



Dialogue for governance and regulation: engaging citizens for the long-term

Ingrid Prikken and Simon Burall

June 2013



Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Exploring the current role of ongoing citizen involvement	2
	2.1 More examples of ongoing citizen participation.....	3
3	The value of ongoing public involvement	5
4	Issues to bear in mind	6
5	Conclusion	7
6	References	8

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank colleagues at Involve and Sciencewise for their contributions to this paper. Special thanks to our colleagues who have kindly given their time to talk to us about their experiences with ongoing citizen advisory groups (Sarah Castell, Jan Robinson, Lucy Simons, Lorna Ahlquist and Lindsey Colbourne), Edward Andersson for his comments and editing of the paper, and Lani Shamash for transcribing the interviews.

Special thanks to Sciencewise Citizen Group members, whose efforts have helped improve Sciencewise’s work and illustrate the value of engaging members of the public over a longer period.

1 Introduction

Over the last 20 years, there have been important shifts in how decisions are made about policy involving science and technology. Where these decisions used to be made by experts and politicians alone, there has been a growing movement, in Government and the wider science and technology field, to give a broader range of voices a place in decision-making. Sciencewise exists to open-up decision-making to ensure that the public voice is directly heard in the policy-making process. Evaluations of Sciencewise demonstrate that this can have significant value in this process, offering alternative perspectives, questions and framings, and providing evidence about public values and attitudes to emerging policy involving science and technology¹.

However, until now, public engagement with science and technology has mostly happened on a one-off basis. Deeper, more deliberative engagement with science and technology hardly ever involves members of the public over a sustained, longer period of time. At the moment, public dialogue and engagement is viewed within a project framework where it is an intervention at a moment in time, leaving day-to-day policy-making and wider processes of governance largely unaffected.

Scientific and technological developments have always had significant impact on societies, cultures, economies and governments. However, these changes, and their corresponding impacts, are happening at an increasingly fast pace. Policy decisions and regulatory frameworks risk being left behind by this rapid pace of change. Opening up policy-making to public engagement only at moments of specific policy decisions might not be enough given the rapid pace of development. This raises questions about how policy-making and governance can be opened up on a more ongoing basis in ways that ensure that citizens are involved in:

- the development and review of the wider strategies of organisations making policy decisions involving rapidly changing science and technology (**Governance**)
- the review and oversight of regulatory frameworks in such situations (**Regulation**)

There are a number of wider trends that are changing the relationship between Government and citizens, which make these questions more pertinent. Two of these trends are particularly visible at the moment².

1. The first is external to Government and is a result of the changes in the relationship between citizen and Government that are being driven by developments in the Internet. This trend itself has at least four dimensions to it.
 - a. The ease with which citizens can access knowledge and expertise to engage with and challenge Government decisions.
 - b. The ease with which citizens can organise around issues and, again, challenge Government.
 - c. The way in which institutions are forced to become more transparent.
 - d. The rise of social media is changing the way that citizens and Government communicate.

All of these changes mean that institutions are becoming increasingly porous, whether they intend to or not.

2. The second trend changing the citizen-Government relationship is being driven by Government itself, partly in response to the technological changes outlined above. This is the trend towards open Government. The Government's agenda for open Government is outlined in the Civil Service Reform Plan³. In this, the Government is explicitly seeking ways in which to open up policy-making to a wider range of voices, including the public, through processes such as crowdsourcing⁴.

¹ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/Sciencewise-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf>

² See forthcoming Sciencewise thought leadership paper Experts, publics and open policy-making for a deeper exploration of these two trends.

³ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/experts-publics-and-open-policy-making-opening-the-windows-and-doors-of-whitehall/>

⁴ <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform>

⁴ Crowdsourcing means obtaining (information or input into a particular task or project) by enlisting the services of a number of people, either paid or unpaid, typically via the Internet (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/crowdsourcing>)

The positive impact that public engagement and public dialogue⁵ is having on policy-making is also advancing the case that new and different ways must be found to involve citizens in more strategic ways in Government decision-making.

Finally, this is an issue that citizens themselves are concerned about. One of the consistent views and responses from public participants across different dialogue projects is the consideration of 'anticipatory regulation' of emerging technologies⁶.

The absence of ongoing citizen participation in the strategy formulation of organisations or in the review and monitoring of regulations is not exclusive to science. For example, in the health sector, commissioners are dealing with similar issues in trying to make sure that patient and public engagement and insight are considered at all decision points in the commissioning cycle⁷. Could there be benefits from involving citizens more holistically in the implementation and ongoing development of policy involving science and technology? It could increase accountability to the public or it could give citizens a better understanding of the regulatory process so they can feed into the review or formulation of regulations in other areas of science⁸.

With the trends and drivers outlined above in mind, and taking these questions as the starting point, this paper explores what value involving citizens on an ongoing basis could have. It identifies examples of good practice and highlights some of the ways that the challenges arising from engaging citizens in this way can be overcome.

For this purpose, the paper looks at processes that:

- involve citizens in on-going processes that last longer than a year
- have no fixed endpoint
- provide citizens with a meaningful role in decision-making

As noted above, there is a distinct lack of examples in the area of policy-making involving science and technology. However, in other areas (particularly health), there is already more experience with ongoing citizen advisory groups. This paper draws on the growing number of examples to identify good practice and the main challenges inherent in involving citizens in an ongoing way.

Sciencewise has also started to implement structures to allow ongoing citizen involvement in its own strategic management. Learning and insights from the Sciencewise Citizen Group, launched in October 2012, will be disseminated in due course. These insights will provide additional insights to the questions and issues raised in this paper.

Section 2 explores the role that the ongoing citizen involvement has played to date. Section 3 identifies some of the potential benefits of involving citizens in wider decision-making and regulatory structures. Section 4 looks at some of the issues to bear in mind when involving citizens in this way and explores potential solutions to these challenges.

2 Exploring the current role of ongoing citizen involvement

Public engagement has an important role to play in providing 'social intelligence' about the wider public, social and ethical dimensions of research strategy, policy-making and governance. Successful public dialogue can play a key role in supporting more open governance and decision-making. This is a condition of wider public confidence in policy-making around science and technology⁹.

Public engagement can bring into sharper focus the public's social framings and assessment of risks and benefits around particular technologies. It does so in ways that engaging stakeholders or carrying out other types of research cannot. For example, it is hard to see other ways to gather good evidence

⁵ For example, see this year's draft evaluation of the Sciencewise programme and projects:

<http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/SW-SG-February-2013-P01-Evaluation.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Review-FINAL.pdf>

⁷ http://www.institute.nhs.uk/images/Engagement_Cycle/Engagement_Cycle_Overview_PDF.pdf

⁸ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/co-regulation-in-science/>

⁹ <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Review-FINAL.pdf>

about the different perceptions of the public about the value of specific scientific developments, the conditions under which they are likely to accept a policy involving science and technology or not, and the questions and issues that they feel remain unanswered¹⁰. Public engagement can create a better understanding of public attitudes relating to an emerging area of research. In addition, different publics as potential end-users or consumers of research, stimulate researchers to reflect on the social implications of their research, inform strategy and decision-making, and contribute to wider public debate about emerging research and technologies¹¹.

Even though most citizen engagement with science and technology policy happens on a one-off basis, there are developments that create new, complementary, processes that allow longer term, ongoing public engagement.

One example of a longer term engagement of citizens is the Living With Environmental Change (LWEC) advisory panel¹². During 2010, the LWEC partnership launched a Citizens' Advisory Forum (in partnership with Sciencewise) to bring public attitudes and values into its strategic decision-making processes. The method used for this dialogue process was a small-scale panel that would allow in-depth discussions. A broad public group comprising 18 forum members was recruited. The group met three times during the year. The forum was intended to facilitate the involvement of a broad cross section of individuals in a relatively small group. For the public participants in the process, the most valuable benefit was learning. Throughout the sessions, forum members reported that taking part had affected their views, including about their own behaviour. There were several specific areas identified where influence on future policy decisions was expected, including governance and regulation¹³. Some of the forum's influence was on the broader context for policy rather than having direct influence on decisions¹⁴.

An example of ongoing engagement in which Sciencewise is involved was initiated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency. This process is testing a new approach to encourage greater local participation in 25 pilots at catchment level¹⁵. It involves a range of community-led public dialogue projects, each engaging local people in local river catchment planning. These people will engage with complex and contentious decisions about how to improve future water quality. These pilots are designed at the local level and are all different, sometimes involving ongoing citizen engagement. Through these pilots, the Environment Agency is exploring better ways of engaging with people and organisations at a catchment level in ways that can make a difference¹⁶.

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) are piloting a novel approach to public dialogue, to develop an ongoing, informed discussion between the BBSRC, their research community, the public and other stakeholders, around bioenergy research, its potential and the issues associated with it. The first phase of the project started in October 2012 and will run until October 2013, and potentially running it throughout 2014 and beyond¹⁷.

2.1 More examples of ongoing citizen participation

This section explores examples from areas of public policy other than science and technology that have experimented with, or are still conducting, more permanent citizen involvement structures where citizens have a continuing role in the development, implementation and oversight of policy. These are examples drawn from across a range of organisations. In most of the examples, citizens provide evidence, advice, views and perspectives rather than being involved in the governance or oversight processes of the organisation in question. It is also important to note that the examples given are not all deliberative in nature. The examples are included to point out certain elements of ongoing citizen engagement that could be considered in thinking through ongoing citizen involvement with science and technology, and should be read as such. They are intended to illuminate the different ways in which citizens are involved in more ongoing ways, rather than representing an exhaustive mapping of such processes.

¹⁰ <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/What-the-public-say-report-FINAL-v4.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Resource-FINAL.pdf>

¹² <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/citizens-advisory-forum-for-living-with-environmental-change-lwec/>

¹³ This evaluation reported very soon after the conclusion of the Forum activities, so it was too early to identify clear influence on policy.

¹⁴ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/LWEC-eval-report-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁵ In England and Wales there are 100 catchments. A catchment is an area with several, often interconnected, water bodies (rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal waters). Many of the problems facing our water environments are best understood and tackled at a catchment level.

¹⁶ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/131506.aspx>

¹⁷ <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/society/dialogue/activities/bioenergy-dialogue/bioenergy-dialogue-project.aspx>

There are several examples of ongoing citizen engagement with policy. A method widely used in the UK is a **Citizens' Panel** – a large, demographically representative group of citizens regularly used to assess public preferences and opinions¹⁸. They are typically used by statutory agencies, particularly local authorities and their partners, to identify local priorities and to consult service users and non-users on specific issues. A Citizens' Panel aims to be a representative, consultative body of local residents. Participants are generally recruited through random sampling of the electoral roll or postcode address file. Once citizens agree to participate, they will be invited to a rolling programme of research and consultation. Typically, this involves regular surveys and, where appropriate, further in-depth research tools, such as focus groups and workshops.

In 1998, Bristol City Council was one of the first to form a Citizens' Panel¹⁹. The panel has a membership of 2,000 people and, during its existence, many thousands of people have served on the panel or been given the opportunity to join. The panel's membership is constantly refreshed to provide continuing opportunities for people to get involved. Bristol Council regards the panel 'invaluable' as a thermometer of public sentiment and as a trial bed for new policy suggestions²⁰. The purpose of the panel is to provide a cost-effective way of capturing the views of the public on a variety of issues. Citizen Panel reports of the various consultations are available on the Council's website and the results from the Citizens' Panel are regularly fed into decision-making. A Citizens' Panel Feedback newsletter is published, providing information on previous consultations, and details of upcoming issues, developments and future consultations.

This type of engagement isn't just done by local government, other parts of government use ongoing **Customer Panels**. For example, the gas and electricity markets regulator, Ofgem, has its 'Consumer First Panel', consisting of 100 domestic customers recruited from five locations across Great Britain. Panel members meet regularly to discuss key issues impacting on their participation in the energy market and other key issues, such as energy prices, because it is important for Ofgem to understand on an ongoing basis consumers' perspectives on changing conditions^{21 22}.

There have been a few examples of Citizens' Panels at a national level in the UK (e.g. **the People's Panel**²³ that was conducted by Ipsos MORI and tracked satisfaction with public services between 1998 and 2002). Another example of an ongoing panel was the **Parents' Panel**, which was organised by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2008²⁴. The Panel of 40 members met quarterly, until March 2010, to discuss a range of issues linked to government policy.

Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) have 'lay' members, with variations in practice across the SAC landscape. While lay members won't have expertise in the area of responsibility for the committee, they will often bring expertise of different kinds. They may be experts in a different area that is sometimes required by the committee (e.g. in law or ethics). Alternatively, they could be an expert through their life experiences, perhaps because they are a patient or have a family member who lives with a particular condition. The Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees²⁵ highlights the added value that lay representatives can bring to SACs. The Code notes that lay members can observe and input into the process of a SAC by providing a useful challenge function, reality checking key decisions and asking questions that may not have been considered during technical discussions²⁶.

There are quite a few examples of ongoing citizen involvement in the **health sector**. For example, through the use of structures, such as patient groups, members of the public are engaged in NHS research²⁷. They are involved throughout the research cycle – from prioritising what research should be carried out, commissioning research, involvement in individual specific research projects, through to supporting the dissemination of research and getting that research put into practice. Public involvement is across a wide range of topic areas. The way involvement is carried out will vary

¹⁸ <http://participationcompass.org/article/show/131>

¹⁹ <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/citizens-panel>

²⁰ <http://participationcompass.org/article/show/15>

²¹ <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Cp/CF/Pages/CF.aspx>

²² <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Cp/CF/Documents1/Ofgem%20Consumer%20First%20Panel%20Year%204.pdf>

²³ <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Archive/Polls/panel98c.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR022#downloadableparts>

²⁵ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/goscience/docs/c/11-1382-code-of-practice-scientific-advisory-committees.pdf>

²⁶ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100623185502/http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/goscience/docs/S/10-1012-sharing-experience-across-sac-secretariats.pdf>

²⁷ INVOLVE was set up as an advisory group to the Department of Health to advise public involvement in NHS research. This has expanded to include social care and public health research. INVOLVE provides people with resources, advice and support to enable them to do it themselves. It acts as a resource centre, enabling the sharing of good practice. <http://www.invo.org.uk/>

depending on the objectives. This can range from two lay members sitting on a multidisciplinary committee, to a patient advisory group made up of patients and service users.

An interesting example of ongoing citizen involvement comes from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), which has been working with a **Citizens' Council**. The council is composed of a panel of 30 members of the public. The membership is intended to reflect the diversity of the UK population. It provides NICE with a public perspective on overarching moral and ethical issues that NICE has to take account of when producing guidance, which is then incorporated in a 'social value judgement'²⁸. Members meet once a year for two days at a time. Their discussions are arranged and run by independent facilitators. The meetings are open to public observers. During the meetings, council members listen to different views from experts on a topic and undertake exercises that allow them to examine the issues in detail and thoroughly discuss their own views. The members' views and conclusions are captured by an independent rapporteur and the report is circulated to members for comment and amendment before finalising. After a meeting, the report is made available for public comment. A summary of these comments along with the report are then presented to NICE's board for discussion²⁹.

Local Healthwatch³⁰ is a recent development in patient and citizen involvement in healthcare. It aims to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided in their locality. Each local Healthwatch will have a seat on the new statutory health and wellbeing boards. This is to try to ensure that the views and experiences of patients, carers and other service users are taken into account when local needs assessments and strategies are prepared. Local Healthwatch will carry forward the functions of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and will have additional functions and powers. Similar ongoing involvement structures at local level have also been set up in other fields, often allowing citizens to work alongside stakeholders and public sector employers (e.g. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CRDP) are partnerships between the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, social landlords, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses, who work together to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse).

3 The value of ongoing public involvement

Involving citizens, whether as a one-off exercise or an ongoing form of engagement, can have a range of benefits. Public engagement can have a role in providing outside scrutiny, providing the opportunity for alternative voices to make a contribution to the policy process, drawing in wider sources of experience and knowledge to the policy process, identifying alternative framings to wider questions about the policy³¹. Gathering public evidence can also bring into sharper focus the social framings and assessment of risks and benefits around particular technologies.

As the examples highlighted above show, Government is exploring ways in which it can involve citizens at different levels of decision-making processes and in more ongoing ways. In the context of rapidly developing areas of technological innovation, there may be particular benefits from involving citizens on a more ongoing basis. Reasons for doing so will vary, but may include:

- opening up more strategic decision-making processes to citizen voices
- reviewing and overseeing regulatory frameworks relating to the development or implementation of scientific and technological developments

These benefits could include:

- **Easy access to citizen views.** A group of citizens working together over a period of time, with a strong relationship to policy makers, could provide valuable external perspectives on time-critical policy and governance issues. Over time, this could be a resource that is able to grapple quickly and effectively with new issues as they will be used to the engagement

²⁸ http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/howwework/citizenscouncil/citizens_council.jsp

²⁹ http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/howwework/citizenscouncil/citizens_council.jsp

³⁰ <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/what-is-healthwatch/>

³¹ <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/Guiding-PrinciplesSciencewise-ERC-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

process, to the other participants and the policy makers. The LWEC Forum showed signs that this approach can be highly effective³².

- **Direct contact between policy makers and public voices.** One-off engagement processes are often developed and delivered by external experts with relatively little policy-maker involvement. Where ongoing citizen engagement processes are integrated fully into the governance processes of organisations, as those of NICE and Sciencewise are, there are greater opportunities for key policy and decision makers to interact with citizens directly and to experience the value of hearing their views directly³³.
- **Identifying changing societal reactions to scientific and technological innovation.** As noted above, scientific discovery and technological innovation in some areas is moving very fast. In addition, news stories, the activities of campaign groups and wider events can significantly impact on the way society views the potential of such innovation, the questions citizens ask and the wider framings they place it in. Ongoing citizen engagement could help to open up the perspective of policy makers to changing societal reactions to technologies and any Government policies relating to them. While such a process is unlikely to provide answers, or even identify all the new issues becoming relevant for citizens, it should help policy makers to decide if and when further, wider public engagement is necessary, given changing circumstances.
- **Increased likelihood of gaining public acceptance of policy** by ensuring that policy makers recognise alternative viewpoints and are able to draft policies that are more likely to 'go with the grain' of public opinion. While one-off engagement can also help policy makers in this way, it can be difficult to achieve in areas where scientific and technological developments are moving quickly or societal perspectives and reactions to them are rapidly changing. Sustained involvement of citizens in the policy-making process could help to ensure that this is more likely.
- **Building trust of citizens in policy-making.** Opening up ongoing governance and regulatory processes to alternative perspectives, including those of the public, can demonstrate transparency and openness. This will, of course, only be true if the way citizens are chosen to join the process, and the extent of their involvement and influence is demonstrated in an accurate and transparent way.
- **Strengthening democratic oversight and accountability.** Ongoing citizen engagement with institutional structures for governance and oversight clearly presents a different way of engaging citizens with policy-making. It can give citizens a much more direct link to decision-making. It could even act as a catalyst for their further engagement³⁴.

4 Issues to bear in mind

Involving citizens in an ongoing engagement process raises a number of challenges for policy makers. Some of these are challenges raised whenever Government decides to engage citizens. Others are more pertinent for more ongoing processes. The main challenges include:

- **Representativeness.** Bringing small groups of citizens into a decision-making process can raise concerns that the group is not representative of the wider population and that this makes their contribution less useful. This is true for all engagement, but given that ongoing engagement tends to involve smaller number of citizens than one-off events, the fears may be heightened. If claims are being made about how the views of the group relate to overall public opinion, then this is indeed a problem. However, if the purpose of the group is explicitly to open up the decision-making process to wider views and alternative perspectives, rather than to make wider claims about representativeness, then this should be far less of an issue. Indeed, while often desirable in the policy-making process, 'representativeness' is also elusive. Notions of what it means will vary from process to process and between those making the assessment as to what criteria they think need to be fulfilled for representativeness to be

³² <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/LWEC-eval-report-FINAL.pdf>

³³ <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Review-FINAL.pdf>

³⁴ <http://www.hta.ac.uk/nihmethodology/reports/1566.pdf>

achieved³⁵. Lack of representativeness should not divert policy makers from seeking ways to open up to alternative voices and improve accountability mechanisms. As long as the role of the group is clear, this does not need to be a problem³⁶.

- **Conditioning.** As highlighted above, members of an ongoing citizen process have the opportunity to learn more about an organisation and potentially contribute more than they would have been able to in a one-off exercise. However, there is a risk of losing the fresh perspective, staying grounded in personal experience and, ultimately, becoming experts themselves. Most ongoing processes have systems for renewing membership for this reason.
- **Remit.** As with all public-engagement processes, a lack of clarity by policy makers about which issues are for discussion and which issues are being dealt with elsewhere can be a problem. In an ongoing engagement process, there is also the risk of ‘mission creep’ – unconsciously changing the remit of the group over time. This can cause tensions if citizens and policy makers have a different view about their roles due to poor communication or if the citizen members insist on discussing issues that are not appropriate from the perspective of the policy maker. Policy makers should be clear about ‘what is up for grabs’ and manage public expectation of influence.
- **Joined up.** Aligning the citizen group to the work of an existing organisation can be challenging. Simply setting up a citizen group as an add-on, without changing the overall structure of decision-making is unlikely to be effective. Policy makers will have to consider how the citizen group relates to the existing decision-making processes. The ongoing engagement of citizens may result in complex feedback and, more often than not, this won’t fit the decision-making process. It is also important to consider how ongoing citizen groups can complement other public engagement methods and elements of the governance structure rather than competing with them. A citizen advisory group is not the answer to all engagement needs. Policy makers also need to diversify methods to involve the views of others beyond the citizen advisory group.
- **Complex and abstract.** Engaging meaningfully with the public on complex scientific matters can be challenging. Members of the public often require specific support if they are to be involved effectively. Participants may have different knowledge bases around certain subjects and some of the issues they are asked to debate can be very far removed from everyday life. An ongoing citizen advisory group requires members of the public to engage with principles that underpin national policy, rather than local issues or single decisions. The challenge here might lie in the abstract nature of such issues and their complexity³⁷. Sciencewise has carried out a large number of projects that have engaged members of the public on complex issues so complexity is not an impossible obstacle. The challenge is giving the group members enough information and knowledge to be able to contribute without leading them. On some levels, the fact that the participants are involved for the long term makes it easier to deal with complex information, as long as time is allowed for them to familiarise themselves, notwithstanding the issue of conditioning highlighted above.

5 Conclusion

To date, engagement in governance and oversight of policy involving science and technology has been limited to one-off, or short-term interventions. Despite great strides in some areas, citizens are largely engaged at specific policy moments. Most of the time, policy-making does not include the voice of citizens.

This paper has explored the potential of ongoing engagement, and the value that providing public evidence and social intelligence on a sustained basis might provide. Ongoing citizen involvement can potentially play an important role in the regulation and governance of policy involving science and technology in the UK. However, for it to work, policy makers will need to consider what ongoing engagement structures will add that cannot be obtained in other ways. It will be especially important

³⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement>

³⁶ <http://www.lbro.org.uk/docs/citizen-in-regulation.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.hta.ac.uk/nihmethodology/reports/1566.pdf>

for policy makers to demonstrate to citizens that policy-making is open and transparent in policy areas affected by rapidly evolving and potentially controversial technologies (e.g. stratified medicine).

However, it is important to bear in mind that developing structures for ongoing involvement of citizens in the governance and regulation of controversial areas of science and technology will not be a panacea. By their very nature, such structures will involve a small number of citizens and cannot replace larger scale public engagement and dialogue processes at appropriate moments in the policy process. In addition, developing such structures will not remove the need to ensure greater transparency and openness in policy-making.

This paper raises the potential that developing structures and processes that allow the ongoing involvement of citizens in governance and regulation processes may have a positive impact on complex and contentious areas of public policy. Structures such as the Sciencewise Citizen Group and the NICE Citizens' Council are leading the way, and lessons can be drawn from these experiences.

The value such ongoing citizen groups can add should be monitored and evaluated to draw lessons and improve practice. The impact it has on decision-making should also be shown in terms of the wider political context, particularly in a time of budget restraint. One-off public dialogue events are, and will remain, important. However, in certain cases, involving members of the public on a more sustained basis should be looked at.

6 References

Bristol Citizens' Panel <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/citizens-panel>

Cabinet Office (1999) Do people's panels represent the people? <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Archive/Polls/panel98c.pdf>

Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research, The citizen in regulation: A Report on the Evidence Base for The Local Better Regulation Office <http://www.lbro.org.uk/docs/citizen-in-regulation.pdf>

Citizens Advisory Forum for Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) Sciencewise-funded project 2010 – 2011 <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/citizens-advisory-forum-for-living-with-environmental-change-lwec/>

Co-regulation in Science <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/co-regulation-in-science/>

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, The Government's Approach to Public Dialogue on Science and Technology <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/Guiding-PrinciplesSciencewise-ERC-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

Department for Education (August 2010) Parents' Panel: Summary Reports of Meetings Held from January 2009 to March 2010 <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR022#downloadableparts>

Doubleday, R. Teubner, R. (2012) Public Dialogue Review Lessons from public dialogues commissioned by the RCUK <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Review-FINAL.pdf>

Environment Agency <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/131506.aspx>

Experts, publics and open policy making <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/experts-publics-and-open-policy-making-opening-the-windows-and-doors-of-whitehall/>

Government Office for Science (2010) Sharing experience: Improving engagement across SAC secretariats. Report of a series of workshops designed to facilitate greater engagement across the Scientific Advisory Committee community. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100623185502/http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/goscience/docs/S/10-1012-sharing-experience-across-sac-secretariats.pdf>

Government Office for Science (2011) Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/goscience/docs/c/11-1382-code-of-practice-scientific-advisory-committees.pdf>

Guiding principles for public engagement UCL <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement>

Healthwatch <http://healthandcare.dh.gov.uk/what-is-healthwatch/>

HM Government (June 2012) The Civil Service Reform Plan <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/reform>

Involve and Sciencewise (2010) 'What the public say' <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/What-the-public-say-report-FINAL-v4.pdf>

INVOLVE <http://www.invo.org.uk/>

Ipsos MORI (January 2012) Ofgem Consumer First Panel Year 4 Findings from first workshops (*held in October and November 2011*) <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Cp/CF/Documents1/Ofgem%20Consumer%20First%20Panel%20Year%204.pdf>

NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (2012) The Engagement Cycle http://www.institute.nhs.uk/images/Engagement_Cycle/Engagement_Cycle_Overview_PDF.pdf

NICE Citizens' Council http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/howwework/citizenscouncil/citizens_council.jsp

Ofgem Consumer First <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Sustainability/Cp/CF/Pages/CF.aspx>

Participation Compass <http://participationcompass.org/article/show/131>

Prikken, I. Burall, S. (2012) Doing Public Dialogue, a support resource for research council staff <http://www.involve.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/120727-RCUK-Resource-FINAL.pdf>

SW SG February 2013 P01 – Evaluation <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/SW-SG-February-2013-P01-Evaluation.pdf>

The Open University (March 2005) Opening The Box Evaluating the Citizens Council of NICE Report Prepared for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Research Methodology, NHS Research and Development Programme <http://www.hta.ac.uk/nihrmethodology/reports/1566.pdf>

Warburton, D. (July 2011) Evaluation of the Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) Citizens' Advisory Forum <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Project-files/LWEC-eval-report-FINAL.pdf>

Warburton, D. (May 2011) Evaluation of Sciencewise-ERC <http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/assets/Uploads/Publications/Sciencewise-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf>