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Supporting participants in a self-driven journey of policy creation

Social Research Association

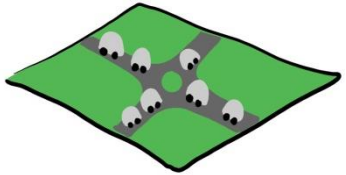
10 December 2019

What we're talking about today

- Using innovative approaches to support citizens to inform policy

The role of diverse stakeholders

The role of enabling activities



Reconvening participants

In Autumn/Winter 2018,
>150 people each came to
3 workshops, for us to **understand public attitudes toward automated vehicle technology**.

This was to contribute to:

- Strategy and regulation
- Future engagement
- Technology development

Who was involved in the oversight of the project?

Oversight Group

15 members

Policy-makers, NPOs, manufacturers, transport authorities

Specialist Group

37 members

Research, manufacturers, policy-makers, transport authorities

Project Team

- DfT and CCAV
- Sciencewise
- UKRI
- Traverse
- UCL
- 3KQ

What did they bring to the process

For participants

- Ensuring that the process was designed for maximum engagement and contribution to policy
- Ensuring materials covered the right issues, at a suitable level
- Providing deeper insight into issues at workshops
- Sense-checking that findings reflected participant views

For policy

- Credibility of process leads to credibility of policy
- Influence of first-hand experience of public views
- Challenge makes the outputs more robust and impactful
- Subject matter expertise makes recommendations more relevant

Our experience

- Time intensive
- Flexibility for participating in workshops
- Larger pool of insight and resources
- Attending workshops provided a unique experience and insight
- Importance of having a clearly defined role and ability to influence the process
- Co-design workshops during materials development
- Presenting draft summary findings allowed for a sense-checking exercise

What is important for enabling policy input?

- Understanding complex concepts
- Imagining the future
- Thinking as individuals and as groups
- Reflecting on views
- Making recommendations

Understanding complex concepts

- **What:** Interacting with specialists and policy-makers
- **Challenge:** Engaging at the right level in an unbiased way
- **Enablers**:
  - Balanced varied selection
  - Briefings
  - Pairing with facilitators
- **Importance for policy:** First hand experience and credibility of process

Imagining the future

- **What:** Activities to help participants imagine possible futures
- **Challenge:** Thinking beyond current contexts but remaining grounded in themselves
- **Enablers**:
  - Scenarios
  - Experiences
- **Importance for policy:** Views are grounded and more robust

Thinking as individuals and as groups

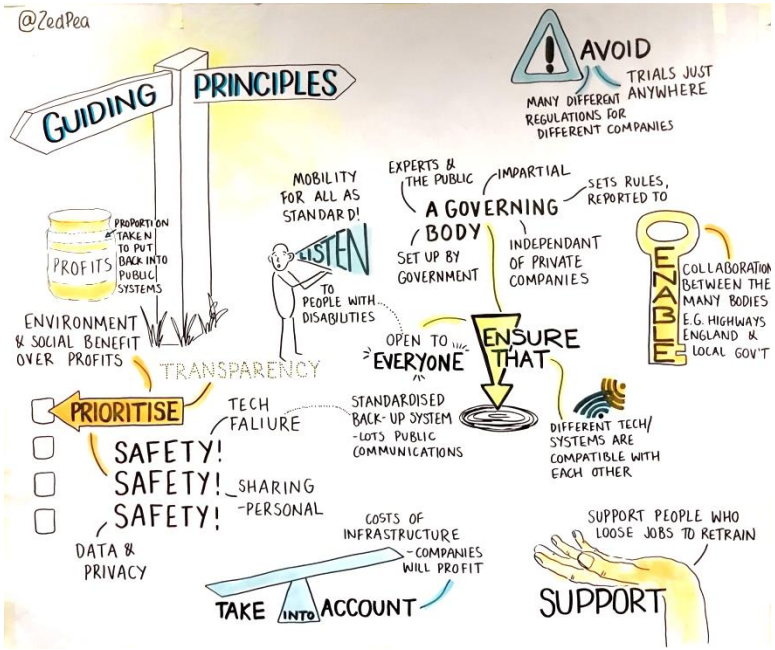
- **What:** Data collection from individuals and groups
- **Challenge:** Teasing out individual views, while reaching some agreement
- **Enablers**:
  - Digital voting
  - Post-its
  - Post-workshop interviews
- **Importance for policy:** Exploring where views are similar or different

Reflecting on views

- **What:** Reflected and built on data from previous sessions
- **Challenge:** Analysis and presentation of data
- **Enablers**:
  - Voting software
  - Live analysis
  - Graphic recording
- **Importance for policy:** Depth beyond initial concerns and story telling gives a summary

Making recommendations

- **What:** Developing guiding principles
- **Challenge:** Shifting perception from citizen to decision-maker
- **Enablers**:
  - Shift the task or **framing**
  - Provide a **structure**
  - Support and **validation**
- **Importance for policy:** Clear framework for policy-makers



How did we bring participants back multiple times?

3 workshops

- welcome evening
- full Saturday
- full Saturday

Why do it?

- Complex concepts
- Reflection
- Further research
- Test ideas
- Varied input
- In depth views

What made it work

Keeping groups the same

Varying the days, length and time

Bringing new people into the delivery team

Varied activities

£ Back ended incentives

Rewarding process & outcome

Our top 3 lessons

Traverse

- When dealing with future concepts, it is important to provide tools that enable participants to relate those concepts to their individual lives
- The use of experiences requires careful consideration
- Only collect the data you need

DfT

- Immersive learning experience for policy-makers
- Importance of ongoing engagement with experts throughout the process
- Importance of multiple perspectives

Thank you.

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The research report and appendices can be found online:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/837958/**cav-public-acceptability-dialogue-engagement-report**.pdf

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