

## INFOSHEET #4

### Creating a public engagement plan

This infosheet forms part of a CfA toolkit and resource created to support greater public engagement with archaeological projects. The guidance materials are designed to support CfA Standards and guidance. It was created by DigVentures, in partnership with CfA, and funded by Historic England.

You can find the full resource online at:

<https://www.archaeologists.net/toolkits/community-archaeology>

## Delivering proportionate public engagement

When considering public engagement for archaeological projects, there is a spectrum of activities, multiple audience groups and lists of intended outcomes which must be scoped and planned before delivery to ensure the maximum impact and value is achieved. Meaningful public engagement needs to be planned alongside all other project management activities, rather than added towards the end of the works.

The requirement to deliver public engagement within the archaeological programme must be considered in the commissioning phase of the project to enable contracting organisations and delivery teams to respond appropriately. To support that process, the local authority (LA) archaeologist and/or project consultant will need to identify:

- what constitutes a proportionate and reasonable scale of engagement to require within a particular development
- how engagement with archaeology meets the overarching development targets for public benefit and social value
- how tender structure can support positive outcomes through weighting of quality and cost measures

### How much is proportionate?

While it is important to consider *how* public engagement can be fulfilled in all projects, the first question to answer before a plan is even started is *how much*. The extent, complexity and cost of engagement activities should be consistent with the size of the project and its impact on archaeology, as well as aligned to the overarching ambitions of the project.

But what is consistent and proportionate, and how can that be applied on a project-by-project basis?

# Archaeology and public engagement

Recent guidance from [ALGAO Scotland](#) sets out a good starting point which, although framed around Scotland's NPF4 policy, is relevant to all archaeological works undertaken within planning-led projects:

---

*Contractors are expected to include public engagement and social value opportunities, as appropriate, in each of their developments where archaeological work to mitigate and offset harm to heritage assets is required. The emphasis is to be proportionate and reasonable at all times, balancing the scale of the development against the scale and significance of the archaeological works and what is found. These public activities should not be seen as an additional burden, but rather as a mechanism for maximising the positive contribution the development is making to local communities.*

*(ALGAO 2023, para 1.4, p4)*

---

There is no fixed amount or calculator that can be applied to determine the proportionality of public engagement for all projects. Discussing the nature and extent of engagement with key stakeholders will clarify what is consistent and possible within the development project, and help commissioners identify what proportion of the archaeological contract should provide public benefit and/or social value outcomes. If this is clearly identified in a brief or tender document, delivery teams will be able to respond appropriately and build a fully resourced public engagement plan around the outlined requirement.

Whilst no blueprint exists, two relevant models currently used in government contracts and community grant schemes do provide examples of how proportionality of public engagement within archaeology projects could be applied: the Social Value Model and NLHF guidance on project evaluation.

## Social value model

As described elsewhere in this toolkit ([Section 2](#) and [Infosheet #2](#)), the [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act](#) came into force in 2013 and requires people who commission public services to secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. The [Social Value Model](#) defines social value through a framework of priority themes and policy outcomes and provides a consistent approach to the procurement process. Before starting the procurement process, commissioners are advised to consider whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

The Act is a tool to help commissioners get more value for money out of procurement. It encourages commissioners to talk to their local provider or community to design better services, enabling new and innovative solutions to difficult problems. The Act and model set out a clear

expectation regarding proportionality within procurement contracts, which could easily be applied when procuring archaeological works:

---

## *Social Value Model – Allocation of weighting for social value in procurement*

*3.15 When developing the evaluation strategy for a procurement it is essential that the contracting authority determines the weightings attributable to the evaluation criteria. A typical approach is to identify the relative importance of price and quality, typically as a percentage split, where 'quality' refers to all non-price factors, including social value. The contracting authority should ensure the weighting of price and quality reflect the characteristics of the goods, works or services, and should test potential outcomes with the market before the weighting is fixed.*

*3.16 Under the Model, a minimum overall weighting for social value of 10% of the overall score is mandated whenever any of the social value policy outcomes are included in the procurement. For example, the contracting authority might split the weightings as 30% for price, 60% for quality and 10% for social value. This sends a message to the supply market that social value is important to the contracting authority.*

---

## NLHF evaluation requirement

The National Lottery Heritage Fund takes a similar approach to grant applications, with a strong recommendation that applicants design project budgets which demonstrate appropriate allocation of resources to evaluation of outcomes. As NLHF supports projects which aim to make a difference for heritage, people and their communities, asking delivery teams to carry out self-evaluation means they can demonstrate that a project has spent its money appropriately and they have achieved the desired outcomes. Programme evaluation also helps the NLHF monitor strategy and provide evidence that their programmes are achieving overarching objectives.

---

### **NLHF – Guidance on resource allocation to evaluation**

*We recommend budgeting for evaluation in the following ways as a minimum:*

*Projects between £250,000 and £1m should allow a budget of between 2% and 7% of their total projects costs and consider using independent external evaluators.*

*Projects over £1m should allow a budget of up to 7% of the total project costs and always consider using independent external evaluators. Evaluation budgets for projects over £1m should not be less than £20,000. If evaluation costs at*

*this level are not appropriate for your project, please explain why in the cost heading description.*

---

All projects will need a tailored approach to public engagement, and taking a proportionate response may not always be as simply as allocating a 10 per cent procurement weighting or overall proportion of costs to the process. However, the examples provided above are credible and well-used methods, developed to ensure government and grant-funded projects deliver public benefits, have tangible social value impact and can be evaluated to demonstrate results.

## Public engagement outside the brief

If a project brief or scope does not include public engagement, those commissioning or facilitating the archaeological projects cannot expect delivery teams to achieve benefits beyond those intrinsic to the process. These might include the project report, submission of new information to the HER and deposition of the archaeological archive.

Without resources allocated to public engagement activities or project evaluation, they can't be delivered. However, in some circumstances it might be possible to create opportunities for engagement or raise awareness with the client/commissioning team that archaeology can deliver a wider role within developments than they may be aware of. What steps can delivery teams take where those opportunities may arise?

- Raise awareness – where archaeology is seen as a barrier to be removed within a process, the development team may not appreciate the potential benefits. [ClfA's public benefit resources](#) can provide information to help raise awareness of the wider benefits and impacts archaeology can provide.
- Be prepared to discuss – if contracts are government-funded projects, there should be a requirement to deliver social value. Understand the framework which contracts sit within and highlight where the Social Value Model should be enacted within a process.
- Provide solutions – Are resources for public engagement sitting elsewhere in the development? More complex projects may have teams involved who are looking for opportunities to undertake community consultation or ways to demonstrate social outcomes. Talking to community engagement teams might provide an opportunity to help contribute to that process.
- Adding value – is there an opportunity to show added value and enhance tenders by demonstrating your ability to engage with wider audiences? Where the tender process does not enable resources to be allocated within the identified budget, showing areas in a contract where value could be added through public engagement activities could help unlock additional support.

## Communicating your intentions

Once the project has been initiated and contracts signed, the public engagement activities should be planned to the same detail and in the same manner as the delivery of the archaeological works. This means that the scope of the activities, and the framework documentation to support them, can be agreed with all project stakeholders at an early stage. For example:

- At the design stage, include an outline of plans within the WSI/project design
  - summarise what you plan to do and signpost supporting documentation where it exists
  - this can then be signed off and agreed by the project monitoring team and clients
- During project delivery, take an iterative approach to engagement
  - for medium to large projects this might include revisiting and updating the plan
  - things will change, and with project evaluation and feedback in place, delivery teams can respond rapidly to consultation, audience development activities and delivery issues
- Make it meaningful; use evaluation for effective engagement and to measure outcomes
  - part of your allocated resources for public engagement should support evaluation activities, at an appropriate level for the size of project
  - make this clear and outline how project data and analysis will benefit your clients and stakeholders
- Report back; in the same way project assessment and analysis is undertaken for finds and contexts, include data about public engagement in your reporting cycle
  - use public engagement results to demonstrate the impact of the development beyond the archaeological resource
  - show how project funding has been used and how the outcomes of that investment have been measured and impacts understood

## What can you include in a public engagement plan?

The scale, complexity and aims of the project will determine what elements will be needed to support the delivery of the public engagement. Your public engagement plan will be formed of one or more of the documents listed below. At a minimum, all projects must demonstrate how public engagement has been considered within the design process – even where public benefit beyond intrinsic results has been included.

# Archaeology and public engagement

<p><b>WSI/project design</b></p>	<p>Summarise the intention of the project in relation to public engagement.</p> <p>WSI/project design agreed by project stakeholders.</p>	<p>How and where?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– public benefit section in the WSI/PD</li> <li>– engagement aims in the project aims and objectives</li> <li>– outline activities/approach in methodology, or reference accompanying documentation as appropriate (including those listed below)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community consultation plan</b></p>	<p>An outline of how the project team will consult with the community impacted by the project to understand their needs and interests.</p>	<p>Guidance: The <a href="#">Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit</a> for engaging with communities is designed to support voluntary and community sector organisations consult with local audiences to discuss ideas and projects.</p>
<p><b>Audience development plan</b></p>	<p>A good audience development plan will help delivery teams understand needs and preferences of audiences, as well as how to reach target groups.</p>	<p>Guidance: Audience development means putting both your current and potential audiences at the heart of what you do, and there is no fixed way to do that.</p> <p>For larger projects: <a href="#">The Audience Agency guide</a> to create an effective audience development plan.</p> <p>The National Archives has published case studies on engaging and developing audiences of archives: <a href="#">web resource</a>.</p>
<p><b>Theory of Change</b></p>	<p>The Theory of Change articulates how the project activities aim to achieve impacts in different contexts, such as people, heritage and communities.</p>	<p>Guidance: See <a href="#">Infosheet 3</a> for more detailed explanation, examples and resources.</p>
<p><b>Activity plan</b></p>	<p>An activity plan summarises the details for different events, activities and opportunities that the project will deliver.</p> <p>A project plan can be a matrix or table which you can complete for</p>	<p>Guidance: There is no single way to write an activity plan, and teams may be asked to outline engagement opportunities in specific formats. The delivery team might have an organisational template for events.</p>

# Archaeology and public engagement

	<p>each activity – or it could be more involved. Some information can be provided in advance (such as activity, audience, resources, cost and timetable) and others may be completed later as the project takes shape (such as outcomes, targets and measures of success and methods of evaluation).</p>	<p>planning, or it might be worth developing one for the project. Heritage Fund have specific guidance for grant applicants: NLHF <a href="#">Activity plan guidance</a>. STEM Learning's guidance on planning practical classroom activities is also useful: <a href="#">STEM activity planning template</a>.</p>
<b>Evaluation strategy</b>	<p>Evaluation is fundamental to understanding the impact your work is making, and to isolating areas where you can do better, both for your project and for audiences. A written strategy may not be a necessary part of the project documents and could be covered within the Theory of Change and Activity Plan.</p>	<p>Guidance: For a small-scale project involving a handful of people, a relevant strategy might be to simply collect testimonials and pin them to a page on your website or wall in your venue. This can be communicated via the Theory of Change. For larger projects, the <a href="#">BetterEvaluation</a> website has valuable insights for those planning and managing the process. Heritage Fund also have guidance on evaluation for projects: <a href="#">NLHF Evaluation guidance</a>.</p>