agencies across the country and we very rarely hear of their work, it's predominantly education and the NHS that are in the news." Participant, Peterborough.

"It's changed the way I think about quite a lot of things to be honest. I think It's our responsibility to be better informed, about not just water but things like rubbish or where things come from. We could easily have a day on how we dispose of, well anything, just because you don't think about it doesn't mean to say it isn't there." Participant, Brighton.

"I'd not heard about any of this stuff before, all the various risks and problems. I could have guessed it but it was really nice to have laid out all the socio, economic and political elements that go into all these things. I've definitely looked at things a bit differently." Participant, Brighton.

"I found myself looking at river defences when I was out walking the other day; something I wouldn't have even noticed before." Participant, London.

"Before the workshop I may have deselected articles in a newspaper that dealt with these sorts of issues but now I would read those articles." Participant, Brighton.

Talking to others / further research

Many workshop participants commented that they had talked to and passed information on to family, friends and colleagues about the issues that were covered. Some had undertaken further research to understand water management better.

"I have definitely looked at things a bit differently, when I got home I looked up some of the things it had raised." Participant, Brighton.

"I've told my daughter about turning off the tap and using the short flush on the toilet. I gave her the handout to take into school because I thought it would be useful for them." Participant, London.

“Have talked to relatives and friends – bending my brother in law’s ear at the weekend as he worked in the Environment agency and doesn’t have a water meter.” Participant, Leeds.

“I was explaining to my wife all the problems that occur before we drink the stuff.” Participant, Leeds.

“I’ve kept the sheets we had during the day to show my friends; I’ve been thinking about the issues. They are quite shocked too.” Participant, Leeds.

“I was really buzzing when I came out of the workshop. I told others about it and said I was really surprised about how informative it was. Have shared the information with others.” Participant, Exeter.

Taken action

There were a range of, mostly small, actions that people had taken as a direct result of their participation in the workshop.

- Turning the water off when brushing teeth (mentioned 5 times).
- Do less washing.
- Use different detergents.
- Limiting the amount of chemicals used.
- Applied for a job as External Relations Officer with the Environment Agency as so inspired by the day.
- Putting water butts in the garden.
- Take showers rather than baths.
- Running the bath lower.
- Not buying bottled water.
- Think more about what goes down the sink.
- Using the short flush on the toilet.
- Checked for leaks.
- Washer on half wash.
- Putting washing up water on the garden.
- Not walking along a local river and aware that it contains chemicals.

Educative value

The educative value of the workshops was substantial. Participants across the board commented that they had learnt a great deal, and Environment Agency staff were impressed how the workshops enabled the public to get up to speed on the basic issues and trade-offs within a very short space of time.

“Good just in terms of an educative process – if people are unaware how can they make informed decisions? If want to make long term change in the water

environment and on people's behaviours they need to be better informed so they can make these choices and know the consequences. That educational component is important. hard to quantify pollution incidents that haven't happened so it's hard to value the education activity easily.” River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency.

“I almost wish you could step back in time and give everyone a set of facts – the debate would have been fantastic. There is so much misinformation out there.” Project planning group member.

Feel good factor

Environment Agency staff who attended the workshops consistently commented that it was good to be engaging with the public on these issues in a constructive, informed and well designed and facilitated environment. It felt positive and meaningful in relation to their job to be engaging with the people they are there to serve.

“In terms of projects I've been involved in this is one of those projects that has made me feel good and motivated throughout. I really enjoyed being part of it. It was intellectually stimulating, an avenue of work we should do more of in all aspects of our business not just river basin planning but also with flood risk for example. I can't sing its praises enough. I reported back to our liaison panel locally and explained my passion for this sort of work. It's enriched our understanding about what the public think of the wider water environment and given us another string to our bow when we go to talk to government.” Project planning group member.

Transferability of the approach to other issues

The evidence suggests there has been a high degree of learning about this kind of approach for the Environment Agency, and there is significant scope to apply that to other aspects of work and across different issues. In particular some staff members identified how it had highlighted the need to bring SWMI / WFD issues together with flood risk management as an overall approach to managing the water environment. One comment from a River Basin Programme Manager suggested that *“if we'd learnt this a bit sooner we perhaps wouldn't be getting the press we're getting at the moment [re. the recent extensive flooding]”*.

We shouldn't look at WDF or improvements to the water environment or water resources or drinking water as separate to flooding. We're all talking about water – either talking about being too much, not enough or not being in the right state. It ties in with education; we shouldn't be separating things off. It can be frustrating hearing calls for solely dredging as the silt that needs dredging and the water that needs taking away comes off the land. It's how you manage the land be it in a rural or urban environment that makes the difference to how the

catchment behaves. It's about human behaviour." River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency.

"One clear thing is we really need to get a plan in place to work out how we pick up and integrate this into what we do. I can think and use the feedback much wider than just river basin planning. The work done by the project group was very powerful and we need to make sure we maximise the value/learning from this work. We got value for money out of it but there's a lot more value we could take out of it." Project planning group member.

Combining skills

The evidence shows that the workshop teams of 3KQ, Ipsos Mori and the Environment Agency worked very well together to maximise engagement and understanding. The three ingredients that enabled participants to engage well were the high quality issues handout, appropriate and clear input into discussions from Environment Agency staff, and good facilitation.

"The scene setting at the start worked very well because it made the subject real to the participants. The EA staff were brilliant. They weren't domineering and were very helpful. It made it a real rather than an abstract debate; it probably helped motivate them to stay engaged. Also, all the work that went into the hand-outs was worthwhile. This gave some flexibility to how that information was delivered to meet different people's needs and having EA staff on hand to answer the questions it raised for people was particularly useful". Project planning group member.

"The information given was clear. The booklet was easy to understand. The man from the EA was very helpful and informative". Participant.

"There's no reason why we couldn't undertake similar dialogue processes on a regular basis. We can't hide from the defence that it's complicated and difficult to explain ... it is complicated but people get it and they process it using different frameworks to us but actually they come up with exactly the same trade-offs that we have to work through. It's fine to say there is uncertainty and there are trade-offs. This is what I will take out of it most of all is not to underestimate the public; they can really make sense of it". Project planning group member.

"We have some very clever people in HQ who wrote the evidence packs for each of the pressures. Ipsos were able to translate that very technical info into those materials that we used in the events. The way they did that was so good. So professional that the learning for us is that there are ways of doing that and that our comms team need to learn from that". Project planning group member.

Interest group impact

An interesting point observed by one member of the project planning group was the impact on an influential stakeholder interest group when he fed back headline findings from the dialogue process to his local Liaison Panel.

“The members of the Liaison Panel that are up for engagement with the public in protecting the water environment were nodding heads [when he fed back]; then there were other sectors like the fishing community who were a bit frightened of it - my speculation was that they thought that with the wider public having their say on the water environment their voice may get muted slightly. At the moment the angling community have a huge voice nationally and this work is opening up wider views.” Project planning group member.

It will be interesting to gauge the effect on the behaviour and attitudes of traditionally influential consultees (such as well organised water using interest groups such as anglers, canoeists, wildlife, recreation organisations etc.) if public engagement is developed more extensively and becomes more influential through initiatives such as The Catchment Based Approach.

Summary learning points – Impacts and outcomes

Evaluation question 1a):

To what extent has this dialogue process delivered its planned outputs and outcomes, and met the initial expectations from project partners?

Evaluation question 1b):

To what extent do the findings from this process have the potential to influence policies, planning or decision-making?

Evaluation question 1c):

Is there anything else that has, or will, be done to make it more likely that the findings will be impactful?

- Findings from the individual workshops are being used effectively within the Environment Agency and have been **disseminated through briefings to key teams and initiatives**. The findings will be used to enrich and inform the process of strategy and policy development with regard to significant water management issues and give a steer on priorities.
- The individual workshop reporting is helping to **support water management planning processes at a catchment level in some areas** with a number of regional Environment Agency staff briefing (or having plans to brief) Liaison Groups and Catchment Partnerships. Impacts are likely to be more focussed on **engagement processes** rather than the content of policies although the feedback from the public dialogue process is helping to enrich planning and

deliberations within some Catchment Partnerships. This has the potential to bring a much wider spectrum of stakeholders into contact with public opinion and enhance the confidence of engaging with the public at a catchment level. It reflects the principles set out in a Catchment Based Approach.

- The differences in satisfaction with the findings between the Environment Agency and Sciencewise may reflect **the two organisations' relative experience in public dialogue work**. The Environment Agency has a lot of experience in stakeholder engagement but limited experience in planned and designed engagement with the public. It would have been helpful to have explored expectations and relative experience to a greater extent at the start of the process and built this understanding more robustly into the project's objectives and in turn into the methodology and outputs. This disconnect between project partners has affected overall objectives, input into methodology and communication within the project planning group. It should be used as **learning for future dialogue initiatives where the Environment Agency and Sciencewise are working together on public participation initiatives**.
- A different format for the workshop, for example, **focussing on three key water management pressures, may have enabled participants to produce more decisive policy related opinion**. This approach however was not supported by the project planning group who preferred to address the breadth of issues rather than a more limited sample of pressures in more detail. Given the time limitations and the range of pressures to cover this made it more challenging to guide a group of the public in addressing policy recommendations in any substantive detail.
- An analysis in relation to the current evidence available would suggest that the 4 project objectives were partially achieved. Certainly a sample of the public was able to engage with and deliberate on a range of evidence in relation to water management issues - **objective 1**. The findings will assist the Environment Agency in relation to water management decision-making, although there was not a wealth of robust and substantive public opinion that could be applied to 'key decisions'.

Objective 2 was achieved in part as an open and objective approach was demonstrated. This may contribute to an environment where business and stakeholders can commit more to actions within the water environment; however there does not appear to be a direct and measurable relationship between the dialogue outcomes and this aspiration.

Objective 3 was also partly achieved. The workshops did encourage and deliver a frank and evidence based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by the water environment but provided only generalised feedback on

how this could be best managed into the future.

Objective 4 remains a work in progress but internal debate has been informed by the dialogue process. Much depends on the Environment Agency's commitment to continue referencing and embedding the findings of this project in their on-going work.

- This dialogue process has proven that members of the public, with little existing knowledge of this complex subject, can quickly and readily digest information in order to **have a good quality discussion about water management issues**.
- Although the policy steer and prioritisation of issues was limited the reporting **will help inform the design of the River Basin Management Plans consultation** in September 2014. It will inform the language used, how it is communicated to the public and support the framing of some issues and options.

Evaluation question 1e):

To what extent have public participants:

- ***Taken value and benefit from their participation?***
- ***Learnt about SWMI, river basin management plans and other WFD commitments?***
- ***Developed confidence in the process and feel that their views will be impactful in developing plans and policy?***
- There was substantive feedback that demonstrated that the majority of participants **found the workshop experience positive**, educational and a good use of their time.
- This dialogue process has shown how such approaches can play a role in **helping the general public understand** the challenges and complexities that the relevant agencies have to deal with. This in itself is a key part of improving public awareness and understanding of how the important decisions that affect their everyday lives are made and the role of government and citizens.
- The evidence makes the significant point that the general public has **a high expectation and a reasonably high degree of confidence** that the Environment Agency will take account of the workshop findings; there is however an acknowledgment that decisions are made within the context of expert knowledge, politics and tight budgets as well as public opinion.
- Bringing together members of the public and technical experts using a quality, deliberative, facilitated process **has been very powerful in terms of people's learning, attitude and behaviour changes in relation to water resource**

management. The majority of people participating started the day with a very limited appreciation of water management issues. By the end of the day many people felt they had learnt a great deal and were prepared to talk to others about water issues and make some personal changes with regard to their use of water. It is interesting to note how quickly lay people can become much more articulate and relatively well informed in relation to a significant societal challenge. Both public and professional stakeholders pointed out, this process could be undertaken in relation to a wide range of national issues and challenges.

Evaluation question 1d):

Have there been any unplanned or unexpected impacts from the dialogue process?

- There have been a wide range of unplanned and / or unexpected impacts from the process. Notably for the Environment Agency, has been the realisation that there is an **enthusiasm and good will among the public to engage positively in deliberations about water management**. Much of the contact the Environment Agency has with the public is unplanned and often contentious and combative. An appreciation that a well-planned, designed and facilitated approach can develop good understanding about the role and challenges the organisation faces and constructive debate has been an **extremely positive learning experience for staff involved**. It has potentially opened up a new dimension to a range of work areas and given insight into how plans and options can be 'road tested' in a managed and constructive environment rather than deploying the more traditional 'decide and defend' approach that is often used in decision-making. In addition it has been interesting to see the extent to which participants have taken what they have learnt and discussed in the workshops further in terms of personal research, discussing water management issues with others and changes in the way they use water and products that affect water quality.
- The degree to which a **'team' approach has worked well** has been a significant learning point for this project; in this instance professional facilitators combining with quantitative public opinion research and environment Agency staff.

Evaluation question 1f):

Having taken part in the dialogue, are participants more or less willing to be involved in future dialogue initiatives?

- A large majority of participants indicated that they would **welcome participating** in future dialogue initiatives. This is a testament to the good facilitation and organisation of the workshops.

Evaluation question 1g):

What are the lessons from the dialogue process, and how will those lessons be disseminated and used to improve future dialogue processes?

- Findings have been and are currently being shared across the relevant functions within the Environment Agency, for example, River Basin Programme Managers, Pressure Leads, Catchment Coordinators and the Environment and Business Directorate. There is also an action plan for wider dissemination to appropriate parts of the business that would benefit from hearing about the findings and appreciating the potential and approach to public dialogue. In particular the challenges and benefits of public engagement need to be communicated to staff within communications and engagement functions as this (deliberative public dialogue) is an area where the Environment Agency lacks experience.

Evaluation question 1h):

Having been involved in this dialogue, to what extent are the Environment Agency and stakeholder partners willing and able to use public dialogue in the future?

- The process has been **positive and worthwhile for the Environment Agency**. The workshops provided a non-combative forum for quality conversations about water management. There is a feeling that this engagement of the public could be usefully replicated as decision-making and policy development moves forward both in relation to water management and other environmental management issues.
- **Confidence and experience has been built within the Environment Agency with regard to the methodology engaging with the general public.** Lessons have been learned about process design, scope and the capacity for the public to engage in sophisticated dialogue about significant water management issues and the technicalities and trade-offs needed when developing policy. This experience now needs to be shared widely and learning embedded so that future dialogue initiatives have the best opportunity to realise their potential.

4. Inputs to the dialogue process

The evidence and learning set out below reviews the overall resources available to the project, as well as the input of the facilitators, technical experts and members of the public, the stimulus materials, and the project governance. All of these factors are indicators for the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

Reporting in this section relates to the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

- *Evaluation question 2a)* Were the purposes of the dialogue project the right ones to best ensure that the public's views and concerns are fed into plans and priorities for river basin management plans and other WFD commitments?
- *Evaluation question 2b)* Have the inputs (time, money, resources) to the process been sufficient to deliver the project's purposes?
- *Evaluation question 2c)* In what ways has the project provided good value for the resources invested?
- *Evaluation question 2d)* Has the governance / management of the process been adequate to ensure a process that is well run and supported? Have the different management and delivery elements worked well and complemented each other's roles?

4.1 Overall project resources

There is a general view that the dialogue process had sufficient resources (time, money, human resources) to complete the tasks as designed: seven round 1 workshops, one reconvened workshop, both workshops offering financial incentives for participants, the Omnibus Survey, individual workshop reports and the outputs report⁴, plus the presentation of the findings. The overall project budget was £200,000 (including £100,000 of Sciencewise funding), of which £105,000 was allocated to the dialogue process contract.

There is unavoidably an educational aspect to all public dialogue work of this nature; participants have to be given enough information about new topics before they can enter into meaningful deliberation. In this instance, the project planning group's decision to focus on seven water management issues in equal measure meant that a good proportion of workshop time was used to provide information about those topics. This affected the time remaining for more constructive debate around management options and policy. It is the view of a number of members of the project planning group that this was a key factor that limited the degree of interrogation possible on specific issues. However one member of the group does believe that it should have been

⁴ The 'outputs report' is the final, over arching report produced by 3KQ / Ipsos MORI summarising the findings and the suggestions arising from the public dialogue process.

possible to deliver more concrete data about the public's view on management options and priorities while considering the full seven topics – specifically, that more could have been achieved with regards to project objective 3 (*to encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future*).

While this is an issue that relates to the achievement of the project objectives, the question of sufficient resourcing is also relevant. There is a strong view among some members of the project planning group that the dialogue process achieved as much as it could have given the available resources and the design constraints set by the planning group – i.e. the dual requirements of delivering round 1 workshops in seven river basin districts, and focusing on seven water management issues. However, as described above, there is a counter view that these factors were not restrictive and that there was scope to design the workshops differently to achieve more detailed results (see section 3.1 above).

4.2 Project governance

A project planning group guided the dialogue process, meeting four times in total. It was comprised of nine Environment Agency members of staff, plus the consultancy team and the designated Sciencewise Dialogue and Engagement Specialist. In addition, a Project Reference Group was established, involving seven representatives of key sector organisations (e.g. Defra, Natural England, Angling Trust), to act in an independent advisory capacity. This group attended a meeting early in the planning stages to contribute to workshop design and the development of stimulus material. As the project progressed however, the Reference Group had minimal on-going involvement. This was a result of the project planning group's view that such external oversight was less significant for what was a relatively uncontroversial subject matter.

It is the majority view of stakeholders that the requisite elements were in place for good governance, that they were fit for purpose and proved effective. However, two factors impacted on the progress of the project in the planning phase. Firstly, planning took place over the summer holiday months (commencing at the start of July), when it was difficult to achieve consistency of representation due to periods of holiday leave among planning group members. Secondly, the timescale set by the Environment Agency required the planning to take place over a short period of time, with delivery commencing in September 2013.

As a result it proved difficult to maintain a consistency of involvement in the planning group for some members; and key steps in consolidating the purpose, objectives and overall approach to and design of the project had less attention than might have been the case with a more generous planning period. These factors had repercussions later in the project. For example, some of the comments and intervention during drafting of the outputs report were regarded as being too late in the process and that concerns about

the nature of the workshops, and what they could deliver, should have been made more explicitly at an earlier stage. If these concerns had been addressed earlier then there would have been the scope to discuss what outcomes were possible from the dialogue process, and to amend the process design if necessary.

4.3 The purpose of the dialogue project

The public dialogue project had four key objectives.

1. To allow a sample of the public to engage on, deliberate and, alongside other evidence (such as environmental, technical, economic), feed into key decisions within plans for the water environment.
2. To demonstrate an open and objective approach to river basin planning which can help create greater commitment to actions from business and other stakeholders.
3. To encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future.
4. To link across various water planning cycles (e.g. abstraction plans, flood risk plans) to ensure we (the Environment Agency) have a customer focus and avoid silo mentality.

Feedback from stakeholders regarding the adequacy of the objectives for the project suggests that in hindsight they would have benefitted from more scrutiny both in terms of whether they could be achieved within the scope of the initiative and whether they were the correct objectives per se – that is, were they the best fit for what the Environment Agency wanted to achieve?

The facilitation team also agreed that the objectives would have benefitted from more scrutiny at the beginning of the process but the start of the project was very frenetic and this didn't get done.

Although close to what was required there was agreement among stakeholders that the project would have benefitted from more specifics - for example, there was no reference to the WFD or River Basin Management Plans in the objectives. Feedback differed as to whether the objectives were too ambitious given the project's resources.

"The Environment Agency were not entirely clear what they wanted from the process." Project planning group member.

"We could have spent more time on these objectives at the beginning. We haven't gone through this process before and therefore didn't know what could be done with the public, what was realistic and what not. We suffered from a lack of experience." Project planning group member.

Further analysis is provided in sections 3 and 5 about the degree to which the project and workshop objectives were achieved.

4.4 Participant selection

There is a general view across stakeholders that the recruitment process (see section 2.5 above) was effective and achieved its goal in ensuring a cross section of the general public attended the workshops. There were a minimal number of non attendees across the seven round 1 workshops, reflecting Ipsos MORI's experience in this area of work.

"We certainly achieved the goal of engaging with a set of people who are reflective of the general public." Project planning group member.

A couple of stakeholders have commented that they felt that participants were too urban focused in areas where there were significant rural interests. This could be a result of the specific recruitment methodology; 'on street' approaches may not reach rural residents unless they have gone into the town on that specific day, nor those who work in rural areas, such as farmers.

There were some difficulties encountered in recruiting for the reconvened event. Participants were invited to express an interest in attending while at their round 1 workshop. This resulted in 63 expressions of interest for Ipsos MORI to recruit from. The biggest difficulty resulted from the London location; this was not easily accessible for some people, requiring train journeys of upwards of two hours (particularly Worcester with a travel time of two and a half hours as a minimum). While the overall quotas were achieved, it did not prove possible to recruit a minimum of two people from Worcester, and 16 of the total 20 people recruited attended.

4.5 The facilitators and technical experts

The workshops were well resourced in terms of both facilitators and support staff. Each workshop had two lead facilitators, plus recorders and support from Environment Agency officers who contributed their technical expertise as required. Separating the roles in this manner was very effective. It enabled the facilitators to concentrate on the process of ensuring that the workshop was engaging, that participation was maximised, clear information given, and that the group were guided through the discussion exercises. The key discussion points could be recorded accurately and in real time by the recorders, and technical expertise was on hand for clarification as required. Arguably there was more scope for all of the key discussion points to be recorded in a more visible way, particularly given the fact that recorders were present who could have made notes onto flipchart paper for example rather than solely onto laptops.

Feedback from the project stakeholders and participants about the facilitator skills has been very positive. The fact that they were independent was crucially important; it

helped reassure participants that this was a genuine process of engagement and dialogue, without pre-conceived agendas.

“I liked the fact that the facilitators were impartial. They could, if necessary, close off a pathway of discussion without a risk of being told [by a participant] that they were trying to cover things up.” Project planning group member.

“We're a scientific, professional organisation and that doesn't lend itself to one that can engage having external facilitators takes the pressure off - allows us to be within our role to watch people work and contribute information. If we had run it we would have strayed to the wrong side and given too much opinion. Facilitators were great to know when to bring us in to clarify the facts and not get too preachy”. Project planning group member.

The input of Environment Agency staff to the workshops was particularly valuable; they were able to apply their specific skill set of technical expertise and local knowledge. They responded to participant questions and provided technical expertise as and when required throughout the workshops without the pressure of holding the events together. They were able to provide local examples of topics under discussion, helping to illustrate and set a context for the national level water management issues under discussion. Their role was enhanced by having good independent facilitation that managed their input appropriately.

“The Environment Agency staff were brilliant.” Consultancy team member.

“Facilitators being independent was great - stopped us saying too much. Content was fantastic. Independent facilitation combined with having technical support from the Environment Agency - essential. A good combination.” Project planning group member.

Two members of the Environment Agency staff who supported the workshops suggested that it would have been useful to have had contact with the facilitation team before the workshops to run through the structure of the day and their role. Another suggestion was that the Environment Agency team who supported the workshops may have benefitted from a crib sheet with a broadly agreed interpretation of the key pressure areas as they were largely left to bring in their own interpretation on the day which may have introduced inconsistencies across the workshops. There was also support for having the flexibility to interpret local issues by local members of staff so a workable balance needs to be found.

The vast majority of participants enjoyed taking part in the workshops and consistently fed back that they were pleased to have had an opportunity to give their views and learn about water management through their participation.

“The team were fantastic, they were really nice people who managed a very diverse group very well.” Participant, Worcester.

4.6 The technical information

Scope of the workshops

It has been suggested by several members of the project planning group that it may have been beneficial to study just two or three water management issues in depth, rather than examining seven in a relatively superficial way. Alternatively, to have not gone out so broadly across the regions but instead run two day sessions for the same cohort of participants in fewer places. This may have enabled more in depth dialogue and addressed the minority view that the findings have not been sufficiently detailed and have not put forward adequately interrogated management options.

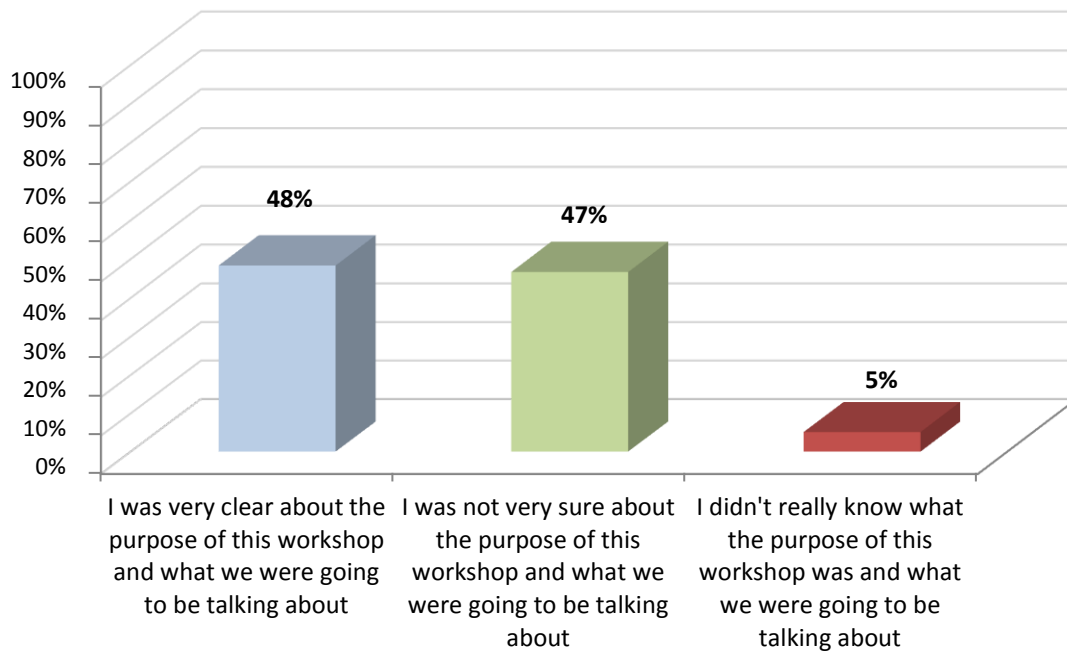
There was also a growing realisation as the project progressed that may not have been prominent at the outset, of the importance of using real life examples to illustrate the debate. The input of Environment Agency staff, providing local examples and case studies, was particularly useful for illustrating what might otherwise be quite abstract issues. This was done but not in a consistent fashion or to a particularly high standard with regard to visuals.

“We needed more real life examples from our patch - didn't have time to do this very well. Could have made it more real and local to participants. Bit ambitious to get everyone to look at all the pressures, especially the final facilitated session when there was a lot to get through in the time allowed. Needed more time at this part of the day to maximise the potential for good informed conversations”.
Project planning group member.

Pre workshop understanding of what to expect

Participants were not provided with any materials prior to the workshop. It was a fairly even split between participants who fed back that they understood what the workshop would be about and that it met those expectations, and those who were unsure what it would be about. Many people however commented that the day had a much broader focus and was much more interesting and enjoyable than they had expected.

Before you came today, were you clear about what the workshop was about?



Arriving 'with an open mind' was a common comment. Participants seemed very open to learn, discuss and find out. It is possible that, at the time, water issues were not as contentious or politicised as some other national issues and indeed many people felt that they should have more profile. However, at the time of writing this final report the situation may have shifted, given the degree to which flooding has been a major issue in many parts of the country over the intervening months.

"I expected to be bored out of my skull and it went really quickly. It was not what I expected, it covered so many things from so many angles." Participant, Leeds.

"Very, very interesting, went with an open mind and heard some very good comments." Participant, Leeds.

"I knew it was vaguely about water but not much more than that." Participant, London.

"I was surprised at how in depth it was and how there were issues that I hadn't thought of." Participant, Worcester.

“Surprised me that people didn’t really know very much [about water], they hadn’t given it a lot of thought.” Participant, Brighton.

Participants’ expectations were also exceeded in terms of the quality of the day. There was frequent mention of the friendliness of the people running the event, the good level of organisation and the clear structure and methodology that enabled people to participate and learn.

“I was expecting a presentation and a quick Q and A afterwards. In fact it was broken up, there was lots of to-ing and fro-wing rather than us just passively receiving information.” Participant, Peterborough.

Written material

The summary handout of the key water management issues, provided during the round 1 workshops, were widely welcomed and written in a way that was accessible to and understandable by participants. Many workshop participants commented on the clarity of information and that it was pitched at the correct level.

“Able to understand the issues as they were clearly presented and there were opportunities to talk to others.” Participant, Worcester.

The materials originated in the Environment Agency, were refined by Ipsos MORI and then returned to the Environment Agency for a final ‘technical check’. A number of Environment Agency staff interviewed noted the significant achievement of summarising complex issues so effectively, using plain English, yet without ‘dumbing down’ the content.

“The materials were excellent.” Project planning team member.

The scope existed to provide additional physical resources as a stimuli for discussion and to illustrate key points. Large, good quality photographs demonstrating the challenges such as invasive species and eutrophication would have been beneficial to help participants understand what these challenges look like in practice. They would also have provided the opportunity for participants to move around the room, and to break up the concentrated periods of group work and discussion. In some workshops photographs were provided (introduced by Environment Agency staff in the Manchester workshop) and welcomed, but they were A4 prints of poor quality and could have been improved.

At the reconvened workshop there were some weaknesses in the resources provided for the ‘Groats’ allocation exercise.

- The direction of water flow was not included on the diagrams illustrating the scenario / issues; the two discussion groups made different assumptions and as a result worked with opposing views of the direction of flow.
- The third, coastal scenario, was regarded by one group as including insufficient detail to inform their decisions.
- Participants were asked to look at the scenario diagrams and solutions sheets prior to their discussions. However there were not enough copies for each person and in some cases 3-4 people were gathered around an A4 sheet trying to read its content.

"I didn't feel that I understood enough about what was being discussed and we were too rushed. In the groups we didn't have a copy of the paper work (scenarios) each and we couldn't even see what it was we were supposed to be discussing. It needed a much more detailed introduction and explanation, or some briefing sent to us beforehand." Participant, reconvened workshop.

- The decisions made by the two groups were recorded on A3 sheets posted on the walls with relatively small text. No-one but the facilitator could see what was on the sheets. This was a minor problem in the first part of the exercise where the sheets were posted next to each group, but was a problem once they were all back together in plenary and each group was reporting back on its progress. For example, the facilitator would say 'measure 2' but no-one knew which measure this referred to. Eventually the groups found the original A4 sheets they were looking at so they could see what was being referred to.

Given that this was the substantive part of the reconvened workshop content, these weaknesses may have contributed to the fact that participants were slightly less satisfied with this workshop. Interviewees were split between regarding the exercise as too detailed and too superficial. The exercise did however still produce interesting material and useful insights that Dave Baxter (Environment Agency project sponsor) commented on his summary statement at the end of the workshop.

The fact that individual workshop summary reports were put on-line soon after each event is very positive and a number of participants reported that they did access these. Arguably, it would have been beneficial if participants at the reconvened workshop had been reminded about these reports, and encouraged to read them, prior to attending this event.

It is not the intention to send participants the outputs report, but many would welcome sight of an executive summary.

Summary learning points – project inputs

Evaluation question 2a:

Were the purposes of the dialogue project the right ones to best ensure that the

public's views and concerns are fed into plans and priorities for river basin management plans and other WFD commitments?

- There was an issue around the amount of attention paid to the **framing and agreement of project and workshop objectives**. More time given to scrutinising, firming up and clarifying the desired outcomes would have helped the dialogue contractors and project planning group manage the process with more certainty about what was required. This may also have impacted on **methodological decisions and process outputs** as it may have influenced decisions about the numbers of, duration and locations of workshops and the number of significant water management issues under discussion.
- **More time for the planning phase at the outset of the project** would have helped ensure the project objectives had been fully scrutinised.
- The expertise of Ipsos MORI was used to good effect to achieve **recruitment of participants** that reflected the general population. However there were some concerns that this was less effective in terms of recruitment in rural areas.

Evaluation question 2b:

Have the inputs (time, money, resources) to the process been sufficient to deliver the project's purposes?

- The overall **resources** for this project, as designed, were sufficient.
- However the question remains about **whether the design was the most appropriate to achieve the project objectives within the available resources**. For example, it has been suggested that it would have been beneficial to focus on fewer significant water management issues in more detail. Or that fewer round 1 workshops were held, with all of them reconvened. Given the fact that the workshop findings did not demonstrate any major regional differences, the argument for a wide geographical spread has proved insubstantial which is important learning for the Environment Agency for future public dialogue exercises. It can be concluded that either of these options would have given more scope for detailed deliberation on significant water management issues and would have provided more progress against project objective 3.
- **Locating the reconvened workshop in London** meant long travelling times from some areas, and was a disincentive to participate for some people. The question of how many reconvened events there should have been is addressed in the point above. However what is clear is that a single location was not a best fit and did not suit a number of the potential participants.

- The **resourcing of the workshops** was good in terms of the facilitators, recorders and technical experts. It built confidence that there was a **seriousness of intent and that people's contribution was important**.
- The **financial incentive** helped ensure that a diverse range of people could attend the workshops. This is an important point and should be a feature of similar dialogue processes in the future.
- There is a need to consider how to **use stimulus material to best effect**. Graphics, photographs etc. help participants put the discussions into a real life context. They can also provide the opportunity to create a new energy within group work as participants are invited to move around a room and look at resources to stimulate their thinking. While the technical water management issue handouts were very successful, the potential to use visual material particularly was largely over looked in this project.
- It has been demonstrated how it is possible to **synthesise complex material** into a usable and understandable format that also inspires the interest of participants. The summary handout of the seven significant water management issues was particularly well received by participants and Environment Agency staff alike and should be used as an example of how complex information can be communicated effectively. These materials have subsequently been used in different meetings with non-technical stakeholders to help interpret and explain water management issues.
- Methods that enable participants to **visualise different scenarios** are particularly useful for members of the public to contextualise, visualise and understand complex issues. These need careful planning however, and in this instance evidence suggests that the scenarios would have benefited from a period of testing and refining in advance of the reconvened workshop, thus contributing to higher levels of confidence in the process by participants. It is also the case that the use of scenarios would have been beneficial in the round 1 workshops.
- Overall the process participants have not questioned whether this was a good use of their time. There is a sense that they are satisfied that their contribution was an **effective use of them as a resource** to the process.

Evaluation question 2c:

In what ways has the project provided good value for the resources invested?

- The response to this question is not clear-cut. While the majority of stakeholders believe that the project achieved as much as it could have in the given resources,

there is one view that contradicts this. While **more could have been done in achieving objective 3 (see above)** the weight of the arguments would suggest that **the project has provided good value** for the resources invested.

- It is notable that **participants' expectations were exceeded** in terms of the quality of the workshops. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that events such as these are well resourced, well planned and well delivered.

Evaluation question 2d:

Has the governance / management of the process been adequate to ensure a process that is well run and supported? Have the different management and delivery elements worked well and complemented each other's roles?

- **Project management** was good. However, as highlighted above, more time should have been allocated to the planning phase, particularly given the fact it coincided with the peak holiday / leave period.
- **Representation on the project planning group was adequate** but the fact that the design stages of the project took place over a short time frame and through the summer holiday period made it more difficult for everyone to engage on a consistent basis for this phase of the project.
- The issue of the **two differing perspectives** that exist about the workshop outcomes raises a question about how the planning phase should ideally proceed. In this instance the contractors discussed the workshop plans with the project planning group, and shared a number of iterations for comment. Judgements were made about the range of comments received and what prominence they should have in terms of responding to them and making changes to the plans. The result is that one member of the planning group does not believe that their comments were sufficiently taken into account, and that the decision not to do so ultimately impacted on the effectiveness of the workshops. It is not clear how this could have been dealt with differently – in these situations, where design is 'by committee', there is a need to take account of all the comments and then make judgements about what is the best approach. One option would have been for a **protocol** to establish how comments would be dealt with, whose views would take precedence should there be differing views, and at what point the funder (the Environment Agency or Sciencewise) would intervene and halt progress should they be unhappy with how the project is proceeding.
- The **separation of roles** between facilitators, recorders and technical experts ensured that the workshops remained focused and participatory, with technical expertise on hand as required. There was a proactive approach from all involved towards effective team working.

- The presence of Environment Agency staff members from each workshop area helped **provide a local flavour** to the events, and their presence was of value to participants. It is possible that more could have been done to brief these representatives to ensure they provided a standardised response, but there is no evidence to suggest that they felt uncomfortable with their role and the level of knowledge and insight they brought to the workshops.
- The **feedback loop to participants is important** in keeping them engaged with the process and feeling valued. While the individual workshop reports were made available to participants, the same is not true for the outputs report. A follow up / summary document should be sent to all the members of the public who participated in the workshops. This should include information about how the data is being used as this was an area of interest to participants.
- **Friendliness, openness, hospitality, a good venue and quality catering** are all important parts of the process of maximising the engagement of the public and should be deliberately designed into the process.

5. The dialogue process

The evidence and learning in this section of the report reviews the dialogue process in some detail, specifically the design and delivery of the workshops and the Omnibus Survey. This relates to the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

Reporting in this section relates to the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

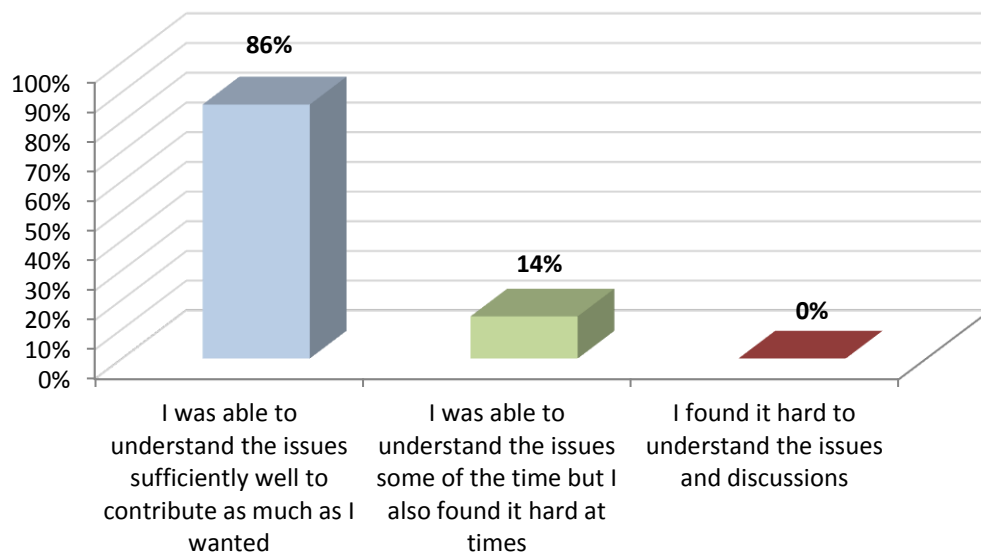
- *Evaluation question 3a)* To what extent have participants been able to engage with the content (environmental, technical, economic data and policy) of WFD and river basin management and contribute their perspectives on these issues?
- *Evaluation question 3b)* Have the dialogue activities been appropriate and engaging?
- *Evaluation question 3c)* Have there been particularly successful approaches or challenges in the process design, delivery or reporting that future dialogue processes could learn from?
- *Evaluation question 3e)* How are the dialogue results, and the influence of those results, being communicated back to public participants and other stakeholders?

(Note: question 3d) is addressed in the Conclusion to this paper, on page 75.)

5.1 Understanding the issues

The facilitators, together with technical input from the Environment Agency staff, were very successful in presenting the topics and technical information in a way that participants could understand and use to contribute their views and comments to the various discussions. This was evident during the workshop observations and over 85% of the round 1 workshop participants said that they understood the issues sufficiently well to be able to contribute as much as they wanted.

Understanding the Issues. The workshop today has covered some quite complex, technical issues. Were you able to make sense of these and as a result, contribute your views about them?



The topics were explained well, they were pitched at a level that was understandable, and, as highlighted in section 3, the summary handout was particularly helpful in this regard. This is very positive given that the content was new to a high proportion of participants, and included a quite large number of complex issues. For Environment Agency staff there has been some degree of surprise about the degree to which non-technical, previously un-informed members of the public can be interested in, and engage in detailed discussions about, such a breadth of issues.

"I was surprised that the concepts they were using, and how they explored trade offs, are exactly the sort of conversations we have internally." Project planning group member.

Key points from feedback and observation include the following.

- The level was pitched very much at the correct level to enable a mixed public group to get to a point of understanding where they could enter into constructive discussions. Even those people who identified themselves as being fairly knowledgeable beforehand felt that the level needed to be pitched where everyone could understand and participate.
- There was appreciation that the information was presented as objectively as possible with no apparent bias or 'position' being put forward. People were free to come to their own conclusions.
- The information was presented in a way that didn't patronise or make people feel uncomfortable with the level of their own knowledge. There was nothing but praise

for the facilitators and Environment Agency specialists. Generally Environment Agency staff explained technical details and issues when the groups needed additional information without giving their own opinion about what should be done.

- There was a lot of feedback to say people had learned a great deal and really appreciated being able to learn about and understand these issues. Participants were surprised at how extensive the field of water management was; many fed back that they had no idea it was so complex and extensive.
- A number of comments related to the benefit of having a mixed group of men, women, people from different walks of life, and different age groups. There was a lot of learning support given among the group members if someone didn't understand or was struggling with a concept. Indeed the 'learning from other participants' was mentioned a number of times across the workshops.
- While the WFD and river basin management were mentioned at the start of the round 1 workshops, they were not referenced again. While the workshop content was clearly focused on the relevant significant water management issues, the policy context was not given a high focus during round 1 workshops or the convened event. Consequently, participants did not recall them when asked about how they thought the Environment Agency would use the workshop findings.

"The things I wasn't 100% sure about were made quite clear. The day refreshed a lot of things I knew but had forgotten about. It has re-motivated me." Participant, Brighton.

"Definitely learned a lot. It's not the sort of thing you think about apart from the way I'd behave in my home. I live a two minute walk from the sea in Brighton and I'd never really given any thought to the quality of the sea." Participant, Brighton.

"Very well organised, When the Environment Agency guys sat in you felt that these are the guys who are at the leading edge. They knew their stuff." Participant, Leeds.

"Very informative, I need the idiots guide to everything." Participant, Leeds.

"They weren't trying to coral us into any particular position." Participant, London.

"Generally it was OK. Found it hard to get my head around the chemical stuff – phosphates and nitrates – but I got there in the end." Participant, London.

"It achieved the right balance on the whole as the technical issues were grounded in practical examples and not just too theoretical." Participant, London.

"Everything was clearly explained and you didn't feel embarrassed if you wanted to ask a question." Participant, Exeter.

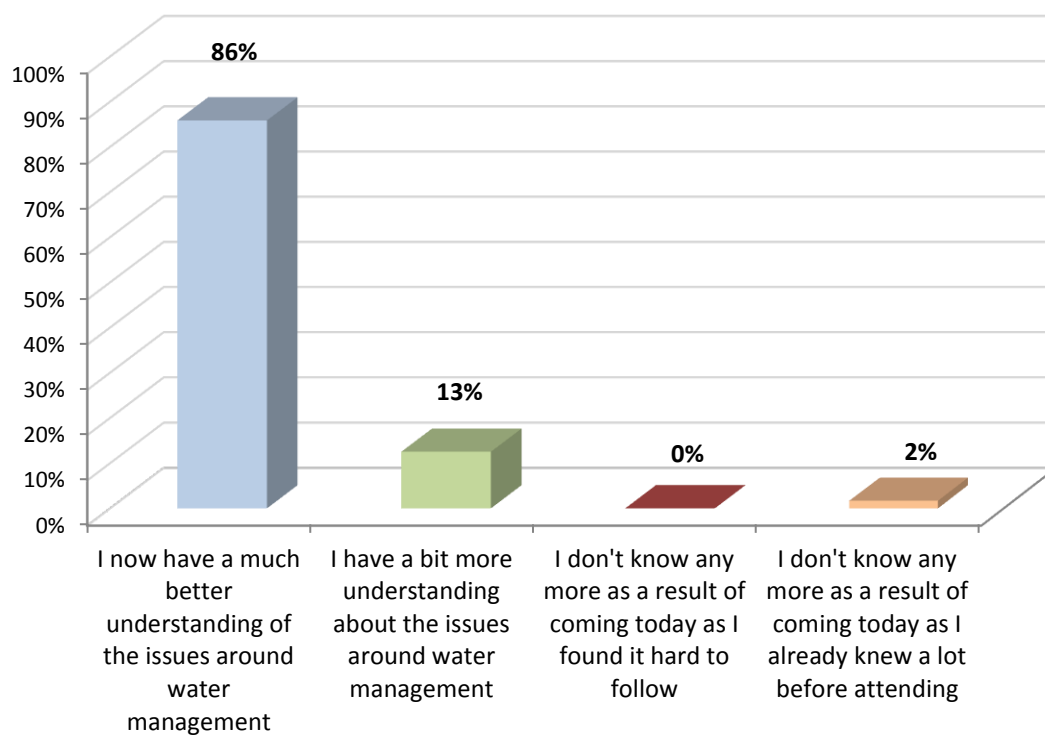
"It was presented well and it was good to talk to other people." Participant, Exeter.

"It's a very good way – there were people older and younger than me and we were all coming at it from different points of view and it was interesting to hear other people from different generations." Participant, Leeds.

"I wonder how valuable it is given the limited knowledge people have." Participant, Brighton.

"I thought it was going to be about using water in your own house and it wasn't. That was just a tiny part of it. I hadn't thought about water before; wasn't interested but now I've realised how important it all is. Nothing was above me, I could understand it all." Participant, Peterborough

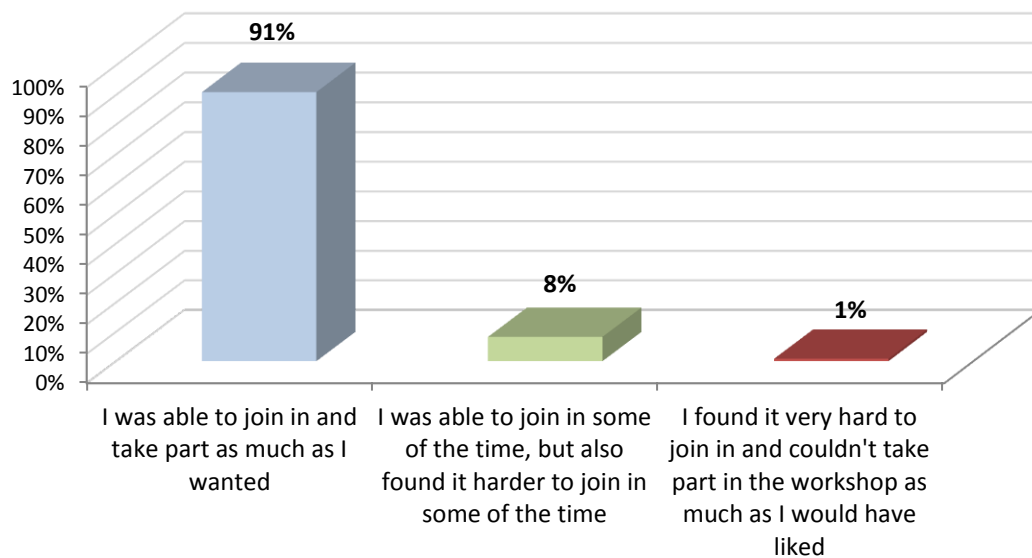
Knowing more. To what extent has the workshop today increased your knowledge or understanding of the issues around Significant Water Management Issues?



5.2 Ability to take part

Overall participants felt very able to take part in the workshop; to discuss and offer their opinion. Over 90% of the participants in the round 1 workshops felt they were able to join in discussions and take part as much as they wanted to. Project planning group members similarly commented on the degree to which the workshops were designed, and then facilitated, in a way that enabled full participation across each set of attendees. This was similarly clear at the workshops observed by the evaluators, where it was evident that the facilitators were adept at engaging with the range of individuals in the group to maximise participation and deliberation.

Taking part. Overall did you feel able to take part in the workshop today fully?



A number of elements were identified by participants and via the evaluators' observation as contributory factors in enabling participation.

- Facilitators and technical specialists listening carefully to what participants were saying.
- Not objecting to or challenging anything that was said. People felt comfortable to say what they wanted even though they may not have known much about the issues.
- Referring to people by name.
- Not asking specific people to offer their opinion. An atmosphere was created and methods used where people felt it was fine to say what they thought even if they didn't know much about the subject matter.

- Combining big group and small group work worked well. In particular small group work maximised participation.
- Activities like the prioritisation (using dots) appealed to a lot of people as it allowed everyone to say what they thought personally.
- The pace was good with lots of stimulation but with sufficient time and space to collect thoughts and express what was meant without being rushed.
- Having the Environment Agency staff on hand to respond to questions and explain the technical detail really facilitated the ability to take part.
- Swapping groups around so that people go to work with different people helped keep interest and participation high.
- There was clarity from the start as to what was happening when during the day.
- The facilitators and specialists demonstrated that they genuinely wanted to hear what people had to say.
- The level of organisation was very good.

"I particularly liked the facilitation and the way they engaged people." Project planning group member.

"It felt very personal that the facilitators took the time to refer to us by name." participant. Participant, Worcester.

"I'm not a good speaker so I liked the small groups where I was happy to speak out." Participant, London.

"The pace was good and there was not point where I felt bored or under stimulated." Participant, London.

"Liked the mix of big groups and then going into small groups." Participant, Worcester.

"It was good having the Environment Agency staff on hand in the small groups to respond to more technical questions as they arose." Participant, London.

"It was run really well. I go to a lot of conferences where you can hardly stay awake whereas this one got people really well engaged – a few of us went for a drink afterwards – it was an amazing day." Participant, Worcester.

"Plenty of time to give your opinion. I wasn't put on the spot but if I had anything to say I had plenty of time and opportunity to put my point across." Participant, Leeds.

"We were told right away when we would have breaks, what we were doing in the first part, then after the first break and then how long we would have for

lunch, what would happen in the afternoon.” Participant Leeds.

“The presenters were genuine and it felt very relaxed.” Participant, Exeter.

The only areas identified that made it more difficult to take part for just a couple of people was the volume of information and material to take in and one participant was partially sighted and had to rely on other participants and facilitators to help assimilate the material as it was presented.

“I haven’t been in a learning situation for many years. I was overloaded with information, by the end I was just finding it hard to take it all in.” Participant, Brighton.

5.3 The round 1 workshops

It is important to assess the degree to which the round 1 workshops fulfilled what was expected of them, as described in the original workshop objective and its constituent questions.

Round 1 workshop objective:

To identify public views of the priority issues around strategic water management on a national level.

- *Question 1: What do people prioritise as issues?* This question was addressed at the end of the day when participants ‘voted’ for their priorities using sticky dots. This process allowed the top issues to emerge, although some participants did note that this represented the ones they experience more directly and can observe the effects of, and those topics that had been the subject of significant amounts of discussion during the workshop. It was also clear from evaluator observations and stakeholder interviews that participants didn’t have enough knowledge to make a well-informed decision at this point having only been exposed to the information and discussion for a few hours.
- *Question 2: How do the public value benefits around water, and what are the trade offs and complexities?* This was covered in the morning session where small groups discussed the benefits and challenges of the water environment. The nature of this discussion meant that the trade offs and complexities became evident as participants had conversations around their varying perspectives.
- *Question 3: What measures do the public think should be taken to manage water issues, who should take these measures?* This was addressed in some detail in a substantive afternoon session where the facilitators summarised each of the seven water management issues in turn, with input from the Environment Agency as necessary. However the focus remained on understanding the issues, given the considerable breadth to cover. As a result it proved difficult for group members to

first of all absorb all of the new information being presented and to then come up with many suggestions about the appropriate measures. It was over ambitious to expect the participants to be able to move into suggesting measures given what remained a low level of knowledge of each issue, and the degree of concentration it took simply to understand that complex information that was being presented.

- *Question 4: How do the public want to pay for water management? What are the trade offs?* This question was addressed by a small group exercise at the end of the workshop. However at this stage of the day it was hard for the facilitators to keep participants focused on this topic alone, as many took this opportunity to keep discussing the detail of the water management issues.
- *Question 5. What are their different priorities locally and nationally, and what drives these?* The question of local versus national priorities had very little, if any, prominence at the workshops.

This suggests that there were aspects of the round 1 workshops that were covered more thoroughly than others. However this is often the case in processes such as this, where there has been a degree of prioritising about the more important aspects to pay attention to. What is also relevant here is the question of whether too many water management issues were being covered, and whether it was feasible to get to a point of detailed deliberation within one workshop, in such circumstances?

What worked well about the round 1 workshops

Feedback on the way the workshops were run and the methods used was generally very positive. Participants liked the friendliness, the clarity of information and the techniques such as small group work, the sticky dot voting and writing thoughts down on cards first then discussing, also observed by the evaluators. This, amongst other approaches, enabled virtually everyone to take part, no matter what their level of confidence or knowledge.

“Liked it when the group was split into smaller groups and the participants worked around tables, it was more enjoyable and relaxing and it brought up questions that I hadn’t thought about.” Participant, Exeter.

“At one point we had to write ideas down onto cards before we did a group exercise and this helped to get the discussion going.” Participant, Exeter.

“[the facilitators] invited you in a nice way to join in, everyone got their points over.” Participant, Leeds.

“It was all really well done from A to Z.” Participant, London.

“One guy overtook it a bit – I preferred the smaller groups.” Participant, Manchester.

Stakeholder feedback covered similar ground with the clarity of information, the way it had been produced and how it was used on the day eliciting a lot of praise.

“Giving individuals the handouts worked well. The decision was made to prepare these given the low level of knowledge assumed of participants. They worked really well in terms of simplifying the complex issues. How these were produced also worked well. Environment Agency provided the material, Ipsos translated into plain English and then Environment Agency did a technical check. This was a good process that worked well.” Project planning group member.

“It really pushed us out of our scientific language - look at the issue handout - they are some of the best materials we've ever produced”. Project planning group member.

Note taking was also thorough and participants were aware that two members of the facilitation team were inputting notes into a laptop throughout the sessions as well as those notes that were taken as part of activities (see summary table 2, section 2.4).

Parts of the round 1 workshops that could be improved

Overall there were only a few aspects of the round 1 workshops that could be improve. There were a few comments from participants relating to the length of the day (*“a bit long”*) and this was certainly the case for some people for whom this kind of intense experience was unfamiliar.

There was also scope to improve the session after lunch where two groups methodically went through all seven of the significant water management issues using the issues handout for reference⁵. This was clearly hard work for some people.

This session was important to the outcomes of the day but required participants to work through and understand seven individual and complex water management issues. Whatever the approach to delivering this, the volume of information to cover was substantial and this could easily have taken a significant portion of the time available during the day. It is clear however that it would not have been feasible to spend too much time on this part of the workshop; participants would have lost concentration and the scope to address other aspects of the workshop objective would have been diminished. As a result the facilitators sought to ensure that the breadth of issues was covered and there was some time for questions and discussion, but at a pace that kept participants engaged.

⁵ See summary table on page 15, this exercise is described as ‘session 4’.

Interestingly however the facilitation team feel that this session was effective, and had an in built flexibility which allowed them to take different approaches to reflect the group interests and make up in the different locations. Arguably, allowing for some flexibility in the delivery of this session, inevitably based on the facilitator making a quick judgement about the best approach, may have been counter productive. This is a session that could have benefitted from a standardised approach and one that would break up what in some instances was a repetitive methodology.

“Reading through the information that was provided at the workshop was quite challenging because of the limited time that was available.” Participant, Exeter.

“The session after lunch where we went through all the handouts and all the different issues. It was a lot to take in one go.” Participant, London.

“Went over the same stuff in the afternoon – we were giving the same answers all the time.” Participant, Manchester.

Equally, some feedback from participants indicated that there was a lot to take in a short time. Certainly it was a full and intense day with a lot of information to take on board and some participants were able to deal with this better than others. It is also clear that the quality of visuals, diagrams and photographs could have been better. Participants in the Manchester workshop really appreciated the photographs that the Environment Agency representatives brought along to illustrate a number of the pressures and issues, even though these were not of the best quality.

“Bit of a long day – a few more visuals would have been useful.” Participant, Manchester.

Facilitator feedback cited a central issue for this sort of event – *“balancing the education versus deliberation dilemma”* – that is, the participants needed to be brought up to speed to be able to deliberate effectively. As discussed earlier in this report, the requirement to educate participants about a total of seven water management issues, limited the time available for deliberation. How this could have been addressed is dealt with elsewhere in this paper, but it is the case that the dual requirements for seven round 1 workshops, and examination of seven water management issues, impacted on the effectiveness of the workshops’ capacity to interrogate water management options to a significant level of detail.

One member of the project planning group has commented on the design of the workshops and the issue of not sufficiently, from their perspective, putting participants in a position to make decisions about choices and options. There was a suggestion that more robust, policy and management feedback could have been achieved through the use of different possible options for dealing with the water management issues, with

sufficient background information on the pros and cons to enable participants to compare, comment on, and suggest preferences.

Table 2 on page 15 describes how notes were taken throughout the workshops. It was the case that at some points the only record was that of the person typing into a laptop. While this appears to have generated a good record of the discussions and key points during the workshops, this was an approach that did not offer any transparency about what was being recorded, nor could participants comment on the accuracy of what was being noted.

5.4 The reconvened workshop

Designing a format for the reconvened workshop presented a particular challenge because of its ambitious scope. With the same objectives as the original workshops, the key task was to further develop participants' understanding and capacity on water environment issues and to provide additional useful feedback to the Environment Agency. This required an element of reminding people about what was covered during the first workshop they attended (through round table discussions), before moving them into a process of applying their learning in a more focused way (using the 'Groat' allocation scenario exercise).

The process of recollecting previous discussion was harder for those people who had attended the first workshop, in Brighton, as there had been an intervening period of about two months. While some participants reported that they had read the summary report for their round 1 workshop, it was clear that the majority had not. It would have been useful for participants to have been reminded about the existence of these reports, and encouraged to read them, prior to attending the reconvened event.

The result was a workshop that was more challenging for participants than the first one they attended, as it expected them to be able to apply the understanding of water management issues they had acquired in real life settings via the scenario exercise.

"I felt like the first workshop was teaching us about the issues and that this one was us showing what we had learnt. We were applying what we had learnt in the first session."

"Having the specific scenarios ensured we could put our understanding into practice and we could apply our thoughts more effectively due to the opinions and knowledge developed in the previous workshop."

This was partially successful, with one third of participants feeling that at times the discussions were in more detail than in the first workshop, and at other times they were not. The same proportion of people felt they had a bit more understanding about water

management issues, compared to two thirds who believed they had a much better understanding. There were some difficulties with the 'Groats' allocation scenario exercise (as described in table 3 p. 17) and it had mixed reviews from participants. However it should be noted that, while the weaknesses noted for this exercise are genuine, it is sometimes the case that participants become critical of an activity when it is forcing them to work hard, to think differently, and to move outside their comfort zone. In this instance it is probably a combination of these two factors that resulted in this workshop having slightly less positive feedback than the round 1 events.

5.5 Recording and reporting

A core purpose of a dialogue process like this is to gain insight into the range of perspectives that exist among members of the general public (as opposed to technical / Environment Agency experts), and this was a key aspiration identified by the project's Reference Group members. For example:

"An understanding of the public's view of what the most important issues are for them re. the water environment and therefore how Natural England respond to this in terms of our statutory responsibilities and how we advise around them." Reference Group member.

This dialogue process has enabled members of the public to consider complex technical issues, and to give their perspective on water management issues. The individual workshop reports record these perspectives and have been collated into the outputs report that has recently been published (but was still being finalised at the time of undertaking the research for this paper). The presence of dedicated reporters at each workshop was beneficial in ensuring the record of discussions were made in real time and were comprehensive.

As discussed in section 3.2, finalising the outputs report took some time given the substantial degree of revision that was requested by one representative of the project planning group, although it should be noted that feedback suggests that the Environment Agency were by and large satisfied with its early iterations. The argument made was that the report did not provide an appropriate level of analysis of the data generated, that it did not sufficiently address the project objectives, and by inference, that the workshop design had not been completely satisfactory in terms of generating usable data, particularly for project objective 3 (*to encourage frank and evidence-based dialogue with the public on the cost and benefits provided by our water environment and how best to manage this environment into the future*).

The outputs report was substantially revised, with more analysis of the workshop data embedded in the report, rather than included as Appendices. In its final form it is a

readable report that gives a good overview of the project findings, together with a set of eight suggestions to inform Environment Agency practice into the future.

Participants at the round 1 workshops were told how they could access the report summarising the event they attended. However no steps have been taken to share the findings in the outputs report with project participants, which is critical in terms of ensuring that participants feel their contribution has been valued and has been fed back to the Environment Agency. However the outputs report has been distributed to members of the project planning group and Reference Group. Internally the Environment Agency has undertaken a range of briefing sessions with teams responsible for water management, including the following.

- Regional River Basin Programme Managers - responsible for drafting River Basin Plans.
- Pressure leads - responsible for chemical, invasive species etc.
- Catchment Co-ordinators.
- Key individuals in the Environment and Business Directorate.

5.6 The Omnibus Survey

The original intention was for the Omnibus Survey to take place concurrently with the dialogue workshops, to add quantitative data to the qualitative evidence generated that they produced. However this did not prove possible due to the timings of the Omnibus and it instead took place after the workshops had been completed, between 31st January and 4th February 2014.

On reading the outputs report it is possible to see how this change of timing created the opportunity to further test out some of the findings from the workshops. For example, participants in the dialogue workshops discussed the fact that they would be more likely to take action to protect the water environment if they were made aware of things they could do to effect change or mitigate against negative impact. The Omnibus Survey allowed the opportunity to explore this with a larger sample of the general public in England, and two questions were included about their willingness to consider household measures to protect the quality of the water environment, as well as their opinion on the effectiveness of these measures.

As a result, the survey results provide an important reference point for the workshop findings; they allow the Environment Agency to make judgments about the validity of the workshop evidence against that generated by the larger sample of general public.

However, at the time of undertaking the research for this paper, the survey results had not been seen by most members of the project planning group. As a result it was not

possible to gather comment about their usefulness in adding value to the project as a whole.

Summary learning points – the dialogue process

Evaluation question 3a:

To what extent have participants been able to engage with the content (environmental, technical, economic data and policy) of WFD and river basin management and contribute their perspectives on these issues?

- Skilful design is needed to develop **accessible materials that are at the correct level of technical content** when working with the general public. There is not necessarily the need to simplify; just to explain really well in a way that accommodates those whose starting point is low as well as those who already have some knowledge. The use of plain English is key. The combined efforts of Ipsos MORI and the Environment Agency in designing the water management issues handout proved to be a successful combination and the end result was a readable and accessible document, something the Environment Agency could learn from and use in other projects and contexts.
- The combination of good stimulus materials and a good process **enables participants to help each other to understand the content** of the workshop. As discussed elsewhere in the report, the stimulus materials for the workshops could have been improved, with more, better quality photographs and the use of real life case studies and scenarios.
- This process has proven that public dialogue processes can provide **insights into a wide range of non-technical perspectives on what are complex scientific topics**.
- The workshops were designed to reflect the agreed objective and its constituent questions, and to respond to the requirements of the project objectives. **The extent to which they addressed each question equally was not consistent**, although this could reflect a degree of prioritisation that had had been established in advance during the project planning group's deliberations of the workshop facilitation plans as they were being developed.
- Given the requirement to cover seven significant water management issues, there is **a sense that the workshops went as far as they could** in terms of deliberation on management options. It is difficult to see how any more could have been achieved given this constraint, unless fewer round 1 workshops were run, and all were reconvened. It is important to note however that one **member of the project planning group does not agree** with the assertion that it was difficult to get to the point of measures and management options within the structure as established by the project planning group.

- The Omnibus Survey gave the opportunity to **validate the response** from the workshop participants against a larger sample of the general public. This provided a useful set of quantitative data to support the qualitative evidence generated by the workshops.

Evaluation question 3b:

Have the dialogue activities been appropriate and engaging?

- The facilitators and the Environment Agency staff present during the workshops created **the right tone and atmosphere** and enabled participants to contribute and feel that their contribution was valued.
- The fact that facilitators, experts and note takers were **listening closely** to what was being said demonstrated to participants that they were being listened to and their contribution was valued and interesting.
- **Small group working** was used successfully as a technique for providing an environment where members of the public felt comfortable to participate. It enabled **productive conversations** to take place and ensured good levels of participation.
- The balance was struck between maximising participation and **not putting individuals 'on the spot'** when seeking comments and feedback. Given the right atmosphere and process people will contribute as much as they need to.

Evaluation question 3c:

Have there been particularly successful approaches or challenges in the process design, delivery or reporting that future dialogue processes could learn from?

- Good session design meant that non-experts – the general public – were able to **contribute** their views on complex and technical water management issues.
- **Good facilitation**, coupled with the **expert input of the Environment Agency staff**, ensured participants felt comfortable and able to participate fully in the workshops.
- It is important to ensure that people have enough **baseline information** about the issues under discussion to enable them to participate fully and make a meaningful contribution. Given the seven issues to be considered, this was done successfully, but it proved time consuming and it was challenging to do in a way that maintained the engagement of the participants.

- The water management issues handout proved very successful, but scope existed for more / improved **stimulus material** – such as photographs of the issues in a real, local setting, and the use of case study / scenario examples to prompt debate.
- Scope existed to improve the session where participants were walked through the **water management issues** handout – this was somewhat laborious and it was ambitious to expect that this approach would lead to detailed discussions on measures that could be taken (policy or practical) to address or mitigate the issues.
- The **time lag** between the round 1 and reconvened workshops was too long for some participants. This was as much as two months in some instances and their recollection of the content of the first workshop was not fresh. A reminder about the individual **workshop summary reports** would have been a useful reference point for participants at the reconvened workshop so they could refresh their memories beforehand if they wanted to.
- The workshops would have benefited from a **more ‘public’ form of note taking** throughout – while some sessions were recorded in a visible way, others were recorded by note takers on laptops. The use of flipcharts, or exercises that self generated findings, would have ensured that the event record was open to comment from participants
- It would have been beneficial for participants to see a very concise **‘road map’** orientation of how the public dialogue process fits in to the preparation of River Basin Management Plans and other policy documents. This would have helped emphasise that the process was first and foremost about evidence gathering for a real purpose and application.

Evaluation question 3d:

How are the dialogue results, and the influence of those results, being communicated back to public participants and other stakeholders?

- It is positive that **individual workshop reports** were made available on-line to participants. However it will be equally important to ensure that the outputs report, or a summary, is also made available to them.

6. Context

This section acknowledges the wider context within which this dialogue process was operating. As referenced in previous sections, there is on-going influence from this process being brought to bear on other areas of water based management within the Environment Agency. There are also potential process insights for other areas of the Environment Agency's business.

Reporting in this section relates to the following evaluation questions from the evaluation framework.

- *Evaluation question 4a)* Has the process been designed in a way that reflects regional as well as national policy circumstances / needs?
- *Evaluation question 4b)* To what extent has the process related to and complemented other dialogue and wider decision-making processes regarding WFD commitments and the development of River Basin Management Plans?

It is recognised by the Environment Agency that public engagement needs to be central to much of the decision-making and policy development work that they undertake, not just within the water management / WFD environment but also within flood risk management and across other parts of the business. Increasingly the Environment Agency's context is in addressing complex multi-faceted environmental issues where it doesn't have all the requisite expertise and progressively has less resource to deploy. Partnership working is increasingly important aspect of its work and the organisation is actively seeking to develop collaborative working relationships that can maximise the intellectual, human, material and financial resources it has to undertake its work. This additional resource includes the general public and it feels it is imperative to learn from dialogue processes like SWMI to maximise the benefit of working with the public. Recent dramatic flooding events in early 2014 have highlighted the importance of good public engagement, particularly the need for the public to understand the work it does, the complexity of flood / water management issues and to have a mechanism for the public to be involved in water management and flood risk management work. Public relations and the reputation of the organisation is particularly vulnerable when flooding occurs and it is recognised that there is more to do in terms of connecting with the public.

"If we'd learnt this a bit sooner we perhaps wouldn't be getting the press we're getting at the moment." River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency.

A number of Environment Agency staff interviewed suggest that WFD work and flood and coastal risk management work (FCRM) need to be more joined up in terms of policy, practice and stakeholder and public engagement on these issues. Feedback suggests that water management in the round is becoming more integrated internally.

Certainly the dialogue findings are being considered at different strategic levels, informing River Basin Management Planning processes as well as regional and local catchment planning work. As noted in the impacts section above, River Basin Programme Managers, who were involved in the process, are disseminating findings and learning through Catchment Partnerships and at strategic planning levels within the business.

Summary learning points – context

Evaluation question 4a):

Has the process been designed in a way that reflects regional as well as national policy circumstances / needs?

Evaluation question 4b):

To what extent has the process related to and complemented other dialogue and wider decision making processes regarding WFD commitments and the development of River Basin Management Plans?

- It is recognised that **quality, well planned, appropriate and resourced** engagement processes can enhance outcomes across the environment agency's business.
- **The public can, and need to be considered as, an additional resource** as the organisation is working increasingly in partnership and collaborative arrangements with others.
- The management of water, across WFD and FCRM outcomes, **can have significant positive or negative repercussions** in terms of how the public view the effectiveness and value of the work the Environment Agency undertakes. Engagement with the public regarding the direction of policy is important but also the awareness raising and educative value of engagement processes was strongly advocated by members of the public and had the potential to significantly change and enhance their view of the Environment Agency's work and remit. Recognising that education and awareness raising was not an objective of the process, nonetheless, a number of Environment Agency staff commented on the benefit of this approach in terms of public education but acknowledged that this was no longer a significant part of their day to day work.
- There is **potential for learning** from this dialogue process across the Environment Agency's business areas. It would be worthwhile to analyse where the key findings need to be shared to maximise the benefit and value of the SWMI public dialogue initiative.

7. Conclusion

The dialogue process has achieved a wide range of learning both in terms of process and content. It has been a particularly rich learning experience for the Environment Agency in appreciating the potential of public dialogue and the value of doing this through a well-designed, delivered and reported process.

This report outlines a wide range of learning across all dimensions of the work. However there are a number of particularly significant areas that are worth emphasising as they have had implications for the value of the entire process.

It is apparent that the initiative would have benefitted from more time and focus at the start of the process to set out very clearly, and develop a mutual understanding across the project partners and contractors, the desired outputs and outcomes of the initiative. There is a need for an iterative process at this stage to reference the project's objectives against the resources, time and expertise available and to then design a process that has the best opportunity to satisfy those objectives.

Having undertaken the design of the process the project planning group agreed that the process should go ahead as designed even though it appears that not every organisation represented was convinced that the design was the best way to achieve the objectives. This concern didn't translate into a significant shift in either the project's objectives or the process design. However, this highlights some learning about governance, where there are different organisations with different objectives and levels of experience in public participation.

Given these points about the relationship between setting objectives, process design and governance it is the evaluators' view that this process was worthwhile and there were significant useful outputs, outcomes and learning. The process particularly appears to have instilled substantially more confidence within the Environment Agency to work with the public as water management policy and practice develops at both a national and catchment level. Given the emphasis on partnership working embedded within 'A Catchment Based Approach' this is particularly significant.

Since there is increasing public awareness of water related management issues (due to the flooding events of winter 2013/14) it will be important to continue assessing the value and influence of this dialogue process and the potential for developing and refining on-going public engagement in relation to water management.

Appendix 1: Workshop feedback collated results

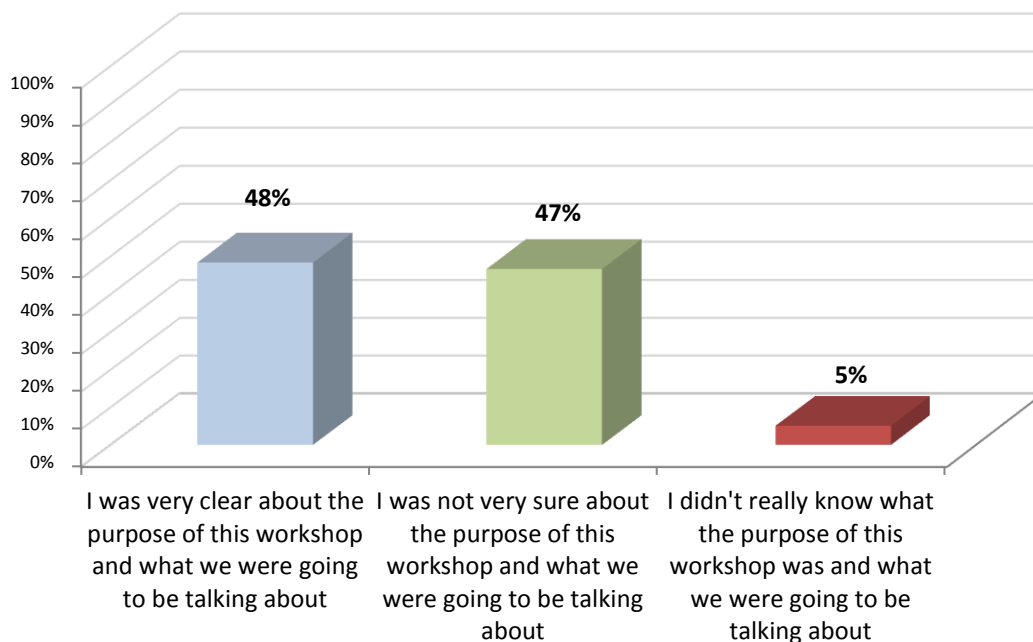
Breakdown of the workshops and number of people that filled in a feedback form :

- Brighton : 16 people
- Exeter : 16 people
- Leeds : 18 people
- London : 18 people
- Manchester : 18 people
- Peterborough : 19 people
- Worcester : 14 people

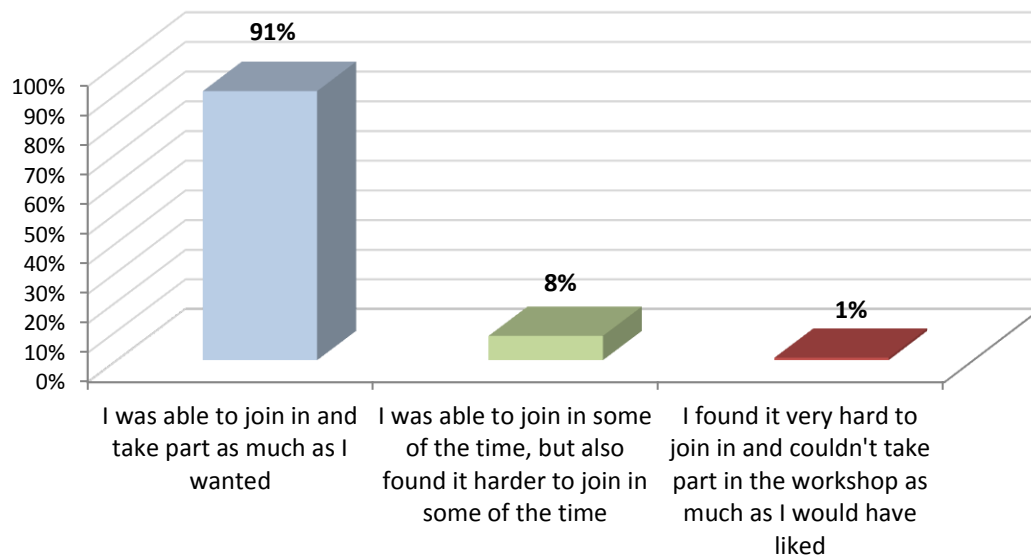
TOTAL : 7 workshops and 119 people filled in a feedback form

About the Workshop today.

Q1. Before you came today, were you clear about what the workshop was about?



Q2. Taking part. Overall did you feel able to take part in the workshop today fully?



Please explain why you have given this answer. What factors helped you or stopped you getting involved?

- A lot of information to take in and on all area I know nothing about. I found it more useful to listen and learn from other contributors
- I was interested in this subject and felt at ease to talk. I have also found a lot of information about his subject today.
- Found the information clear, concise and understandable and was encouraged to give my opinion
- Everyone was able to speak and in turn listened to people's opinions
- my group was very interesting and vocal and team leaders were great
- I found it ways to participate - my concerns were shared by the group
- the workshop was explained clearly and simply to me, and presented as accessible and engaging for a layman
- I was allowed to speak freely. I also thought the facilitator was good at reigning me in when necessary and keeping conversation moving and relevant
- nothing
- Friendly atmosphere and speakers. Good forum for debate. Good structure to the workshop
- The purpose of the event was clearly explained at the outset. The facilitator managed the session effectively thus able to deal well with the complex nature of the matters discussed, and able to involve all contributors as necessary
- It seemed ok to ask questions and make contributions and I think most people felt this
- In general the overall opinions of everyone counted
- obviously some people naturally dominate a group and this is why
- It was brilliantly cleared by Richard. Full and open discussions, to which I felt my two

pennies worth!

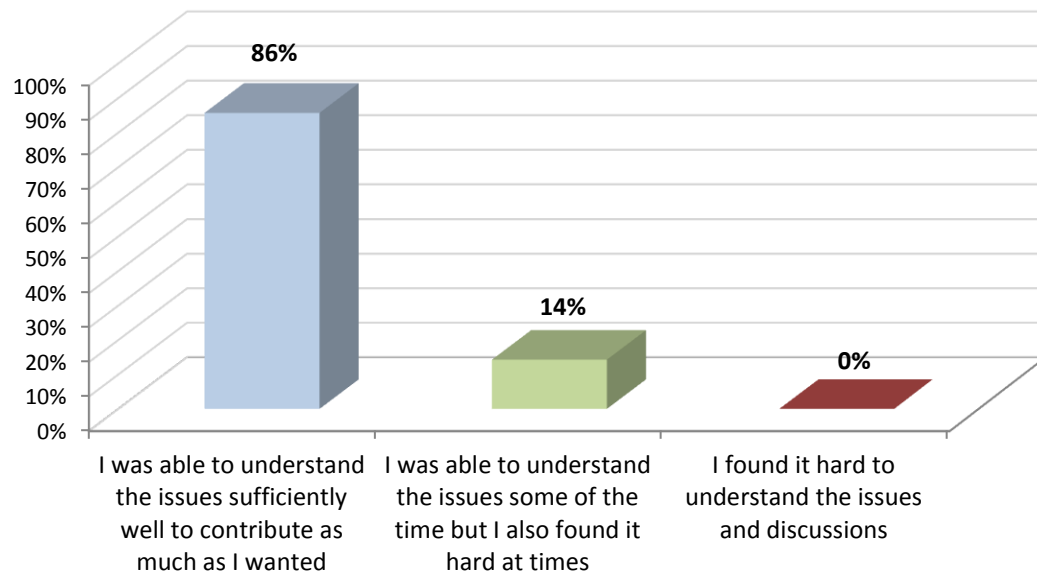
- I was allowed to speak freely and encouraged to do so
- the atmosphere was relaxed and open minded
- the breaking up into smaller groups made me more confident to speak and then feel more comfortable once in the larger group setting
- the issues are vital to the survival of the nation/world!
- this is an interest to me and I believe it needs to be opened up to more people
- Time to answer all questions and not judged on answer given. Felt all questions relevant to everyone
- good explanations. Clear information and friendly atmosphere. Felt comfortable
- Everyone was given the opportunity to talk and give their opinion. Enough information was provided as a background to help with the discussion
- these groups were small enough that our views were all heard. There were not too many issues crammed in for the time provided
- given full opportunity by the facilitators
- it is very important - in our daily life
- my understanding of what was involved was based on a 2 min conversation in the street. I gave my email address so some prior briefing could have been sent. That said, it probably wasn't necessary. The facilitators for the day were excellent
- it was all very clear, all subjects were covered
- inclusive tone of the workshop helped
- I didn't feel pressured, answered what I wanted to
- the factors involved in the topic of 'Environment' affected all participants - factors which we not necessarily aware of, which gave us, as individuals much food for thought, regarding a basic product
- I very much enjoyed today and found it most informative, I hope I have contributed something towards this
- I enjoyed taking part in the discussion as it gave me a valuable insight into the challenges faced by water companies and other agencies
- Raeema was so good at explaining what was needed from us and encouraged us to join in
- feel I am more educated and that I have learn how to help myself and the environment. Hopefully I can pass on the information to everyone
- so many views were being put forward
- set up of the room - formal. Able to see everyone and all information needed. Comfortable surroundings
- I didn't have any of the information that I have gained today. I feel more aware now. I felt free to comment without judgement
- yes it was a very open group and I felt I was able to join in as much as I wanted
- well facilitated, allowing everyone the opportunity to participant
- I felt happy that I could speak as much or as little as I wanted. And my opinion was valued

- encouragement from course leaders
- I feel I have my opinion on most matters but also feel I was not as knowledgeable on some matters as everyone else. So I just listened to what other people had to say
- I was able to take part in the discussions because of the group leader
- there was open discussions which everyone could contribute and also split into smaller groups if you weren't comfortable talking in a large group
- came with an open mind and found the workshop very enjoyable
- I was able to join in all discussions
- I was able to join in fully because the discussion were about things that affect us all, in our everyday life. There was at times things I was not sure about so I listened and learnt
- I enjoyed learning about the challenges faced by the water industry. However, I felt limited to contribute as the agenda for the day and the desired responses that were expected posed barriers. For example, questions were not answered and critical information was not presented
- I felt comfortable to state my opinions, I felt that everyone in the group was supportive and the facilitators were interested to listen to everyone's opinions
- very well facilitated
- I found the summaries from the experts helpful an engaged on a practical 'bigger picture' level mainly
- everyone was able to get points across if they wanted to and opinions were taken into account
- education on the purpose of knowing more about our environment
- knowledge and learn
- being noticed when I put my hand up
- everyone got involved, no pressure to talk and everything that was contributed was valued and discussed
- I thought it was easy to join, it seemed very conversational, the co-ordinators were nice and friendly and did not make you feel stupid or awkward
- Very informative workshop. I was able to put over my points of views at all time and take part
- good facilitators and good experts on hand made it a good, productive and informative experience
- the information provided and literature helped me to get involved, including discussions
- found some members more knowledgeable and able to the lead more. In some instances, I wasn't able to comment
- the fact that I had read all the literature, understood it, and wanted to air my views, on this very serious (and depressing actually). Very informative.
- it was open for everyone to view their opinion on the matter on water and the cost
- most of the issues had been discussed

- thought provoking questions. Interesting and informative, easy to ask questions
- plenty of group discussion rather than one to one. Easy to follow on from other people's points and develop an opinion and argument. No pressure to speak involuntarily
- Able to put my point of view on the various issues discussed. Answers to my questions were easy to understand
- Basically knowing things that have never been explained is well knowing about
- I felt really comfortable in session and staff was brilliant
- I had views to put across and feel that my views contributed to the discussions
- n/a
- the group was quite large and sometimes when I tried to speak someone started before me and the moment was lost
- Very easy to understand and interesting
- I came here today with the water and environment and to say what I think could work or help
- relaxed environment, slides explained things before we discussed them - useful!
- the discussion format felt very respectful and familiar
- you were encouraged to have input no matter how little it was
- helped by clear tallies and notes that explained the information well.
- I gave the ticks on what I thought was my opinion on the talks and I was able to get my story over
- I felt that opinions of different people were valued and the facilitators were well trained and well educated, also experienced, which allowed me to 'peak' up my mind
- it was cool to talk about issues
- fully open forum very well refereed
- all of the staff were professional and all participants were encouraged to share their views
- had some prior knowledge about how Anglian water provides water and also concerns, difficulties that we come across
- everyone had plenty of opportunity to contribute
- the people encouraged us to think about certain issues, question responses and gain a great degree of new knowledge in respect of water
- out group was very well facilitated and everyone had a chance to voice their opinions
- I am involved in similar formal meetings in my job so am used to this
- the group leaders where really supportive. It was on a friendly environment. Learnt a lot from the session
- I did. enjoyed and understood most things too. I listened and it did help me to talk to others
- I found it very interesting and liked asking about different things, very interesting
- the honesty of the people

- talking one at a time, everyone had their say, managed well
- to be part of going forward
- very free and easy atmosphere. Well organised and extremely interesting
- small groups sitting close so easy to hear what others said. Good leadership which promoted, encouraged, welcomed responses
- Being organised into small groups helped everyone to feel comfortable and share their viewpoints
- I did not know all the issues, or understand them fully until I came to workshop, which explained clearly, precisely, which educated me on all the issues discussed
- felt comfortable to participate
- I just was intrigued about the whole situation
- there was opportunity for everyone to give a view, it was not intimidating
- by waiting in turn and listening to others
- fair discussions, everyone was given the opportunity to have their say and make key points

Q3. Understanding the Issues. The workshop today has covered some quite complex, technical issues. Were you able to make sense of these and as a result, contribute your views about them?



Please explain why you have given this answer. What factors helped you understand the issues or worked against your understanding? What information was most helpful? Could anything have been improved?

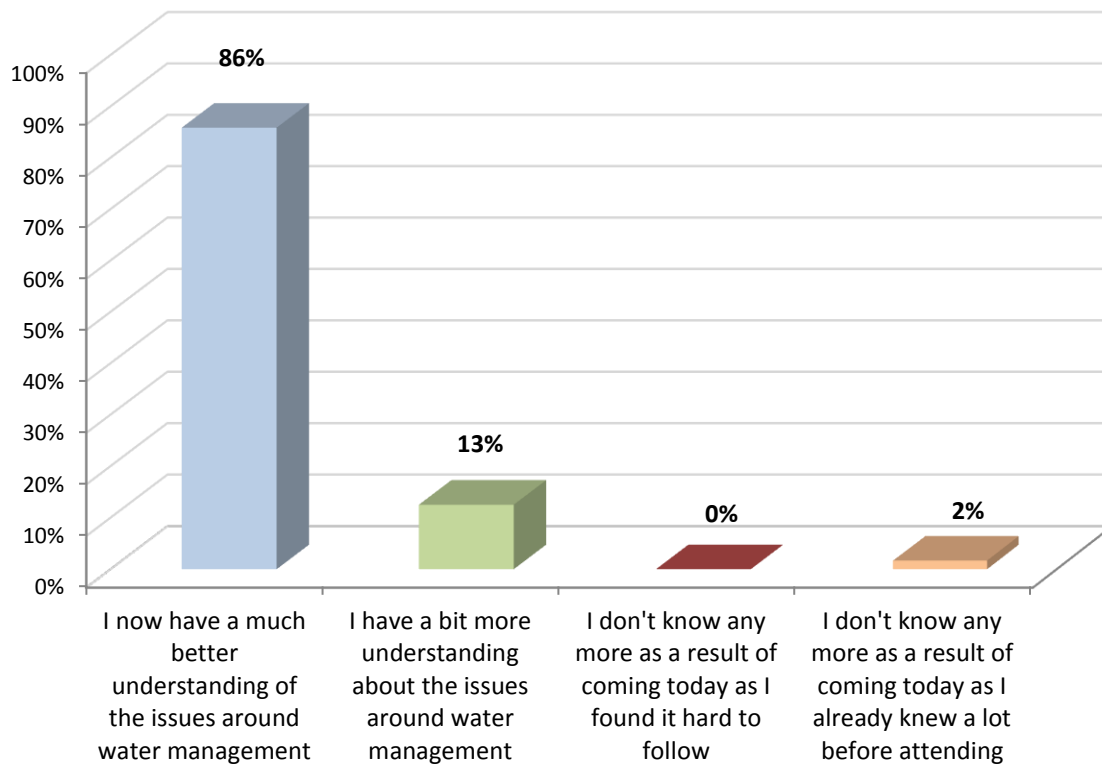
- A lot of information in a short period of time . It helped that the staff were informed and clear in their guidance and contributions.
- Most of the information was new. It was explained very well so I felt I was able to contribute
- Everything was clearly laid out, not rushed and important to the process
- These are highly complex issues and I felt unable to contribute and informed opinion in a short space of time
- The information provided helped and was put across clearly
- Nothing, seemed too scientifically complicated, not to grasp its effect
- The info sheets/wall posters were clear and informative
- I think the fact I covered some of these topics in A Level Geography and have some awareness helped though I also learned a lot
- Everything was explained as well as possible in the time provided. However, due to the lack of time and amount of information, sometimes information was lost on me but not through fault of speakers
- Time was given to explain technical concepts and matters. The Environment Agency staff were able to provide any supplementary support and clarification as requested.
- As issues were discussed I realised where my knowledge stopped!
- The subject of wear is underrated as we the public heavily rely on water more than any other in nature
- When I came first of all I would say that I know nothing about the issues
- On many occasions it was not possible to explore the issues to the detail it deserved
- the documentation was very helpful and staff were more than willing to point out the finer details
- the group leader gave useful introduction to the various aspects together with the input of the Agency members and the printed paper setting out the issues etc
- being giving a physical leaflet alongside talking through the issues helped me have a greater understanding of what was being discussed
- good background information and opportunity to give my opinions
- the environment has been a topical subject for me for many years
- able to enlarge train of thought and talk about other factors of the subject
- clear instructions, good handout, very good leaders
- as a geography university student I had some prior knowledge of the issue which assisted me. However, lots of very useful information was provided which also helped
- previous education. Many of these issues were covered as part of school biology, geography or chemistry
- the information was explained by the staff and given in the written sheets

- the first part of the day was well designed as an introduction to the issues
- I found it difficult to read but I understood
- info sheets was very simply written so was accessible to a variety of intellectual levels
- talking to the other people around me
- certain issues necessitated knowledge of science, climatic effects and those regarding farming conditions, which affected us all. When these were explained to us during discussion it helped further contribution.
- I found that there's a lot more to water and the environment that I thought
- the issues were clear to understand and enabled me to contributed as much as possible
- because everything was explained and put to us in a such a way that encouraged me to join in
- some of the conversations were a bit confusing but I shall have to look into it and research more
- very informative info posters
- everything was explained so that I was able to comprehend things
- it was very informative and the group joined in well
- issues were explained fully and clearly allowing participation
- the information given was clear. The booklet was easy to understand. The man for the EA was very helpful and informative
- clear information of issues. Information on knock on effects of the various problems e.g. nitrates and algal blooms
- I am not that knowledgeable about most matters as I am only 20 years old and haven't had much experience about these things
- because the issues involved me
- everything was well explained and I could contribute when I wanted
- common sense
- some of the things we talked about was straight forward, other things it was like why is this happening in our rivers and what can I do to help
- good
- a general background from my education meant I was able to follow all topics even if not directly relevant to my everyday life
- fact sheet very well laid out
- when the issues focused upon the human angle I was more interested, when it became scientific, less so
- The information given was clear, concise and easy to understand. All information was important
- some of the information found very very interesting, other information was explained in more detail e.g. abstraction and flow problems. This I had no knowledge of before I attended
- well presented

- a good facilitator to take us through the issues individually, clear explanation and any queries were given. The handouts as a pre reading exercise was helpful
- the pack of information was clear, well set out and informative. A lot of information through the day but in manageable amounts and well explained. All questions were well answered with informed responses
- it was explained well and the organisers went in to great detail if anything was not quite clear to me
- workshop was given to me very clearly on all subjects and took part at all times
- professionals who know the industry and good facilitators were able to communicate effectively to the group and relate to them
- no improvement needed
- some of the issues I found hard to understand due to lack of understanding. In some instances the pace was a little too slow and things were repeated, which was not necessary
- same answer as question 2. read the facts and digested them
- the knowledge of different factors of our drinking water and sewage
- the information sheets given out the explanations and reasons, the thought process
- using own ideas as starting points and building on them. Booklet of different issues was most helpful as it was clear and concise, not too much reading. Members of Environment Agency described the situation in a way we as 'non experts' could understand.
- Group discussions helped with understanding the issues
- wasn't aware of certain aspect
- everything was explained very well and I really enjoyed this session
- we were provided with information which enlightened us to the facts which helped to be fully involved in the discussion
- all to do with the way we live and the environment. Explanation from team leader
- the handout was very useful and gave me a clear understanding of the issues
- I understand the problem because I like to take time to understand things
- Again slides and handouts. Perhaps more varied/interactive - videos
- I studied a lot on science and the environment in school
- I was able to understand the issues due to clear instruction, debates and good notes. The most helpful information would be the group chats
- I found the information very good and I learnt a lot about the water board
- every topic has been covered in a public friendly manner so my own knowledge and awareness of impact of our understanding of responsibility in this society about water made the topic easier to understand.
- plenty of information supplied for guidance
- the contributors and participants explained the issues very well
- issues well explained. Input from Environment Agency staff was very good

- there were some complex technical issues which I wasn't aware of but did find the discussion valuable/interesting. I was able to contribute to the discussions about things I was aware of
- no
- booklet was very informative
- at various stages viewpoints were offered in respect of issues both from other volunteers and organisers
- the video and handouts were very clear and our facilitator was able to explain any points which needed clarification
- the handouts were clear in the subject matter and the leaders of the discussion targeted the information in a way that help guide it without too much ring fencing
- I able to understand most of the issues that were discussed in the workshop. This also helped me a lot and also gave me more knowledge about water and the environment
- I did understand most things
- the most interesting was for me was about the rivers they are trying to improve
- no
- handout, talking and PowerPoint
- the input of the people from the Environment Agency was very important and useful
- I have worked in water treatment i.e. cooling towers
- as before, good atmosphere and I feel I was listened to
- the information sheets were helpful as were the Environment Agency staff who sat in on our sessions
- The Environment Agency representatives fully explained issues prior to the discussions, I felt well informed about issues and able to discuss my concerns confidently
- because all issues were explained clearly, as well as the content
- People from the Environment Agency were on hand to explain specific things I was unsure of
- the fact of what goes into the water and how it effects us as humans and the surroundings of how it effects nature itself
- most enlightening , we take our water for granted not realising the extreme good work involved
- the facilitators were clear and the material was helpful
- all issues were clearly explained and executed

Q4. Knowing more. To what extent has the workshop today increased your knowledge or understanding of the issues around Significant Water Management Issues?



Q5. Which parts of the workshop today did you find most interesting and why?

- Small group discussions
- I now have some knowledge of what is happening to our water and environment
- Group discussions - differing opinions helped clarify details
- Other people's thoughts
- The dots - great to see what everyone thought
- The extent to which an individual can affect these issues - and to what extent he can't
- Realising the inter connections of dealing with any water related issues - nothing exists in a vacuum
- Industry's role. Anecdotes from the Environment Agency and real stories helped to contextualise issues. It was good at explaining issues in particular
- Different pieces
- Group discussion over water solution taking on broader more political and economic and even philosophical levels
- The overall scale and cyclical nature of water management. The impact of specific concerns relating to physical human health e.g. pollutions of water
- Understanding the interface between natural environment and the 'man made'

- aspects of water management
- How we the public underestimates the importance of clean water
- I never realised the extent of phosphorous use in domestic usage and also the amount of chemicals used in water treatment
- Lots of bits of information of which I was totally ignorant!
- Phosphate content of the water supply. The discussions regarding how any challenges could be addressed
- The information on phosphates and nitrates was an eye opener and the information about physical modifications
- I enjoyed the large group discussion towards the end where we prioritised the issues in terms of the importance we placed on them. I also enjoyed the small (3-4 people) group discussions. In both instances this was due to collaborating ideas that had been discussed in the two groups and physically doing something
- all parts - good spread of group /total sessions
- the issue of chemical pollution
- interested in the challenges and knowledge gained from them
- listening to other member's ideas and suggestions. Group discussions and smaller group chats
- the difficult issues we discussed were very interesting as there were some issues that I hadn't previously known of and am now more aware
- most of it was interesting, especially trying to work out potential solutions to the problems and seeing which problems people thought most important
- phosphates and nitrates
- the cross section of people and views
- I do but I will read again and understand it more
- bit about chemicals and water supply. Enjoyed the discussion
- all of it
- devising all the problems in a prioritising order which showed that the majority present viewed the problems in a popular picking order and agreement and conscientious was evident
- can I say I really enjoyed this session and found it most informative
- I enjoyed all of the workshop, particularly the input from the Environmental Agency
- all of the aspects covered were very interesting and taught me so much about what goes into managing the water that comes out of my tap
- about saving water i.e. brushing teeth, chemicals in the water try to prevent myself harmful substances
- discussing with the Environment Agency who gave me a better understanding of the main issues
- sat in smaller groups, speaking with Dan from Environmental Agency - info not previously known
- this was so informative. Touching on issues I know nothing about was the most interesting

- we covered topics that I had never thought about, it has given me a greater deal of understanding
- raised awareness of all the issues concerning water management
- I didn't realise there were so many issues
- the first smaller group - it gave more encouragement to put forward views
- finding out about where your water goes and how much you use water in everyday life
- I found all of the workshop interesting
- all of today was very interesting and I know a lot more about water management
- all aspects
- the depth of conversations and I found out quite a lot of info
- most of it was really useful, when they spoke about the river running rapidly and cleaning itself, there was a lot more that I learnt
- learning about the challenges faced by the water industry
- the afternoon session where we were given a good overview of the general aspects of problems faced in the UK concerning water
- discussions of 7 issues
- made me think a lot more about my part in all that happens on a day to day basis. Also how tiny details can cause major problems such as invasive non native species
- all of it!
- Phosphates and nitrates. In now know more about what goes into the products I use
- I did not understand all things but I learn more now
- detailed, personal awareness, understanding of how water management works - only part of it though
- where/how water 'works' what effects it and how we can change our effect on the system
- I found the most interesting part was findings about how exactly the water is cleaned and what it must go through to get to our homes (taps)
- much better understanding of what happens in water management and how
- the part where the expert discussed several situations where we went through the handout
- the whole workshop, I found very interesting and knowledgeable
- section 1 - group work in smaller groups, and the last sessions, which seem to flow
- every aspect really - each issue has fundamental effects on all our lives!
- the discussion within the group an hearing everybody's view
- all of what was talked about
- all interesting
- Learning about the multitude of different issues the Environment Agency has to deal with regarding water. How many chemicals are added to our water supply.

- regarding sanitary pollution as I was unaware of the systems used. Also the topic of storm defence
- discussions and debates
- I actually thought it was all very interesting and I will be sharing my experiences with my family
- learning about the pollutants that affect our water supply
- all
- I didn't realise that nitrates were used so extensively in farming and that there is no alternative
- all of it opened lock of door for me to look into and want to know more
- finding out others views, looking at the big picture
- generally, open discussions as it was good to hear different opinions from different sorts of people
- overall most areas had the good points
- I enjoyed the group chats as they allowed me to ask questions while being more personal
- discussing all of the questions that was asked
- hospitalists society does not allow prevention of issues causing water contamination, wildlife extinction etc so education and raising awareness against the cosmism would make the difference - less waste, less money spent to treat it, lower water bills etc
- all
- the input of the EA professionals provided great insight
- what impacts we as human beings are having on the environment
- final afternoon session, detailed to variety of problems facing the 'water industry' both as personal users and for industry/agriculture etc
- all of it
- how many different factors issues they are with water - did not realise and feel more educated
- discussions, the information booklet all attributed to this
- I already knew stuff about treatment and filtration. I was most surprised by the pollution and invasive non native species issues and their effects on the environment
- the impact of what most people take for granted and the details behind it
- the most interesting part was the different challenges, the booklet
- about nitrates and phosphates
- Phosphates and nitrates. Knowing the problems they can cause
- all
- meeting the two Davids and talking through the issues
- the handout about the issues was interesting and showed how so many of the issues and possible remedies were linked. I enjoyed the smaller group discussions the most. It has given me food for thought, especially about the complexity and difficulty of deciding how to remedy the problems

- issues with water treatment
- great diversity of problems facing the environment and water industry
- the group discussions. Listening to varying viewpoints and grappling with challenges to one's own initial thoughts. Trying to articulate ideas and reasons for views is always interesting even when difficult.
- Learning and discussing the issues was particularly eye opening, our opinions were valued and we had interesting discussions
- it has educated me and given me the underpinning knowledge I required to understand the issues brought up and subject matter.
- different issues surrounding water - was unaware of before
- all the facts - great experience!
- the challenges to the natural water cycle. How these can be combated
- every aspect!
- All of it as found informative as knew little about subject

Q6. Which part of the workshop today did you find most difficult/challenging and why?

- This, I hate writing
- Nothing really
- Going around in circles
- Feedback as I felt a tad nervous
- Parts where it wasn't clear who was responsible
- I found the duration a bit challenging and there should have been a 5 min toilet break sometime before lunch
- Mixture
- Getting my head around some of the most complicated science/technicalities
- Issues around some technical matters
- I found it quite hard to contribute in an informal way about where responsibility should lie in relation to improvement action and very hard to make meaningful contribution to how this relates to wider public policy agenda
- None
- where the responsibility lies in meeting the physical and financial challenges to the water supply
- deciding which five of the seven issues to prioritise was difficult as water management is so complicated for all of us
- perhaps getting my head around the full implications of each of the issues as this was not an area of expertise. Also prioritising complex issues that again, I did not quite know enough about
- completing this question - I found the meeting very useful and although challenged - confirmed my own feelings
- none

- all issues were important it was difficult to select the most important
- having to absorb the whole issues and implications and understand some of the technicalities
- the second half of the afternoon was quite intense in terms of the amount of information provided. However, this is not something that I feel was a huge problems
- trying to decide where the resources should be spent a all the issues seemed important but also should funds be transferred from other areas
- choosing between the 7 priorities. They were all important so difficult to choose
- I think more of them are important and I don't think difficult any of them
- workshop was too long - was challenging to retain sufficient concentration
- none
- initial comprehension of technical explanation
- none
- understanding more complex issues such as effect on business and landowners etc
- none as everyone was so patient and listened to others views and opinions
- phosphates and nitrates. I understood most things but found it hard to join in as I'm not as knowledgeable on the subject
- none
- taking in so much information at once. But this was revisited, so making it more digestible
- understanding the priority levels as they all intermingle
- understanding which agency was responsible for what
- absorbing all of the printed information sheet
- I found discussing about individual aspects e.g. nitrates, sewage etc quite difficult as it was quite detailed
- talking in a large group, I felt more comfortable when in smaller groups
- all aspects! Of great interest
- the beginning as I didn't really understand the effects of water and chemicals
- because there was not a percentage, you did not know which was more important
- I found no part challenging
- I found most of the workshop to be comprehensive and understandable
- it was difficult to decide the most urgent issues
- None!
- Abstractions and flow problems. Didn't know about this but would like to find out more
- I did not find it hard
- the breath of the discussion was the most difficult and to keep all parts in balance was the most taxing
- not knowing the whole picture/structure

- getting my head around the 'challenges' and at the beginning, I didn't understand the point of the day
- discussing and speaking about the info on the handout
- nothing challenging (don't wish to sound conceited)
- I didn't really find it difficult or challenging
- none
- The length of the day, 6 hours was very long. However I understand that it was necessary to cover everything.
- Deciding whose responsibility for correction of problems. Which is most important for government funding?
- not knowing enough
- sediment, I didn't know very much but now I have a lot better understanding thanks to the great staff on hand
- I didn't feel any of it difficult and was able to fully join in
- summary of info
- invasive species as it would be almost impossible to eradicate them
- it was not difficult at all and was very interesting
- the afternoon session was quite long, similar points raised. Perhaps more variety would have been more engaging
- listening to the initial introduction and video
- understanding of how contaminated water is cleansed and how much it cost, how much of tax payer money is spent on each part
- preventing my point from being lost in the hubub of debate
- what are the most effective solutions? Will the public change their lifestyles?
- going into each issue in detail - long session, same questions
- none
- trying to work out which priorities were most important as they all had different merits
- nothing was hard or difficult
- knowing which group to look into
- none
- the group was quite old and kept going off subject and bringing up points that we were not talking about. The group really needed a wider range of people. The group was very old, not enough young people
- not having enough personal knowledge about the problems, so that is why it was important to have some 'experts' there
- none
- making decisions about priorities for action by placing red dots on the chart. There was so much inter connections about the issues that it was difficult to isolate them into discrete choices
- Deciding which issues were most concerning was particularly difficult
- all of it was straight forward

- the more technical and specific language and topics
- n/a
- I did find it a little bit depressing and overwhelming, the size of the issues and amount of information
- I haven't found it challenging, was easy to understand
- n/a
- n/a
- none

The Next Steps.

Q7. From your discussions today is there an idea or suggestion that you feel should be explored further or put into practice through plans for managing water in England?

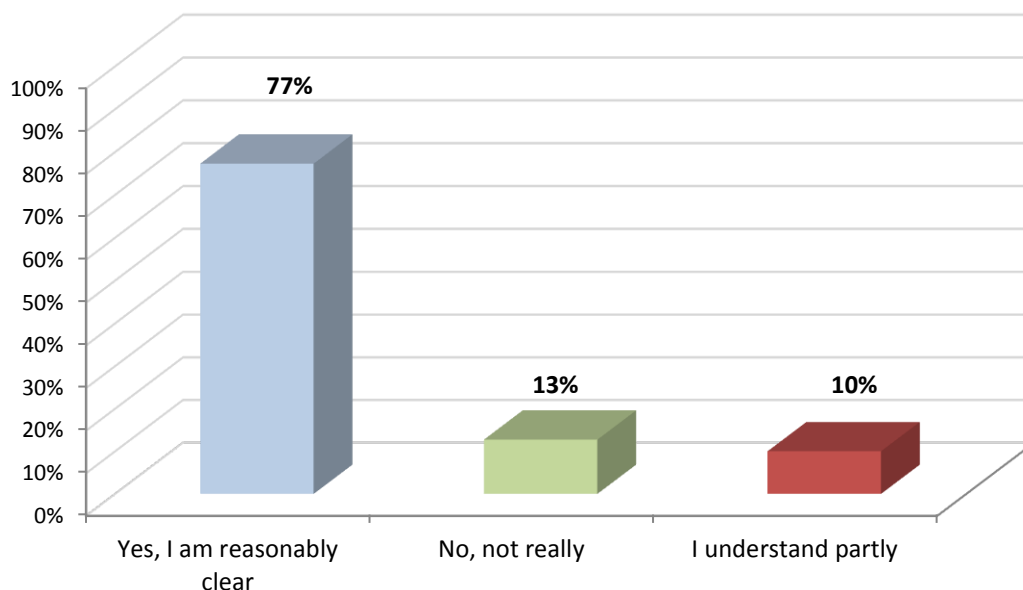
- Education
- Everything discussed
- Increase public awareness, put more focus on corporations
- Not sure
- Public awareness should be a priority
- Education/awareness to be a key part of implementing change for adults (as well as kids). The idea of a 'civic responsibility workshop' it is mandatory to attend once every 10 years or so, to main awareness of things everyone can do to make a difference.
- ?
- Nothing exact but more emphasis on regulation and education over profits. More on long term than short term policy.
- Raising public awareness of Environment Agency role in regard to water management
- How to ensure that water management policy and practice can work more closely alongside education, health and industry regulation
- Clouds - not mentioned once in any discussions today and pollutions
- The general public need more education about environment issues affecting our water supply
- In the sense that there's issues.... the wider viruses in society
- at one of the group discussions, a national water grid was suggested and that does seem like the only long term solution for shortages
- Community awareness/action groups : ensuring communities are aware of issues and try to positively benefit the local area e.g. walking together to clean rivers - incentive programme? Labels on products to help consumers understand the environmental impact their purchase has (like energy ratings on fridges etc)
- send an on line questionnaire to the whole nation to cover points covered today. Increase taxes to increase funding to Environmental Agency!
- education to the public and children at school today

- some sort of scale to pick out the most environmentally efficient products that I purchase
- more public awareness through media and education in schools
- I feel this is an issue that needs to be tackled from a number of angles; government regulation needs improving, local councils need more power to make changes, young people need more incentives to get involved in the issue of water management and individuals need to be made more aware of water management issues and what they can do about it
- more education and awareness, CV enhancing opportunities to attract students and young people to volunteer to help as they can
- to educate people to use water safely
- if public views are considered important to the decision making process, then a broader cross section might be beneficial (i.e. the majority of participants came from Exeter City)
- ways of finding projects to solve the problems rather than simply stating that there is a problem
- an ombudsman, set up by the government to look at problems and issues
- can you make the Government listen?
- I would suggest more information which is sustained so enabling a saturate message to general public
- I need to go home and look at the literature we were given and really think about what I have learnt today
- maybe adverts about why we need to care about the situation with water (like yes we need to save but why)
- teach more in schools about saving water etc
- information - public availability, advertising
- educate the children and they will educate us
- everyone to have a water meter fitted
- educate the younger generation
- education on effects of flushing away unnecessary chemicals in the home
- everyone should have a water meter in their home, to try manage their use of water
- I thought more should be done to educate people about water management
- more information to the public
- more awareness, in the media, schools, adverts, leaflets, let us know what is going on.
- businesses should be made by law to contribute to 'environment' tax e.g. to do with their excess use of resources or their own will to use nitrates etc (for example) to produce 'better' food products etc
- local authorities should take charge of correct disposal of sewage and separation of clear water

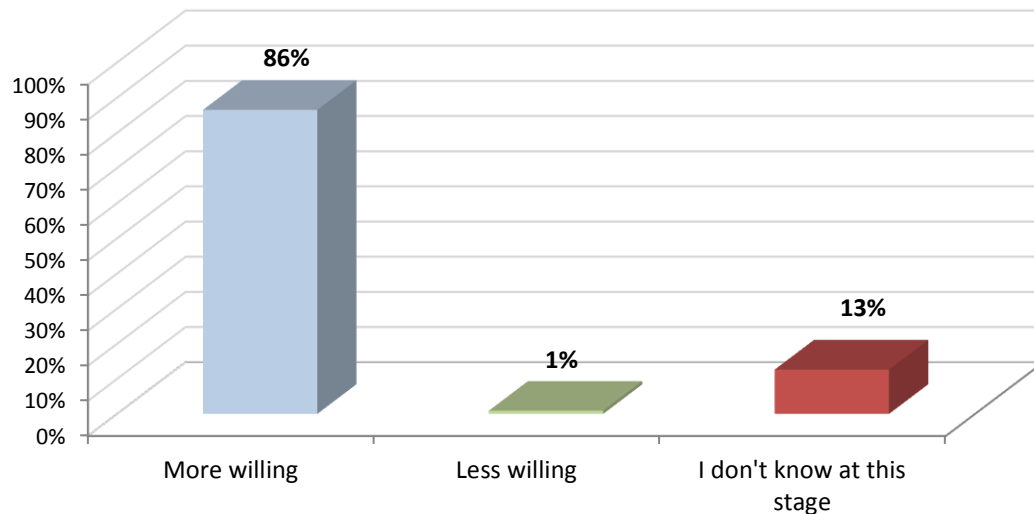
- people need to be aware of the issues so that they can make informed decisions and make changes that will have a positive outcome for the environment as a whole
- more information is needed about chemicals
- I think of the population
- awareness and education
- there seems plenty to be getting along with
- both national and international organisations as well as local residents need to be responsible for water usage
- to ask first peoples general understanding or preconceived understanding of the subject and issues
- I think there should be more awareness of the damages that can occur from substances in cleaning products etc
- more informed public. More emphasis and importance given to the topic and more responsibility given to the public/community workers and realisation
- no
- public awareness, leaflets to every household
- products lines in supermarkets, for selling water friendly products i.e. less chemicals
- tax on products which are particularly damaging to the environment. Equivalent of fizzy drinks tax
- In my opinion every home should be metered for water as is electricity and gas - this could make people more aware of water misuse.
- filtration
- I think schools should make this matter more available to children so we can practice better
- more education is required, either through the media or leafleting
- more discussion
- put our own waste management in order and hope that other will do the same
- planning for the future rather than a quick fix - flexible solutions. Raising awareness
- Government investing for increased investment from farmers and industry
- educating people better and investing money back instead of looking for profits
- more advertising, get on the TV more
- learn from others i.e. Germans and educate the nation!
- listen to the experts and build in slack - not 'just enough'
- to find a purpose and use for the pollutants i.e. facile mature bred for verses non native plants used commercially no native creatures used for food
- to obtain cleaner water is late to change the content of detergents. Continue to levy harsh fines upon industrial polluters
- no
- education and advertising with a view to support the environmental agencies

- volunteers for tackling non native invasive plants, VERY clear explanations as to why extra money is needed for various projects
- environment off setting similar to carbon off setting users (industrial) of processes/ material harmful to the environment contribute to helping resolve other issues
- no
- flooding of the cortege
- no
- explore the possibilities of fines going directly into enabling companies, farmer etc to remedy the problem
- better use of canals. Encouragement of volunteer groups for clearing Calder river banks. Maybe offering the unemployed part time work
- comprehensive campaigns to educate and alert about pollutants and chemicals which should not be used in water activities like washing and cleaning
- It would be interesting to see more public awareness on these important environmental concerns
- creating workshop like this, to go into schools, because education creates a prevention of bad practice
- N/A
- the effects of pollution in long term
- More public awareness campaigns via TV
- National and local awareness. Via avenues which would be most effective, media, local water companies, government
- find a way of educating/ communicating water management

Q8. Do you understand how the results of the workshop will now be used by the Environment Agency?



Q9. having taken part in the workshop today, are you more willing or less willing to come to an event like this in future; to respond to public consultations on water management issues; or take further interest in water management issues?



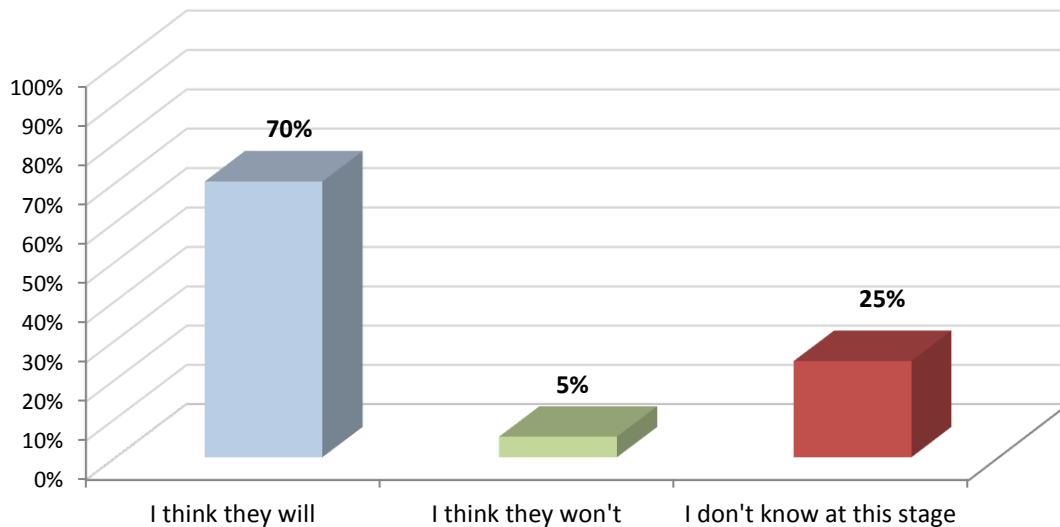
Please explain why you have given this answer

- It was interesting
- was not aware before of the impact on the environment
- To learn something new
- I think it a civic duty
- was ok
- I have identified it as a serious topic that should be considered more
- I have been encouraged to take a more active interest
- Because there is clearly a large agenda and it is important!
- Hope my opinions counts
- I have learned much and hope I've contributed something!!
- a rewarding discussion - and an education
- I think this is an important part of democracy
- I feel comfortable with the legitimacy of the program and feel as though opinions of the general public can have an impact
- vital to take part in the implementation of an improved policy regarding water
- if it is ok with you
- I believe this is an important issue
- I hope this is useful!
- realised the importance of the whole issues

- it was informative and I felt my viewpoint will be taken into consideration
- I found the issues interesting and £65 is always welcome for a bankrupt student!
- because I enjoyed today and I gained knowledge and hope to be able to put some things into practice
- I have enjoyed the experience
- I have enjoyed the day
- I don't know how much difference this consultation will actually make to water management as yet
- because it has helped me get over my panic attacks a bit more
- depends on the content of 'management issues' and its significance
- I was a bit weary at first but have enjoyed myself
- I found the event very helpful and has helped educate me
- I learnt such a lot and enjoyed the discussions
- interesting to know about the world
- because it was nice to listen to information and put my input
- found it very useful and informative
- more understanding
- I feel that it is very important to give the public a voice and to ensure wider awareness of issues
- because I have enjoyed learning
- it has made me want to come back for more meetings
- very educational
- depending on location
- because it makes you more aware
- indifferent
- probably I'd say equally well as when I arrived
- enjoyed the views of others taking part
- it makes one feel part of the community
- education
- because there is a lot more to learn, for better planning with the water management
- like to learn more
- it increases my knowledge and to think a little more on the subject
- I still want to know more
- depending on what will happen with results and if I think it is valuable
- I found it very interesting and it is an issue which is often overlooked
- I enjoyed the experience and learning
- today has given me the skills and knowledge
- because I know such a lot now!
- child care
- this has made me more aware
- I enjoyed discussion groups and interacting

- very interesting and eye opening
- have found this workshop informative
- needing to know more of the water environment
- it has opened my eyes a lot and I have learned a lot more, thank you
- it gave me a feeling of being useful
- need to know more of how industries work
- I've learned a lot today!
- interesting
- because I find it worth while
- I feel responsible for the world I live in and want to make a difference or at least try. It might sound naive but people in this country should allow themselves to express their opinion more often, not just complain
- it was very interesting
- because the people involved listened to individuals
- interesting to hear diverse opinions
- enjoyed expressing my point of view
- just not sure
- a very informative, enjoyable and mutually rewarding day
- it was fascinating, thoroughly enjoyed the day
- has given me a wider understanding of the issues and ways to help
- today was my first time in this type of survey and I really enjoyed it. And I am looking forward for the next
- it would not feel so intimidating in future, and it is good to have an opportunity to learn, think and give feedback
- as I am unemployed
- I want to help safeguard the world for future generations
- because this has been a positive experience.
- I feel I am more informed and can value it more
- I found it interesting subject
- more aware now
- so people have more understanding
- I think we all need to be willing to listen and take part in these sessions
- helps you get an understanding of what is happening
- informative and interesting. More discussions like these should take place

Q10. To what extent do you think the Environment Agency will take account of the public's views from this workshop in their future planning around water management issues?



Please explain why you have given this answer.

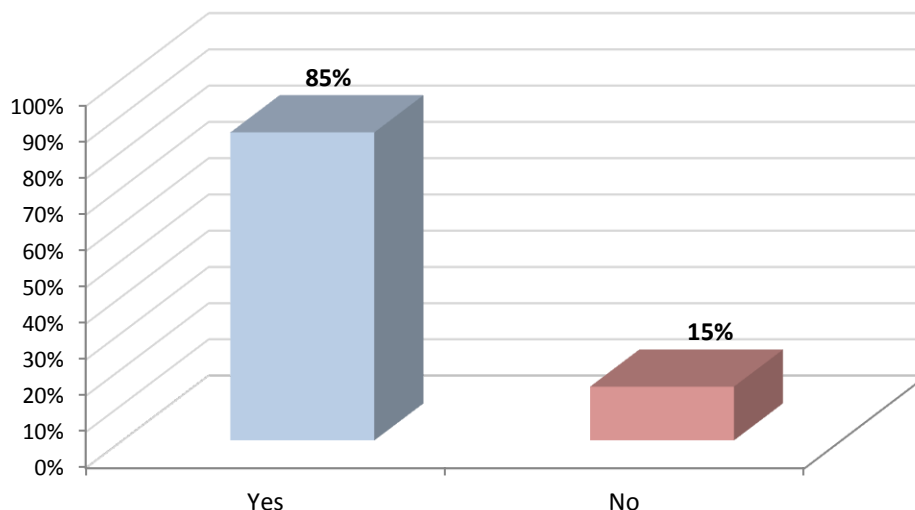
- I hope this workshop has provided a broad spectrum of opinion across a spread of non professions and reflects a range of views
- I can only hope they will
- It's a huge problem and where to start?
- I trust the process
- too many competing interests at work
- Environment Agency is constrained by funding and government policy . Much has been discussed today about holding corporations responsible but I imagine government in current climate will be reluctant to do this
- It's encouraging to see the Environment Agency taking an interest in what the public thinks. However, other influences such as economics, social, political pressures could come out stronger and outweigh it. However, I am optimistic
- I understand the event was part of a genuine consultation process
- General scepticism about the power of public consultation in influencing government and other policy. But I can still be optimistic
- From the discussions today
- BUT I'm not convinced the Government will lead the Environment Agency!!
- This and other discussions can only provide a solid idea of public knowledge and feelings on the issue

- the members here today were evidently listening and that is in everybody's interests
- it will depend on the results of the study and the practicalities of the suggestions both in terms of the cost benefit analysis of the suggestions and the scope of how much each suggestions will have a positive impact
- it is not that they do not listen, I believe their finding (or lack of) means that decisions have to be made and it is important that priorities are recognised
- I think they will but feel it should read. I hope they will
- we all feel removed from large public bodies
- the fact that they are listening to these meetings - investing time and money and their commitment of their people
- from the briefing at the start of the event, it is clear that the Agency has the scientific knowledge they need for their planning but that public opinions would be extremely beneficial
- the Environment Agency clearly cares about the public opinion since they have organised this event but at the end of the day they are more informed on these issues than the general public
- I think the issues involved are far too technical for our input to have much weight
- maybe lack of understanding others views
- it is all very well to ask our opinion (very nice to be asked) but if our ideas are non sensible or unworkable then logically and rightly they can't. If our ideas provided new and useful insights that can improve water management and policy then they should. wrong question - I know, I have worked in market research
- because they helped people see things more clearly
- too many issues and varying opinions to untangle
- I would like to think these type of meetings can show more of public opinion
- I feel that the information we have shared will be helpful
- they want to save the environment as much as the population will
- because it was explained that the information will be used with others to try and make a difference
- some of the views raised seemed to get across to the 2 workers from the Environmental Agency
- their priorities appear to reflect those of the group
- I think they will because public point of views matter
- the views I fell will make their way to people who make decisions including the public and water services
- I think they will take on board what we have said
- we were reasonably positive with ideas
- I hope they will in future
- not sure if they have it on the top of the list
- as mentioned, I felt this exercise is part of a wider agenda

- I don't know how much notice they will take of individual responses or how they will use this data
- because their job is so complex
- I think the progressive nature of the issues indicates this. The approach of the workshop leaders indicates that also the desire is there to do this. Otherwise what would be the point
- due to the importance and benefit to society
- people need to know more
- because they will use our tax wrong
- maybe - much depends on overall economic circumstances
- if not, why the workshop?
- I'd like to think they will and would care to see results in the future but I am not yet convinced I will
- it seems like a waste of time and money if they don't
- I think that a good account of what has been said today will be taken in and reported of
- because the people hold the answers
- we the public are impartial
- getting views from members of the public is important. Education and awareness also very important
- because of the time and money put into these workshops
- I just hope they do
- they need to listen and provide the service people expect
- there are external pressures such as Government funding which greatly restricts any actions
- The agents present at the workshop were very positive
- use of public knowledge
- I think the Environment Agency will take account of all information taken
- I don't think they would conduct these discussions if they were not interested in changing things
- I think all discussions are useful
- Environment Agency gone to a lot of trouble to get people's views so why wouldn't they take account of them?
- it would be a complete waste of time if it was ignored
- They try to see if the people can help
- the Environment Agency will have a much more detailed idea of the budgetary constraints and issues surrounding these concerns
- I am not sure how the challenges can be addressed but I am sure that my personal advice could be met
- because they listened to what people had to say and gave us the answers
- all depends on who the voters are and who is in the government, what the priorities are or the people in charge!

- our opinions must be balanced against their expertise
- I would like to think they will, I would like to think and hope that they could override commercial interests to avoid pollution
- they would need central government support
- because all the answers are not in yet
- there would be no point in asking our opinion if they weren't going to take any notice
- by their responses, notes taken
- the guys we spoke to from the agency will definitely take notice of our opinions, whether or not this will go up decision makers? Only time will tell.
- in holding these sessions they obviously value public opinion. In addition if they can get the public on board thinking about these issues, it can only help their cause
- to do better
- the environment agency are looking in the future planning around glacier
- our feedback may not be very useful or the money may not be available
- to organise and pay for these group sessions took lots of time and money. Why waste it?
- our thoughts and discussions were made to feel valued
- because it will be used in reports so they can learn from
- they seem very eager to hear people's opinions
- all the info. Will be sifted and the best parts used
- the leaders were very open to our thoughts and opinions
- to understand what we want in our community to live securely knowing that our Environment is alive and pleasant and hazard free for wildlife and people
- everyone in the workshop had a certain passion with the concerning issues
- because they would only arrange this event so can get views

FEEDBACK ON NEXT STEPS?



Appendix 2: Summary of project planning group / Reference Group baseline survey

These are the points made in response to the question “what do you hope the dialogue process will achieve?”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Genuine discussion and opinions for the general public. - Opinions and views on what matters most to people (wrt water env). - Who in should pay, how people should, speed of improvement and change.
<p>I hope it will help us to realise that we need to be much more engaging in the way we go about ‘delivering the directive’ – and that in doing so we will do much more to de-mystify and simplify both the process and our communications (internal and external) about what we are trying to achieve and why. This is because we are competing for space in the government’s agenda and for money and if we can’t articulate a simple compelling story we won’t succeed in doing the best we can for the environment.</p>
<p>Greater involvement of the public in managing and conserving the water environment. Moving from unknown elitist legal process owned by a government agency, to a well known, understood community led activity promoting a real sense of participation, and responsibility for their own environment. A feeling of being able to make a difference with the support of government.</p>
<p>This is a tricky one. I hope it will shine a light on a truly representative public opinion of the value of and impacts on the water environment. However I think the fact that the ‘lay’ person in the workshop will most probably have limited understanding and very little time to grasp the issues on the day that the answers and concerns will be skewed towards the more emotive issues e.g. consumer costs and flooding. I know it’s been stated that the results of these workshops will be used to inform the decision making process in combination with others, but it must not be lost sight of that this is an environmentally driven process. Therefore, if folk are scared of flooding, it should not be used as an excuse to favour hard engineered flood defences. Instead, education of river processes, from a young age, and helping people feel more comfortable of living with water takes longer but is more effective and achieves more for WFD in the long run. Therefore I hope this process helps raise awareness and deepen understanding of the benefits / challenges of the water environment, at the same time as provide public engagement for the RBMP process.</p>
<p>Clarity over the questions to be asked in the 2nd river basin management plans.</p>
<p>A useful set of public opinions / comments presented in clear reports, with conclusions and recommendations for us (EA and other orgs such as Defra) to consider. Help EA improve our communications of technical issues to the public, and help us with future dialogue (build our capacity) we may carry out.</p>
<p>Overview of public opinion without views skewed towards particular stakeholders / influences.</p>

Unlike a consultation where often respondents are replying on behalf of an organisation / a particular group, this could potentially provide an overview for 'ordinary' people. Assessing what they feel / their priorities could be interesting.
Some really interesting and detailed insights on key dilemmas and strategic choices facing the sector. Insights set in context of e.g. real case studies and issues, rather than generalisations and wish lists.
An understanding of the public's' view of what the most important issues are for them re the water environment and therefore how NE respond to this in terms of our statutory responsibilities and how we advise around them.
A better understanding of what people really 'value' the water environment for. So, a better feeling / sense of the benefits to society of water – but from the public, not EA perspective.
An informed view of what the public view as priorities for action to improve the water environment, and who should pay for those actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insight into level of awareness. - Insight into how 'worldly' folk think – do they really care about the world or just their local park. - Insight into level of responsibility folk are willing to take (reason for problems is to service society so we are all culprits really).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An understanding of how the public values the water environment. - An understanding of how they expect funding to be provided and by whom. - An understanding of the desired pace of delivering and achieving improvements. - The degree to which the public expect joined up thinking to integrate actions to provide best value for money.
An opportunity to obtain a qualitative and impartial view form the public on their perception of the status of UK water env, their key concerns and action for the future. The outputs from this should help inform the WFD planning process alongside other parallel work streams.
An improved understanding of public interest, concern, understanding and priorities u the field of water pollution reduction. I hope that the dialogue will produce honest responses that will inform and steer EA development of actions for the WFD.
Provide perspectives (qualitative rather than quantitative) on what the general public feel are the significant water management issues facing England in the next 8 years or so.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information to complement / supplement views of stakeholder organisations on RBMPs to inform the draft plans.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Perhaps something on the language / accessibility of RBMPs.- Info to inform the catchment based approach (partnership working). |
| Be able to openly relay the issues to the public in order that they could understand and meaningfully input to the project. |

Appendix 3: Evaluation Framework

Public dialogue on significant water management issues

Key area	Evaluation questions	Source of data					Evaluation methods					
		Workshop attendees	Public survey	Findings Recipients	Project team (core and wider)	Facilitator/s	Observe workshops	Workshop feedback form	Interview sample W/S participants	On line survey – w/s participants	Professional stakeholder interviews	Add Qs to broad survey of 1000
1: Impact: (outputs and outcomes)	1a) To what extent has this dialogue process delivered its planned outputs and outcomes, and met initial expectations from project partners?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	1b) To what extent do the findings from this process have the potential to influence policies, planning or decision making? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who needs to see the findings? Have the findings been effectively communicated to them? What have they influenced / are likely to influence? What insights from the dialogue have been most useful / interesting for policy making? What other opportunities for influence are there? 			✓	✓	✓					✓	
	1c) Is there anything else that has, or will, be done to make it more likely that the findings will be impactful?			✓	✓	✓					✓	

	1d) Have there been any unplanned or unexpected impacts from the dialogue process?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1e) To what extent have public participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taken value and benefit from their participation? • Learnt about SWMI issues, River Basin Management Plans and other WFD commitments? • Developed confidence in the process and feel that their views will be impactful in developing plans and policy 	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	1f) Having taken part in the dialogue, are participants more or less willing to be involved in future dialogue initiatives?	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		
	1g) What are the lessons from the dialogue process, and how will those lessons be disseminated and used to improve future dialogue processes?	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	1h) Having been involved in this dialogue, to what extent are the EA and stakeholder partners willing and able to use public dialogue in future?			✓	✓						✓	

Key area	Evaluation questions	Source of data					Evaluation methods					
		Workshop attendees	Public survey	Findings Recipients	Project team (core and wider)	Facilitator/s	Observe workshops	Workshop feedback form	Interview sample W/s participants	On line survey – w/s participants	Professional stakeholder interviews	Add Qs to broad survey of 1000
2: Inputs	2a) Were the purposes of the dialogue project the right ones to best ensure that the publics’ views and concerns are fed into plans and priorities for River Basin Management Plans and other WFD commitments?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	2b) Have the inputs (time, money, resources) to the process been sufficient to deliver the projects’ purposes?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	2c) In what way has the project provided good value for the resources invested?			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	2d) Has the governance / management of the process been adequate to ensure a process that is well run and supported? Have the different management and delivery elements worked well and complemented each others’ roles? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment Agency project team• The reference group• Sciencewise• 3KQ				✓	✓					✓	

Key area	Evaluation questions	Source of data					Evaluation methods					
		Workshop attendees	Public survey	Findings Recipients	Project team (core and wider)	Facilitator/s	Observe workshops	Workshop feedback form	Interview sample W/S participants	On line survey – w/s participants	Professional stakeholder interviews	Add Qs to broad survey of 1000
3: Process	3a) To what extent have participants been able to engage with the content (environmental, technical, economic data and policy) of WFD and River Basin Management and contribute their perspectives on these complex issues?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	3b) Have the dialogue activities been appropriate and engaging?	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	3c) Have there been particularly successful approaches or challenges in the process design, delivery or reporting that future dialogue processes could learn from?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	3d) Did the whole process of workshops and surveys provide the best way to satisfy the purposes of the project?				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	3e) How are the dialogue results, and the influence of those results, being communicated back to public participants and other stakeholders?				✓	✓					✓	

Key area	Evaluation questions	Source of data					Evaluation methods					
		Workshop attendees	Public survey	Findings Recipients	Project team (core and wider)	Facilitator/s	Observe workshops	Workshop feedback form	Interview sample W/S participants	On line survey – w/s participants	Professional stakeholder interviews	Add Qs to broad survey of 1000
4: Context	4a) Has the process been designed in a way that reflects regional as well as national policy circumstances / needs?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	4b) To what extent has the process related to and complemented other dialogue and wider decision making processes regarding WFD commitments and the development of River Basin Management Plans?			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	

Appendix 4: About Icarus

Icarus specialises in the design, facilitation, delivery and evaluation of planning and decision making processes which draw people and organisations together – often called stakeholder engagement. Much of the work we undertake involves the design of processes where multiple stakeholders, multiple issues and multiple positions are involved. Our approach is underpinned by a commitment to a shared journey, working collaboratively to build skills, understanding and capacity with our clients and with the organisations and individuals we are seeking to engage.

Icarus provides professional support, policy advice and direct delivery in a wide range of inter related fields. We have particular expertise in environmental issues, health and social care, child and family services and voluntary sector development.

Our work is across the public / not for profit sector and our main client base is with governmental organisations, local authorities, the voluntary sector, partnership bodies, communities and community organisations. We only work with organisations committed to 'Positive Social Change'.

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