

Setting aims, approaches & expectations	Characterising Communities	Requirement Capture	Options Evaluation	Detailed Design	Evaluation
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## 1. Title

Method statement for setting aims, approaches and expectations for community engagement

## 2. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this method statement is to describe stage 0 of the co-design process – setting aims, approaches and expectations. This method outlines a framework for engagement and is used to set and track aims, processes and potential outputs. It can be used to iterate and evaluate the project throughout, in conjunction with Method 5: Evaluation.

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1. Defining Aims

3.1.1. The aims of a co-design process should reflect issues of expected levels of change (i.e. infrastructure, policy); expected nature of outcome (i.e. physical, design, interactional); extent of community engagement (i.e. representativeness, decision-making power); community value retention; and reflexive evaluation of activities.

3.1.2. The aims can be defined by determining the expected level to be achieved through the project. These predetermined levels can then be used to evaluate the project process and its outcomes. See the [project aims & assessment example](#).

3.1.3. The aims of a co-design process will be dependent on the context, and can be developed in collaboration with community partners. The aims should be recorded at an early stage and be continuously assessed throughout the process.

### 3.2. Determining the approach

3.2.1. To determine the project approach we followed current best practice community engagement methods. We reviewed [collaborative research guidelines](#) to draft a [collaboration framework](#) and submitted this drafted plan for [ethical review](#) by the research university. This included complying with data protection protocols. Relevant examples are listed in section 5 below.

3.2.2. Along with step 3.2.1 we identified a set of locations and community groups as potential partners. We consulted with representatives of five place-based groups and picked the group we felt most able to enter

into and benefit from an infrastructure co-design process. See the identifying & contacting a community check list.

- 3.2.3. After initial discussions with community group representatives and stakeholders we agreed a programme of activities and timeframe. We consulted with stakeholders to understand: other works and projects happening within the community; appropriate language and approaches for the community group; a feasible number of participants to get involved (in this case 10% of residents); local gatekeepers, and community members likely to be interested in being involved; access requirements (in this case a door fob allowing the researcher into all areas of the estate).
- 3.2.4. We designed an evaluation strategy that we could use throughout the programme to assess the process and outcomes. Refer to Method Statement 5: Evaluation for a full description of the tools and their use.
- 3.3. Setting expectations
  - 3.3.1. All partners and participants should have a clear understanding of the project aims, processes and range of outcomes. This will set feasible expectations for the co-design project. This also informs the framework for evaluating the project. Expectations can be linked to the aims and expected levels of achievement. Expectations and expected outcomes can evolve through the project and these changes can be captured at each stage. See assessment sections of method statements 1-4 and method statement 5: Evaluation.
  - 3.3.2. A project co-design framework setting out the planned activities and links to the aims and assessments can be used to communicate to all participants, support realistic expectations and help with the evaluation.
4. Safety and responsibilities

This method should be applied with the involvement of stakeholders and community members engaged through the co-design process.

This method was used to begin a co-design process as part of a research project. The intention was to design an infrastructure intervention in the WEF nexus, however the process and outcome were fully open for the community to influence and change. In cases where the process is less open or part of the outcome has already been established, this needs to be communicated appropriately.

The person leading the engagement process is responsible for checking the appropriate ethics guides, engagement best practices and data protection protocols for their organisation, sector and location.

The key personnel involved in this stage includes team lead and social researcher and/or community engagement officer.

5. List of tools
  - 5.1. Project aims & assessment
  - 5.2. Collaboration framework
  - 5.3. Identifying and contacting a community checklist
  - 5.4. Ethical review

6. References and further reading/training

- Collaborative research guidelines

Just Space 'Protocol on research collaboration between community/activist groups and university staff and students on housing and planning issues'

<https://justspace2010.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/jsn-research-protocol-draft3-2017.pdf>

UCL Public Engagement Unit 'Creating knowledge in collaboration with communities and interest groups outside the university'

[https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/sites/culture/files/creating\\_knowledge\\_in\\_collaboration\\_6.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/sites/culture/files/creating_knowledge_in_collaboration_6.pdf)

Stirling, Andy. 2015. Developing "Nexus Capabilities": Towards Transdisciplinary Methodologies.

- Ethical review processes

The Social Research Association 'Ethical Guidelines' <http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ethics03.pdf>

Respect Project (EU) 'Code of practice for Socio-Economic Research'

<http://www.respectproject.org/code/index.php>

- Data protection protocols

The Social Research Association 'The Data Protection Act 1998 Guidelines for social research' (UK) <http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRS-SRA-DP-Guidelines-updated-April-2013.pdf>

Respect Project 'RESPECT for Confidentiality: Guidelines' (EU)

<http://www.respectproject.org/data/guidelines.php>