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## **Meaningful Participation Within Government-induced Interactive Governance Processes**

Participatory budgeting: a UK case study comparison



## Summary

This study fills an important gap in the literature on participatory democracy – drawing a link between the theoretical frameworks of CLEAR conditions, evolving paradigms of public management and how this impacts the roles, responsibilities and perceptions of those involved.

The main research question asks: *How do CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions affect the experience of meaningful participation of citizens in legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes?* The focus on both public officials and citizens within comparable case studies highlights the tensions of government induced initiatives. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 21 individuals (6 public officials and 15 citizens) in which role perceptions were measured and compared to participants' experiences of meaningful participation within the interactive governance process of participatory budgeting events.

The report concludes that CLEAR conditions and the clarity of role perceptions are drivers of meaningful participation and therefore essential to the sustainability of interactive governance processes. Additionally, participatory budgeting should be viewed as an opportunity to build social capacity – not a tokenistic practice, it is instead a civic tool and community treasure which can be used to empower citizens towards meaningful partnership.

*Keywords:* interactive governance, citizen engagement, meaningful participation, CLEAR conditions, role perceptions, participatory budgeting

## Preface & Acknowledgements

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Most importantly, thank you to the tireless efforts of those involved in the *Spennymoor* and *East Durham Rural Corridor* Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). What a wonderful experience it has been to meet the members of your community – both citizens and public officials alike – who are passionately committed to the continued development of communities in the North East! To Michael Wilkes, Peter Henderson, and Jason Turnough: thank you for allowing me the privilege of asking questions and examining the way in which you empower local citizens through participatory budgeting. Your assistance is met with every gratitude.

Regarding ~~those~~ ~~those~~ who [kindly volunteered their time to take part](#) in this research by agreeing to an interview ~~and the community concerns for which you care so deeply~~, I trust you will find these results worth review. The conclusions of this report highlight matters of consideration for the future context of participatory budgeting and fruitful citizen engagement. I have endeavoured to speak plainly: to say what I mean and to mean what I say – [and to interpret and share the themes of your interviews with integrity and accuracy](#). Thank you for your time and hospitality. It has been a pleasure.

Sincerely,



Carmen Borger

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation for the research

Interactive governance is an inspiring paradigm. There is a great deal of potential for meaningful community development to occur by building bridges of interaction between political and societal actors, between public officials and their citizen counterparts.

The current contexts of many developed Western countries include the harsh side effects of devolution and decentralizing policies which have changed the political landscape right down to the municipal level. Local authorities have been charged with more responsibility than ever before; and often with less than sufficient resources (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2016). On the one hand, the need for innovative methods of governing is an exciting development and opportunity – a ‘policy window’ for new patterns of interaction in the public sector. On the other hand, the issues of modern civilisation are great. Globalisation and fragmentation of civil society have compounded the complexities of decision making within public administration to an entirely new degree. This complexity is the central argument for more interactive forms of governance, not only permitting but intentionally creating space for citizens to be part of the solution to the ‘wicked problems’ facing democratic societies and communities across the world (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016).

Despite the potential of interactive governance processes, it is important to form a balanced analysis of the actual impacts and consequences which they produce. The institutionalisation of citizen-initiated initiatives has sometimes proven to be a deflating exercise. Interactive governance literature warns of the dangers government involvement can pose. Academics contend that when interactive governance processes begin at the grassroots level, they are susceptible to being undermined or even entirely dissipated by the intrusion of top-down, bureaucratic institutionalisation; otherwise known as the hedgehog dilemma (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016). On the other hand, when interactive governance processes are government-induced, this entails a structure of top-down institutionalisation from the get-go. Because of these tensions, some critics claim top-down participation schemes are ploys by the establishment to co-opt citizens; enhancing the government’s own power and control over social issues (Monno & Khakee, 2011). Unfortunately, some participants of failed interactive governance initiatives may experience disillusionment with the strategic games employed throughout the process. Some critics may even [argue](#) tokenism and placation are likely outcomes within [differing-certain](#) forms of interactive governance initiatives –



alluding to Arnstein's strong critique of citizen participation schemes (Arnstein, 1969). This suggested motivation exists in direct opposition of the normative 'democratic value' of participation which values it as a good and desirable objective. On a brighter note, case studies offer evidence that even in institutionalized settings, public sector innovation may still occur, and that the co-creation of policy processes *is* possible (De Vries, Bekkers, Tummers, 2014). ~~feared.~~

Are safeguards against tokenism possible? Different perspectives on democracy bring with them different forms of legitimacy and accountability mechanisms (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk 2016). Amongst a variety of institutional contexts, attitudes are shifting and interactive governance initiatives are emerging across surprisingly diverse political settings (Baiocchi & Ganuza 2014:30). To prevent the paradigm of interactive governance from becoming a hype or fad which later disillusion both citizens and officials, it is important to ask: where is the line between tokenistic practices and meaningful participation within these legislated, government-induced participation schemes? This research specifically examines the influencing factors of CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions as a driver and/or barrier to the experience of meaningful participation of citizens in legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes.

The intention of this research is to examine case studies in which the lived realities, the interactions and perspectives of both citizens *and* public officials cooperating in interactive governance processes, can be evaluated and compared. The theory of interactive governance provides a motivational argument for its continuance, but how does this hold up pragmatically? There are not two sides to every story; but rather, innumerable perspectives to consider. Each new actor within the network of interactions provides an additional viewpoint. This research takes a qualitative approach to weighing the voices of participants – both top-down and grassroots perspectives.



Figure 1 Network actors provide additional perspectives

## 1.2 Problem statement

Although the paradigm of interactive governance lights the way for innovative methods of decision-making and policy implementation in the realm of public administration, these processes are also

met by resistance or reservation in the public sector (from officials, academics, and citizens alike): government-induced forms of interactive governance have been framed by some academics and professionals as duplicitous, token initiatives. Is this an accurate and evidence-based perception? This particular research examines the evidence by comparing the roles and responsibilities required to produce and protect meaningful participation, on behalf of both the public officials initiating interactive governance processes and those of contributing citizens.

### 1.2.1 Goal of the research

The goal of this research is to evaluate the perception of meaningful participation amongst differing actors within government-induced forms of interactive governance. This study adds to the growing body of theoretical knowledge on interactive governance by testing certain theories of drivers and barriers as outlined within the literature – exploring the conditions which must be met for citizen participation to be perceived as meaningful. The drivers and barriers specifically examined through this research are the influence of *CLEAR conditions* and the *clarity of new role perceptions* as outlined in the following chapters.

This research also aims to evaluate the justifications for interactive governance processes beyond the democratic yet highly symbolic and normative argument of participation for participation's sake. There are many theoretical arguments regarding the benefits of interactive governance processes, but how do they take place in practice? The results of this research underscore the functional application of interactive governance theory and ultimately provide empirical support of best practices – what is or is not working – for those looking to enhance the quality (meaningfulness) of interactive governance processes on a local, municipal level.

### 1.2.2 Main research question

*How do CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions affect the experience of meaningful participation of citizens in legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes?*

### 1.2.3 Sub research questions

To answer the main question, the following sub-questions must be addressed through the structure of a suitable research design and theoretical framework:

- What is government-induced *interactive governance*: how is it defined in the existing literature; and what forms does it take?
- What is meant by *meaningful participation* and how does it differ from tokenistic practice?
- What are *CLEAR conditions* and their impact on interactive governance processes as a driver/barrier?
- What are various *role perceptions*; and how do they relate to different paradigms of public administration?
- What are the “new” role perceptions of citizens and officials as required by interactive governance; and what new *tensions* do these generate?
- What is the impact of role perceptions as a driver or barrier of existing CLEAR conditions; what is the impact of role perceptions on interactive governance processes overall?
- How do the chosen *case studies* pertain to the main research question and can they be explicitly classified as legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes?
- What *conclusions* can be made by comparing case study results?

### 1.3 Relevance of the research

The importance of this research is two-fold: both its scientific and social relevance provide empirical recommendations for local authorities moving forwards with interactive governance processes.

#### 1.3.1 Scientific relevance

This research paper takes a social qualitative approach, digging through the trenches of front-line citizen engagement. Collecting data focused on the concurrent experience of public officials and their citizen counterparts may help to fill in current knowledge gaps in an area of growing policy needs. This research tests the existing theory on the drivers and barriers of interactive governance, mainly related to the CLEAR framework and the influence of new role perceptions. Results of this research provide recommendations for enhancing the degree and quality of meaningful participation in interactive governance processes – specifically in the context of participatory budgeting as explored in the case studies.

This research also adds to the academic debate regarding the justification or dangers of interactive governance processes by evaluating *if* and *how* participation tools examined in the selected case

studies adequately support citizens in their empowerment towards meaningful participation – or if government-induction of these processes plateaus at a level of token participation because the powerholders of traditionally elected government feel threatened by the new roles dictated by the emergence of interactive governance. As Røiseland and Vabo (2015:15-16) explain, interactive governance processes can result in disconnecting and/or threatening outcomes for actors within the network – however, there are ways of “*closing the gap*” and “*possible measures for reducing the tension between representative democracy and interactive governance*”.

### 1.3.2 Societal relevance

The bottom line is that perceptions of meaningful participation build trust (Yang, 2005). As an outcome of successful interactive governance processes, this solidifies the interaction as a positive experience for both citizens and officials. Theoretical and empirical supports show that this leads to more fruitful collaboration among actors in future interactions; which is necessary for the continued success of interactive governance – both its process and outcomes (Yang, 2005). Perceptions of meaningful participation indicated by participants in each of the research case studies serve as positive empirical evidence for the reinforcement of continued citizen participation within a new paradigm of public administration. An analysis of relevant CLEAR conditions also highlights the similarities and differences of institutional design which leads to positive perceptions of interactive governance processes.

Undoubtedly, there is a growing need for sustainable implementation of policy answers to the difficult questions of today’s globalised issues. Clear lines of interactive policy development and partnership between varying levels of government and the communities they govern is therefore a high priority for many politicians and policy makers on (inter)national and local levels. This research challenges the critique of tokenism within government-induced interactive governance processes by examining case studies of local participatory budgeting initiatives in the United Kingdom. Selected case studies form the basis of analysis for current methods of interaction – providing direction for future policy based on the drivers and barriers verified through this empirical research.

### 1.4 Structure of the thesis

The *theoretical framework* for this research is outlined in Chapter 2 – defining the boundaries of top-down interactive governance practices, the impact of CLEAR conditions as a both a driver and/or

barrier thereof, and the theoretical impact of actors' role perceptions within processes of interactive governance. Chapter 3 details the *research design* applied throughout this project, including methodology and the operationalisation of relevant variables. This is followed by an introduction and detailed description of selected *case studies* in Chapter 4. Qualitative research results are summarised in the *research findings* of Chapter 5 and a *critical analysis* is articulated in Chapter 6, before final *conclusions* are shared and *discussion* made of the possible recommendations and implications for government and public management in Chapter 7.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Interactive Governance

Interactive governance as defined by the existing literature takes many different forms.

#### 2.1.1 Defining interactive governance

Pioneers of the interactive governance paradigm, Torfing, Peters, Pierre, and Sørensen (2012:14) define interactive forms of governance as *“the complex process through which a plurality of social and political actors with diverging interests interact in order to formulate, promote, and achieve common objectives by means of mobilizing, exchanging, and deploying a range of ideas, rules, and resources.”* This definition highlights several core components of interactive governance: the complexity of the governing process, common objectives as a driving factor (i.e. the existence of complex social problems which require collaborative solutions), and an arena of ‘negotiated interactions’ among actors (Torfing et al., 2012:15).

Governance itself, is more broadly defined as *“the process of steering society and the economy through collective action”*, again in relation to the common objective of communal problem-solving (Torfing et al., 2012:14). In general, there has been a shift away from traditional forms of public administration – ranging from the rigid models of government established through Weberian bureaucracy to the efficiency schemes of New Public Management and the layers of hybrid in between. It is apparent that our traditionally hierarchal methods of governing society are simply outdated and inadequate to properly address the emergence of modern wicked problems affecting local communities across the globe (Torfing, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2016). Interactive governance is not a replacement for government; but it is instrumental in developing an adequate response to the challenges faced by government (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016).

Although a variety of actors are present in interactive governance settings, this research will specifically examine interactive governance practices between government and citizens. These working relationships are often nestled within a greater network of actors and interactions. However, a study of the specific relationship between government and citizens is anything but avant-garde: the concept of citizen participation has long-existed, though perhaps contested in its accepted parameters of application or public value. There has been much transition over the last

century. Buckwalter (2014: 573) highlights the parallel dynamics of the government's more recently escalating inability to respond to citizens' expectations, with a growing lack of trust from the public in traditional governing institutions. These have arguably been major influencing factors towards the resurgence of citizens' direct involvement and their agency in contributing to systems of governance, since the mid-twentieth century.

Why opt for processes of interactive governance instead of a different evolutionary paradigm of public administration? The literature outlines several benefits. Incorporating citizen perspectives into the policy making process can open opportunity for a "renewal and revival of democracy" (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:124). Not only do citizens gain new skills through these interactions, but local governments are able to increase the responsiveness of their policy to the needs of stakeholders – ultimately improving the quality of overall governance. Citizens bring many valuable resources to the table, especially new knowledge and information sharing opportunities. Their participation in the definition of both public problems and corresponding policy solutions is proven to increase successful policy implementation, legitimacy of major policy decisions, and support for strategic alliances amongst actors (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:124-125).

### 2.1.2 Forms of interactive governance

Forms of interactive governance between government and citizens can be largely distinguished into two categories: government-induced or citizen-initiated. According to Røiseland and Vabo (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:126) the effects of both are highly dependent on the relationship of the interactive governance process within the greater context of representative democracy. Tensions between these perspectives of democratic participation lead to differing outcomes – either complementary or conflicting. In turn, these outcomes affect the roles that citizens and public officials are expected to play within the interactive governance processes at hand (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:129).

Focusing specifically on government-induced forms of interactive governance, there are instrumental, cultural, and democratic perspectives which provide both positive and critical arguments pertaining to the benefits and/or risk of these processes. A brief synopsis of these conflicting perspectives is highlighted in the following table.

Table 1 Positive & critical stances on government-induced interactive governance

	<b>INSTRUMENTAL PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE</b>
<b>+ POSITIVE STANCE</b>	Citizen participation needed for gaining support, tapping knowledge and community energy, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of governmental policy and decision-making	Governments trying to overcome lost meaning and restore political identity in contemporary self-reflexive modern society by adapting their roles and generating new information and participation channels to society	Governments try to bridge the gap with society and citizens, and to restore trust in governmental and political institutions by supplementing representative democracy with deliberative and participatory processes
<b>- CRITICAL STANCE</b>	The interactive process is time- and resource-consuming, leading to inefficient and ineffective outcomes as too many actors, interests and values have to be reckoned with, enhancing the chance of conflict and deadlocks	Government develop new conditions (rules, language, etc.) to give shape to active citizenship which doesn't provide much room and freedom for citizens, with the result that citizens resist this 'selling' of new government identities	Governments do not adequately connect to citizens, which in turn backfires and leads to even further decreasing trust and broader cleavage leading in the end to a further downgrading spiral in the relationship between government and society

(Table adapted from Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:10,12,15)

As evidenced by the contrast of these positive and critical stances, the relationship between citizens and government is a precarious balance. In government-induced forms of interactive governance, the government sets the stage and forms the rules of the game. It holds much of the decision-making power and establishes *how* or *if* this will be distributed amongst other stakeholders at various junctions throughout the duration of the interactive governance process. It is understandable therefore how citizen participation within legislated interactive governance processes may vary to such a large degree. “[O]nce public participation has been mandated, the choice for administrators is not necessarily whether to include the public but rather how inclusive to be in terms of quality of interaction and potential for impact” (Buckwalter, 2014: 573).

Although Denters more closely examines the potentials and pitfalls of citizen-initiated forms of interactive governance, he acknowledges that civic participation may take many forms: referendums, voting, public hearings, and volunteering are a few examples which require an ‘invited space’ by institutional powers of government (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:234). Additional forms of interaction may take place through e-participation, participatory budgeting, citizen juries,



or similar initiatives. While participation methods may aspire or claim to enhance the common interests of all, equal decision-making power amongst stakeholders is not guaranteed. Additionally, responsibility is asymmetrically divided, as the brunt of implementation falls mainly on the shoulders of political and administrative officials (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016).

### 2.1.3 Participatory Budgeting as a form of interactive governance

Participatory budgeting (PB) has been selected as the interactive governance process of study because its existence and experimentation span several decades and can be examined in democracies across the globe. In addition, there is a host of academic literature to draw from regarding these initiatives – their strengths and pitfalls. PB presents a real opportunity for citizens to have their say in how a budget is formed or spent. However, little has been recorded regarding the concurrent experiences of citizens and/or public officials amid these types of interactive governance initiatives. This research aims to fill this gap.

To understand the purpose and potential of PB, we must first examine its origins. Although it is now employed as a tool for participatory democracy throughout the world, PB was originally the idea of

A RELATIVELY SIMPLE IDEA – THAT “ORDINARY CITIZENS” SHOULD HAVE A DIRECT SAY IN PUBLIC BUDGETS THAT IMPACT THEM – IT HAS TRAVELLED THE WORLD BY THE MOST UNEXPECTED ROUTES AND LANDED IN UNLIKELY SITES.” (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014:30).

neighbourhood activists in Porto Alegre, Brazil – piloted in collaboration with local government, and heavily influenced by a leftist Workers’ Party (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014). PB worked on the premise

that citizens should be involved in the policy decisions which impact their lives, including the allotment of public funds. Citizens of Porto Alegre collectivised to address the poverty and income disparity which ran rampant in their community. This pioneering city paved the way for numerous communities across Latin America to improve living standards by setting the priorities of local budgets – expanding access to public amenities such as drinking water and sanitation. Far from humble beginnings, PB has a history of radical democracy and sustainable transformation (Cabannes, 2004).

The original concept of PB was birthed out of grassroots beginnings, but it was not possible without the institutional support from top-down, government-induced structures and resources. It is an established tool of participatory democracy and, by definition, a form of interactive governance as

“CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS IS SEEN AS INSTRUMENTAL TO STATE EFFECTIVENESS. IT ALSO LEADS TO BETTER PUBLIC DECISIONS BY INCREASING VERTICAL, OR SOCIAL, ACCOUNTABILITY. WHEN CITIZENS ARE ENGAGED IN PROCESSES OF PLANNING, FUNDING, DELIVERING, AND MONITORING PUBLIC GOODS AND SERVICES, THE INCENTIVES OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND OFFICE HOLDERS CHANGE.” (Shah, 2007:225)

*“a plurality of social and political actors with diverging interests interact in order to formulate, promote, and achieve common objectives by means of mobilizing, exchanging, and deploying a range of ideas, rules, and resources”* (Torfing

et al., 2012:14). Baiocchi & Ganuza (2014:30) describe PB as a “Real Utopia” of policy alternatives because it is not only evidenced as a successful institutional reform, but its very design stimulates continual social transformation in accordance with public ideals. It can be adaptively applied to a variety of political projects including central and right-wing contexts. This may explain the growing presence of PB as a part of official government policy in such a variety of nations including the United States, United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014:30-31).

From a governmental perspective, PB has been understood as a “programme to curb corruption, improve administrative efficiency and enhance state capacity” (He, 2011: 122). However, the logistics of PB vary from case to case. The original Porto Alegre model of PB historically held two main components: [1] *a yearly cycle of assemblies where participants choose and debate projects;* [2] *and a reshuffling of the Administration* (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014:33). Since then, examples of PB have differed in a variety of aspects. According to Cabannes (2004:40), “[i]n spite of having (few) features in common, participatory budgets are important mainly because of their diversity, flexibility and rapid adaptation to local contexts”. Cabannes (2004) reviews PB in light of the following four key dimensions:

Table 2 Dimensions of Participatory Budgeting

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
<b>Financial</b> (pp. 34-36)	The amount of resources allocated to PB may vary between less than 2% (a symbolic sum) to a full 100% of a municipality's resources. However, 2-10% of the overall implemented budget is an average allotment for PB initiatives.
<b>Participatory</b> (pp. 36-39)	Public participation rates vary. Where direct participation is favoured in place of participation through organisations or associations, anticipated participation rates are only a mere 2-7% of the total population. "Mixed" systems of PB occur where budgetary decisions are made in cooperation between local organisations and citizens. Institutions which govern the PB process must outline the rationale behind <i>who controls the implementation of the budget and the role of local government</i> to allow for the clear participation of all parties.
<b>Physical</b> (pp.39-40)	There is a physicality to the impact of PB because of decentralisation and the localised priorities involved. PB provides an opportunity for public funds to be redistributed into geographical areas which need it most. This "inversion" of traditional priorities serves to reduce income disparity; and to improve community standards or quality of life.
<b>Legal and regulatory</b> (pp. 40-41)	PB requires "rules of the game" to be set out in advance. In some cases, PB is "regulated and institutionalized by municipal resolutions, decrees, laws or constitutions". PB must be formalised to "ensure its good operation"; however, "[o]nce PB is institutionalized, the risks of 'instrumentalisation' of the process and manipulation of the participants increase considerably" (Cabannes, 2004:40).

(Concepts summarised from Cabannes, Y. (2004). Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy. *Environment & Urbanization*, 16(1) 27-46.

Cabannes urges academics and practitioners to evaluate PB according to all four indicators – to avoid a biased appraisal solely on its participatory dimension (Cabannes, 2004). See *Appendix D: Dimensions of Participatory Budgeting* for an extended list of questions surrounding the framework and implementation of these dimensions as they relate to PB, governance and democratisation. Participatory budgeting is a simple principle with a complex application. Inevitably, there will be those who see its value and those who see its shortcomings. This report endeavours to evaluate both perspectives through the examination of case studies in Chapter 4.

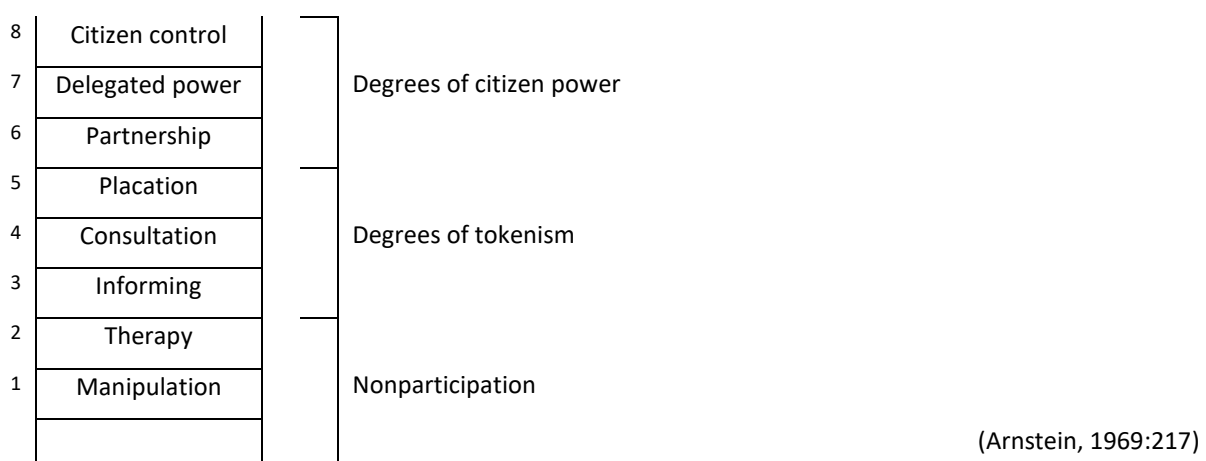
## 2.2 Meaningful Participation

Despite the evidenced benefits of citizen participation in interactive governance processes, participation is not in itself a solution to today's wicked problems. Case studies on public participation in Europe emphasise the need for *quality* participation, not just *more* participation (Evans & Reid, 2013:8). Therefore, it is necessary to define public participation as a dynamic variable which includes a spectrum of activities, from tokenistic practice through to genuine empowerment.

### 2.2.1 Participation Literature

Literature on citizen participation is broad and comprehensive, the subject of study for several decades – it remains a contested issue with differing academic perspectives and definitions. However, one thing is certain: the concept of power is central to participation – as is perhaps most famously depicted by Arnstein's *ladder of citizen participation*, seen below in *Figure 2*. Arnstein explains that “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all ideas were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo” (Arnstein, 1969:216). Each rung of the ladder theoretically enhances citizens' power by increasing their influence in decision-making processes.

*Figure 2* Eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation



While this typology elucidates the different objectives and outcomes for each variety of citizen interaction, it also has several limitations. Most notably, it does not illustrate the barriers on either side of the relationship between government and citizen. Obstacles to meaningful participation may

not only be due to top-down control (i.e. structural resistance to power redistribution) but also issues of a bottom-up nature (i.e. lack of resources or the capacity of citizens to participate). Pragmatically, policy development may also fall into various degrees of overlapping categories instead of each distinct classification (Arnstein, 1969:217).

Another shortfall of this simplification, is that the hierarchy of citizen control may not always be an appropriate end goal. According to the OECD's engagement model, *active participation* can be defined as a "collaboration in which citizens actively shape policy options, but where government retains the responsibility for final decisions" (as cited in Evans & Reid, 2013:39). Careful thought should be given to *how* and *to what extent* citizen involvement may be required as to potentially benefit the policy process most. Conversely to Arnstein's hard stance on consultation schemes – the International Association for Public Participation depicts a spectrum of participation which highlights the usefulness of informing, consulting, involving, collaborating with, and ultimately empowering the public – each as a valid participation goal in its own right (as cited in Evans & Reid, 2013:40).

Given the changing paradigms of public administration and the re-organisation of society in effort to address wicked problems with efficiency and sustainability, Torfing et al. (2016) argue for the application of a new perspective on participation – mainly, supplementation by a new *ladder of co-creation* which is focused on joint-agenda setting and problem definition, co-production of services, added value for community, and enhancing citizen capacity for meaningful participation. According to Torfing et al. (2016:10), "the new ladder of co-creation is both concerned with the enhancement of democratic influence and with fostering effective solutions to shared problems." Co-creation is a form of interactive governance which "captures the plurality of public and private actors aiming to solve public problems, challenges, and tasks and the innovative potential that emerges when different actors aim to solve shared problems by stepping out of their comfort zone and engaging in processes of mutual and transformative learning" (Torfing et al., 2016:9). Not all forms of participation lead to co-creation, where the structure of the working relationship as well as the development and eventual outcomes of the interactive process are each subject to innovation. However, experimentation with co-creation policies and processes are becoming more common and increasingly representative of the direction in which participation schemes are moving, across many European countries (Voorberg & Bekkers, 2015:5).

### 2.2.2 Defining Public Participation

In traditional representative democracy, citizens are severely limited to roles of indirect participation through voting or support of specific advocacy groups. In interactive governance, citizens are invited into opportunities for direct participation. Both the normative ideal and pragmatic benefits of citizen participation have already been discussed in this paper; however, the core values of public participation are can be summarized into seven principles:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

(International Association for Public Participation, 2017)

Participation remains a dynamic variable. A literal description of the word refers to *the fact of taking part, as in some action or attempt; a sharing, as in benefits or profits* (Participation, 2017). It is important to note this definition again underscores concepts of power and access or representation within participation schemes: Who participates? Who benefits? According to Friedmann (1978:86), participation can be understood as *a social practice* in which *“acting and knowing are united in a single process of learning”*. Lastly, Purcell (2009:151) highlights another essential aspect of participation: *“It is not a process to control, neutralize or eliminate conflicts”* – indicating that the motivation behind citizen engagement truly matters in its application.

### 2.2.3 Empowerment & Trust: Tools for Meaningful Participation

The antithesis of participation is nonparticipation or non-involvement. Tokenism is thus a subtle form of participation and not its counterpart. Token effort means *“doing no more than the minimum [in compliance to the law]”* (Tokenism, 2017) and describes *“actions which are small or unimportant but are meant to show particular intentions or feelings which may not be sincere”*

(Token, 2017). It is best understood as a fluctuating variable or quality. In order to adequately evaluate the degree of tokenism present within an interactive governance process, researchers must ask more nuanced questions. Instead of: “Is this practice tokenistic?” which produces only binary results within the ongoing academic debate; practitioners must ask “To what degree does this practice show signs or lack of tokenism?” In reverse, this question may be reframed as “To what degree does this practice (of participation) show signs or lack of meaningfulness?” Only then can action be taken to move forwards through more effective forms of empowerment and towards more meaningful participation.

Citizen participation is directly related to modern notions of empowerment. In the field of public administration, empowerment is understood to be instrumental to the creation of strong societies; however, it is not the sole goal of interactive governance processes. Empowerment is a complex term. It is accompanied by many socially constructed definitions; but at its core is the verb *empower*, meaning *to enable or permit* (Empower, 2017). This paper examines whether public consultation – although theoretically declared tokenistic according to Arnstein – can be a form of meaningful participation. Therefore, the term *empower* will be used to examine how actors are *enabled or permitted* to move along the spectrum from tokenism towards more meaningful participation.

In their paper *Preaching empowerment, practicing participation*, Boluijt and de Graaf (2010:4) differentiate between various forms of empowerment. They focused specifically on empowerment in relation to citizen participation in local democracies. Exploring the concept of empowerment from its literary origins in the work of Paulo Freire, the historical contexts of civil rights movements, and its centrality to social action throughout the decades, we see that empowerment as a policy takes two approaches: *pushing* the citizen to take initiative and equipping them to take control of their own life; and/or *pulling* the citizen into institutional environments of decision-making in order to increase the participatory democratic legitimacy of the administration in question (Boluijt & de Graaf, 2010).

Vigoda (2002:535), defines *empowerment* as a tool “by which collaboration develops”. However, it can also be the outcome of collaboration. This reinforcing relationship is of central importance in interactive governance processes where government and citizens must navigate new roles and patterns of interaction. Although it is arguably a subjective variable, *perceptions of meaningfulness* build trust which in turn impact future interactions (Yang, 2005). Trust is “both a lubrication and a glue” – facilitating participation and holding it together (Bryson, Quick, Schively Slotterback, &

Crosby, 2013:29). Incremental steps towards perceptions of meaningful participation increase trust and therefore increase the possibility of future empowerment through continued collaboration.

Figure 3 Collaboration & empowerment as an effect of perceived meaningfulness



*Meaningful* interactions are regularly associated with empowerment and participation practices; however, critics voice concern that current methods of citizen engagement are not *meaningful* enough. Increase in meaningfulness can be understood as a key transition away from tokenism, in which empowerment is not the goal but remains a faithful sidekick and reinforcing outcome. However, without a proper explanation of desired outcomes in measurable terms, the word itself holds a great deal of ambiguity. For research purposes, *meaningfulness* will be measured by its most literal definition as *full of significance, purpose, or value* (Meaningful, 2017).

### 2.3 CLEAR conditions

What conditions are required for meaningful participation processes to commence, let alone flourish? The breadth of academic literature on variables which motivate and inspire citizen participation in government processes is extensive. Consider *Understanding participation: A literature review* (Pathways to Participation, 2009) and similar research publications for decades of relevant data. Many researchers have focused on the individual motives and resources of citizens, while others on the institutionalized structure of surrounding political and/or cultural contexts. A comprehensive analysis considers both (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:238). Empowering citizens to participate in interactive governance processes requires policy objectives to address *private spheres* of empowerment, in relation to citizens' personal and social capacities for participation; in addition to restructuring the space of *public spheres* made up of the surrounding civil and institutional contexts (Boluijt & de Graaf, 2010:6).

Again, the importance of trust in the working relationship between citizens and public officials in interactive governance processes must be underscored. "Trust not only makes officials' work more efficient: citizens' voluntary compliance and their trust in public administration are likely to increase when officials trust them [in return]" (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:190). Trust builds as actors



prove their trustworthiness – their *ability, honesty, and benevolence* (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:192). It is also affected by *organisational determinants* – the type or level of administration; *interactive determinants* – the amount and nature of interactions; and *individual determinants* – including socio-demographic characteristics of age or gender (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:194). The CLEAR framework designed by Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2006) takes this challenge of trust into consideration. It provides a diagnostic tool for municipal governments to investigate local capacities and to determine “what needs to be in place for citizens to participate” (Lowndes et al., 2006:285). By responding to local strengths and weakness through the application of a CLEAR analysis, government may strategically prove its benevolence or goodwill towards the public by empowering citizens to more fully participate in an adequate and democratic fashion.

Lowndes et. al, (2006) encourage public officials to use the CLEAR framework as a tool for analysing the obstacles of citizen engagement and how they might be overcome. The CLEAR framework demonstrates the profound impact empowerment has on citizen participation – each letter of the CLEAR acronym representing a driver or barrier of citizen participation (Lowndes et al., 2006:286):

- **CAN do:** citizens have the resources and knowledge to participate;
- **LIKE to:** citizens have a sense of attachment that reinforces participation;
- **ENABLED to:** citizens are provided with the opportunity for participation;
- **ASKED to:** citizens are mobilized through public agencies and civic channels;
- **RESPONDED to:** citizens see evidence that their views have been considered.

Boluijt and de Graaf (2010) discuss the effects of empowerment practices which enable citizen participation; highlighting how empowerment ultimately enhances the level of democratic legitimacy and quality of government-citizen interactions. Congruent with arguments put forward by experts in the field of interactive governance, the CLEAR framework highlights the democratic opportunity for government and public officials to employ connective management strategies in this network context: *exploring* the content of problem definitions and solutions through engagement with citizens’ knowledge and resources; *arranging* the structure of interaction to enable citizen participation; *establishing* process rules in a responsive manner; and *connecting* actors and opportunities by mobilizing citizen participation and creating a shared sense of attachment to the process and/or problem solution (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:431).

The CLEAR model asserts that *participation is most effective* when the five CLEAR factors are present; although the authors are careful to point out that factors are “neither hierarchical nor sequential” – meaning that while each factor creates a condition which correlates to successful participation, the “presence of one factor is not a precondition for others and effective participation does not necessarily depend on all of the components being present although, in an ideal world, they would be” (Council of Europe, 2008:4).

The presence of CLEAR conditions is an essential starting place to understand the impact of any additional variables on the perceived experience of meaningful participation in interactive governance processes. To neglect this model is to neglect a wealth of substantiated knowledge. For the purposes of this research, the CLEAR model has been selected as an integral component of the theoretical framework for several reasons: (1) each component is empirically evidenced – a compilation of research which aligns with a wide-array of literature in the field of interactive governance; (2) it is a comprehensive and accessible framework – tried and tested for more than a decade; (3) its current employment continues to prove its worth as an internationally acclaimed diagnostic tool – helping public organisations and varying levels of government identify and overcome barriers to citizen participation.

Public officials can make use of the investigative questions detailed in the CLEAR tool, to ascertain the current strengths and weakness of their community and to take a proactive stance on the provision of each condition when initiating interactive governance processes (Council of Europe, 2008). This may lead to corresponding policy targets, as detailed below.

Table 3 The CLEAR diagnostic tool & policy targets

KEY FACTOR	HOW IT WORKS	POLICY TARGETS
CAN do	The individual resources that people have to mobilise and organise (speaking, writing and technical skills and the confidence to use them) make a difference	Capacity building, training and support of volunteers, mentoring, leadership development
LIKE to	To commit to participation requires an identification with the public entity that is the focus of engagement	Civil renewal, citizenship, community development, neighbourhood governance, social capital
ENABLED to	The civic infrastructure of groups and umbrella organisations makes a difference because it creates or blocks an opportunity structure for participation	Investing in civic infrastructure and community networks, improving channels of communication via compacts
ASKED to	Mobilising people into participation by asking for their input can make a big difference	Public participation schemes that are diverse and reflexive
RESPONDED to	When asked people say they will participate if they are listened to (not necessarily agreed with) and able to see a response	A public policy system that shows a capacity to respond – through specific outcomes, ongoing learning and feedback

(Table adapted from Table 1: Factors promoting participation: it's CLEAR in Lowndes et al., 2006:286)

### 2.3.1 CAN do

The *Can-do* condition focuses on the socio-economic status of citizens. These factors are often outlined in traditional efforts to explain why engagement of certain population segments yields higher civic participation rates than others. The *Can-do* factor forces administrators of interactive governance processes to pause and reflect: who can or cannot participate; why; and what can be done about it?

*Can-do* argues that skills and resources exist within communities but that citizens may need facilitation to enhance these capacities, access learning opportunities, or to utilise available public assets. Statistically, citizens with a higher socio-economic status are better situated to invest their own time and resources into an interactive governance process. For citizens who do not possess civic skills in overflow, “[i]t is possible for public, voluntary or community bodies to intervene to make up for socioeconomic limitations in equipping citizens with the skills and resources for participation”

(Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 10). For this reason, the CLEAR model lists detailed questions under themes of educational attainment, employment and social class, demography, resources, and skills/knowledge (Council of Europe, 2008).

### 2.3.2 LIKE to

The *Like-to* condition means that citizens experience a “felt sense of community” which increases their willingness to participate in interactive governance processes. Where a shared sense of identity and a commitment to the policy process or problem-solution are absent, there are likely to be cleavages amongst citizens and a lack of group cohesion. Policy targets in this vein focus on concepts of civil renewal, shared citizenship and community development. “Over coming polarization, reducing conflict, [and] looking for common ground” (Sheedy, MacKinnon, Pitre, & Watling, 2008:10) are necessary strategies from the very conception of interactive governance processes, but should be well structured throughout. Eventually, this solidifies a continued sense of solidarity and a general increase of social capacity.

*Like-to* argues the importance of citizens’ trust in each other and in the municipality, a sense of community spirit, and the inclusion and legitimacy of many voices (Council of Europe, 2008: 39). For this reason, the CLEAR model lists detailed questions under themes of homogeneity and/or group cleavages; in balance with a sense of community identity, trust, or citizenship.

### 2.3.3 ENABLED to

The *Enabled-to* condition is based on the importance of collective participation – recognizing the facilitative impact of groups and organisations in creating a sustainable context for relevant, valuable participation. The focus is shifted away from the outcomes of participation and centralizes instead on the manner in which citizens are engaged and the density of civic channels at their disposal (Council of Europe, 2008).

*Enabled-to* argues that citizen empowerment can be achieved by supporting or developing a community infrastructure where “civic, community and voluntary groups can play [a role] in providing and sustaining the context for appropriate types of groups and participation platforms to emerge” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 11). These network actors are essential in equipping citizens with the necessary skills to approach ‘relevant decision-makers’ and to assert their agency and inclusion in decision-making processes (Department for Communities and

Local Government, 2009: 12). For this reason, the CLEAR model lists detailed questions pertaining to the prevalent types of civic organisation, activities, and infrastructure present within the municipality or participatory process.

#### 2.3.4 ASKED to

The *Asked-to* condition highlights the importance of mobilisation. “Research shows that people’s readiness to participate often depends upon whether or not they are approached and how they are approached... The variety of participation options for engagement is important because some people are more comfortable with some forms of engagement such as a public meeting while others would prefer, for example, to engage through on-line discussions” (Council of Europe, 2008:11). When designing an interactive governance process, public officials must decide *who* they will ask to participate, *what* the core focus of participation will entail, and *how* participants will be approached. Resulting strategies may include an array of incentives focusing on the mobilisation of specific demographics within the community (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 12).

*Asked-to* argues that public officials must make concerted effort to mobilise citizens when instigating interactive governance processes if they are to be of genuine purpose or value to the administration and to the community of participants themselves. Facilitators must recognize the barriers hindering participation amongst target populations or key segments of the municipality; and toil diligently to diminish their impact. For this reason, the CLEAR model lists detailed questions under themes of differing forms of participation, strategies employed by the municipality, and dilemmas of research and diversity (Council of Europe, 2008).

#### 2.3.5 RESPONDED to

The *Responded-to* condition is “simultaneously the most obvious but also the most difficult factor in enhancing political participation. For people to participate they have to believe that they are going to be listened to and, if not always agreed with, at least in a position to see that their views have been taken into account” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 12). This requires public officials to carefully assess how well they are able to understand and consider the differing views of citizens (Council of Europe, 2008). A responsive government administration will not only ensure feedback about the outcome but will also explain how final conclusions were made

and the impact of the participation process on these policy decisions. This information must remain accessible to citizen participants. Feedback “may not always be positive – in the sense of accepting the dominant view from participants” (Council of Europe, 2008:12). However, a transparent decision-making process is essential in clarifying how conflicting views have been acknowledged and prioritised. Citizens are resilient stakeholders who will navigate disappointments that materialise over the course of interactive governance processes. To ease this process, public officials show democratic leadership by ensuring their responsiveness through the “[i]mproving deliberation and accountability mechanisms” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 13).

*Responded-to* argues that in order to increase the sustainability of participatory processes, citizens must “believe that their involvement is making a difference, that it is achieving positive benefits” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009: 13). For this reason, the CLEAR model lists detailed questions under themes of institutionalized listening mechanisms, balance and prioritisation of expert v. public forms of knowledge, and educative feedback loops.

## 2.4 Clarity of Role Perceptions

### 2.4.1 Role Perceptions & the Black Box of Citizen Participation

The CLEAR framework acts as both a tool to promote participation and a safety net to avoid tokenism; helping government-induced forms of interactive governance reach their full potential. However, there is a gap in the theoretical framework of meaningful citizen participation which can be explained neither by the presence nor lack of these ideal CLEAR conditions. Arguably, this gap may be affected by any number of unpredictable complexities which emerge throughout the process of interactive governance. However, role perceptions are a crucial driver and/or barrier of interactive governance, which is largely neglected by the CLEAR framework. In his article *The Potential for Public Empowerment through Government-Organized Participation*, Buckwalter (2014) notes “*there exists a sort of black box between participation structures/processes and the impacts of direct citizen involvement. There is a need for understanding how processes link with outcomes, how participation mechanisms shape citizen capacity, and how these phenomena interact with administrator responsiveness to move toward substantive empowerment*” (Buckwalter, 2014:575). Could role perceptions provide this missing link in the black box of public participation?

On the basis of several case studies, Buckwalter highlights the *realistic expectations of participants* and the *explicit support of administrators* as key components of successful working relationships within this black box of citizen participation (Buckwalter, 2014:583). This strongly underscores the importance for clarity of actors' roles, so that neither party is left disillusioned with the interactive governance process; and to ensure that both citizens and public officials recognize what they bring to the arena in terms of resources and responsibility. However, Buckwalter is not the only author to draw attention to this empirical mystery. Participatory arrangements between citizens and local government are entrenched in institutional models where the development of these interactions is restricted by numerous political, social, economic, and individual factors (Yang & Pandey, 2011:880). In their paper entitled *Further Dissecting the Black Box of Citizen Participation: When Does Citizen Involvement Lead to Good Outcomes?*, Yang and Pandey (2011) explore the correlation of fourteen variables theorized to influence effective participation. Interestingly, they also conclude that the *role of official support* and that of *transformational leadership*, although often neglected in the existing participation literature, are central components of good public management in interactive governance processes (Yang & Pandey, 2011:889). Their research defines *transformational leadership* as the presence of officials who “motivate behavior by changing their followers' attitudes and assumptions, [...] doing things much differently from the bureaucratic tradition [and emphasizing] the role of citizens and citizenship in formulating and realizing shared goals” (Yang & Pandey, 2011:883). Thus, it is logical to conclude that the perceptions held by citizens and public officials regarding their role and responsibilities in the interactive governance process consequently affect the quality of overall citizen participation – but how?

#### 2.4.2 Evolution of Roles & Responsibilities

Changing paradigms of public administration have led to changing roles and responsibilities for politicians, public officials and administrators, NGOs and other private actors, as well as for citizens. Current role perceptions are based on a layered amalgamation of previous paradigms. This mix of expectations causes many dilemmas as noted in the table below (Torfing et al., 2012).

Table 4 New roles, dilemmas, & coping strategies in the interactive governance paradigm

	<b>GOVERNMENT PARADIGM</b> <i>(traditional role images)</i>	<b>INTERACTIVE GOVERNANCE PARADIGM</b> <i>(new role images)</i>	<b>DILEMMA</b>	<b>COPING STRATEGIES</b>
<b>Politicians</b>	Sovereign political ruler  Responsive political authority	Board of Directors Boundary spanning participant	Involvement or independence	Forming strong metagovernance alliances and developing shared ownership between them and interactive governance arenas
<b>Public administration</b>	Sovereign executive bureaucrat  Responsive street-level bureaucrat	Executive manager Boundary spanning and facilitating manager	Power of legitimacy	Forming strong metagovernance and developing shared ownership between them and interactive governance arenas
<b>Citizens</b>	The entrepreneurial citizen  The passive subject and/or voter	Consumer Coproducer Everyday maker	Influence or avoidance of responsibility	Downplaying their actual engagement and influence in interactive governance
<b>Private actors</b>	The lobbyist  The passive object	Service producer Project partner Policy producer	Publicity or privacy	Downplaying their engagement and influence in interactive governance

(Table adapted from Torfing et al., 2012:146 “Table 8.1 Traditional role images and new roles, dilemmas, and coping strategies in the interactive governance paradigm”)

Interactive governance poses a challenge to traditional role images. The resulting dilemmas or tensions do not signify problem areas per se; but instead highlight the new choices which individuals must make. New roles and responsibilities entail new goals and targets; and therefore, they ultimately require new strategies. As Torfing et al. (2012) explain, politicians retain certain governing privileges in interactive governance processes due to the lingering of traditional paradigms. However, adjusting to their new role as meta-governors provides them with a difficult dilemma. Politicians are forced to choose between hands-on involvement or conversely indirect methods of hands-off engagement, while recognizing the independence of additional actors in the interactive governance network. Politicians must reconcile the fact that the rules of the game have changed and that power struggles within interactive governance networks require entirely new strategies of meta-governance (Torfing, et al., 2012). Public administrators on the other hand, experience new roles as managers of these processes – responsible for the institutional design and

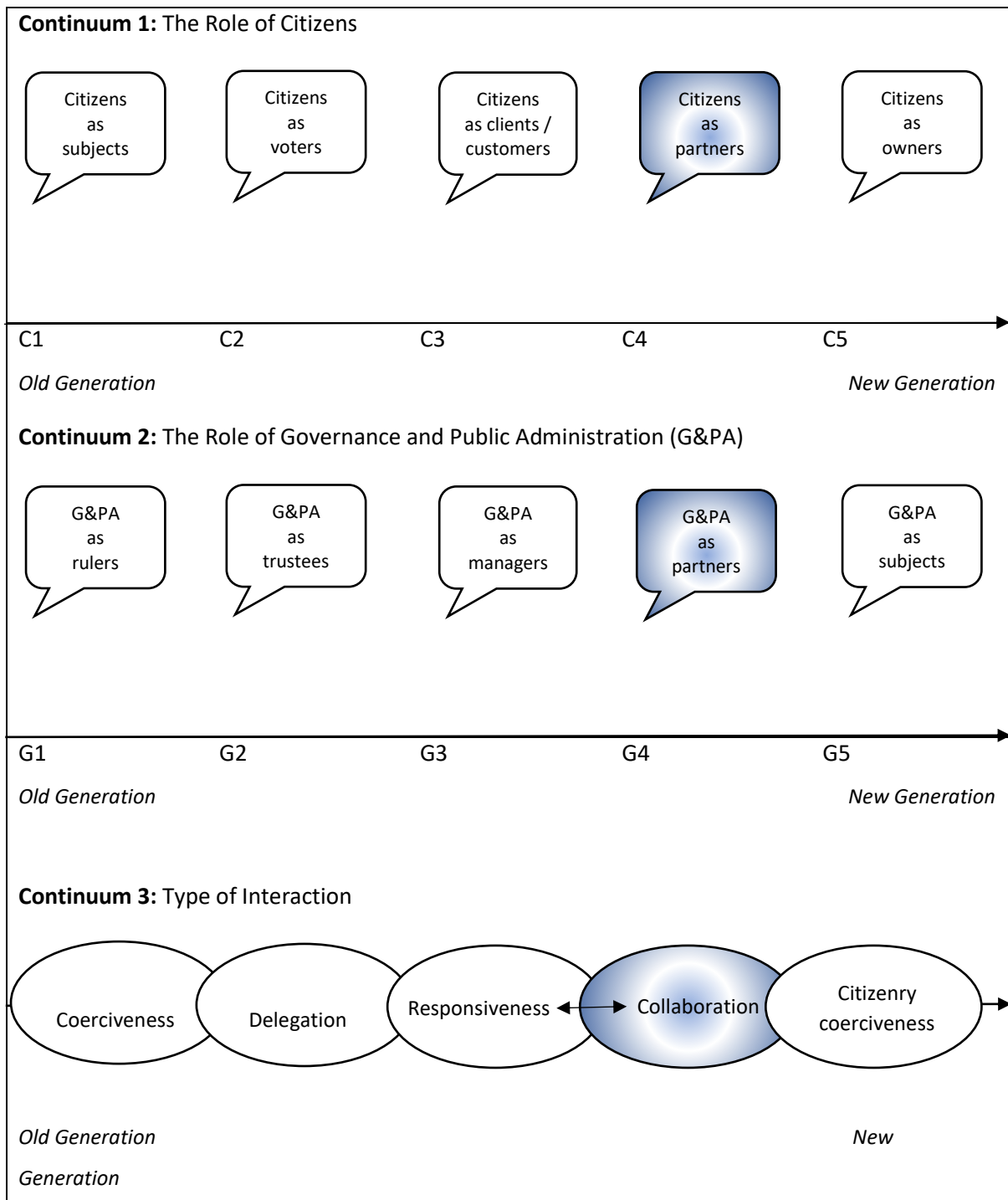


facilitation of citizen and government interactions. The difficulty for administrators involved in interactive governance arrangements is the balance of supporting the meta-governing strategies of politicians while maintaining their own legitimacy and “credibility as trustworthy, loyal, and disinterested facilitators” of these processes (Torfing, et al., 2012:159). Finally, citizens and private actors cope much the same way with the dilemmas of their new roles – choosing to take action in the public sector or to avoid emerging opportunities. By downplaying their engagement and influence in the network, these actors maintain their inclusion on key issues while evading an excess of responsibility (Torfing, et al., 2012).

The ‘evolutionary continuum’ of public administration has seen many changes in public sector paradigms (Vigoda, 2002). Classical Weberian Bureaucracy placed the citizen at the “receiving end of public services” and perceived them as a “passive and disempowered subject whose welfare was highly dependent on public regulation and service provision” (Torfing, et al., 2016:4). With the emergence of New Public Management (NPM), the importance of “user-satisfaction” was compounded by a neo-liberal focus on “consumer choice” – thus emphasizing the role of the citizen as primarily a *customer* of public services (Torfing, et al., 2016:5). Torfing et al. (2016) point out that trying to please a wide array of stakeholders while simultaneously solve problems is simply unsustainable without mobilizing citizens to actively participate in the solution. Therefore, in the post-NPM era of New Public Governance, interactive governance processes are not only a promising avenue for change but a necessary step forward. Clear delineation of new roles and responsibilities within interactive governance promotes a fresh vision of public sector possibilities: no longer a bureaucratic chain of government, but a renewal of democratic agency. Together, each stakeholder completes a piece of a much larger puzzle.

Vigoda (2002) highlights how the changing role perceptions of citizens and public officials logically impacts the nature of their interactions. The ideal conditions for true collaboration and partnership therefore require a congruent perception of actors’ roles. If citizens continue to view themselves as customers, they may not respond to empowerment measures put in place by governing authorities seeking to promote collaboration. Likewise, if public administrators view themselves purely as managers – they may lose out on opportunities to implement sustainable policy solutions through the partnership of interactive governance processes. In the following diagram, we see the evolution of interactions transition across a spectrum from traditionally coercive governmental rule of passive subjects to the opposing extreme of citizen coercion and a subordinate government.

Figure 4 An evolutionary continuum of public administration-citizen interaction



(Figure 3 adapted from Vigoda, 2002:531)

Vigoda argues that structural and cultural institutions must be challenged for effective participation to take place in the public sphere. Public administration systems hold innovative potential to create arenas for effective participation. Collaborative interaction is rooted in origins of responsive government; the two concepts are not exclusive. However, the shift towards a deeper partnership

deviates from traditional NPM foundations of rational choice or agent theory (Vigoda, 2002:534). That is to say, when citizens are given the opportunity and tools to make a meaningful impact on policy decision-making through interactive governance processes, they are more likely to replace the consumer mentality with a more altruistic sense of belonging and participation in the production of social value. The existence of distinct partnership role perceptions may ultimately be the driving force behind effective participation where CLEAR conditions are already present.

### 2.4.3 Impacts of Clear Role Perceptions

The impact of trust is widely researched as a driver of meaningful and effective citizen participation in interactive governance processes. However, this trust is greatly affected by the inherent role perceptions held by both parties. If trust can be defined as “*the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another*” (Rousseau et al., as cited in Yang, 2005:275), it follows that clear role perceptions may enhance the quality of participatory processes – decreasing the likelihood of strong disappointment which can occur when the expectations of citizens and public officials are misaligned. In addition, examining the role perceptions held by participants may provide useful insight into their intended level of interaction, as well as their pre-existing assumptions of other actors. Understanding role perceptions is crucial to managing the interactions of citizens and public officials in interactive governance processes.

Attitudes towards the process of citizen participation will understandably influence how both citizens and public officials view their individual roles and responsibilities. Negative or ambivalent perceptions of the citizen as an incompetent partner obviously undermine the interactive governance process (Yang, 2005:274). However, the pendulum can swing in either direction. A positive assumption that citizens are both competent and eager to participate in varying areas of public administration will equally lead to negative outcomes if citizens are overloaded with responsibilities which they have no intention or ability to uphold (Torfing et al., 2016). Interactive governance processes are a precarious balance of *give and take* as actors navigate their shifting roles and responsibilities. For citizens, the task may be to educate themselves on current issues and to enhance their social capacity as opportunities arise in the surrounding institutional context. For public officials, this requires individuals to switch gears and lead – not through control, but by fulfilling new tasks of facilitation. Failure to develop these conducive role perceptions is highly obstructive to the continuation and success of interactive governance processes (Torfing et al., 2016:16).

Both the term *citizen* and *public official* are “value-laden” concepts to which many varying descriptions are assigned (Yang, 2005:275). Proponents of political innovation in interactive governance processes heavily advocate the facilitative role of government and public officials – emphasizing the need to mobilize relevant actors in their new role as meta-governors (Grotenberg & van Buuren, 2017:3). In practice, this may be unfamiliar territory for many civil servants and elected officials. Some researchers have focused specifically on the individual characteristics of citizens which correlate to a willingness or reluctance to engage as active collaborators (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:238). However, it is the interplay between both parties which ultimately demonstrates their different roles and responsibilities. In their work on *Interactive governance and governability*, Kooiman, Bavink, Chuenpagdee, Mahon, & Pullin (2008:2) discuss how differing systems of governance mainly “revolve around the perceived role of the state”. In turn, governance by the state is instrumental in developing qualities of governability in citizens and other actors (Kooiman et.al, 2008:8). Again, there is a strong connection here between the roles of actors on either side of the divide – they are defined by how they define one another.

However, it is not only their stark differences which delineate the roles of citizens and public officials in interactive governance processes. Sometimes interaction calls for a sharing of similar tasks. For example, both citizens and public officials must become co-learners in processes of interactive governance. It is through a process of social learning that solutions may be defined and implemented (Roberts, 2004:330). Both parties must also recognize the importance of their role as watchdogs. Public officials should act as referees ensuring fair representation and accessibility of interactive governance processes (Roberts, 2004:329); whereas citizens fulfil this role by likewise holding public institutions accountable through means of their participation in direct democracy (Roberts, 2004:315). Additionally, interactive governance processes require both citizens and public officials to identify themselves as genuine asset-holders (Buckwalter, 2014). Explicit recognition of the resources which each party brings to the table restates their legitimacy as relevant stakeholders. In turn, this lends itself to more equitable power distribution throughout the interactive governance process.

If such a variety of perspectives can be found in the literature of citizen participation, it follows that this same *mélange* of perceptions may be prevalent amongst the participants of interactive governance processes themselves. Clarity of role perceptions is reflected in their *precision* and *simplicity* (Clarity, 2017). Therefore, we return to Vigoda’s *Evolutionary Continuum of Public*

*Administration-Citizen Participation* as a point of reference for the operationalisation of role perceptions. In this typology, each role perception translates into distinctive actions, tasks, or concepts of responsibility. While the type of interactions between citizens and public officials may overlap in nature, they are anchored in separate perceptions of each actor's roles. The model is simple and straightforward. Theoretically, Vigoda argues that interactions marked by strong *collaboration* should correlate to participants' awareness and perception of themselves and others primarily in the role of *partners*. The typology suggests that matching perceptions such as subject-ruler or voter-trustee will lead to clear outcomes of interaction, as described in the table below. Across the continuum, a comparison of these complementary role combinations and corresponding outcomes is an exploratory exercise of "collaboration between those in power and those who delegate power" (Vigoda, 2002:530).

Table 5 Complementary combinations of role perceptions

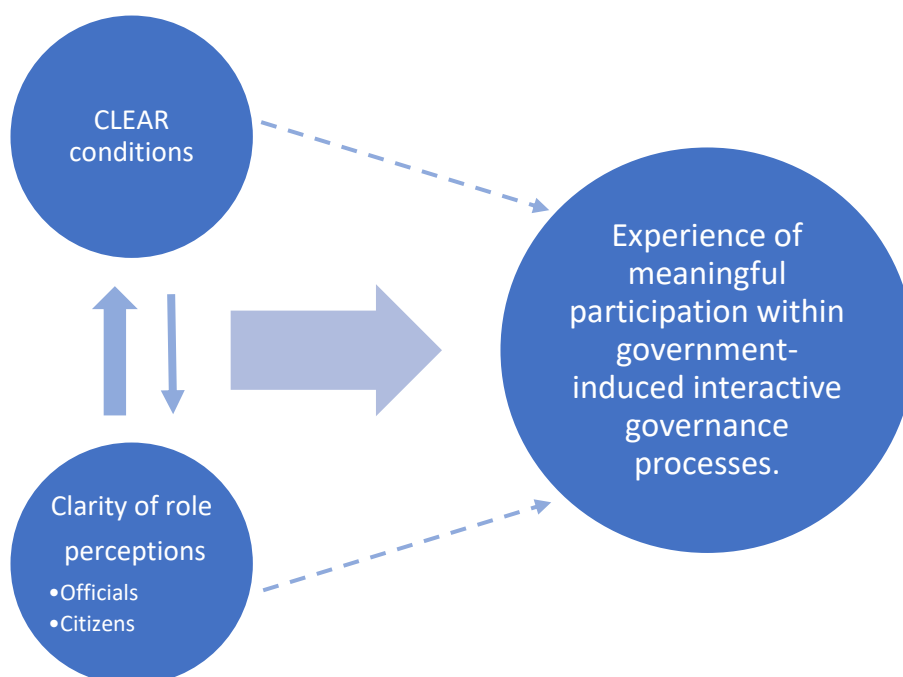
COMPLEMENTARY PERCEPTIONS	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME
SUBJECT - RULER	As <i>subjects</i> , citizens are dependent on government decisions regarding the resources and services organized on their behalf; feedback is rarely received. Citizens are forced to adapt to bureaucratic systems and generally accept “the unlimited tyranny of the state” (Vigoda, 2002:532). As <i>rulers</i> , public officials have the power to implement policy without consulting citizens. Public officials have full control over national resources and services like education; in addition to controlling many aspects of daily life.	<i>Coerciveness</i>
VOTER - TRUSTEE	As <i>voters</i> , citizens should trust the goodwill of public officials because the government is better suited to govern society on their behalf. Citizens can voice their opinion most efficiently through voting for elected officials and trusting their representation. As <i>trustees</i> , public officials are professionals who have been delegated the role of managing society due to their “wisdom, experience, and civic goodwill” (Vigoda, 2002:532). Public officials are trusted with the responsibility of decision-making.	<i>Delegation</i>
CLIENT / CUSTOMER - MANAGER	As <i>clients / customers</i> , citizens express their dissatisfaction and call for government reform. Citizens support or oppose policies through economic interaction, choosing to refrain or invest resource contributions, such as time and money. As <i>managers</i> , public officials respond to citizens in a spirit of marketplace rules (Vigoda, 2002:533). Public officials strive for NPM values of efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector.	<i>Responsiveness</i>
PARTNER - PARTNER	As <i>partners</i> , citizens should participate in decision-making processes. Citizens are capable and willing to improve the quality of public programs and policies. As <i>partners</i> , public officials should seek citizen input in administrative decision-making. Public officials make use of empowerment tools to promote collaboration with citizens.	<i>Collaboration</i>
OWNER - SUBJECT	As <i>owners</i> of the state, citizens are equally responsible for decisions made by the state. Citizens should dictate the agenda and processes of interaction as an “ideal type of democracy” (Vigoda, 2002:538). As <i>subjects</i> , public officials should be closely controlled and monitored. Public officials recognize that “the government's power must depend principally on citizens' support, voice, and satisfaction with the services they receive” (Vigoda, 2002:537).	<i>Citizenry</i> <i>Coerciveness</i>

### 3. Methodology & Operationalisation

#### 3.1 Conceptual Model

The influence of CLEAR Conditions and the Clarity of Role Perceptions on the meaningful participation of citizens within government-induced interactive governance processes.

Figure 5 Drivers & barriers of meaningful citizen participation



##### 3.1.1 Explanation of conceptual model

The model explores the following concepts, as reflected by the research questions in Chapter 1:

- The largest, central arrow explores the possible impact of the *interaction between* [1] participants' assessments of CLEAR conditions and [2] their clarity of role perceptions – as a barrier or driver behind the experience of meaningful participation within interactive governance processes (i.e. within participatory budgeting). Are there existing correlations; or do these separate variables trigger differing mechanisms – therefore requiring individual analysis only?

- The dashed arrows investigate the *individual* effects of [1] participant's assessment of CLEAR conditions and/or [2] the clarity of participant's role perceptions on corresponding experiences of meaningful participation. What patterns emerge?
- The vertical arrows signify an expectation that the clarity of role perceptions may impact participants' assessment of CLEAR conditions; and vice versa. What conclusions can be made by comparing case study results?



## 3.2 Operationalisation

### Meaningful Participation

Table 6 Operationalisation of Meaningful Participation

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Item/indicative question
Participation	Learning takes place	Participants perceive learning took place as a result of the interactive governance process.	Did any learning take place through the experience? What kind?
	Input is given	Participants make intentional contributions to the interactive governance process.	How were you involved in the interactive governance?
			What did you give/input to the interactive governance process re: time, resources, energy? Could you have given more?
	Sharing of benefits or profits	Participants perceive to have personally profited or shared in the benefits of the interactive governance process and/or results.	What did you gain anything from your involvement?
Who gained the most from this process?			
Meaningfulness	Significance	Participants feel that the interactive governance process greatly influenced the final outcome.	What was the outcome of the interactive governance process?
			How did citizen participation change the official outcome? To what degree did it make an impact?
	Purpose	Participants make mention of active motivations for participation in the interactive governance process (e.g. <i>democratic, ethical, economical, capacity/relation building, goal-orientation, future power transfer, information exchange</i> ). Participants do not respond with negative/passive motivations (e.g. <i>to control or neutralize the public, symbolic power, legislation</i> )	Why do you think an interactive governance approach was used in this case? What was the purpose of citizen participation?
			Value
		Should the government continue to invest in similar interactive governance processes?	
		Is it worthwhile for citizens to invest their time and energy?	

Dimensions and indicative questions adapted from the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy: C.L.E.A.R. Tool (Council of Europe, 2008). For the feasibility of this study, only corresponding questions to the key dimensions emphasized by the theoretical framework of this research project have been included to limit the scope and breadth of interviews in an efficient manner. The emphasis here is not solely on the existence of CLEAR conditions, but whether participants are aware of these conditions and/or perceive their presence in the context of interactive governance processes. Certain dimensions listed in the comprehensive C.L.E.A.R. Tool document were not considered for measurement as they were unrelated to the subjective experience of individual citizens but rather, focused on the community of participants or municipality as a whole – therefore these indicators have been purposefully omitted from this methodology but will be covered partially in the descriptions of the selected case studies.

Table 7 Operationalisation of CLEAR Conditions

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator	Item/indicative question
CAN do (condition)	Resources	Participants perceived involvement in the interactive governance process as easily accessible.	Was it easy to access the meeting venue?
			Were there additional resources (information or materials) you and other participants required?
			Were these accessible?
	Time	Participants had time to participate and/or factors restricting people’s time availability were addressed.	Did you and other participants have the time for participation?
			What were the major factors restricting people’s time availability?
	Skills / Knowledge	Participants are perceived as skilled and capable of participating in political life.	Did you and other participants have the necessary skills for participation (e.g. the ability to write letters, speak in public, organise meetings, etc.)?
Did you and other participants have the competence to utilise the resources in their community (e.g. to use computers, Internet, etc.)? Which skills were in short supply?			
To what extent were these skills and resources distributed differently across the community (i.e. do some groups have more access to resources and more skill to use them than others)?			
LIKE to (condition)	Identity	Participants identify with the municipality and feel attached to the area in which they live.	What do you identify with most: your local neighbourhood, your municipality, or the region in which you live?
	Trust	Participants trust one another and trust that the municipality makes decisions that are in the interests of the whole community.	Are people in this community most likely to be helpful to others or are they more likely to put their own self-interest first? How much do you trust the municipality to make decisions that are in the interest of the community as a whole?

	Citizenship	Participants feel a sense of shared responsibility towards the community. Inclusion and fair representation is valued throughout the process.	Do you feel a sense of responsibility towards the community or participation process? Is there a sense in the municipality that the voices (opinions) of some groups/individuals are more legitimate than others?
ENABLED to (condition)	Civic infrastructure	There is investment in or addition of new channels of communication between citizens and the municipality which are accessible and therefore utilised.	Is there investment in or addition of new channels of communication between citizens and the municipality (i.e. is participation facilitated through other groups or organisations)? Do you make use of these channels; or do you experience barriers to usage of these channels?
ASKED to (condition)	Forms of participation	The municipality seeks to inform and engage citizens in decision-making processes through multiple forms of participation.	How does the municipality seek to inform or engage citizens in decision-making processes? Does this include: surveys/opinion polls, consultations, open public meetings, focus groups, citizens' juries or panels, advisory councils, school and youth councils, general forums, or online forms of participation?
	Strategy	The municipality employs a clear strategy for engagement.	Did the municipality collaborate with any other organisations in consulting or engaging the public? Were you offered incentives to participate?
			Has the municipality experimented with unusual locations to encourage participation (e.g. citizens' homes, schools, supermarkets) or did you have to attend an official location to participate?
Reach and diversity	Effort was made to engage all the relevant sections of the community.	Were these forms of engagement sufficient to engage all relevant stakeholders? Who was left out of the interactive governance process?	
RESPONDED to (condition)	Listening	Participants are aware of the procedures and mechanisms through which their opinions can be heard or made known.	What are the procedures for ensuring that the citizen's voice is considered in decision-making? Were you informed about the results of your participation; how?
	Balance and prioritisation	There is transparency regarding the balance and prioritisation of different views.	How good are decision-makers at understanding and taking into account the views of citizens? How are the views of citizens balanced against the opinions of professionals and elected members, especially where they diverge?

	Feedback and education	Feedback is ensured. The process and outcomes of decisions are thoroughly explained.	How good is the municipality at explaining to citizens the reasons for the decision and the ways in which citizen views have been taken into account? Do you understand and accept the decisions made by municipalities? What efforts is the municipality making to better communicate its decisions to citizens? (Does the municipality have a programme of citizen education in relation to participation? Does the municipality provide support to public officials in learning how to respond more effectively to participation?)
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### Clarity of Role Perceptions

Table 8 Operationalisation of the Clarity of Role Perceptions

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Item/indicative question
Clarity	Precision, exactness	Participants' role perceptions fit into clear theoretical boxes (i.e. citizen as subject, voter, client/customer, partner, owner; public officials as rulers, trustees, managers, partners, subjects).	Participants show high (polarized) scores of strong agree- or disagreement with statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of citizens and public officials.
	Simplicity, straightforwardness	Participants hold complementary views of the roles of citizens and public officials – congruent to Vigoda's model (i.e. subject-ruler, voter-trustee, customer-manager, partner-partner, owner-subject combinations).	Is there harmony among perceptions or do they contrast with Vigoda's typology of Public Administration-Citizen interaction?
			<b>ON A 5PT SCALE, TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS REGARDING THE ROLE AND/OR RESPONSIBILITIES OF ...</b>
Role perceptions (old v. new)	Citizens as	Subjects	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as subjects with a high degree of agreement. Citizens must accept the decisions made by government because they depend on resources and services organized by the government. Citizens are subjects forced to adapt to bureaucratic systems in society.
		Voters	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as voters with high degree of agreement. Citizens should trust the government to make choices in their best interest because elected officials are more capable of governing society on their behalf. Citizens can voice their opinion most efficiently through voting or by speaking to an elected government representative.

	Public Officials / Government as	Clients / customers	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as clients / customers with a high degree of agreement.	Citizens should be clear about what they expect, want or need because it is the duty of public officials to serve public interests.
				Citizens should show support or opposition for policies by choosing to invest or withhold their own resource contributions, such as time and money.
		Partners	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as partners with a high degree of agreement.	Citizens should participate in policy decision-making processes.
				Citizens are collaborative partners who can improve the quality of public programs and policies.
		Owners	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as owners with a high degree of agreement.	Citizens should set the political agenda.
				Citizens own the state and are therefore equally responsible for decisions made by the state.
		Rulers	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of public officials as rulers with a high degree of agreement.	Public officials should have full control over national resources and services like education.
				Public officials have the power to implement policy without consulting citizens.
		Trustees	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of citizens as trustees with a high degree of agreement.	Public officials should focus on the tasks specifically delegated by elected party platforms.
				Public officials show goodwill towards citizens by governing wisely and in the best interest of the common good.
		Managers	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of public officials as managers with a high degree of agreement.	Public officials should be very responsive to what citizens say they need.
				Public officials are managers who strive for efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector.
	Partners	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of public officials as partners with a high degree of agreement.	Public officials should seek citizen input in administrative decision-making.	
			Public officials use empowerment tools to promote collaboration with citizens.	
	Subjects	On a 5pt Likert Scale, participants will score statements which support the perception of public officials as subjects with a high degree of agreement.	Public officials should be controlled and monitored closely by citizens.	
			Public officials are dependent on citizens for their positions and therefore pressured to satisfy public wants and needs.	

## 3.3 Methodology

### 3.3.1 Research Strategy

Answering the main research question of this study is largely a deductive exercise, completed through a triangulation of methods including desk research of relevant demographic data and content analysis of documented policy legislation; as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews with both citizens and public officials involved in the selected case studies. Interviews were focused on gaining a *depth* of insight into the experience of those participating in government-induced interactive governance initiatives. As such, qualitative sampling techniques were specifically appropriate to this study to assess participant perceptions.

The United Kingdom is an ideal location for research in this field due to its socio-political context of decentralisation and devolution of responsibility to regional and municipal governments. To cope with new policy and programming pressures, there exists a great deal of legislation mandating citizen involvement across the country – the implementation of which may take many different forms. *Participatory budgeting* was eventually chosen as the interactive governance process of study for this research because of the willingness and support of Durham County Council to allow for an internal investigation of its best practices and areas for improvement. These case studies were primarily selected based on categorisation of the interactive process as being (i.) government-induced and (ii.) conducted at a municipal or local level. Additionally, participatory budgeting schemes have been carried out in County Durham since 2011 – providing several years of suitable experimentation, the wisdom of experience, learned best practices, and a formalised structure which merits review. It is within this political framework that feedback loops have already been established, allowing for a thorough examination of the level of meaningful participation perceived by participants involved in these PB initiatives.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with participants of two local PB initiatives. These examples of government-induced interactive governance processes were selected from within the same county to decrease the influence of extraneous variables, allowing for a more controlled environment of observation. Choosing a most-similar design helped to control for cultural and political institutional factors which may influence the relationship between citizens and public officials. Any effect these factors will have made should have had comparable consequences in the following case studies and were therefore not the focus of study. However, it was important to

examine the relationship between the roles and perceptions of citizens and public officials across more than one case study to ensure that any proposed correlations could be confirmed within a greater population and did not represent outlier results.

Contact information for eventual interviewees was obtained through the help of organisational administrators of each participatory budgeting event. Availability and willingness of interviewees was considered in the selection of participants, increasing the probability that interviews resulted in authentic, comprehensive responses from which significant empirical analysis can be made. In total, interviews were conducted with 15 citizens and 6 public officials involved across the two case studies for a total of 21 interviews. This was judged to be an adequate number of participants for qualitative analysis by supervising faculty, given the availability of time and resources. Participants' perceptions paralleled the background information that was gleaned from additional interviews with researchers, public officials and citizens involved with PB in the surrounding area. Enough data was collected to make comparison of the two case studies and to address the main research question, cross-referencing the perceptions of citizens and public officials in each population of participants.

### 3.3.2 Methods

Careful attention was paid to methods of data collection. Because the interviews relied heavily on participant observations, local researchers were consulted on their previous experience interviewing residents of County Durham and their consequent publications were reviewed. Additional documentation on the demographics, strategy and impact of Durham County Council was also examined. Interviews were recorded where possible, transcribed, and coded before analysis. Names were removed from interview transcripts and replaced with a numbering system to signify the case study (A:1000, B:2000) and category (public official: 100, citizen: 200) to which they belong. For example, 1101 represented the first public official interviewee of Case Study A. 2201 represented the first citizen interviewee of Case Study B, and so forth. A list of anonymised respondents can be found in *Appendix A*. Any nominal risks were minimalised by ensuring the anonymity of participants and confidentiality of their information.

See *Appendix B – Interview* for content details. All interviews followed the same order and results were coded in accordance with the operationalisation of relevant indicators as outlined in Tables 5, 6, and 7. The interview was divided into three sections. Part I: the use of a 5-point Likert Scale to determine the *clarity of role perceptions* as outlined in Vigoda's theoretical model of the

*Evolutionary Continuum of Public Administration-Citizen Interaction* (2002). Part II: an introduction and six questions highlighting the participant's perception of *meaningful participation* achieved by the process. Part III: an analysis of *CLEAR conditions*. This assessment tool is comprised of 13 dimensions and 28 corresponding indicative questions to analyse the five C.L.E.A.R. variables as outlined by the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (2008).

The clarity of role perceptions was analysed on both the precision (clear agree- or disagreement with roles) and the simplicity or straightforward-ness of participants answers according to Vigoda's model – i.e. the presence of complementary perceptions regarding corresponding roles for citizens and public officials such as voter-trustee or customer-manager, which form the working relationship. Statements on the Likert Scale can be divided into two categories: *should statements* (measuring internal opinion) and *active statements* (measuring current state perceptions). Therefore, the score of these components (i.e. the *should* and *active* statements regarding each role of citizens and public officials) were combined to magnify the contrast in participant perceptions.

**Example:**

Citizens *should* participate in policy decision-making processes.

Strongly disagree = -2, disagree = -1, neutral = 0, agree = 1, strongly agree = +2.

Citizens *are* collaborative partners who can improve the quality of public programs and policies.

Strongly disagree = -2, disagree = -1, neutral = 0, agree = 1, strongly agree = +2.

Therefore, the role perception of CITIZENS AS PARTNERS can be calculated as:

Strongly disagree = -4 or -3, disagree = -2 or -1, neutral = 0, agree = +1 or +2, strongly agree = +3 or +4.

As dictated by its operationalisation, perceptions of *Meaningful Participation* were coded according to 6 indicators: learning, input, benefits, significance, purpose, and value. Interview transcripts were coded along a three-point scale: -1 (lacking), 0 (neutral), 1 (relevant). A score of 6/6 signifying a high sense of meaningful participation where all indicators were present; whereas 0/6 represents neutral or uncertain perceptions; and -6/6 would signify explicitly negative perceptions that meaningful participation is non-existent across all categories. Note: If negative or passive motivations were



acknowledged relating to the *purpose* indicator, this neutralised any positive answers given. This resulted in a calculation of '0' instead of '1' although purpose was technically present. Additionally, the *value* indicator was divided into two scores: 0.5 to indicate the participant's perceived value for government and another 0.5 to indicate their perceived value for citizens. Lastly, if no examples could be given to support a certain perception, indicators were marked as "0".

The results of the perceptions of CLEAR conditions were calculated in a similar fashion. Each of the 13 dimensions of this tool were coded as -1 (lacking), 0 (neutral), 1 (relevant) based on the answers participants gave to the 28 corresponding indicative questions. A final score of 13/13 signifying a strong presence of CLEAR conditions, as perceived by the interviewee; and 0/13 signifying a lack of perceived CLEAR conditions. In both case studies, none of the participants reported a total score less than 0 which would have indicated that beyond a lack of perceived CLEAR conditions there may also be strong barriers preventing democratic participation entirely. This is logical because in both cases, PB initiatives are already in operation. This signifies that there must be an initial level of CLEAR conditions present and that participants recognise this through their involvement with the PB process. However, these scores are useful in determining the strength of certain perceptions and highlighting the contrast of measured perceptions between citizens and public officials.

### 3.3.3. Quality indicators

Reflection of quality indicators took place throughout implementation of the research design and was tailored appropriately to the details of the pending case studies.

#### *RELIABILITY*

Several measures were undertaken to enable future researchers to reproduce this research – specifically the description of a detailed methodology and the research steps taken. Results were coded methodically, and the coding scheme was carefully documented to increase the reliability of this research. Interview questions are included in Appendix B in the exact order and format of use. Appendix C includes a copy of the Interview Outlines which was given to interview participants as a guideline for the session. Additionally, a list of respondents was kept on record – although, not published in the final work to protect the anonymity of participants. Interview transcripts were also available over the course of the research project to allow input from academic supervisors regarding the level of reliability maintained throughout data collection and analysis.

## INTERNAL VALIDITY

The internal validity of the original research design was strong due to the use of theoretical frameworks by Lowndes, Pratchett, and Stoker (2006) as well as Vigoda (2002), which have been previously validated as viable building blocks for social research. Interview questions measuring the perceptions of *meaningful participation* are mainly subjective in nature and therefore open to a vast array of answers. However, the concept was operationalised into concrete dimensions with direct indicators. The analysis of CLEAR conditions has been borrowed entirely from the C.L.E.A.R. tool published by the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy and therefore a trusted source of validity. Lastly, an investigation of role perceptions has been formatted into a 5-point Likert Scale based on Vigoda's (2002) theoretical model. This was not used to calculate averages, but successfully illustrated the presences of polarized, conflicting perceptions. This component of the research design could use further testing or revision before being applied in future studies; however, prior to this research, the Likert Scale had been given to a group of 10 adults ranging from age 21 – 80 years old and proved successful in delineating strong perceptions or differences of opinion.

Results were re-examined for internal validity to ensure that indicators measured concepts adequately and that the findings truly reflect participants' experience. Limitations to this credibility are discussed further on; however, thorough data-triangulation was applied whilst interpreting the perceptions articulated in the Likert Scale survey and individual interviews. These were validated by direct observations and also compared against feedback of previous social researchers who had recently investigated civic engagement across the local county.

## EXTERNAL VALIDITY

This research has limited external validity in that case studies with the same political and cultural contexts or domains were chosen. Government resources and institutions were nearly identical. Findings are based solely on the cases explored and may not hold substantial effect in other contexts of participatory budgeting which take place in differing political climates. This research explores deeply held perceptions of participants, which may also offer subjective results. However, similar findings are present in the comparison of both case studies, proving that similar mechanisms may be at work in other forms of civic engagement. The effect of clearly defined and congruent perceptions between both citizens and public officials may be explored in contexts additional to PB – a useful topic for future study.

## 4. Case Study: Participatory Budgeting

To summarize: interactive governance initiatives may take many different forms. Under a new paradigm of government and governance, it has not only become advantageous but arguably essential that citizens and public officials collaborate for the sustainable benefit of their shared communities. To examine the effect of CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions on meaningful participation, *Participatory Budgeting* (PB) was selected as the interactive governance process of study because of its history and application across many different countries and democratic contexts. Impacts vary along a spectrum of large-scale to small-scale initiatives and can be readily examined at a local level, especially in the United Kingdom. An additional advantage was the suitability of PB to the research design of this project and the willingness of community members to volunteer their experiences through a wealth of qualitative interviews – from both a citizen’s perspective and that of a public official.

### 4.1 County Durham & Area Action Partnerships

Munro, Roberts, and Skelcher (2008:62) contend that “Partnership, at least in the UK context, is the default model through which much local public policy is now determined and implemented.” However, citizen engagement in the United Kingdom is not always a story of exceeding success. It is reflective of the struggle found across most western democracies: people have become “increasingly disillusioned, dissatisfied and disenfranchised by the dominant political institutions and decision-making processes” (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:368). Declining rates of voter turnout point to a disengagement from traditional democratic channels. Politicians largely agree that “democratic reform and an injection of citizen participation” is an essential tool for a strong society; however, perspectives differ in their narrative and execution (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:369).

In the United Kingdom, this can especially be seen by the historic counterbalance of New Labour v. Conservative policy reforms. The New Labour Party, in power during the early 2000s introduced their philosophy of the ‘third way’ – stressing a form of devolved governance that was both ‘consensual’ and ‘participatory’ as an alternative to the spectrum of traditional capitalist v. socialist policy (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:370). When the Conservative Party came to power in 2010, the narrative of citizen participation was re-coined as ‘The Big Society’ – a catch phrase used throughout David Cameron’s tenure as Prime Minister. *Big Society* was an attempt to protect the welfare of individuals and communities by increasing their involvement in service provision, while justifying the

retrenchment of public services and funding cutbacks at a national government level. *Big Society* relies heavily on voluntarism and encourages people to take an active role in their communities – arguing that market-based and state solutions are unsustainable without citizen involvement (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:372).

PB was mainstreamed in the United Kingdom by New Labour’s Secretary for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears who pushed for every local authority to initiate a PB procedure within a five-year time span (Sintomer, Herzberg & Röcke, 2008:176). The success of these initial schemes was debatable, though some local authorities determined to learn from consecutive attempts and continued employing PB processes. This was the case with County Durham and the PB case studies examined here in this report. With a decade of experience and experimentation, County Durham is a useful model for further research.

County Durham was established as a unitary council in 2009, following legislated structural changes to tiered-government in a time of political transition. The county was then split into 14 geographical areas known as Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). The partnership structure of these AAPs and their five shared priorities are illustrated in the following diagram.

Figure 6 County Durham Partnership Structure



(Elliott, 2017:6)

The experience of PB in the United Kingdom has not been as radical as original models in South America; however, it is at this local level of AAP governance that public officials have been mandated with its implementation. Similar to PB across the United Kingdom, PB initiatives in County Durham are financed by “central funds that are ear-marked for specific geographical and policy areas, meaning their agenda setting powers are severely limited” (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:377-78). Pragmatically, PB becomes an exercise in “participatory grant-making” where “small grants [are] distributed to third sector organisations to fund projects that they themselves will deliver” (Davidson & Elstub, 2013:378). That is not to say the benefits of PB should be dismissed. On the contrary, the benefits of this model of PB still allow for a host of positive impacts, including but not limited to:

- Wider community engagement
- Opportunity to host additional consultation activities
- Partner involvement
- Supporting applicants, community networking, capacity building and empowerment
- Devolved decision-making
- Promotion of groups, organisations and partners

(Durham County Council, n.d.:10-13)

These benefits are not self-evident to all participants, and Durham County Council therefore encourages AAPs to use PB in conjunction with other activities that allow for more accountable and transparent decision-making processes which promote deliberation. In line with this, participants of PB in all AAPs not only vote on the projects which are to receive funding; but they are also required to vote on the priorities of their local AAP for the coming year. For additional details on how PB is carried out within County Durham AAPs, see *Appendix E: The PB Process* for a 12-step guideline.

#### 4.2 AAP comparison: Spennymoor & East Durham Rural Corridor (EDRC)

Legislated by County Durham, PB is a common exercise across several AAPs with measured, though varying levels of success. It is important to examine the profile of both AAPs to analyse the existence of CLEAR conditions present during interactive governance processes. AAPs differ in population demographics and density, throughout the region. However, the two AAPs selected for this research share many similarities as noted in the table below.

Table 9 Comparison of Spennymoor AAP & EDCR AAP

	SPENNYMOOR	EAST DURHAM RURAL CORRIDOR
Total Population	21,468 <sup>1</sup>	25,566 <sup>2</sup>
Age Demographics	0-4 yrs = 6% 5-15 yrs = 12% 16-64 = 62% 65+ = 20% 85+ = 2%	0-4 yrs = 5.5% 5-15 yrs = 12% 16-64 = 62.5% 65+ = 20% 85+ = 2%
Space	4,000 hectares (15.8 sq. miles) <sup>3</sup>	13,700 hectares (53.2 sq. miles) <sup>4</sup>
Population Density	5.2 people/hectare ( <i>urban</i> )	1.9 people/hectare ( <i>rural</i> )
Total members in the AAP forum	2000+ (9.3% of total population) <sup>5</sup>	913 (3.6% of total population) <sup>6</sup>
No. of registered voters in most recent PB	819 (approximately 4% of total eligible participants) <sup>7</sup>	472 (approximately 2% of total eligible participants) <sup>8</sup>

(Source: Table based off information from AAP Profile and Summary Reports.)

County Durham is rich in culture and hospitality. A key player during the Industrial Revolution, its economy was founded upon the mining of coal and iron (Durham County Council, 2017b). Unfortunately, the 1980s saw the closure of nearly all mining pits in the surrounding area – spiralling many rural communities into a mass of unemployment and deprivation. However, there remains a great sense of community pride amongst citizens and continued efforts are aimed at the regeneration of these localities. The last five years have also seen a dramatic decrease in the percentage of the working age population claiming out of work benefits (worklessness). Recent statistics show this has fallen in Spennymoor to 11.5% (Durham County Council, 2017a:32) and similarly in EDRC to 11.1% (Durham County Council, 2017a:32), which is now reflective of the county average of 11.8% yet higher than the national average of 8.5%.

<sup>1</sup> (Durham County Council, 2017a:16)

<sup>2</sup> (Durham County Council, 2016:16)

<sup>3</sup> (Durham County Council, 2017a:2)

<sup>4</sup> (Durham County Council, 2016:2)

<sup>5</sup> (Spennymoor Area Action Partnership, 2018:4)

<sup>6</sup> (East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership, 2017:5)

<sup>7</sup> (Spennymoor Area Action Partnership, 2017:1)

<sup>8</sup> (East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership, 2017:1)

There is also a measurable increase across both AAPs of the percentage of students entering post-



Figure 7 Front Street. (Coxhoe Parish Council, 2017)

secondary studies at higher education institutions (Durham County Council, 2016:27; Durham County Council, 2017a:27). In a region which records a much higher percentage than the national average of working age population holding no academic and/or professional qualifications at all, this is a promising indication of capacity building through education (Durham County Council, 2017a:26).

Until recent elections, the Labour Party has historically maintained an unquestioned political majority in the northeast. Civic infrastructure and forms of participation vary throughout the county; however, AAPs are both a channel and catalyst for interactive governance between public officials and citizens – involving “local people and organisations... to have a say in how local services are provided to their area” (Durham County Council, 2017b). To execute PB successfully, each AAP networks with a wealth of civic organisations, public service providers, and local individuals. Opportunity is provided for citizens to participate in public forums and both Spennymoor & EDRC AAP make use of resources such as local newspapers, online platforms, and social media to reach out to local citizenry.



Figure 8 Town hall. Spennymoor (Brydon, 2007)

This is the context in which the presence of CLEAR conditions and the clarity of role perceptions were examined in relation to perceptions of meaningful participation in government-induced, interactive governance processes (i.e. PB).

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Presence of CLEAR conditions

For the purposes of this research, the presence of CLEAR conditions refers to the measured *perception* of CLEAR conditions present. This means that while some participants adamantly believed that resources and skills were abundantly prevalent, others may not have shared the same experience or memory of the PB process. Similarly, while some individuals saw no issues relating to the accessibility of the event – others considered this to be a key concern. The following results of CLEAR factors do not determine whether the venue and events *were* or *were not* accessible, for example, as much as they focus on the perceived reality of those who participated and indicate where these perceptions most drastically deviated between participating citizens and public officials.

The graph below shows the average scores each of the CLEAR factors received from citizens (“C”) in contrast to those from public officials (“PO”). What we notice is that overall, public officials perceived on average a higher presence of CLEAR factors than their citizen counterparts especially regarding the “R” – responded to – factor.

Table 10 CLEAR results (averages scored)

Role	Averages		Difference
	C	PO	
C	1.93	2.16	0.13
L	1.67	2	0.33
E	0.2	0.5	0.3
A	1.73	2.33	0.6
R	1.47	3	1.53
<b>Total Average</b> (Participants’ general perception of CLEAR factors present)	7	10	3

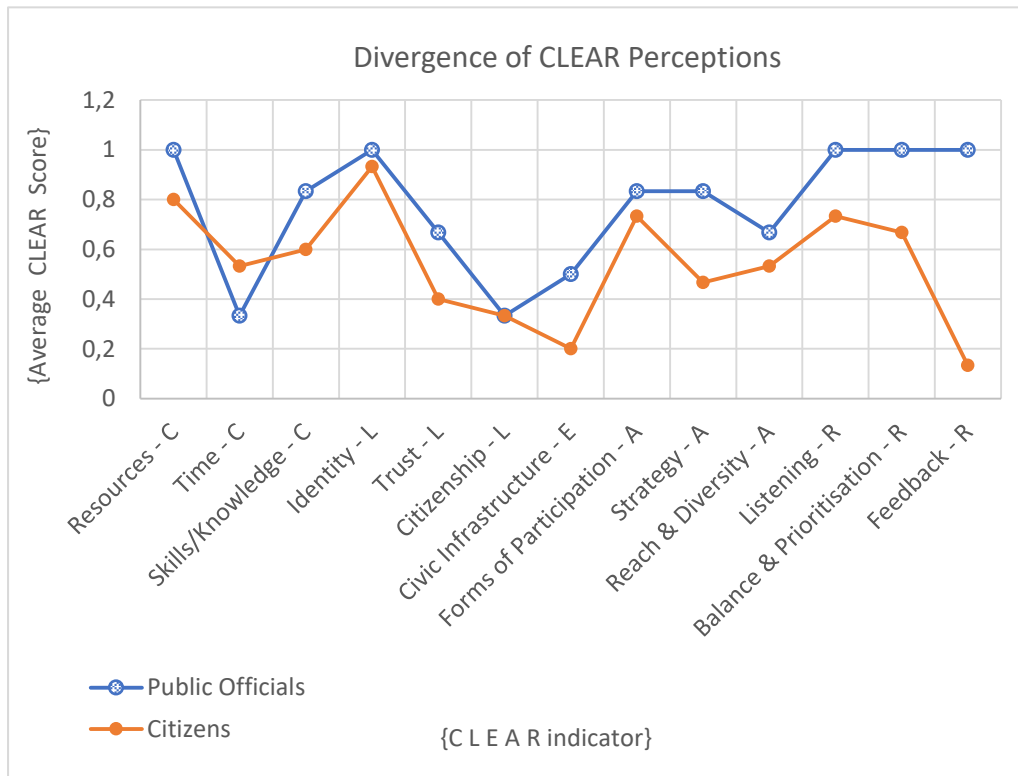
*\*Note: “C”, “L”, “A” & “R” were each scored out of [3] indicative questions and “E” out of [1], for a total of [13].*

This illustrates a discrepancy between the experience of citizens and public officials within the same interactive governance process whereby public officials hold a more positive view of the initial



circumstances than participating citizens. However, by examining the 13 dimensions of the CLEAR framework more closely, we note shared themes and/or patterns where these perceptions both merge and diverge. The use of a line graph in the following figure illustrates these results more clearly. It is not intended to suggest any trajectory but highlights the dimensions where the perceptions of citizens and public officials most notably deviate or overlap.

Figure 9 Divergence of CLEAR perceptions



### 5.1.1 CAN do

The *Can-do* factor received similar results from both citizens and public officials alike in the areas of resource accessibility, time, and skills. By and large, the accessibility of the venues and resources chosen was found to be reasonable and sufficient by most participants. As is the case with issues of accessibility, it is often those experiencing the barriers to participation who are most adept at articulating what exactly it is that these issues entail.

Although everyone interviewed agreed they had the time required to participate, one interviewee described the situation as follows, *"... I think in this county, we're very time poor. Time is very precious so if you're going to have to give it up – I think people are very reluctant to do that. But I*

*don't think people realise how good you feel when you give up something that is so precious to yourself, which is your time, for the benefit of somebody else... and that makes you feel really good! And you feel empowered and you want to do more! But I think that is probably a massive, massive difficulty.*" (Interviewee 1202 – citizen). This supported the suggestion of several public officials: people are often willing to return after having participated in a PB event as proven by rising participation rates, but the difficulty is convincing people to get involved in the first place.

Time was also the only indicator where citizens gave the PB process a more positive score than public officials who often felt hard-pressed for the time and energy to continue facilitating PB within their current mandates and resource allowance. This was a common theme amongst public officials: *"People are being pulled in all different sorts of ways and therefore how much time do they have to invest in the PB process when they're doing everything else administrating the AAP and the board meetings.... a lot of administration goes into that – paperwork, minutes, agenda..."* (Interviewee 2103 – public official); as opposed to the stark contrast of citizen expectations: *"That's what they're there for. Them putting the time and effort in is expected really and if they think this is the best way to do it, they should put the effort in."* (Interviewee 2201 – citizen).

Where skills and knowledge were perceived to be unequally distributed, both citizens and public officials acknowledged that help was made available to any organisation or individual who wished to improve their skills as it related to participation. The most common complaint from both case studies was the power of big organisations to gain votes and funding, simply through their initial capital of resources, time, and 'manpower' or a larger client-base from which to draw support for the PB initiative. A public official offered this synopsis: *"The problem is and always was: when you've got money, there will be people who know how to get that money. A couple of organisations turned it into a fine art. It wasn't wrong that they did that – they were looking out for the best interests of their group – but it meant that money that was allocated before couldn't be allocated that way... There was discussion amongst board members: how to ensure that even if those groups get the money in the end, that as many people as possible had the opportunity to bid in for it if they wanted it; or if not, we can say 'Great! The money can go to them. They can have it.'..."* (Interviewee 1103 – public official).

### 5.1.2 LIKE to

The *Like-to* factor explores issues of identity, trust and citizenship. Citizens and public officials showed similar scores on these indicator questions.

Although participants must identify with the locality and feel attachment towards the area in which they live for an efficient connection to the PB process, both case studies illustrated the instability within a network of actors which occurs when healthy identity edges towards territorialism. A historic perspective is helpful in illustrating the underlying tensions: *“Certainly because of the nature of the area where we are; there are several old pit villages. And there is still a strong tie to individual villages and communities and, to a degree, even parts of villages. There's still that. There's probably still people who have never left the county. Certainly when I was growing up, I knew lots of people who had never left the county. I knew people who had never left the village! Which is horrifying. But genuinely, when I started work 20 years ago – there were people in my workplace who when they were asked to leave the village, they were horrified by it. Looking back now you see the trauma in it, but times change and thankfully we do live in a more global community and people do associate with wider areas now which is great.”* (Interviewee 1102 – public official). Too small an identity prohibits unity for shared cooperation amongst a larger region. Even within the geographical confines of an AAP, this issue prevails. *“It's a very small close-knit community wherever you live. This is sometimes a disadvantage because we should have a broader outlook sometimes. And it tends to be a little bit narrow.”* (Interviewee 2203 – citizen). Unfortunately, a strong desire to protect one's own means that many deserving initiatives lose out on the potential funding if they also serve other localities, as explained: *“[Participatory budgeting] is on the territorial side – thinking why should ‘we’ provide that funding when there's another AAP which is closer to where we live or where this office is – the problem is we've got members right over County Durham and that's one of the issues.”* (Interviewee 1207 – citizen).

Conversely, another point of interest concerning identity was the lack of attachment participants felt in relation to the geographical AAP. *“[AAP] is a term that gets used but not everyone will know about it. Some people will say ‘AAP, what's that?’... They probably are aware of the projects that have been supported – but it could be off their radar as well. At the end of the day... as long as the project is dealt with... people aren't bothered if it was run by the County Council, the AAP, the Parish Council ... as long as it's there to meet their needs... Some people will be aware of [the AAP] as well – a bit of a mix, really.”* (Interviewee 2101 – public official). *“I think a lot of them don't really associate with ‘East*

*Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership' – which is quite a mouthful. No, I think a lot don't, don't really associate themselves with that, no.*" (Interviewee 2205 – citizen).

Regarding the concept of trust, participants often conveyed the tensions which accompany interactive governance processes by contradicting themselves within the same answer – stating on one hand a confidence that participants of PB could be trusted to put their self-interest first (as rational actors) whilst also believing they would put first the need of others (as altruistic stewards). The common desire to choose both answers may illustrate participants' desire to believe the best about themselves and their motives of engagement; though some soberly reflected this perspective was too optimistic. Opinions varied – a couple interviewees even argued that local councils were still fairer or more trustworthy than participation of the masses; although this did not reflect the majority. The concept of tactical voting came up several times, though never maliciously. *"It's a bit of both: you look after yourself first but then you make sure you look after somebody else after if you can."* (Interviewee 2201 – citizen).

Citizenship was examined as a sense of shared responsibility towards the community, with a value for inclusion and fair representation throughout the interactive governance process. Citizens ranked this indicator much lower than public officials did. One participant linked the privilege of having your voice heard within the context of interactive governance to an unequal distribution of personal skills and resources within the greater community context. For example, *"[Because of my job in the community], I know the ways of getting my thoughts and views up the channels. Whether or not the ordinary person on the street would be aware of how to make those processes known, I don't know."* (Interviewee 1202 – citizen).

### 5.1.3 ENABLED to

The *Enabled-to* factor investigated participant perceptions regarding civic infrastructure; asking if there was any noticeable investment in or addition of new channels of communication between citizens and the municipality which are both accessible and utilised. This factor scored highest in citizen neutrality. That is to say: while citizens showed no disagreement for the presence of these channels or investment in new methods of communication, 80% of citizen interviewees shared explicit uncertainty about the usage of these channels by the general-public. Public officials were more optimistic, yet 50% of their responses also resulted in a neutral score.

When pressed for tangible examples of civic infrastructure, citizens shared broad information, but sometimes offered diverging or incompatible details to that of public officials within the same AAP (i.e. confusion regarding channels, access to information and preferred methods of communication). Though this unfamiliarity possibly stems from infrequent use of these civic channels, it seems to become a reinforcing pattern where misconceptions and inaccurate information then prevents citizens from meaningful engagement within these systems.

Participants speak out from varying perspectives:

*“County Council has the website. We've got the GoSpenny! website which is a great tool for getting out there. It's great but we've got no numbers on its use. We also send out by email to 6 groups, 2000 emails. You know that once it's gone out, word of mouth will pass it around. For things like funding opportunities, we subscribe to Funding Information Northeast. We'll say alright there's funding for arts. We've got a local art gallery in town – I'll send them that information. I've got a group for sports groups – so I send them the sports ones... anything they need to know! We disseminate that information. We try to make sure that as a brand we get out there - but it's not just our information: it's any information. The whole point of the partnership is we're giving info out to [and from] those partners as well.”* (Interviewee 1102 – public official).

*“... the AAP have quite a good Facebook page which is followable, if you do. I think where there are certain people who are involved in the AAP who are quite good at passing on or sharing stuff ... there's also a lot of winging on there... but there's quite a lot of information... The town council aren't so good at communicating. I think there's sometimes a bit of lack of trust. It's hard to say at the moment because at the local elections recently, it's been completely turned upside down... some of that was to do with people feeling like they'd been taken for a bit of a ride by too great a majority and I think some of that was down to there just not being enough transparency about decisions.”* Regarding citizen interaction with the AAP or Town Council: *“Main meetings are public but they're always on my day off; so, I've never been.”* (Interviewee 1206 – citizen).

*“I've got a little bit of insight because I am also a Parish Councillor... so I have an idea when there's issues of which route to go down. Before I became involved in community groups, I would have been pretty stuck – I wouldn't have known which or where to go to. I would have found out – I would have gone to the internet or asked somebody, but to people who aren't passionate enough to find out, they would just forget about whatever it is they want to do.”* (Interviewee 2202 – citizen).

*“Online presence? There might be but to be honest, I don't know. I really don't know. There probably is but I've never really looked. Like I say I'm just going to try and get some more money for [our project].”* (Interviewee 2206 – citizen).

Both AAPs boast a strong track record of networking, supporting and developing a community infrastructure through collective participation. Facilitation of PB composes only a fraction of the work they carry out in Spennymoor and East Durham Rural Corridor. However, when the focus is shifted away from the outcomes of PB and centralizes instead on the core ways in which citizens are invited to engage, we see that this remains a tension and area of continuing development. Despite the density of civic channels at their disposal – citizens depend greatly on the AAP to facilitate their inclusion in decision-making processes.

#### 5.1.4 ASKED to

The *Asked-to* factor examined issues related to the reach and diversity of the PB process and whether effort was made to engage all relevant segments of the wider community. Participants were asked about their knowledge of strategy employed by the AAP to secure citizen engagement in decision-making processes through varying forms of participation. Moreover, the *Able-to* indicator asked: Who is left out or excluded from the process of PB? Public officials ranked this indicator very positively according to the CLEAR scoring scheme. 83.3% of public officials felt local government made sufficient effort to engage all the relevant sections of the community; sought to inform and engage citizens in decision-making processes through multiple forms of participation; and employed a clear strategy for engagement. Citizens also ranked the reach and diversity of the PB process highly; but only gave the *Able-to* indicator an overall score of 57.8% as they were unable to attribute clear strategy to the actions of top-down network actors. This does not signify a lack of strategy; but it highlights the discrepancy between the perception and insight of public officials juxtaposed against the views and experiences of citizens.

A concern emphasised by both citizens and public officials was the “cuteness factor” of some groups which has potentially led to the exclusion of newer, less popular or socially less acceptable groups and priorities within the PB process. For example, *“...about three years ago there was one [group] wanting to promote anti-racism. The band won [the funds instead] and I think that was a shame. People just in their priorities didn't know what that meant – but I got a shock at that – they were the*

*last of 21 groups.”* (Interviewee 1209 – citizen). Similarly, a public official raised the taboo of drug rehabilitation – indicating how stigma prevents citizens from a willingness to consider how drug addiction can and/or has affected their local community. Despite an urgent need to direct community resources towards this budding social issue, related organisations and initiatives feel their chances of securing funds through PB are slim to none until citizens discard a NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) mentality. *“In terms of who benefits the most: you've got some of the organisations which have gotten quite used to how the system works now and so they have a ‘cuteness factor’ – whether that has to do with children, etc. They tend to do well.”* (Interviewee 1103 – public official).

Regarding the strategy of engagement, one citizen put it this way: *“Getting the right format is a good start to good communication with confidence.”* (Interviewee 1208 – citizen). Although public officials know that the AAP seeks external advice and examines the best practices of others in addition to establishing a board of local professionals and community expertise, employing engagement strategies is not a one-size-fits-all market solution. *“We do e-bulletins that go out, we have Facebook pages. If we know of things in the community or projects we think may benefit ya, we still do the good old-fashioned telephone call... That needs still to happen because society is moving more and more – [but] there's more and more people who are actually digitally disenfranchised.”* (Interview 2101 – public official). Although digital disenfranchisement and citizen engagement in the age of technology are concepts of substantial weight in academic theory, it is highlighted here as a caution and counsel to top-down actors seeking to establish interactive governance processes such as PB. Varying forms of participation will enable segments of the population differently; underlying the need for regular reflection of these practices and thorough exploration of local untapped potential.

#### 5.1.5 RESPONDED to

The *Responded-to* factor called attention to how well participants believed the system of PB showed capacity to respond to issues raised throughout the process and in years prior. While public officials agreed unanimously that feedback was ensured and that both the process and outcomes of decisions were thoroughly explained, this indicator revealed the largest discrepancy between the perception scores of public officials and their citizen counterparts – which dropped by 86.7% in comparison. Although citizens are made aware of results and have knowledge of existing procedures which consider the opinion and voices of citizens within the PB process, the majority did not feel that they understood decisions taken by the AAP nor did they believe that public officials clarified the process which culminated in the making of these decisions. When asked how the AAP had

improved its attempts at feedback from one PB to the next, one-third of participating citizens interviewed said they were unsure. Public officials on the other hand, were quick to list concrete examples of organisational learning and educative feedback loops which they had employed over the years.

In addition to feedback, the *Responded-to* factor examines general listening mechanisms and the balance or prioritisation of expert versus public forms of knowledge throughout the PB process. During interviews, public officials showed an eagerness to improve deliberation and accountability mechanisms. However, as underscored in the theoretical framework of this report – a responsive government administration will not only ensure feedback about the outcome but *will also explain how final conclusions were made*. Arguably, much of this occurs in the public AAP meetings which are poorly attended by the average citizen. The minutes of these meetings are made accessible to members of the public forum afterwards, but this was not well known by the citizens interviewed.

Again, it is apparent that the AAPs are a gateway for many citizens – their only awareness of current procedures and mechanisms through which their opinions can be heard or made known. Interview excerpts underscore the importance of public officials to recognize the power of feedback in fostering a responsive partnership in interactive governance processes. *“I think it’s that everyone has a little bit of a chunder about how money is allocated and things like that. Why is it spent on things like this and then not on that... When we went to see [an AAP official] not so long ago, we filled in a questionnaire, didn’t we? About how we think funds are allocated from the council and things like that – and do we think it was spent wisely... And I think it’s giving everyone a say and it makes everyone feel a lot better.”* (Interviewee 1204 – citizen).

*“I don’t know what choices they’re making. All I know is on the day of the PB how the money gets spent. They haven’t told me why they’re making these decisions. They just say this is what we’re doing. Any other decisions that they’re making, I don’t know - I don’t know why they are making decisions; I don’t know there’s a decision to make.”* (Interviewee 2201 – citizen).

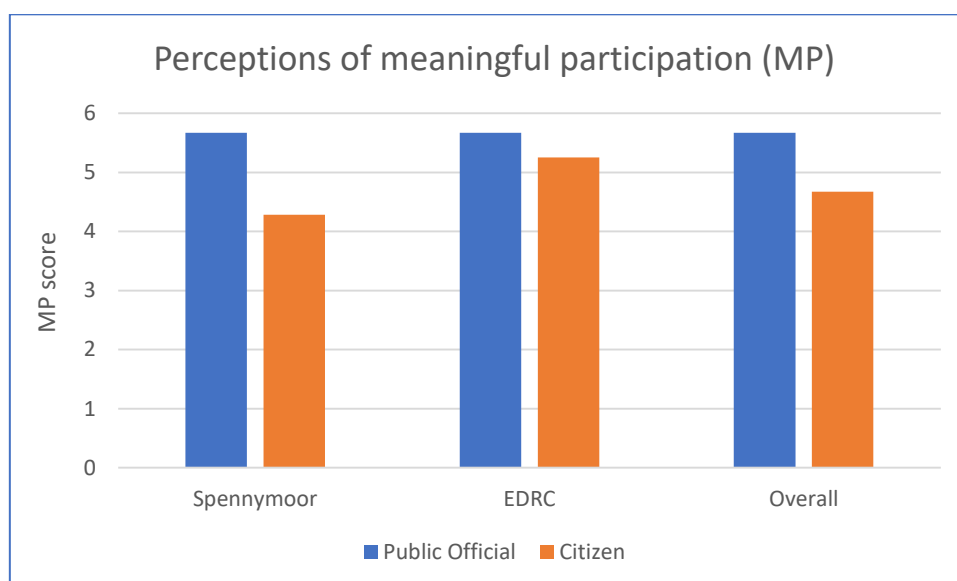
*“No, I wasn’t aware of how or why they were made. I knew they were to be made but I didn’t know how or why they got made.”* Regarding the importance of knowing: *“It would be nice to know where this money comes from and how it is decided to be that amount of money – why it’s different or the same as last year. Maybe not essential, but I think it would be nice to know that. And I don’t know who makes them decisions.”* (Interviewee 2202 – citizen).



## 5.2 Perceptions of meaningful participation

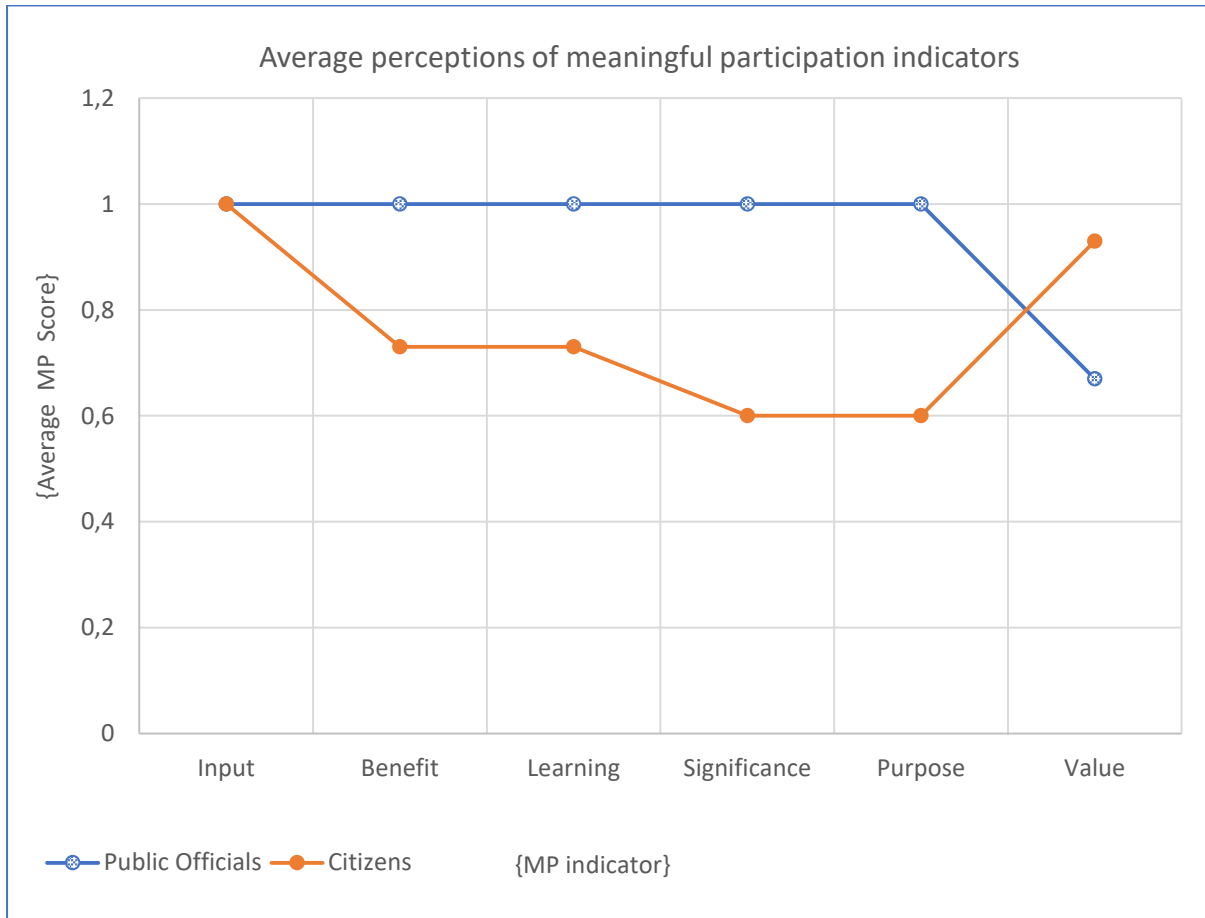
Meaningful participation (MP) was measured according to indicators of input, benefit, learning, significance, purpose, and value for a high score of 6/6. Public officials in Spennymoor and EDRC AAPs each recorded an average MP of 5.67 whereas this was somewhat higher than the average MP of citizens: 4.67 (or 4.27 in Spennymoor and 5.25 in EDRC, respectively).

Figure 10 Perceptions of meaningful participation (MP)



The high scores of *meaningful participation* in the figure above, indicate a lack of tokenistic experience throughout the interactive governance process of PB and across both AAPs. It is interesting to note that, again, public officials show a higher and possibly more optimistic perspective of these interactions than their citizen counterparts. The only meaningful participation indicator which citizens scored higher than public officials was that of *value* – specifically related to the value of local government’s continued investment of PB initiatives and similar interactive governance processes. The breakdown of each of the six indicator scores is summarised below.

Figure 11 Average perceptions of meaningful participation indicators



### 5.2.1. Input

This indicator of meaningful participation received the most unanimous support from both citizens and public officials. Every participant interviewed felt they had made an intentional contribution towards the interactive governance process. Answers varied regarding how much time or personal resource PB cost each participant, but each interviewee agreed they had input into the event.

*“I felt very involved in the whole process.”* (Interviewee 1202 – citizen).

*“To get buy in from groups and the public to want to do it – takes an awful lot of time.”* (Interviewee 1102 – public official).

*“Funding applications take a lot of time and then you’ve got the day of voting... because we have three or four people working on it, so if one misses something, we all run through it to see what we think of it – and maybe only one paid worker and three are volunteers... but time wise you’ve got to print out your constitution, your accounts, a whole list. Probably at least a week [of work] when you add it all up together. Disappointing if you don’t gain from it.”* (Interviewee 1208 – citizen).

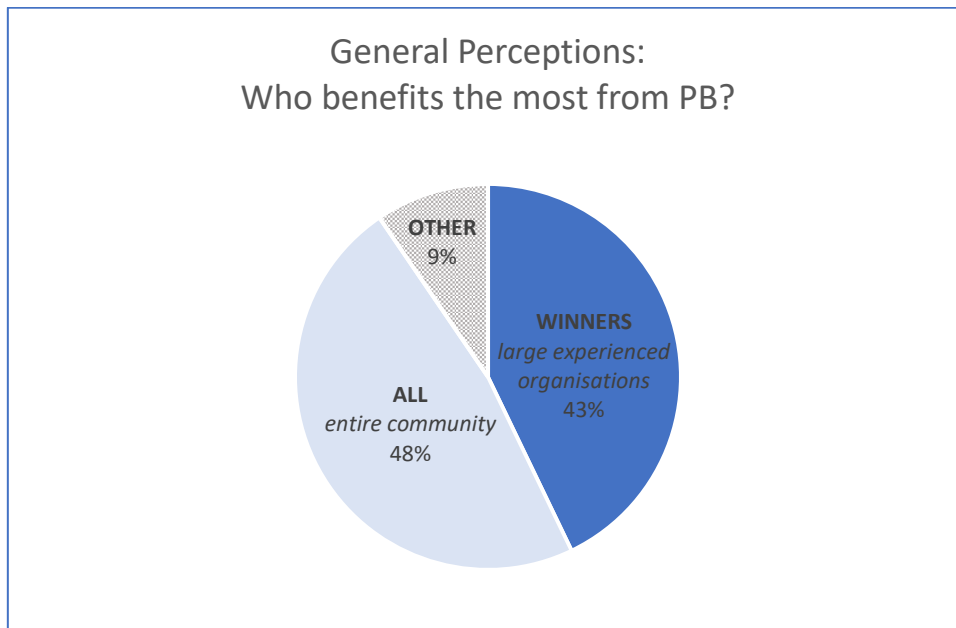
*“If you win the money, it’s a lot less effort than any other charity fundraising event that you could do.”* (Interviewee 1205 – citizen).

### 5.2.2. Benefit

Public officials agreed there was a unique sharing of benefits which occur through PB: community development, awareness, promotion of the AAP, investment opportunities, networking, financial benefits, learning, positive feedback, and more. *“From our side of things, everybody got such a positive feel from the day...the groups that got the money might say they did, but I think collectively everybody got a lot out of it.”* (Interviewee 1101 – public official). Citizens also felt they benefitted from the process of PB. They listed themes of promotion, partnership, membership, organisational knowledge, publicity/advertising, and network building as the main benefits outside of winning their potential financial bid.

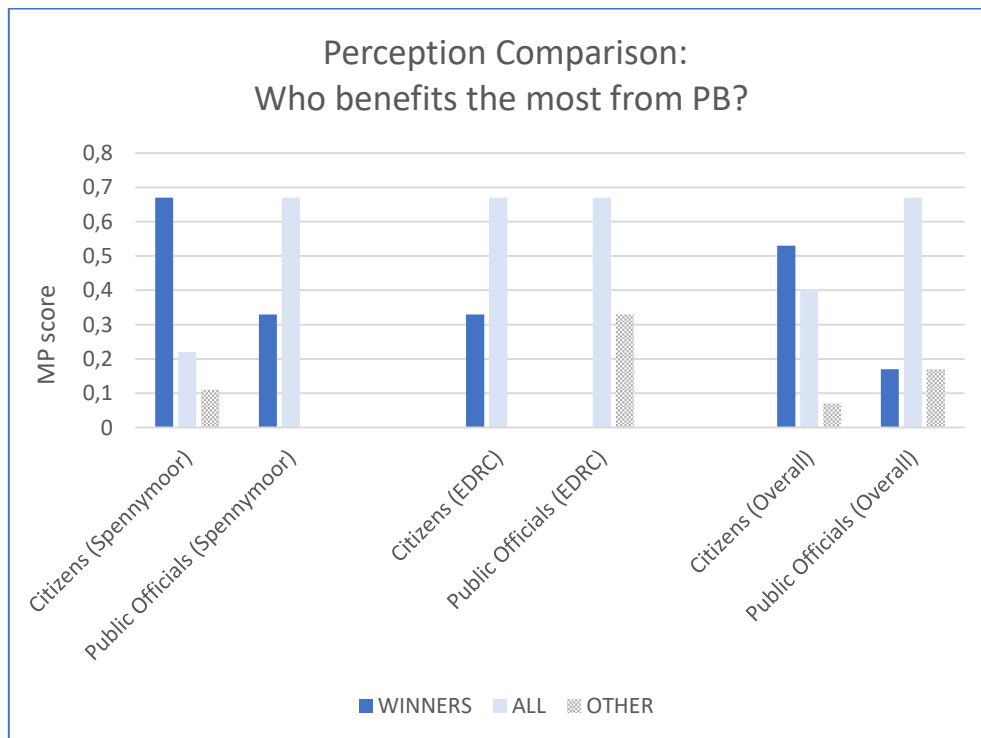
Interestingly, respondents were split regarding the question of who stands to benefit from PB the most – as indicated in the pie chart below.

Figure 12 General Perceptions: Who benefits the most from PB?



Analysis of this dissonance can be further divided into comparison of citizen and public official perceptions on the whole – as illustrated in the following graph – or through comparison of perceptions pervading Spennymoor and EDRC AAPs, exclusively.

Figure 13 Perception Comparison: Who benefits the most from PB?



### 5.2.3 Learning

Citizens and public officials alike commented on the varying forms of learning that take place over the course of PB. In the examples given by participants, *learning* took many forms including: capacity building, skills development, fundraising experience, organisational administration, social learning (knowledge and/or relational), networking (lasting connections), strategic planning, communal problem solving and forms of democratic learning or empowerment. Citizens learning about community resources was most commonly mentioned as a guaranteed outcome of PB.

*“I learned more about bid writing, for sure. For me it was about learning about that whole process... as I say, learning about the other things that are happening in the other voluntary organisations that I didn't know were available.”* (Interviewee 1202 – citizen).

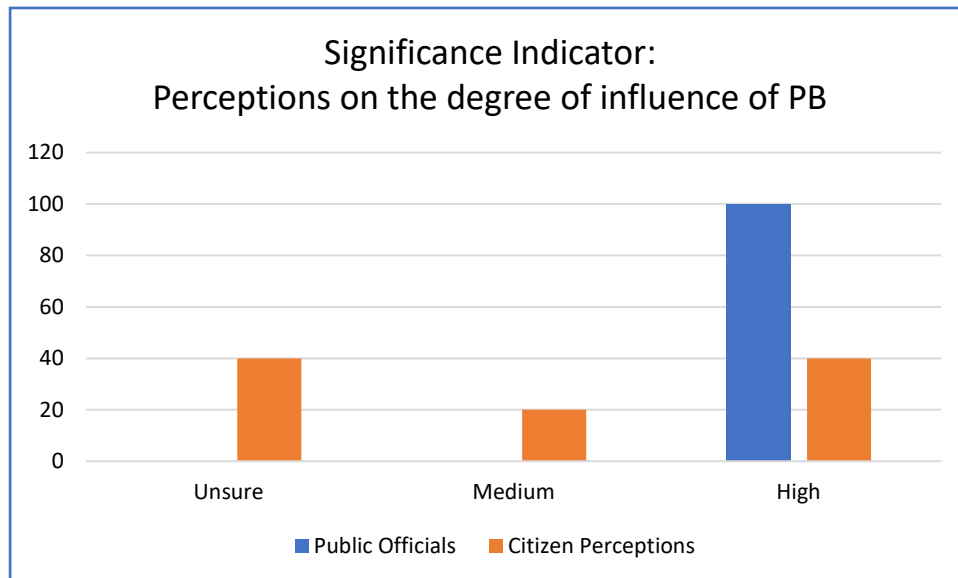
*“[A benefit is] finding out about different little organisations that you might not have heard of (meals on wheels, music band)... I only remember because they won money – I now know about them. It may have got extra people involved in their area who didn't know about them before.”* (Interviewee 2201 – citizen).

Despite the positive score *learning* received as an indicator of meaningful participation, some feel this could be improved. For example, when asked to what extent citizens learn about social issues and local needs, one respondent felt it was highly *“debatable.”* (Interviewee 1207). Helping people to understand the scope of the issue your community organisation may address is not easily achieved in a single afternoon – even if the PB event has a great turn out! Learning is a celebrated aspect of PB, but PB is not the only way in which learning should be encouraged and fostered within a true participatory democracy.

### 5.2.4 Significance

Public officials reported resounding agreement for the significance of PB. When asked *What was the outcome of the event?, How did citizen participation change the official outcome?* and *To what degree did it make an impact?* citizens were less confident in their answers. For better or for worse, 20% of citizens interviewed suggested the PB only made a medium level impact; whereas the rest of the respondents were equally divided (40% and 40%) between *uncertainty* versus confirmation of PB's *high* degree of influence as suggested by the perception of public officials.

Figure 14 Significance Indicator: Perceptions on the degree of influence of PB



There were contradicting justifications given for these subjective scores. For example, although one citizen voiced distrust of an elite, traditional budgeting systems where smaller organisations which do important community work may not win funds – others argued the opposite.

*“There are people looking after problem children and disabled children who should have had more support. They participated in PB and received it, but I don't think they would have received it if it was up to [public officials] to make that decision.” (Interviewee 2203 – citizen).*

*“The public vote does have an influence in it. If it was left to the County Councillors to say what was most needed – I think it might have been a different result. Certain groups the county might say is more deserving because they're a bigger group so there's more people benefiting... but maybe this group has a smaller group of people but may have a bigger need. The public view would sway votes certain ways like that. It's complicated choices, quite harsh choices as well.” (Interviewee 2202 – citizen).*

*“I don't know how they would have portioned the money otherwise. In some respects, it may be easier for the council because they can't be blamed for giving this money here or whatever because it's the public that do it. But here's where I think the system is flawed (even if we'd won every year I would still think the system is flawed) – because our group, we have about 60 children... only about 20 can vote. If we're up against a school that has 200-300 children, or even a secondary-school that*

*has 600 children, we're never gonna win... if you've got a big organisation, they win every time – and smaller organisations, well they only win on certain occasions...*” (Interviewee 1205 – citizen).

### 5.2.5 Purpose

Table 11 Perceptions of purpose

PURPOSE	Perceptions of:	
	Citizens	Public Officials
Negative	1 (7%)	0
Neutral (+/-)	5 (33%)	0
Positive	9 (60%)	6 (100%)

Purpose was explored in terms of positive/active (e.g. *democratic, ethical, economical, capacity/relation building, goal-orientation, future power transfer, information exchange*) and negative/passive (e.g. *to control or neutralize the public, symbolic power,*

*legislation*) motivations for participation in the interactive governance process of PB.

None of the public officials interviewed listed a single negative motivation in answer to the questions: (1) *Why do you think a participatory approach was used in this case?*; or (2) *What was the purpose of citizen participation?*. Only one participant shared overtly negative perceptions on the purpose of PB. Five citizen interviewees listed the possibility of both negative and positive motivations – which were graded as “neutral”, while the remaining nine shared strong support for positive motivations only.

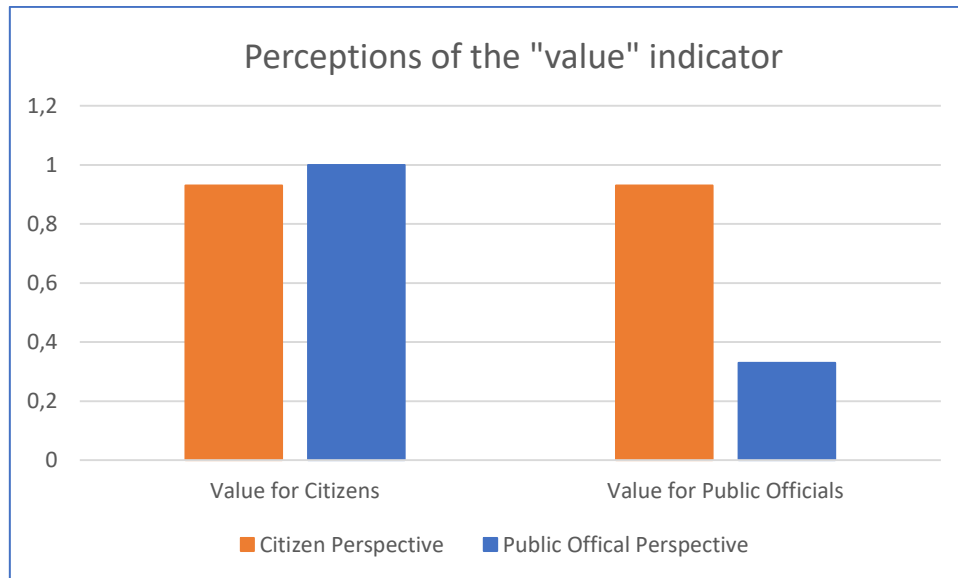
As one public official aptly suggests, it is not only the original purpose of PB which matters but also its strategic trajectory: *“I’ve been a big advocate of citizens empowerment and involvement in decision making and I saw [PB] as a vehicle in order to do that. We convinced people it would be a good idea to try it. But it’s only been tried in a very safe way. Regrettably, we don’t seem to have a strategy to say, ‘Well how [or] where does this policy go from here? ... There should be an active debate going on about how we’re going to develop it.”* (Interviewee 2103 – public official). The underlying purpose of PB may delineate its potential mission and future policy vision; but even this requires continued attention.

### 5.2.6 Value

The *value* indicator of meaningful participation revealed a change in the pattern of high scores amongst public officials. While there was strong agreement that transaction costs were worth citizen engagement in PB, public officials were less convinced that PB was worth the same investment of top-down players. This is summarised in the following graph and the following excerpts from

participant interviews which reveal differing perceptions on the workload required of public officials to facilitate interactive governance processes entailed within a PB initiative.

Figure 15 Perceptions of the "value" indicator



Citizens were clear about the value they see in PB despite the transaction costs required for both citizens and public officials:

*"[Is it worth it?] I would definitely say, yes! Because as I say, we reap the benefits from it."*  
(Interviewee 1201 – citizen).

*"Even if you aren't connected directly to the AAP or project yourself, doesn't mean you can't benefit from it! Meals on wheels may provide the meals for your grandma! For AAPs? They've got to get the money out there, so the benefit is there. That's what they're there for. Them putting the time and effort in is expected really and if they think this is the best way to do it they should put the effort in."*  
(Interviewee 2201 – citizen).

Public officials on the other hand, showed wise reservation in their diplomatic review:

*"[It is worth the time and resources for government] if you have the size and reach of Spennymoor and the percentage of the population, yes. If you don't have that percentage [of participants], is it really participatory?"* (Interviewee 1103 – public official).



*“When you talk about value, to be honest they are expensive!”* (Interviewee 1102 – public official).

*“If it works and it’s beneficial and it’s winding participation and promoting community engagement – than yes. But if it’s not doing that, no. [PB] is about winding participation and benefitting the local community.”* (Interviewee 2101 – public official).

*“With everything, there may come a time where [PB] has gone as far as it can go.”* (Interviewee 2102 – public official).

### 5.3 Variety of role perceptions

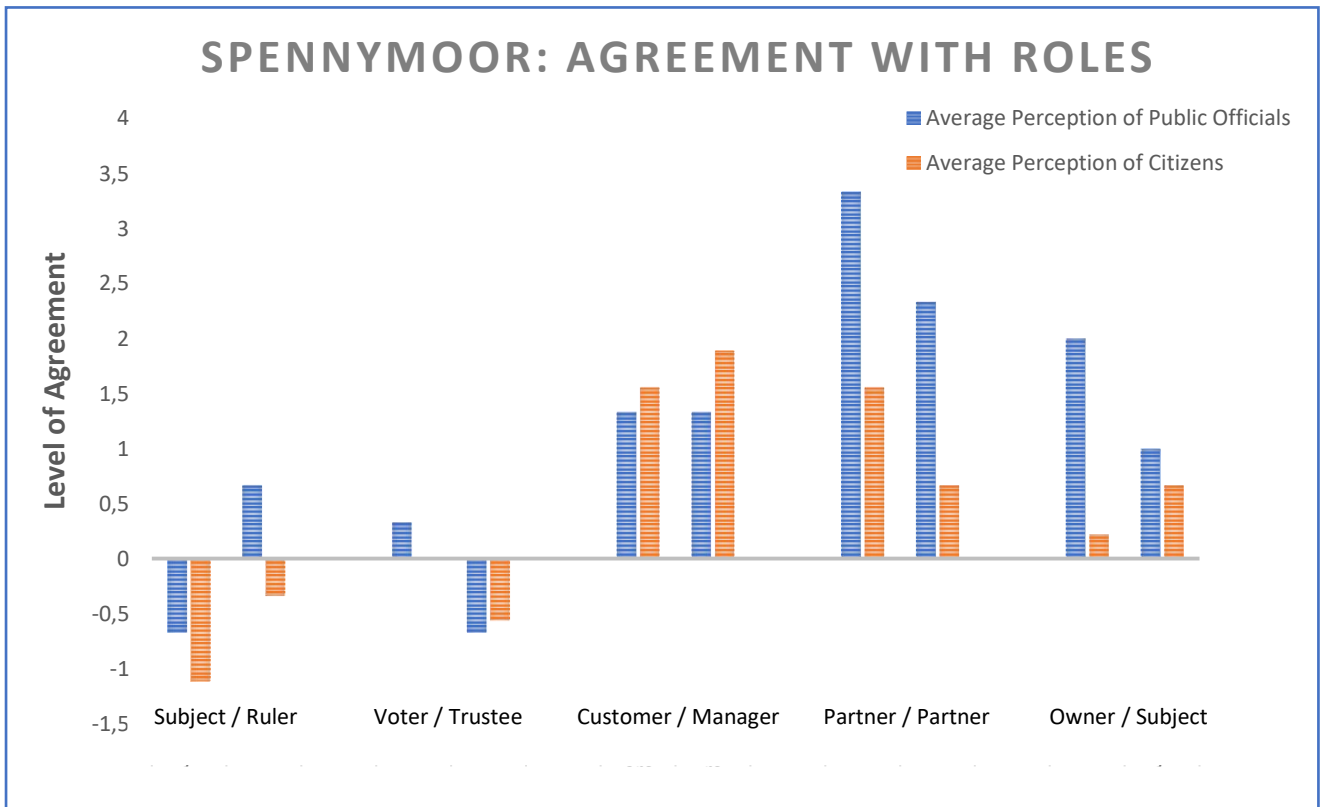
Vigoda’s typology is simple and straightforward. The clarity of role perceptions was analysed on both the precision (clear levels of agree- or disagreement) and simplicity (fit) of participants answers according to Vigoda’s theoretical model of complementary roles which form the working relationship. The Likert Scale captured the polarisation of participants agree- or disagreement with conceptual roles and responsibilities of citizens and public officials which fit into clear theoretical boxes of the *citizen/public official as subject/ruler; voter/trustee; customer/manager; partner/partner; or owner/subject*. While these perceptions do not gauge participants’ conscious awareness of the roles and responsibilities within the collaborative relationship of interactive governance, participants’ perceptions do illustrate their underlying support for varying forms of interaction – later underscored by the content of qualitative interview questions. This gave insight into the expectations of each side where discrepancies in role perceptions highlight areas of potential disappointment or disillusionment within the working relationship.

#### 5.3.1. Clarity of Role Perceptions

By and large, the Likert Scale results showed precision of roles through strong levels of agree- or disagreement with those proposed by Vigoda’s Evolutionary Continuum. In general, role perceptions were simple and straightforward – congruent with Vigoda’s model. Participants held complementary views of the roles of citizens and public officials (i.e. subject-ruler, voter-trustee, customer-manager, partner-partner, and owner-subject combinations). Any inconsistencies or differences in the two case studies have been noted in the figures below. Overall, the prevailing support for customer-manager and partner-partner roles provides pragmatic evidence of Vigoda’s theoretical framework

which suggests these role perceptions are what underlie the outcome of *responsive* and *collaborative* interactions required within civic engagement and interactive governance processes.

Figure 16 Spennymoor: Agreement with roles



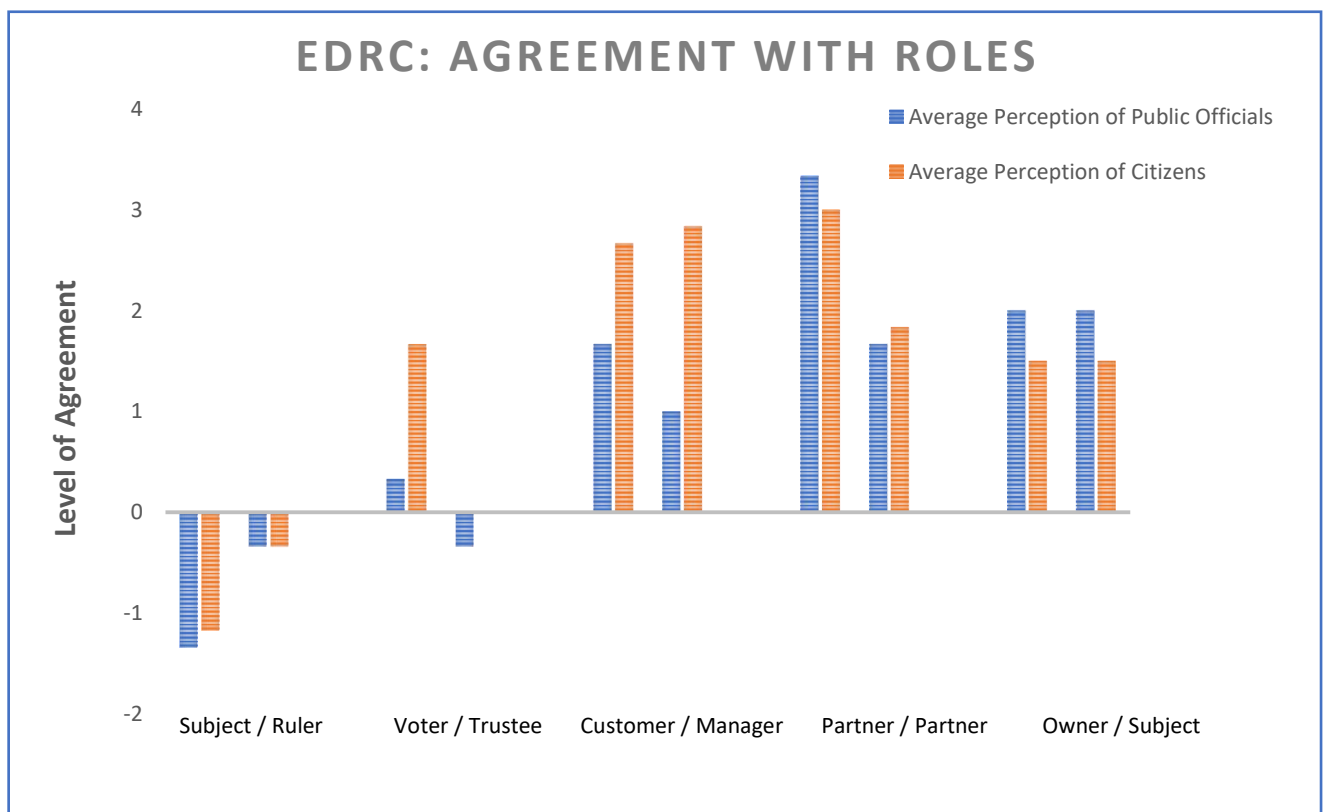
Where strong disagreement is measured regarding the role of citizens (i.e. citizens as subjects or citizens as voters), we would expect to see similar disagreement of its political counterpart (i.e. public officials as rulers or public officials as trustees). Likert Scale results highlighted incongruency amongst participants’ perceptions of Subject-Ruler and Voter-Trustee relationships. Public officials disagreed on the role of citizens as “subjects”; however, they showed agreement for their own role as “rulers”. Conversely, public officials showed agreement for the role of citizens as “voters”, but they did not agree with their affiliated role as “trustees”. Likewise, citizens disagreed with the role of public officials as “trustees” but expressed neutral perceptions on their own role as “voters”.

Overall, these incongruencies may be of little consequence as Vigoda’s continuum of role perceptions suggests that Subject-Ruler and Voter-Trustee relationships culminate in interactions of *coerciveness* and *delegation*, respectively. Where interactive governance is concerned, the aim of interaction is responsiveness and ultimately collaboration. These types of interaction should theoretically occur in Customer-Manager and Partner-Partner role perceptions. In Spennymoor,

both citizens and officials showed strong agreement with these role categories. However, it is evident that citizens agreed most strongly with the Customer-Manager model (and a desire for *responsive* government) while public officials reported their highest agreement with Partner-Partner roles and responsibilities (creating an expectation of *collaborative* interaction).

Although citizens and public officials all showed agreement for the roles of *citizens as partners*, *public officials as partners*, and *citizens as owners*, it is worth noting that these are also the categories indicating the largest discrepancy between the perceptions of both parties – results differing by a factor greater than 1.0 for each (i.e. while public officials show agreement for the role of *citizens as partners* with a score of 3.33-*strongly agree*, citizens only recorded an average agreement of 1.56-*agree* for this category).

Figure 17 EDRC: Agreement with roles



Likert Scale results show that there is a robust perception of citizens as partners on behalf of public officials and citizens alike. Perceptions of public officials as corresponding partners also received a positive albeit moderate review. Overall, citizens in EDRC again showed strongest agreement with the Customer-Manager model of governance – citing higher scores for these roles than citizens in

Spennymoor did. Interestingly, public officials in EDRC showed strongest agreement with the Partner-Partner roles and responsibilities – perhaps a trend, when compared to the results of public officials in Spennymoor AAP.

In EDRC, the strongest congruency between perceptions of public officials and citizens is found in the Partner-Partner and Owner-Subject models of governance. Here citizens and public officials appear to have similar expectations of the role and responsibilities of the other. Note however, that the role of *citizens as voters* received a discrepancy greater than 1.0 between ratings made by citizens (1.67-agree) or public officials (0.33-agree). The least congruent relationship in EDRC is between citizens’ perceptions of *citizens as customers* (2.67-strongly agree) and *public officials as managers* (2.83-strongly agree) in comparison to public officials’ perceptions of *citizens as customers* (1.67-agree) and their own role as *managers* (1.0-agree).

### 5.3.2. Ranking role perceptions

The following graph illustrates the ranking of roles for which citizens and public officials showed agreement. Note that while public officials and citizens did not agree on the *exact* ranking of roles, they did list a similar “top-three” perceptions regarding their role and the role of the “other”.

Table 12 Ranking role perceptions by agreement

	SPENNYMOOR		EDRC	
	Perception of Public Officials on:	Perception of Citizens on:	Perception of Public Officials on:	Perception of Citizens on:
The role of citizens as..	PARTNER ——— PARTNER/Customer Owner <del>————</del> Customer/PARTNER Customer ——— Owner Voter	PARTNER/Owner Customer/PARTNER Owner	PARTNER ——— PARTNER Owner <del>————</del> Customer Customer <del>————</del> Voter Voter ——— Owner	PARTNER Customer Voter Owner
The role of public official as..	PARTNER <del>————</del> Manager Manager ——— PARTNER / Subject Subject ——— Subject / Partner Ruler	Manager PARTNER / Subject Subject / Partner	Subject <del>————</del> Manager PARTNER <del>————</del> PARTNER Manager <del>————</del> Subject	Subject PARTNER Manager Subject

## 6. Analysis

In the following analysis, data from the two case studies is mainly evaluated as a combined sum. The data sufficiently warrants this choice as the perceptions of CLEAR conditions and/or new roles, the experiences of meaningful participation and the relationship between these variables are mirrored closely in each. However, where the data is presented as separate case study results, this has been done to more fully comprehend the reality of participants as articulated throughout their individual interviews. Spennymoor and EDRC AAPs face similar success but differing obstacles in their implementation of PB as an interactive governance process. Distinct analysis occurred where enough data was gathered to support researcher observations and qualitative statements made by participants to explain the nuanced differences in the case study results; whereas collective analysis reflects the more general conclusions which could be made across both case studies – thus holding greater external validity.

### 6.1 Observation of Role Dilemmas

It is evident in both case studies that citizens agreed most strongly with the Customer-Manager model (and a desire for *responsive* government) while public officials agreed most strongly with the Partner-Partner model (creating an expectation for a *collaborative* relationship). This may be because the interactive process is government-induced. There appears to be more enthusiasm or understanding of these roles amongst public officials than can be found amongst a hesitant citizenry. This relationship must be nurtured for both parties to come with equal footing to the decision-making table.

In Spennymoor, the average perceptions of public officials ranked support for the role of citizens primarily as a *partner*, *owner*, *customer*, and then *voter*. Disagreement was measured for citizens as subjects. The average citizen perception ranked support for the role of citizen primarily as *partner* and/or *customer*, and then *owner* - showing neutral opinion about their role as voter and disagreement of citizens as subjects. Perceptions of public officials ranked the role of public official as *partner*, followed by *manager*, *subject*, then *ruler*. Disagreement was shown for their role as trustee. Citizen perceptions strongly support the role of public official as *manager*, followed by *partner* and/or *subject* – also indicating disagreement for the role of public official as trustee.

In EDRC, the average perceptions of public officials again ranked support for the role of citizens primarily as a *partner, owner, customer*, and then *voter*. Disagreement was measured for citizens as subjects. The average citizen perception ranked support for the role of citizen primarily as *partner, customer, voter*, and then *owner*. Again, citizens disagreed with the role of citizens as subjects. Perceptions of public officials ranked the role of public official as *subject*, followed by *partner* and then *manager*. Disagreement was shown for their role as ruler or trustee. Citizen perceptions strongly support the role of public official as *manager*, followed by *partner* and then *subject* – showing disagreement for the role of public official as ruler and neutral perceptions on the role of public official as trustee.

The greatest tension illustrated in both AAPs is that citizens and public officials have rebuffed traditional paradigms of public administration requiring the roles of subject/ruler and the limitations of voter/trustee relationships. However, a new tension emerges whereby citizens seek customer/manager *responsiveness* while public officials pursue partner/partner *cooperation*. This dilemma evidences Vigoda's continuum by highlighting the subtle way in which citizen perceptions are perhaps hesitantly nudged into new understandings of roles and responsibilities, as public officials move towards a new paradigm of public administration: co-creation and co-ownership of today's wicked problems. This is reflected in the research results as well – note how public officials show greater support for the final interaction relationship of Vigoda's model (*owner/subject*) than for the previous tradition of *customer/manager* brought in through NPM. In each category of Vigoda's model, public officials appear to be one step further along the spectrum than the average citizen. These case studies suggest citizen perceptions can be facilitated by the context of participatory democracy afforded them by top-down actors and government induced initiatives. Also, it demonstrates that a *partner/partner* mentality between citizen and public officials should not be taken for-granted but fostered.

Overall, citizens did not appear conscious of these tensions nor how greatly their perceptions and answers varied from that of local public officials. Public officials on the other hand, were more likely to surmise a response which prefaced their own perspective with reference to how the citizen experience may differ. Unfortunately, a larger data sample must be examined to explore and evidence the extent to which these role dilemmas acted as a conduit or barrier to an individual's perception of meaningful participation. No evident patterns emerged from this research. Nevertheless, the visible yet gradual transformation of roles and responsibilities of citizens and public officials does remain aligned with the outlined theoretical framework: As new roles transition

the working relationship between citizens and public officials along Vigoda's spectrum towards a new form of partnering collaboration, the change does not require a volatile, dramatic shift – but rather, as depicted by the example of PB in County Durham, it may take root and inconspicuously find growth under the tender care and investment of a top-down government-initiated framework.

## 6.2 Analysis of meaningful participation

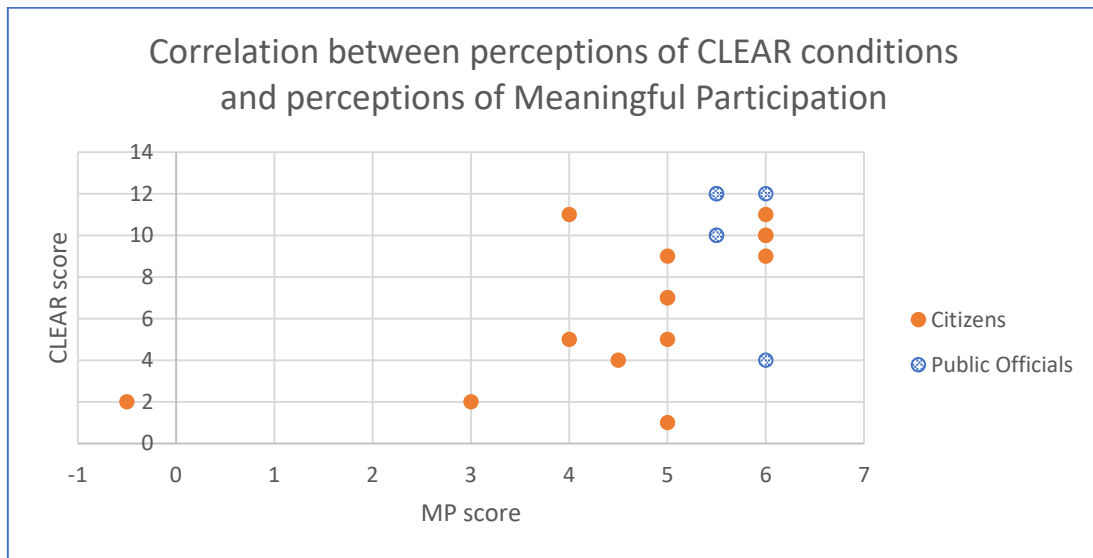
Meaningful participation is an issue for both citizens and public officials. Regardless of new role dilemmas, participants have other pressures to navigate: especially the stewardship of their personal time and resource. As reflected by the lower *value* score of public officials – it is important for government to reflect critically on the inputs and outcomes of interactive governance processes such as PB.

Although interviewees remained supportive of PB, a few critically raised the question: *“Is it worth the time and resources for government to put into it? If you have the [appropriate] size and reach... and percentage of population , yes. If you don't have that percentage, is it really participatory budgeting?”* (Interviewee 1103 – public official). PB can be reframed and emphasised as an opportunity to build social capacity. Instead of tokenistic practice, this nuanced goal of PB may safeguard it as a civic tool and community treasure. This research examined the meaningfulness of *participation* in PB. However, it may have been more valuable to the AAPs if the research had focused on the meaningfulness of the PB process itself. Boluijt & de Graaf (2010:14) discuss an example of PB in the Netherlands where empowerment was one of the original goals of the PB process instead of being relegated to a simple “side-effect of citizen participation” – which unfortunately leads to a decline of empowerment all together. This issue is considered in the recommendations of this report – emphasising the importance of reframing PB for the greater benefit of those involved.

## 6.3 Correlation between perceptions of CLEAR conditions & meaningful participation

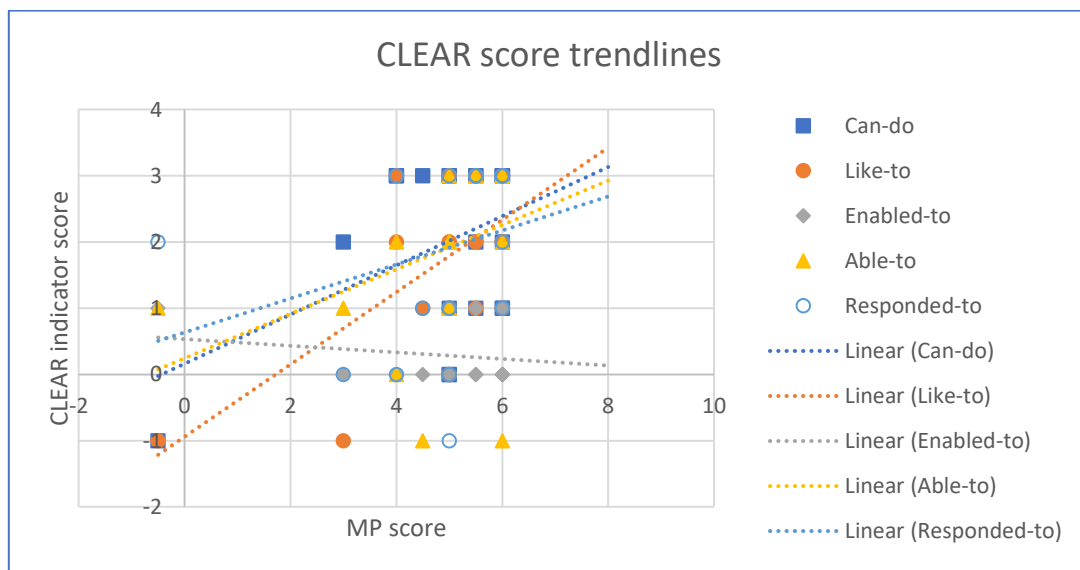
As the graph below highlights, there is a clear correlation between a participant's high perception score of CLEAR conditions and their experience of meaningful participation. Again, it is apparent that public officials score the process much higher overall than their citizen counterparts.

Figure 18 Correlation between perceptions of CLEAR conditions and perceptions of Meaningful Participation



When CLEAR scores are examined per indicator instead of by participant totals, we see similar patterns emerge. However, the “Enabled-to” factor rebuffs the linear trends of the other four indicators, showing a nearly neutral yet negative trajectory. It was scored by the results of only one indicative question; whereas the other CLEAR factors were the sum of three. This explains its lower indicator score overall; but does not explain the direction of its trendline. Graphs depicting each of the CLEAR trends separately can be found in *Appendix F: Breakdown of CLEAR indicators*.

Figure 18 CLEAR score trendlines





There is not enough data to explore the significance of this outlier or to rank the differing effects each CLEAR indicator may have on the perception of meaningful participation. However, the theoretical interchange between perceptions of CLEAR conditions and meaningful participation is proposed in the quadrant below.

Figure 19 Proposed interchange between perceptions of CLEAR conditions & meaningful participation

		Perception of <i>Meaningful Participation</i> →	
		High CLEAR Low MP	High CLEAR High MP
Perception of <i>CLEAR Conditions</i> →	High CLEAR Low MP	<b>(NON-EXISTENT)</b>	<b>(PARTNERSHIP)</b> High levels of agreement are present amongst participants.  14 interviewees: <i>5 public official / 9 citizen</i>
	Low CLEAR Low MP	<b>(CRITICAL)</b> Participants have high expectations for a responsive government to manage their critique of the interactive governance process.  2 interviewees: <i>2 citizen</i>	<b>(TRANSITIONAL)</b> Participants see themselves as meaningful partners but may not be equipped to participate independently. They are transitioning across the continuum into new role perceptions & expectations.  5 interviewees: <i>1 public official / 4 citizen</i>

These results support the well-established theory that CLEAR indicators play a causal role in the meaningful participation of those involved in interactive governance processes such as PB. Where CLEAR indicators are present, so is the experience of meaningful participation. The largest number of participants fit into the “*Partnership*” quadrant where high perceptions of CLEAR conditions and meaningful participation (i.e. higher than 50% agreement) correlated with strong support for the interactive governance process. Approximately a quarter of those interviewed fit into the following “*Transitional*” category where they shared a high perception of meaningful participation but were less likely to score CLEAR indicators with as much confidence. While these individuals were supportive of the interactive governance process, the theoretical framework argues this will not be sustainable for future participation unless CLEAR conditions become more explicit. Lastly, interviewees who perceived a low score (i.e. lower than 50% of the total score) for both CLEAR

conditions and meaningful participation, are classified here as “*Critical*” – not only because of their strong critique of the interactive governance process but because without critical intervention, these individuals self-professed they were likely to exit the participatory process.

#### 6.4 Role perceptions in relation to perceptions of CLEAR conditions & meaningful participation

The Likert Scale on role perceptions was given out to participants before the detailed interview about PB commenced, as not to give a strong emotional context to the topic of roles and responsibilities before participants’ baseline perceptions could be recorded. Findings reported high agreement with partner-partner roles overall and therefore evidenced a collaborative working relationship between public officials and citizens in both case studies.

Given the narrow scope of this study, it is not possible to conclude the full impact of role perceptions as a driver or barrier of existing CLEAR conditions. However, what we do see is that the average role perceptions of individuals who fit into the “*Partnership*” quadrant presented in *figure 19* – sharing a high perception of both CLEAR conditions and meaningful participation -- align most congruently with Vigoda’s proposed movement across the evolutionary continuum: showing strong support for the roles of partner/partner (current – paradigm of new public governance); medium support for the roles on either side of partnership which are customer/manager (previous – paradigm of new public management) and owner/subject (potential future paradigm); and low support for the historic roles of subject/ruler and voter/trustee. See the following two graphs for comparison of citizens’ and public officials’ role agreement categorised according to their location within the proposed quadrant.

Citizens in the “*Transitional*” quadrant also follow a similar evolution but show more reservation along the continuum. There is strong support for partnership, but more support shown for traditional roles of voter/trustee than for future roles of owner/subject.

Individuals who fit into the “*Critical*” quadrant rated their role most strongly as that of a customer or consumer. These citizens scored themselves lower as partners which ultimately reinforced their expectation for government to be responsive to their needs and desires instead of promoting continued collaboration. As described in the theoretical framework of Chapter 2, these citizens express their dissatisfaction and call for government reform. They support or oppose policies

through economic interaction. Again, the results of this study support Vigoda’s original theory that these “critical” (consumer-type) participants are, in their own words, likely to withhold resource contributions of time and therefore refrain from future participation. Arguably, role perceptions continue to shape their actions.

Figure 20 Citizens' role agreement categorised by MP&CLEAR scores

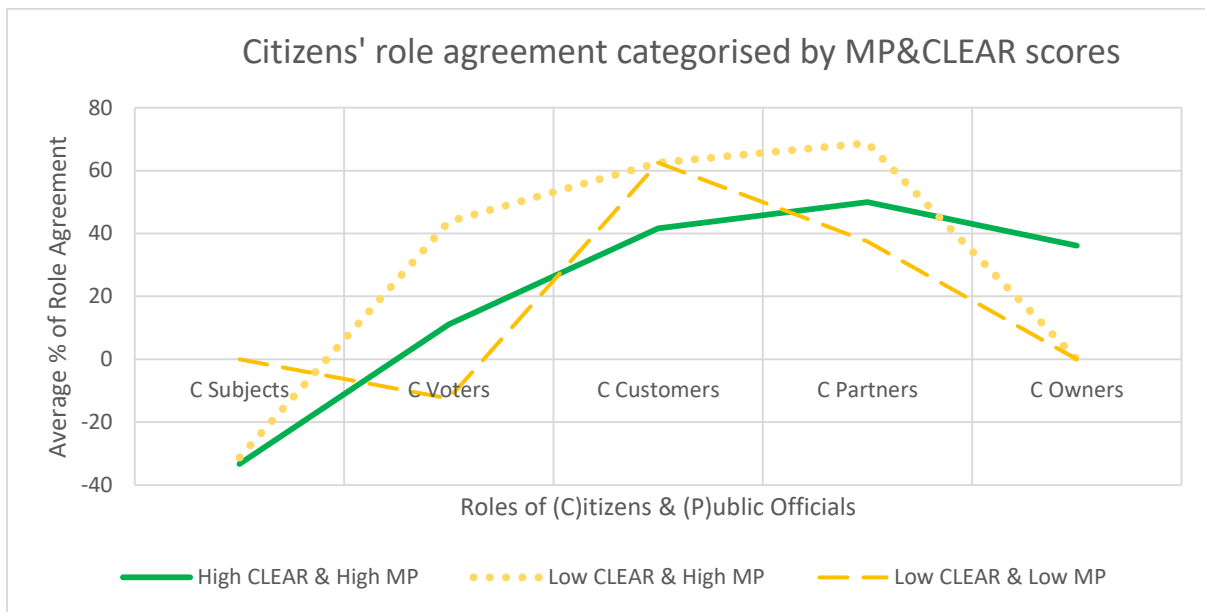
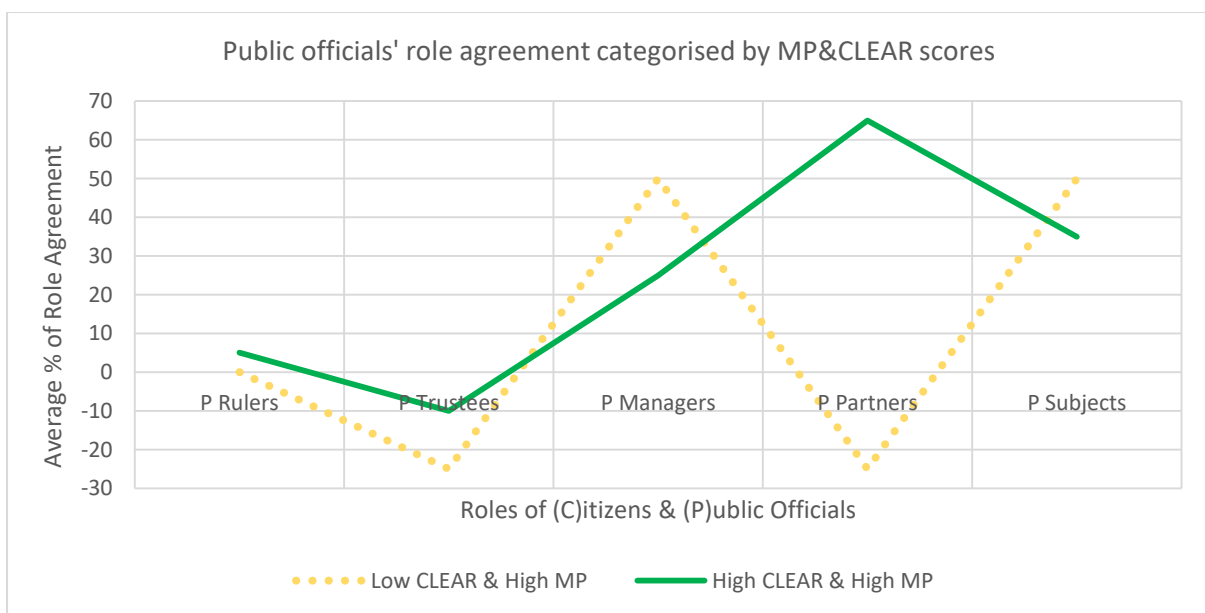


Figure 21 Public officials' role agreement categorised by MP&CLEAR scores



Note that where public officials do not see their role as that of a partner, they are unlikely to hold a high perception of CLEAR conditions which are heavily reliant on initial government support and monitoring.

## 6.5 Expectations and tensions

Although no explicit tensions were mentioned when participants were outrightly asked, some interviewees alluded to feeling a difference of political ideology or “*agendas*”. However, use of the words “*flawed*” or “*unfair*” appeared more frequently amongst participants who rated CLEAR conditions or the experience of meaningful participation lower than 50%.

A key issue which arose in both case studies was the exclusive nature of some communities within the region. Historically scarce on resource, trust is required for these parties to refrain from self-serving behaviour; or, these rational actors must be managed in other ways for the success of the network and those involved in the interactive governance process. Partnership on the communal scale of PB initiatives is not intended for elite membership. Not only do personal role perceptions but also how citizens perceive the community with which they identify more generally can become a barrier to interactive governance when participants identify with too small an aspect (e.g. geographical location) which does not take the larger network into account.

*“Community capacity building is about people working together and community tensions between areas. People have often got local agendas which can make it difficult as well. Especially in local examining communities where the make-up of the community is very, very strong. I suppose talking about communities, you'd have to look up the history of it all – but there was that national union miner's strike back in 1984 when they were out on strike – some of the friendships that were built around that time in terms of the poverty, last in transcendent communities even today. That's nearly 40 years later. It was a while ago but made a massive impact.”* (Interviewee 2101 – public official).

While public officials may recognise these drivers and barriers within the interactive governance processes they manage, the act of *partnering* and sustaining a context for citizen collaboration still weighs heavily on their administrative shoulders. This expectation appeared to be shared by both public officials and citizens alike, explaining “*it's the AAP's job*” to carry out these tasks.

## 7. Conclusion & Discussion

### 7.1 Conclusion

This study explored drivers and barriers of meaningful participation in government-induced interactive governance processes. More specifically, the following research question was addressed: *How do CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions affect the experience of meaningful participation of citizens in legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes?*

The research was carried out through a double case study with a focus on Participatory Budgeting (PB) as the form of interactive governance to be reviewed. By comparing the process and resulting perceptions of PB initiatives in two neighbouring communities within the same UK county, this controlled for the potential influence of factors such as geopolitical interference of the independent variables which this research sought to measure. Analysis of similar results across both case studies strengthen the justification of the subsequent conclusions as more than a simple correlation study or fluke – despite the qualitative nature of the original study design.

Drawing on a combination of interviews with citizens and public officials, document study, surveys and general observation, the following conclusions were made in relation to both case studies:

## CONCLUSIONS

CLEAR conditions alongside the clarity of congruent role perceptions are drivers of meaningful participation and therefore essential to the sustainability of interactive governance processes through the following mechanisms:

- Positive perceptions of CLEAR indicators and clarity of congruent role perceptions mutually reinforce each other – leading to outcomes of meaningful participation.
- Where these key building blocks are not in place, this mutually positive reinforcing effect is hampered – leading to less positive experiences of meaningful participation and eventual dissuasion from future participatory interaction, specifically amongst citizenry.
- There is a shared responsibility for the variables of interactive governance success. Whilst the administrative burden falls to initiators of the government-induced interactive governance process (i.e. public officials) to empower their citizen counterparts, sustainable partnership is not achieved unless both citizens and public officials accept their role and responsibility as *partners*.

When we understand government-induced *interactive governance* as a “*complex process*” [specifically mandated by top-down forces of government as opposed to grassroots citizen initiatives] “*through which a plurality of social and political actors with diverging interests interact in order to formulate, promote, and achieve common objectives by means of mobilizing, exchanging, and deploying a range of ideas, rules, and resources*” (Torfing et. al, 2012:14), it is quickly apparent that the evolving complexities which arise require considerable attention to protect the integrity and sustainability of such processes.

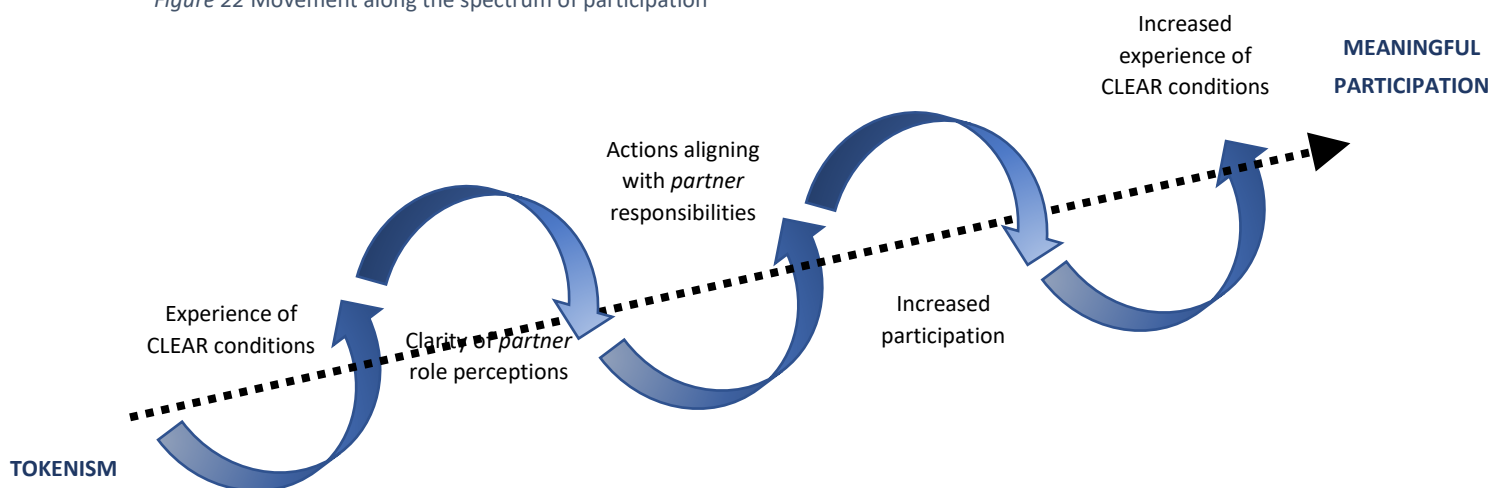
Though interactive governance processes may take many additional forms, the participatory budgeting initiatives undertaken in County Durham present a microcosm of network interactions with distinct role perceptions in play. This study concludes that role perceptions of both public officials and citizens hold an indirect influence over the experience of meaningful participation due to the way role perceptions impact and interact with the CLEAR conditions involved in these

interactive governance processes. Study results also confirmed a strong correlation between the presence of CLEAR conditions and the experience of meaningful participation – a driving force away from tokenistic practice.

While this study cannot report on the full impact of role perceptions as a driver or barrier of CLEAR conditions and/or the interactive governance process overall; there is evidence that these factors influence the experience of citizens and public officials in differing ways. For example, the perception of the role embraced by public officials relates directly to their perception of its correlating responsibility and therefore leads to action or inaction to empower citizens through the establishment of CLEAR conditions. Action to do so ultimately leads to higher CLEAR scores where public officials show strongest agreement for their own role as *partner*. Where public officials do not see themselves as partners, the experience (both the perception and existence) of CLEAR conditions is likely to suffer.

Simultaneously, this enabling of participation through the availability of CLEAR conditions strengthens the citizen’s perception of their own self-efficacy – reinforcing both their role perception and ability to *partner* through collaboration. This was underscored by the qualitative interview results where citizens frequently commented on the help they received from AAP officials in order to participate in the process in a more meaningful way. As CLEAR conditions increase within a given context, citizens are empowered to participate to a new degree which reinforces their own role and responsibility as *partner*; as well as improving their overall experience of meaningful participation within a government-induced interactive governance process.

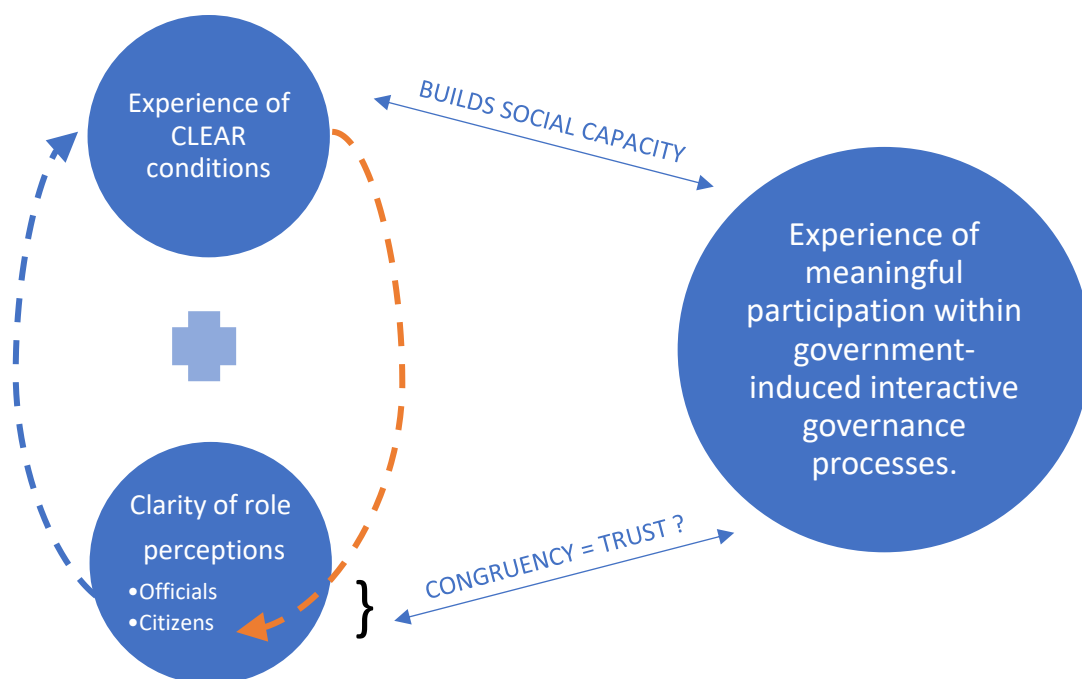
Figure 22 Movement along the spectrum of participation



The clarity of role perceptions was specifically shown to act as a driver of meaningful participation when perceptions aligned with Vigoda’s evolutionary continuum for the modern political context of a new public governance paradigm – moving away from the expectation of a responsive government sustained by customer-manager roles towards a more collaborative working relationship marked by partner-partner responsibilities. Strong or precise role perceptions in other categories may have convoluted participants’ experience as they would be incongruent with the overall process of collaboration. Participants who showed agreement for partner-partner roles expressed less disappointment and/or tensions within the interactive governance process. This correlated to a higher perception of meaningful participation.

Upon review of the original conceptual model, the illustration can be modified as follows:

Figure 23 Review of drivers & barriers of meaningful citizen participation



- The vertical dashed arrows now explore the *individual* effects of [1] participants’ assessments of CLEAR conditions on [2] the clarity of participant’s role perceptions and vice versa. Where officials show clear agreement for their role and responsibility of *partner*, this correlates with a higher assessment of CLEAR conditions. Where a strong assessment of CLEAR conditions is present, citizens show more support for their role as *partner*. This reinforcing relationship represents the interaction of both variables; however, given the



differences in how these two dimensions impact the experience of meaningful participation directly, a summation of this combined impact could not be calculated on the process overall.

- Congruency between the role perceptions of officials and citizens appears to reinforce trust within the working relationship – theoretically fortified by a continued experience of meaningful participation within the interactive governance process.
- Whilst CLEAR conditions build social capacity, meaningful participation in an interactive governance process similarly boosts participant’s ability and desire to continue (i.e. CLEAR factors of Can-do, Like-to, and Able-to are specifically likely to increase).

## 7.2 Discussion

### 7.2.1 Scientific discussion

Why does this report matter? These case studies form the basis of analysis for current methods of interaction – providing direction for future policy based on the drivers and barriers verified through this empirical research. This research raised several points of interest for future study. When evaluating PB initiatives, the subjective perceptions of meaningful participation may not be enough to justify its continuance. Many dimensions must be considered. See *Appendix D – Dimensions of Participatory Budgeting* for additional themes and issues.

For one thing, a key consideration is the allotted budget size. Cabannes (2004:34) explains that PB “generally represents between 2 and 10 per cent of the overall implemented budget”. Where municipal projects do not meet this 2% threshold, Cabannes criticizes these initiatives as being largely “symbolic”. Across AAPs in County Durham, decisions are made by members of the AAP board regarding how much finance will be made available to the local community through PB. In recent years, these amounts have ranged between 20-40% of the AAP’s overall budget – well beyond the 2% threshold! Conversely, the case studies dealt with relatively small numbers of participants overall (i.e. 819 and 472 voters in recent PB initiatives). These statistics represent 40-50% of all AAP forum members which is a celebrated figure within the UK context of political disengagement and declining voter turnout. However, these participation rates only reflect 2-4% of all eligible voters across Spennymoor and East Durham Rural Corridor AAPs – perhaps calling the

significance of these specific PB methods more generally into question. This report narrowed in on the experience and perceptions of participants within PB, but this research methodology would benefit from exploration of additional interactive governance processes which require a higher threshold of public participation to compare CLEAR conditions and the impact of role perceptions to a more significant extent.

This study did not measure trust as a key influencing factor in the relationship between CLEAR conditions, role perceptions and meaningful participation. However, a future working thesis might explore the *congruency* of role perceptions and if or how this provides a context for trust within the working relationship.

Another question worth further investigation is how role perceptions may differ in a bottom-up or grassroots induced form of interactive governance. Would public officials prove less optimistic, less helpful, less committed to their role as partner if it was not mandated; if they were less secure about their own roles and responsibilities; or if the trajectory of *partnership* did not align with their own political agenda? Likewise, would citizens have a stronger vision for *partnership* when initiating the process? Would this inspire higher expectations regarding the behaviour and action of either party (for citizen or public officials), linked perhaps to stronger role agreement or more congruent with the owner/subject relationship proposed by final stage of Vigoda's evolutionary continuum?

### 7.2.2 Societal discussion

Sintomer et. al (2008:165) explain the two key perspectives with which the success and impact of PB is evaluated: "While participatory democracy and deliberative democracy have been the two main basic theoretical frames that have enabled the research [on participatory budgeting as both a theoretical and practical democratic innovation], they have been interpreted in quite different ways. Some, following Habermas (1996), have insisted, for example, on the conditions for a good participatory deliberation; others, in a post-Marxist tradition, have focused on the importance of participatory devices in and for social struggles." This study highlights the impact of *both-and*. Conditions for a good participatory deliberation (i.e. the perception – both the presence and experience – of CLEAR conditions) are clearly linked to the overall outcome of meaningful participation. However, meaningful participation is, in itself, not only a desired outcome: it is additionally a *driver* of interactive governance processes. It reinforces the continued and relevant

participation of network actors towards shared solutions for current and future wicked problems – consequently impacting a variety of social struggles through a growing track record of capacity building, institutional change and improved service outcomes.

In a society faced by issues which a standalone government can no longer solve on its own, it is crucial that public administrators understand the drivers and barriers to future cooperation with citizens and how these interactions can be improved upon. Moving forwards, the conclusions of this report challenge current policy actions around PB and the governance of similar interactive governance processes. The results provide several implications for public management and government officials (i.e. those initiating government-induced interactive governance processes). Firstly, empowerment and trust must be managed within the network. These tools do not thrive spontaneously but require a level of nurturing to spur on a positively reinforcing cycle of meaningful participation. To do this, a growing track record of *ability*, *honesty* and *benevolence* (i.e. trust) can be sustained through the continued facilitation of CLEAR conditions. Secondly, various strategies exist to manage actors and interactions within the network. According to Klijn & Koppenjan (2016:125), “Management of complexity, above all, needs to be focused on making parties aware of the existence of various problem perceptions and on the furtherance of favourable conditions for bridging these different perceptions.” Reflected by the results of this report, the primary objective here is not creation of total consensus but a focus on bridging problem and/or role perceptions and moving forwards through joint image building.

Role perceptions may be influenced towards partnership and/or reinforced by a collaborative working relationship and the experience of meaningful participation. Again, findings showed that where citizens view themselves as partners, this correlated with higher perceptions of CLEAR conditions and an increased experience of meaningful participation within interactive governance processes. Therefore, where a perception of partnership is present, it must be fostered and facilitated by public officials through continued emphasis of CLEAR dimensions:

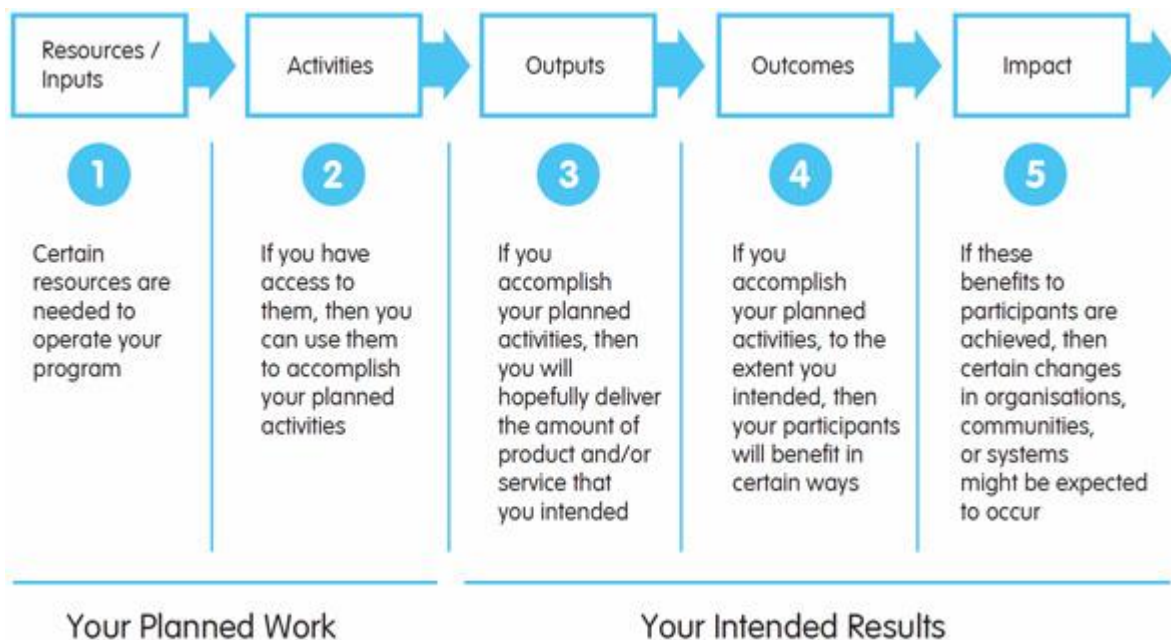
<b>CAN do:</b> citizens must have the resources and knowledge to participate
--

Resources and knowledge can be acquired through avenues of direct participatory democracy as well as citizen participation in organisations and associations. In the case studies provided, we see that the involvement of different groups and associations presented an issue of power dynamics within the PB process: groups with larger member populations were consistently more successful in

achieving their objectives within the interactive governance process of PB and within the broader network (e.g. winning funding bids, securing community support, etc.). Instead of negating the influence of associations on the process and outcomes of PB, this should be *acknowledged* and *harnessed* to reinforce the underlying goal of PB as a capacity building initiative. This entails a reframing of the problem. For example, instead of “How do we distribute public money in a transparent, fair way?” the question becomes “How can we increase social capacity and empower our community to address issues and ideas which closely affect them?” In this way, the funds become a vehicle for change rather than the end-goal.

According to Michels and De Graaf (2010:480), “Citizen engagement in social networks allows individuals to express their interests and demands on government. It makes their individual and otherwise quiet voices heard, and thus leads to more inclusion... Networks of civic engagement also make citizens more competent. Those voluntary associations are schools for democracy where civic skills and civic duties are learned.” An innovative way in which organisations applying for PB funding can be encouraged to build social capacity within their own staff and membership populations might be to introduce a more explicit *theory of change model* into the application process.

Figure 24 Theory of Change Model



(De La Mata, 2018).

An addition to the application process may at first be a hard sell to administrators and applicants alike; however, asking applicants what “impact” their project will make on the community without requiring a narrative of the wider key issues (i.e. wicked problems) the organisation seeks to address actually prevents voters from understanding the full influence of the potential funding. Asking organisations to create a concrete theory of change which outlines clear outputs, outcomes and impacts as part of their funding bid allows public officials to later evaluate the investment of PB funding against the individual outcomes and impacts proposed during the initial application process. Practically, this will require heavy upfront transaction costs as administrators will need to assist smaller organisations without the current skills to complete a more complicated application. Some organisations will be better equipped to measure their impact than others. Inequalities will still exist. However, there needs to be a move away from the “cuteness” factor of certain organisations as the magnetising draw for the majority vote. Citizens need to be more strongly encouraged to weigh the options based on the proposed outputs, outcomes, and eventual impacts. This shift will only happen where information is presented in a way which challenges citizens current perceptions of “good” community investment.

Requiring organisations to breakdown their community impact into measurable components will (i.) increase the capacity of local third sector organisations to act more strategically; (ii.) encourage the application of innovative projects which are not only aligned with community goals but include measurable outcomes; (iii.) increase learning through stronger feedback loops of both successful and failed initiatives; (iv.) challenge voters to weigh the proposed projects in light of the key issues they address – therefore reinforcing a shared perception of local problem definitions and potential solutions and influencing citizen perceptions towards a shared identity of network actors; (v.) diffuse participatory skills and knowledge throughout the wider network of participants – organisations and voters alike.

<b>LIKE to:</b> citizens have a sense of attachment that reinforces participation
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A barrier in both case studies, citizens tended to identify with a very localised community or narrow scope of problem solving. As citizens’ sense of attachment reinforces participation, it may be beneficial for public officials and administrators of interactive governance processes such as PB to investigate the possibilities and ramifications of “nudging” participants into a wider sense of “self” as a way to help expand their identity with a wider community. This entails the creation of intentional links between community centres or perhaps asking organisations to co-partner their projects with

others who are addressing similar key issues and/or who hold similar organisational objectives and mandates across the region.

In this way, the rational actions of network actors (i.e. the tendency for citizens to protect their own self-interests first) may be managed to simultaneously benefit a wider array of network actors whilst also allowing participants to prefer what they acknowledge as their own local needs. As a government-induced interactive process, it is the privilege and responsibility of public officials to manage the network – examining conflicts which arise as an issue of process design as well as the strategic game of social interaction between actors (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016:71). Though many strategies may be employed, this report recommends that public officials focus on *facilitating coalition-building* and *cooperative or collaborative strategies* (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016:80) in particular.

<b>ENABLED to:</b> citizens are provided with the opportunity for participation
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Another challenge highlighted by the results of this report was citizens' general unawareness of the civic and participatory channels readily available to them. This was not due to a lack of such channels. In an era of technological revolution, there is an entirely new field of digital democratic engagement which brings along with it additional complications of management and oversight. Although social media and many online methods of interaction are alternately available, comments by participants in both studies pointed to word-of-mouth and relational initiatives as the most successful channels of communication between citizens and public officials.

In response, much of the gap between citizens and public officials can be bridged through what public management theory refers to as *transformational leadership* (Yang & Pandey, 2011) or *boundary spanning* (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016:467). Boundary spanning requires an actor to translate the perceptions, expectations and language of both parties into that of the other – so bridging the gap of understanding and creating an environment where both parties come to the deliberative, participatory process enabled to communicate. Instead of expecting government to pander to their individually preferred methods of communication, citizens in a participatory process must be given an understanding of the governmental agenda, needs and limitations and also given the opportunity to express this for themselves in order for a shared communications strategy to emerge. Investing in the co-creation of communication channels between both public officials and citizens may result in higher usage of these participatory channels in the long run.

**ASKED to:** citizens are mobilized through public agencies and civic channels

What concerned interviewees about the *Asked-to* element of CLEAR conditions was not the reach and diversity of the process amongst voters themselves, but rather the reach and diversity of the final winners – the funding impact and outcomes of these projects. Consensus was clear – each of the groups and organisations applying for funding through PB were considered to some degree “deserving” and their projects were required to align with regional AAP priorities. However, several groups or organisations were felt to be left out of benefits or even excluded from the process entirely for a variety of reasons: size, lack of experience and strategy, or perhaps because their problem definitions included taboo themes (i.e. anti-racism initiatives or drug-rehabilitation).

This NIMBY-mentality (“not-in-my-back-yard”) amongst participants should be addressed as a “game type” amidst the strategic complexity of a governance network (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016:85). The famous adage by Peter Drucker states: What gets measured gets managed. Acknowledging the presence of NIMBY attitudes will give network managers the chance to respond accordingly through process design, interaction rules and other management strategies. As Klijn & Koppenjan (2016:159) explain, “...process management should be aimed at connecting stakeholders and policymakers by initiating participation beyond traditional, one-way information campaigns, more specifically aimed at exploring ways to make stakeholders co-producers and co-owner of solutions, policies, and services.”

**RESPONDED to:** citizens see evidence that their views have been considered

Participants need to know exactly what’s in it for them – the advantages of participation should be made explicit beforehand. Sometimes re-framing strategies must be employed. For example, PB can be promoted as more than free money or funding bids – but also as a Community Fun Day created to bring the town together, promote volunteerism, and to educate and skill community members. However, it can also be promoted by what participants have to offer to the participatory process themselves. Explicit recognition of the resources which each party brings to the table restates their legitimacy as relevant stakeholders in the interactive governance process. This can help to emphasis partnership role perceptions as citizens and public officials are asked to identify themselves as genuine asset-holders.

There will always be critical voices who feel that government is not doing enough to empower citizens – whether through participatory budgeting or other interactive governance processes. The AAPs in both case studies took this to heart. After each PB event, a booklet is published which includes a section entitled “You said, we listened...”. The feedback here is based on comments shared by participants on the day of voting. This is an example of good practice.

The balance of introducing new stakeholders into established networks of decision-making processes is not an easy task for public officials nor does it take quick effect. Vice versa, it can also be difficult for citizens to switch from a consumer mentality which demands a responsive government to a more collaborative expectation of partnership. The learning that takes place for participants (both citizens and public officials) in these interactive governance processes is not always self-evident, but should be celebrated. In future cases, it may be appropriate to broadcast key learnings from the perspective of both citizens and public officials more publicly. This underscores their partnership in trial and error and creates a track record of good intentions – of ability, honesty, and benevolence to move forwards in a positive way.

### 7.2.3 Methodological discussion

The following reflections present a methodological discussion of the research.

Several limitations were present in the selection of interviewee correspondents for the sake of this research. Participants were chosen and individually approached by an official from their local AAP to ask if they were willing to be contacted for research purposes. Not all of these individuals responded, nor were all possible participants approached – so the sample was not randomised in that regard nor can the overall representativeness of the population be determined in comparison with those selected.

Although quantified indicators were analysed as a conscious effort to illustrate the common themes which emerged throughout the qualitative interviews – these correlations are not calculated but based on researcher interpretations of the data as a whole. Overall, this report remains a qualitative study; and therefore, no strong assumptions should be regarding the statistical significance of these results.



Results were re-examined for internal validity to ensure that indicators measured concepts adequately and that the findings truly reflected participants' experience. It is important to note here that the 5-point Likert Scale used in Part I of the interview was successful in highlighting high (polarized) scores of strong agree- or disagreement with statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of citizens and public officials. However, it could not control for strong political ideologies. In future use, it would be beneficial to hone the precision of this survey by introducing an element which could do so, perhaps based on participant's previous electoral history. Although this is sensitive data which many participants may prefer not to share, understanding strong political ties may help to assess the effect of historic political ideologies on the current role perceptions held by participants.

In a similar vein, future research would do well to examine the overlap between roles. For instance, several interviewees requested an additional definition for the role of "public official" explaining that they were also just ordinary citizens, and vice versa – that citizens may have held the office of public official in the past. This evidences the role of unofficial boundary spanners within the network. As explained by Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk (2016:137) "The expectation that local politicians shall function as boundary spanners blurs the well-established distinction between the governing and the governed as well as between political and administrative governance tasks."

In conclusion, the recommendations of this report provide an academic response to study results, supported by theoretical literature on network governance. However, the subjective nature of perceptions amongst interviewees may limit the transferability of findings to similar contexts. Nevertheless, the key results fit within a robust theoretical framework and should be weighed accordingly.

## 7.4 Recommendations & Reflection

### 7.4.1 Recommendations

The following is a concise summary of the recommendations as discussed in the social application of this report (section 7.2.2). PB has been successful as an interactive governance process in which both citizens and public officials report experiences of meaningful participation; however, there are areas which can be improved upon.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue establishing a context of strong CLEAR conditions to prove trustworthiness and enable empowerment of citizens towards meaningful participation.
- Recognise the importance of understanding differing perceptions within the network. Focus on joint image building and reframing processes to bridge actors through the creation of a common ground.
- Harness the power of associations to reinforce the goals of PB. This includes widening the scope of the problem to include the need for capacity building as a desired outcome of the interactive governance process – instead of a sole focus on funds distribution.
- Nudge participants’ sense of self to identify with the wider network by facilitating coalition-building and cooperative or collaborative strategies amongst network actors (i.e. amongst organisations applying for PB funding, individual voting communities, etc.).
- Enable a co-created communications strategy to emerge between network actors through the continued support of transformation leadership and boundary spanning.
- Address any NIMBY-mentality prevalent amongst participants through game theory and strategic management of process design and interaction rules within the network.
- Use feedback loops to sustain the idea of shared learning and vision casting instead of solely reinforcing citizens’ expectations for responsive government.

### 7.4.2 Final reflections

*“Participatory budgeting can be a powerful process for achieving more democracy, social justice and transparent administration, but it is surely not the only one... Will participatory budgeting only become another ‘tool’ of participation in the New Labour agenda, or will it lead to fundamental changes in the relationship between local citizens and the city government, as well as between local*

*authorities and the central state and in the actual balance of power in urban policies? The future is open but will not depend only on the political will of the national and local governments.” (Sintomer et. al, 20008:176).*

The case studies underscore PB as an interactive governance process which allows public officials and citizens to partner in doing good community work. As noted in the recommendations above, it is not that government actors need to *do more good* in terms of citizen engagement, but rather: we need to *do good, better* – to do good, differently. At the same time, responsibility cannot be solely thrust on those initiating interactive governance processes but must be shared amongst participants – challenging traditional role perceptions between public officials and their citizen counterparts.

The recommendations of this study can be viewed within two key realms of action to sustain and improve the meaningful participation of those specifically involved in government-initiated interactive governance processes:

- ANALYSIS of the social impact of such initiatives in both the *process* (i.e. a context of CLEAR conditions and changing role perceptions) and *outcomes* of collaboration;
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of problems which inevitably arise through the interactions of actors within a complex network; and consideration of network management strategies to address these, as appropriate.

Goals and guidelines should be examined and edited as necessary. Review of PB is important to ensure it is still an active empowerment tool and an efficient use of community resources – soberly reflecting on its impact and if it is the best way to invest the time and resources offered up by a new, participating citizenry who are poised for partnership and open to progress. In this way, interactive governance processes such as PB can be celebrated for what they have to offer without becoming idolized for more than what they truly represent. In conclusion, interactive governance processes are more than a means to an end or a new form of policy making – they should be utilized as a vehicle of real empowerment. In direct dialectical tension, interactive governance processes should not be seen as the ultimate solution, but rather a starting point and catalyst for new methods and collaborative network solutions to the wicked problems faced by modern society.

*“I’ve been a big advocate of citizens empowerment and involvement in decision making and I saw it as a vehicle to do that... But it’s only been tried in a very safe way, like I say. It’s not a big risk really. Regrettably we don’t seem to have a strategy to say – well how / where does this policy go from*

*here? ...Where do we go from here in terms of a policy that's going to strengthen that start? What are we doing about citizens taking decisions over how services should be run? Holding professionals to account with regards to their practice at local level – where are citizens involved with that? Well they ain't. So why aren't we talking about developing / expanding empowerment and engagement? Where's the strategy for that?" (Interviewee 2103 – public official).*

*"I joined community work to make a difference at a local level and promoting community action and promoting change and making a difference, you know.. So it's not just PB events... the projects we do is not just for smiling faces but [for] making that difference at a local level. That's important to remember when you work at the local level -- it can be a catalyst for people... when you see the outcome you see the difference and that's what the jobs about. It's about sustaining community involvement and promoting change and activating participation..." (Interviewee 2101 – public official).*

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: List of respondents

<b>Number</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Type of respondent</b>
1101	June 2017	Public Official
1102	June 2017	Public Official
1103	July 2017	Elected Public Official
1201	June 2017	Citizen
1202	June 2017	Citizen
1203	June 2017	Citizen
1204	June 2017	Citizen
1205	July 2017	Citizen
1206	July 2017	Citizen
1207	July 2017	Citizen
1208	July 2017	Citizen
1209	July 2017	Citizen
2101	June 2017	Public Official
2102	July 2017	Elected Public Official
2103	July 2017	Elected Public Official
2201	July 2017	Citizen
2202	July 2017	Citizen
2203	July 2017	Citizen
2204	July 2017	Citizen
2205	July 2017	Citizen
2206	July 2017	Citizen
2207	July 2017	Citizen



## Appendix B: Interview

- Introduction & brief explanation of the research
  - **What:** *How do CLEAR conditions and the clarity of new role perceptions affect the experience of meaningful participation of citizens in legislated, government-induced interactive governance processes?* (i.e. What do we think about our role as citizens or public officials? How does this affect our interactions, the conditions of our involvement, and the outcomes of participation with municipal government?)
  - **Why:** The theory says that citizen participation has the potential to benefit our communities greatly. This research evaluates if participants perceive their involvement as meaningful and analyses the correlation of key variables which can improve or hinder meaningful participation.
- Ask if interviewee agrees with recording.
- Inform about anonymity of research and sharing of results afterwards.

### General Background Information

- Interview outline:
  - [I] Clarity of Role Perceptions
  - [II] Perception of Meaningful Participation
  - [III] Analysis of CLEAR conditions
- Interview closure (*thank participant*).

### [II] Perceptions of Meaningful Participation

1. **Input:** Could you briefly introduce yourself, describing your involvement in this local interactive governance process? What did you give/input to the interactive governance process re: time, resources, energy? Could you have given more?
2. **Benefit:** What did you gain anything from your involvement? Who gained the most from this process?
3. **Learning:** Did any learning take place through the experience? What kind?
4. **Significance:** What was the outcome of the interactive governance process? How did citizen participation change the official outcome? To what degree did it make an impact?
5. **Purpose:** Why do you think an interactive governance approach was used in this case? What was the purpose of citizen participation?
6. **Value:** Should the government continue to invest in similar interactive governance processes? Is it worthwhile for citizens to invest their time and energy?

[III] Analysis of CLEAR Conditions

\*Questions adapted from the EU C.L.E.A.R. Tool – (Council of Europe, 2008).

C – CAN do

1. **Resources**

- 1.1 Was it easy to access the meeting venue?
- 1.2 Were there additional resources (information or materials) you and other participants required?
- 1.3 Were these accessible?

2. **Time**

- 2.1 Did you and other participants have the time for participation?
- 2.2 What were the major factors restricting people's time availability?

3. **Skills/Knowledge**

- 3.1 Did you and other participants have the necessary skills for participation (e.g. the ability to write letters, speak in public, organise meetings, etc.)?
- 3.2 Did you and other participants have the competence to utilise the resources in their community (e.g. to use computers, Internet, etc.)?
- 3.3 Which skills were in short supply?
- 3.4 To what extent were these skills and resources distributed differently across the community (i.e. do some groups have more access to resources and more skill to use them than others)?

L – LIKE to

4. **Identity**

- 4.1 What do you identify with most: your local neighbourhood, your municipality, or the region in which you live?

5. **Trust**

- 5.1 Are people in this community most likely to be helpful to others or are they more likely to put their own self-interest first?
- 5.2 How much do you trust the municipality to make decisions that are in the interest of the community as a whole?

6. **Citizenship**

- 6.1 Do you feel a sense of responsibility towards the community or participation process?
- 6.2 Is there a sense in the municipality that the voices (opinions) of some groups/individuals are more legitimate than others?

E – ENABLED to

7. **Civic Infrastructure**

- 7.1 Is there investment in or addition of new channels of communication between citizens and the municipality (i.e. is participation facilitated through other groups or organisations)?
- 7.2 Do you make use of these channels; or do you experience barriers to usage of these channels?

A – ASKED to

**8. Forms of participation**

8.1 How does the municipality seek to inform or engage citizens in decision-making processes? Does this include: surveys/opinion polls, consultations, open public meetings, focus groups, citizens' juries or panels, advisory councils, school and youth councils, general forums, or online forms of participation?

**9. Strategy**

9.1 Did the municipality collaborate with any other organizations in consulting or engaging the public?

9.2 Were you offered incentives to participate?

9.3 Has the municipality experimented with unusual locations to encourage participation (e.g. citizens' homes, schools, supermarkets) or did you have to attend an official location to participate?

**10. Reach & diversity**

10.1 Were these forms of engagement sufficient to engage all relevant stakeholders?

10.2 Who was left out of the interactive governance process?

R – RESPONDED to

**11. Listening**

11.1 What are the procedures for ensuring that the citizen's voice is considered in decision-making?

11.2 Were you informed about the results of your participation; how?

**12. Balance & prioritisation**

12.1 How good are decision-makers at understanding and taking into account the views of citizens?

12.2 How are the views of citizens balanced against the opinions of professionals and elected members, especially where they diverge?

**13. Feedback & education**

13.1 How good is the municipality at explaining to citizens the reasons for the decision and the ways in which citizen views have been taken into account? Do you understand and accept the decisions made by municipalities?

13.2 What efforts is the municipality making to better communicate its decisions to citizens? (Does the municipality have a programme of citizen education in relation to participation? Does the municipality provide support to public officials in learning how to respond more effectively to participation?)

[1] Clarity of Role Perceptions

Role of Citizen

Please specify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Citizens must accept the decisions made by government because they depend on resources and services organized by the government.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens are subjects forced to adapt to bureaucratic systems in society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens should trust the government to make choices in their best interest because elected officials are more capable of governing society on their behalf.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens can voice their opinion most efficiently through voting or by speaking to an elected government representative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens should be clear about what they expect, want or need because it is the duty of public officials to serve public interests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens should show support or opposition for policies by choosing to invest or withhold their own resource contributions, such as time and money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens should participate in policy decision-making processes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens are collaborative partners who can improve the quality of public programs and policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens should set the political agenda.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens own the state and are therefore equally responsible for decisions made by the state.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Role of Public Official
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Please specify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Public officials should have full control over national resources and services like education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials have the power to implement policy without consulting citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials should only focus on the tasks specifically delegated by elected party platforms.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials show goodwill towards citizens by governing wisely and in the best interest of the common good.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials should be very responsive to what citizens say they need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials are managers who strive for efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials should seek citizen input in administrative decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials use empowerment tools to promote collaboration with citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials should be controlled and monitored closely by citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public officials are dependent on citizens for their positions and therefore pressured to satisfy public wants and needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix C: Interview Outline

*After completing Part (I): the Likert Scale measuring the Clarity of Role Perceptions, the following outline was given to participants to help give the interview form. This also assisted in the time management of interview sessions and kept conversation along relevant themes.*

### Interview Outline

#### [II] Perceptions of Meaningful Participation

7. **Input**
8. **Benefit**
9. **Learning**
10. **Significance**
11. **Purpose**
12. **Value**

#### [III] Analysis of CLEAR Conditions

C – CAN do

14. **Resources**
15. **Time**
16. **Skills/Knowledge**

L – LIKE to

17. **Identity**
18. **Trust**
19. **Citizenship**

E – ENABLED to

20. **Civic Infrastructure**

A – ASKED to

21. **Forms of participation**
22. **Strategy**
23. **Reach & diversity**

R – RESPONDED to

24. **Listening**
25. **Balance & prioritisation**
26. **Feedback & education**

## Appendix D: Dimensions of Participatory Budgeting

The following dimensions of Participatory Budgeting come from *Section IV. Topics for Further Debate*, in the article “Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy” by Yves Cabannes (2004:41-44).<sup>9</sup>

a. **PARTICIPATORY DIMENSION**

Theme 1: Where are budgetary decisions made? What body has decision-making powers concerning budgets?

Theme 2: What objectives underlie participatory budgets?

Theme 3: Social control of decision-making. Who controls and enforces the implementation of the budget and the process of execution of the works?

Theme 4: Direct participation or citizen-based representation.

Theme 5: Role of the professionals (NGOs, universities, international organizations, “external partners”).

Theme 6: Participation of the excluded people.

Theme 7: Municipal instruments of evaluation and monitoring.

Theme 8: Training and reinforcement of the local governments’ capabilities.

b. **FINANCIAL DIMENSION**

Theme 9: Management of scarcity or full control of public resources.

Theme 10: Municipal finance and municipal budget.

c. **TERRITORIAL DIMENSION**

Theme 11: How far to decentralize?

Theme 12: Participatory budgeting for the neighbourhood or for the city?

d. **LEGAL AND REGULATORY DIMENSION**

Theme 13: Experimental or regulated process?

Theme 14: How far should PB be formalized or institutionalized?

Theme 15: Links between sectorial, development and physical planning and participatory budgets.

e. **POLITICAL DIMENSION, GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY**

Theme 16: Information, communication and participatory budgets.

Theme 17: Relationship with the legislative power and city councillors. The political role of participatory budgets.

Theme 18: Participatory budgets and models of participatory democracy.

Theme 19: How can one avoid political co-option, the bureaucratization of the process and the standardization or modelling of the process?

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<sup>9</sup> For further context and discussion of these themes, see the full article: Cabannes, Y. (2004). Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy. *Environment & Urbanization*, 16(1) 27-46.

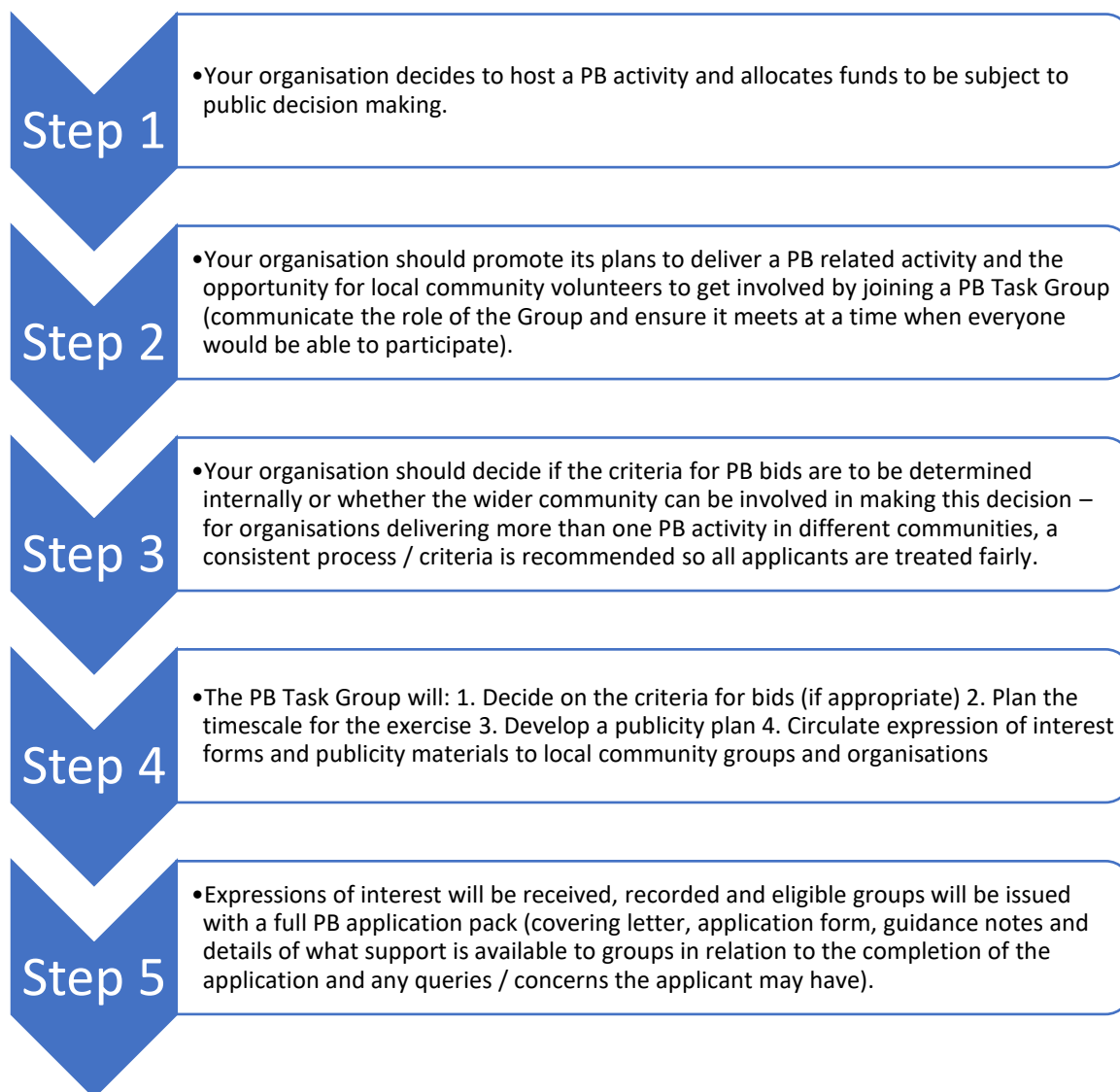
## Appendix E: The PB process

The following flowchart outlining the 12 step PB process comes from:  
Durham County Council. (n.d.). *Participatory budgeting toolkit*. pp 3-7.

### The PB Process

Detailed below is a flowchart outlining the PB process which will help your organisation plan a PB related activity in a structured and managed way. It is good practice to follow the process below, but you may find that your organisation wishes to adapt this process depending on local circumstances and your organisation's expectations.

The key to a successful process is to involve everyone from the outset in all aspects and clearly communicate your aims, processes, expected outcomes and the ways that people can get involved. A six-month lead in time for delivery of a PB scheme is good practice and resourcing considerations are paramount from the outset, both in terms of allocated budget to the scheme and staffing/volunteers for the public voting event.





## Step 6

- Submitted applications should be logged and checked to ensure that all the relevant information has been included and the supporting to documentation is fit for purpose (governing document, accounts, etc.).

## Step 7

- You must ensure that the total amount of funding requested through the application process is over the amount of funding you have available in order for the PB voting process to work. A meeting of the PB Task Group should be convened so all submitted applications can be appraised against the agreed criteria and a list of successful projects can be progressed to the public voting stage.

## Step 8

- All successful projects should be supported in the lead up to the public voting event through the provision of publicity materials, to be used in their own geographical localities, and a display board (resources permitting). Issue 'Event Guidance' to all participating projects which clearly sets out your expectations, event timetable, refreshment and equipment provision.

## Step 9

- Public voting event takes place and the successful projects are announced – all funding is allocated.

## Step 10

- Successful projects should be issued with the appropriate documentation (Offer of Grant and Terms and Conditions) and the outcome of the event should be publicised as widely as possible. Unsuccessful project applicants should also be supported to explore alternative funding sources to support their project. Support should also be provided to groups when completing funding bids.

## Step 11

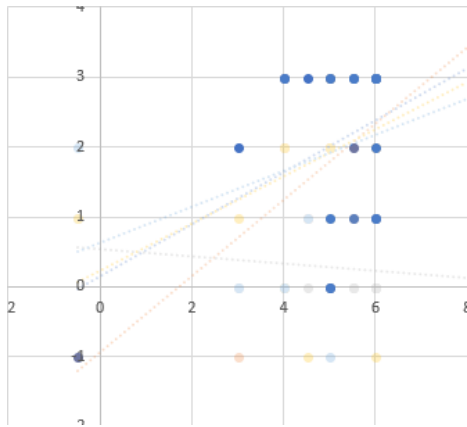
- A meeting of the PB Task Group should be convened to review feedback from the event (from project applicants, voters, partners and other stakeholders). A full evaluation of the process should also be undertaken and reported to the appropriate officers / department / bodies.

## Step 12

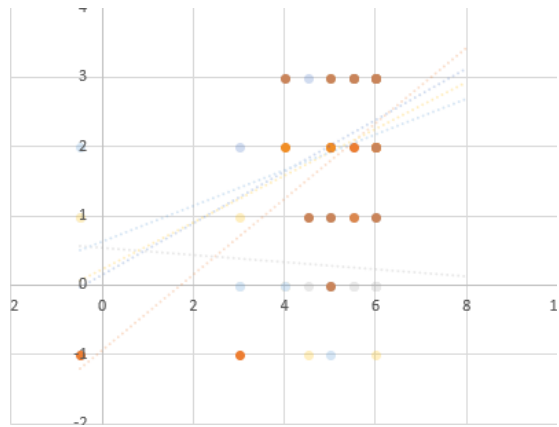
- All successful projects should be monitored to ensure they are being delivered and managed appropriately and that the applicants are keeping evidence of delivery and spend (publicity, expenditure, etc.). It is good practice to undertake project visits to 10% of the funded projects.

## Appendix F: Breakdown of CLEAR indicators

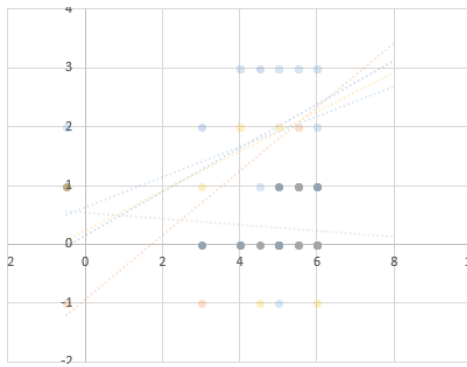
### CAN-DO



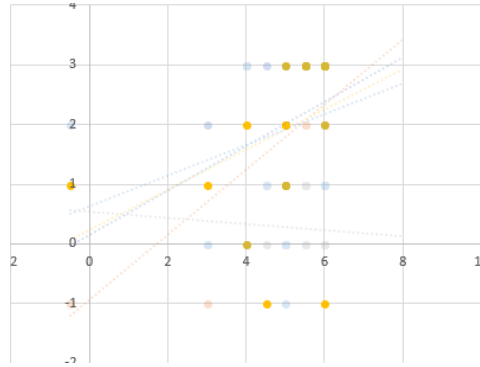
### LIKE-TO



### ENABLED-TO



### ABLE-TO



### RESPONDED-TO

