

Scottish Energy Strategy Public Engagement

This note sets out conclusions from a workshop held on 16 March 2017 in support of Scottish Government thinking on public engagement for the draft Energy Strategy. The workshop was organised by ClimateXChange and attended by a range of academics, engagement practitioners and facilitators, and officials.

The workshop pulled together a list of current energy-related public engagement activities. This list can be viewed on the [ClimateXChange website](#).

This note is focused on the workshop's second output – a list of modes and methods of engagement that might be used in relation to the Scottish Energy Strategy.

Modes of Engagement

The workshop identified five broad modes, or types, of engagement in relation to public policy on energy:

- Direct engagement of citizens in deliberative forums
e.g. citizens' juries or assemblies, which may or may not have a direct role in decision making.
- Dialogue and consultation events
e.g. distributive dialogue, traditional public consultation workshops/events. These tend to be open beyond 'invited publics' but can be resource intensive e.g. requiring production of discussion packs, address for feedback and resource for responding.
- Elicitation of public views
e.g. surveys, opinion polls, focus groups – tending to feed intelligence in to the decision making process rather than provide any direct route in to that process for citizens.
- Media and social media engagement
e.g. dedicated Facebook and/or Twitter spaces/campaigns, tapping into chatrooms/forums, accessing traditional media.
- Via projects
e.g. on-the-ground and community-run activities, projects run by intermediaries, research projects and 'safe space' forums, living labs, agency-delivered support for communities and households.

There are obvious overlaps between these; they are not neat categories. Neither is this list exhaustive, rather it is the product of the workshop. But it is a good characterisation of the different approaches that may be taken. The strengths and weaknesses of specific ideas under each category can be found in the [more detailed read-out](#) of this part of the workshop.

Next Steps

There was a strong sense from the workshop that public engagement in energy issues was worthwhile and ought to be increased. Several of the workshop's ideas for increased or novel public engagement were things that participants (or their organisations) were themselves already working on. Other ideas were things that workshop participants felt well

placed to contribute to. Yet others were things that participants (or their organisations) felt able to partner in delivering if a small amount of support were provided by Government. The workshop revealed significant potential for partnerships between Government and participating organisations that could foster deeper public engagement and generate insights for policy.

A sub-group from the workshop has followed up some ideas around what might be done during the Strategy consultation period. These ideas will be taken forward separately. In addition to these, the following concrete ideas emerged from the workshop and could be the basis of further collaboration and potential projects:

- Research projects and research funding that could be levered to engage publics in energy issues and/or provide insights on values, attitudes and acceptance. Topics for could include: Shape of System Change in Scotland (2030,2050), Energy Storage Technologies, Paying for Transitions and Trust, Bioenergy, Implications of Multi-vector Change, Heat vectors including Hydrogen, Lifestyles and Hard to Change Practices
- Running public, open (or stakeholder) events through Edinburgh Uni's Energy & Society Network
- Neutral portal of information and fact sheets on the Scottish energy system (ECCI / CXC could do this?)
- Engaging through peer-to-peer networks such as the Green Homes Network
- Collaboration at public events, for example science festivals or the Edinburgh Climate festivals
- Hack-a-thons: data-driven problem-solving involving students, civil society and SMEs. These could be used to generate public engagement tools, games or forums. Or they could themselves be ways of engaging particular groups. Citizens science projects are related and also could be run in collaboration with the University sector
- Workplace activities: engaging through employers (for example using the Climate Conversations model, adapted for energy)
- Working with NGOs and development trusts who are already engaging deeply and across society
- Working with industry networks/bodies such as Scottish Renewables
- Working with other groups who are active locally but not necessarily directly on energy, and/or membership organisations (again, perhaps learning from the recent Climate Conversations project)
- Working through area-based schemes/projects e.g. the SEEP pilots and more generally with Local Authorities
- Increased engagement effort at mandated points e.g. when buying/selling a house, using EPC ratings as a vehicle for engaging
- Generation of an online tool that allows citizens to engage with the energy system – an 'energy system model-lite'. This could be led by academia with some seed funding from Government