



Cuckmere Pathfinder Project

Summary of Findings for Assessment Criteria (Intensive Workshop)

Held on 12 April 2011 at the Seaford Town Council Chambers

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project is for East Sussex County Council to work together with the local community to reach consensus on how best to manage change at the Cuckmere Estuary. Some change at the Estuary is inevitable over the long term, and it is important to start planning for that change now. The County Council wants to make sure that everyone's views have been taken into account and all the options have been carefully considered in making decisions about the future of the Cuckmere. The £250,000 Pathfinder Project is being funded by DEFRA and will run until June 2011.

1.2 Engagement Plan

[Hopkins Van Mil: Creating Connections](#) with [Rhoden Green Marketing and Communications](#), was commissioned by East Sussex County Council to work with them on the design and implementation of the engagement and communication elements of the Pathfinder project. Two workshops were held in summer 2010 at which the Environment Agency presented its reasons for withdrawing current flood maintenance, and members of the community put forward alternative management solutions. These were the first in a series of workshops and events held as part of the Pathfinder Project, which will culminate in a major public event to be held on 7 June. The full programme of intensive workshops and public events is given at Appendix 1.

At the intensive workshop held on 8 March participants were invited to discuss a list of themes from which to devise criteria through which the options agreed at the December workshop will be filtered.

1.3 Who is involved?

The Cuckmere Pathfinder Project is being managed by East Sussex County Council. The Project Officer reports to the Project Board made up of members of the community, the County Council and the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership (CEP). The membership of the Project Board is included at Appendix 2. Working closely with the Project Board, and with an overlapping membership, is the Community Forum. The Forum was established in November 2009 further to the recommendations that came from the community engagement events run in the same year. It has an extremely active role in working through options for the future management of the Estuary.

2. Event content

2.1 Event Purpose and Outcomes

The event was divided into three main sections, combining presentation, plenary and small group facilitated discussions. The full programme is available at Appendix 3 of this report. The first introductory session explained the purpose of the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project and this particular event. Andy Robertson, Assistant Director – Policy in the Economy, Transport & Environment Department, East Sussex County Council explained the background to the Pathfinder Project. He described the role of the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership, the Community Forum, the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project Board (members listed at Appendix 2) and East Sussex County Council. He explained that the current community engagement programme aimed to lead to a process through which some kind of consensus could be reached on the future management of the Cuckmere Estuary. Andy referred to the previous workshops and events and encouraged participants to continue their involvement in the process. He emphasised the fact that this workshop was a pilot of the assessment process enabling stakeholders to give their views on the operation of the final community engagement event on 7 June.

Henrietta Hopkins, the lead Facilitator, explained the purpose of this event and introduced the facilitation team. Participants were reminded that each workshop is written up and the summary of findings together with full transcripts of the recorded flip charts are included in the Cuckmere Pathfinder website¹ so that they are available for everyone to review.

The expected outcomes of the event were described as follows:

- To support participants in defining a robust and workable set of criteria through which the community as a whole will assess the options at the final Pathfinder event on 7 June
- To pilot the assessment process.

The second session took the form of small group discussions on the criteria to turn the long-list agreed on at the 8 March workshop into a robust, workable list of criteria for assessment.

As the facilitators worked to collate the comments produced by participants into a final criteria list, participants were invited to hear presentations from Scott Ferguson of Capita Symonds and Andy Arnold from East Sussex County Council. Scott presented a summary of the technical and visual modelling first presented at the public event on 5 April. Andy introduced summary sheets describing the impacts for landscape, ecology, heritage and economics under each option in the short, medium and long-term. These summaries were taken from the work done by those who had been commissioned to produce evidence reports for the Cuckmere Pathfinder project.²

In the afternoon session participants undertook the assessment process to pilot its operation at the final event on 7 June by working in three facilitated small groups. The groups were shown animations (short 'fly throughs') as a visual representation of the technical modelling carried out by Capita Symonds for the baseline and six options, showing predicted views over short (0-20 years), medium (20-50 years) and long-term (50-100 years) timescales, with narrative accompanying and describing each animation. Discussions were held on the animations and the options as described in section 3 of this report.

¹ www.cuckmerepathfinder.org.uk

² <http://www.cuckmerepathfinder.org.uk/New-research.aspx>

Participants were then asked to individually score the options against the short list of criteria that had been agreed in the morning's session. This involved participants scoring each of the options against these criteria on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being 'this option meets this criteria' and 0 being 'this option doesn't meet this criteria' and 3 being a neutral response to whether or not the option meets this criteria. Participants were asked to comment on the process so that it can be refined and adapted for ease of use at the 7 June session.

A final plenary session was held at which participants were shown the indicative cumulative scores for options as an illustration of the results of the scoring process, and a discussion was held on issues such as timings, block voting and the assessment process.

2.2 Workshop Evaluation

24 people attended this intensive workshop drawn from the Community Forum, the Project Board, the Cuckmere Estuary Partnership, East Sussex County Council staff, other statutory organisations and other members of the community. Each participant was asked to complete an evaluation form to assess whether the session had met people's needs. The full results of the evaluation are included in Appendix 6. In summary:

- 80% heard about the event from direct email communications from the Cuckmere Pathfinder team;
- 86% found the process of booking their place at the event either good or excellent;
- 87% found the session on the criteria selection either good or excellent;
- 80% found the outcomes of the small group discussions either good or excellent;
- 100% of participants said they had enough opportunity to express their views;
- 94% found their round table facilitator to be either good or excellent.

There is no doubt that the process has now reached a critical stage where decisions are being made which will have an impact on the final outcome. Participants on 12 April were very generous with their time giving up a whole day to selecting the final criteria and piloting the options assessment process. As one participant said,

'Stamina is an essential requirement!'

Another commented on the fact that the Cuckmere Pathfinder project is now nearing its final stages,

'It's great to be nearing the end of the beginning. Much work lies ahead and it will be challenging to find funding and the will to take this whole project on.'

Participants made very constructive comments to ensure the process is as effective as possible; supporting those who attend on 7 June in making their decisions a future management scheme for the Cuckmere Estuary. These are described in Section 3 and provided in full transcripts at Appendix 5.

3. Event findings

The participants split in to three groups for discussions firstly to finalise the list of criteria which would be used at the event on 7 June to assess the options; secondly to pilot the assessment process.

3.1 Criteria selection

The facilitators in each of the small groups reminded participants that they had drawn up a long list of criteria at the end of the 8 March workshop. It was explained that Hopkins Van Mil had received weighting scores (on a scale 1-5) on the importance of each of these from participants via email following the 8 March workshop and that Hopkins Van Mil had taken this list and applied the following rules to reduce the list of criteria:

- Criteria with a tally of 10 or more in weighting box 5 were retained
- Criteria with a similar theme were merged where appropriate
- Criteria which had been repeated were removed
- Criteria with a total criteria weighting score tally of 13 or less were removed

This reduced the long-list of 64 criteria to a mid-length list of 29 criteria. It was agreed by each group that this was too many to be robust and workable for assessment purposes. A short-list had also been produced, drawing on the results of the mid-length list, this is presented at Appendix 4.

Participants focused on this short-list to produce their own short-list of criteria. Discussions focused on how to retain the essential criteria; agree on those things which should be for later consideration; and a consideration of those issues which were an underlying theme for each option and should therefore be accepted as 'givens'. Participants also spent time agreeing points on which further explanation should be given for those attending the 7 June event. These comments are summarised below and provided in full transcript at Appendix 5.

3.2 Comments on cost as a criterion

Participants in two of the three small group sessions said that they wish to remove cost as a criterion. This was based on the view, expressed at previous workshops, that cost is an issue which has to be considered at the business planning stage, once a preferred option has been selected as two participants said,

'Scoring cost benefits now is putting the cart before the horse'

'Not sure we can identify appropriate [cost / benefit] ratio at this stage'

Participants in the third group discussed the fact that they would like and require a clearer understanding of 'relative cost'. However, agreement was reached in the plenary session that cost should not be a criterion for assessment,

'We are not saying that cost is not important. It is about coming up with clear criteria to answer the question: to what extent does this option [insert criterion].... . There are a lot of variables when looking at cost'

'It will be noted that cost was discussed, but not taken further at this stage as it is about first deciding the best, and 2nd best option, then cost comes in.'

3.3 Cross-option 'givens' and notes to the criteria

The participants agreed that there were some issues which needed to be considered whether a criterion or not. They summarised these as the following 'givens':

'Sustain A259'

'Educational value cuts across whichever option is selected - there will always be an educational value to the Cuckmere, its past and its future'

'Allow for flexibility which takes into account environmental change'

'No increase in flood risk upstream of the A259'

It was agreed that these 'givens' should be explained clearly to participants at the 7 June event. Equally, participants asked that certain terms are defined in notes provided on the score sheet used for options assessment. These include definitions of:

- access
- ecology
- heritage
- flood risk management
- the properties under consideration
- the historic environment as 'man-made' rather than part of the landscape
- landscape character and it's 'high quality'

Some of the givens were nevertheless agreed as criteria, emphasising their importance to the participants on 12 April.

3.3 The agreed criteria

In accepting the above as essential to the process, participants agreed with the following as the final set of criteria through which the options would be assessed on 7 June:

- Sustain the A259
- Maintain the current level of access for all in the Estuary
- No overall detrimental effect to ecology, ideally an enhancement
- Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Estuary
- No increase in flood risk upstream of the A259
- Protection of existing properties
- Sustain the historic environment
- Sustain the high quality of the landscape character
- Minimise maintenance requirements
- Encourage tourism and local business

3.4 Piloting the options assessment process

Participants at the workshop provided some excellent comments and suggestions for improvement to the options assessment process. These are summarised in the following section of this report and provided in full at Appendix 5.

3.4.1 Presentation of evidence

Discussions were held on presenting the large amount of evidence commissioned by the Pathfinder Project in its simplest form so that it is useful for participants on 7 June as they make their assessments. They raised the following points,

'Make available map and description of each'

'Make information available as far in advance as possible to allow public to digest it'

'Make wording on reports / options and criteria consistent to aid public understanding'

'Simplify the information it's too much to take in'

One participant made a helpful suggestion in their evaluation form,

'An exhibition of all the options prior to June event say for 1 or 2 weeks with an outline of how each option meets or doesn't meet the criteria and people available for wider public to ask any questions pick up reports or be directed to the website link.'

This was supported by others at the event who made suggestions including,
'Also at the visitor centre a display, visual displays before the event.'

'Prior information required for all participants.'

3.4.2 The modelling animations

The value in presenting the technical modelling in visual animated form was discussed by each of the groups. It was generally agreed that they were useful, but should be simplified, include a voice over and have some sort of labelling so that it was clear to people where they were in the time-line being presented. Some participants questioned their value,

'I don't know if they are useful? 21 animations – will create information overload, might be better to use the stills'

'Popular local myth: 'they are going to the flood valley', the animations won't help with that misconception'

Others, voiced the view that,

'They are brilliant accessible to everyone, much better than all the reading!'

Some people felt more work could be done on them before 7 June,

'Use colour for saltmarsh, green space, mud etc.'

'Lacking details'

Participants also felt that for people who haven't been involved in the process but come to 7 June that,

'It will be important to allow catching up time for people who haven't been involved – slow build up snapshot, in depth to look at animation'

And in a related point that the animations are clearly described,

'The animations must say what they have to say in a short time so that people can understand and make their decisions. You have to take them with you in 1st 15 minutes'

'We are not seeing a full tidal cycle so the visuals will need to be explained very carefully'

'Have narrative description for each participant'

'Have booths for projection at 7th June event?'

Simplification of the modelling was also discussed,

'Are options over complicated? We don't need the moving 3 cells from an animation point of view. If we concentrated on 1 or 2 things that are happening in certain cells

Cell A – what happens to it under each option? (and the same for Cell B and Cell C) it might be easier to see what's going on.'

'Take stills at certain points, it would be easier to digest. Meanders silting up happens under a number of options and could focus on cells A&B as the areas of biggest interest'

3.4.3 Comments on the assessment process

Participants took their role in piloting the assessment process seriously and made a range of useful comments and suggestions including,

'To be able to score you need to go back to quite detailed information'

Participants in this piloting session were asked to score as individuals rather than as a group, some participants asked that the scoring is done,

'On discussion basis in groups. Explain 'sustain' and what it means for option A and then score as a group'

Do it in group discussions per criterion? (max 10 people)

Comments were made on being clear about what the various scores mean so that the scoring is done consistently by all those participating, people said that clarity is required on how the criteria should be used to assess the options, one participant described it by asking the following,

'To what extent does this option affect.....(criterion)? And how important is this to you'

Others made comments on the 0-5 grading,

'[We will] require a lot of information, standardised grid of information on what quality is 5 and what is 0?'

A number of people were concerned that they didn't know what they should have been scoring. The piloting process revealed an issue in that people didn't know whether they were scoring the options against the criteria in the short, medium or long-term which would affect their decision. As one participant stated, supported by others,

'Issue short / medium /low (complicated). Should we not base decisions on short term and be clear about which positions closed off in those time-scales?'

'NB are we scoring for short term? Should do all 3. We have done short term. Filling out form quite hard because of 3 timescales'

'Should we not offer decision making on information we have about short term?'

'It's not complicated to bear in mind medium/ long term as well repeat process in time'

'Make clear that you're closing off options for medium / long term when you're making certain decisions for short term'

Concern was raised about people coming with one view and scoring everything for that option a '5' and everything else '0'. They also discussed organisations coming and encouraging their staff to vote in the same way. One participant said,

'Issue of block organisational voting - to be avoided'.

4. Next steps

4.1 Points to clarify the process and evidence available

As a result of the discussions held during the event amendments will be made on the descriptive text used to summarise the options and their short, medium and long-term impacts. Work will be done to review the way in which all the evidence is presented to ensure that participants in the 7 June event are able to make their decisions based on the evidence provided through the Pathfinder project, and community comments on that evidence. The Cuckmere Pathfinder Project website will be an essential resource in this process.

4.2 Hopkins Van Mil recommendations

Hopkins Van Mil continues to be extremely impressed with the commitment shown by members of the community in volunteering their time to attend the intensive workshops; working to understand the issues and feeding back constructively. In devising the criteria and piloting the assessment process participants have enabled the project to move forward from a very secure foundation.

4.2.1 Understanding the evidence

It is essential at this critical point in the process that participants are given every opportunity to read, understand and comment on the evidence that has been brought together through the Pathfinder project. We would encourage everyone to:

- Make use of the Cuckmere Pathfinder website as a resource
- Where people do not have Internet they are given access to the information they require in hard copy either at their local library or to their home on request
- Speak to members of the Project Team, Project Board, the Community Forum and those who have been involved in the intensive workshops from the beginning to hear their views and understand the elements of the process they may have missed.

Hopkins Van Mil supports the view that in addition to making information available in hard copy and online it is necessary to have some kind of display presenting the evidence, with advisors on hand to provide further explanation as necessary. This might be best done on the morning of 7 June in the event venue, and / or at the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre at several points in the weeks running up to 7 June.

All those attending the event on 7 June should be aware that:

- This evidence is available to them
- Advisors are available to provide clarification on the process
- The Project Team, Project Board and other members of the community are working hard to ensure the information is straightforward, factual and simply presented.

4.2.2 Community involvement

The community have made a number of comments, suggestions and asked questions on all the process. As the facilitation team Hopkins Van Mil is delighted that the engagement process has been truly community lead. As we near the final event we welcome the fact that constructive comments have been made on the process and look forward to supporting participants to build consensus around the options on 7 June.

4.2.3 Options Assessment Process

Participants on 12 April discussed a number of points related to the assessment process which have been raised in this report including clarification of the criteria; the definition of terms used; and clarity on how to score effectively. In addition participants raised the concern that organisations may organise block voting by

members of their staff and volunteers who support their work or that those championing a specific option may score all the criteria relating to that option a '5' and other options with '0'. Hopkins Van Mil is working with the Project Team to address these issues and ensure that everyone is clear about the assessment process on 7 June.

Hopkins Van Mil also recommends that information on the scoring process is included in:

- The final information provided to those who have expressed an interest in attending on 7 June
- The Cuckmere Pathfinder website
- In other public information provided in public libraries and in display areas

It is essential that those participating on 7 June are aware of their responsibilities in engaging in the future management decisions for the Cuckmere Estuary.

4.2 Function of this report

This report is a summary of the discussion on 12 April. It will be sent to the Project Board for comment, distributed to all those who attended the workshop, and published on the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project's website. The media will be informed of the report via a press release and follow up telephone calls.

Hopkins Van Mil would like to thank all those who took part in this piloting process. It has been of enormous benefit to the Project Team to gather comments on views on the best way forward for the final Cuckmere Pathfinder event to be held on 7 June.

Hopkins Van Mil 21 April 2011

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Appendix 1

Timeline for intensive workshops and public events

14 December 2010	Options Identification (Intensive Workshop)
8 February 2011	Landscape, Visitors, Heritage and Economy of the Cuckmere: Evidence Presentation Stage 1 (Public Event)
8 March 2011	Assessment criteria agreement (Intensive Workshop)
5 April 2011	Landscape, Visitors, Heritage and Economy of the Cuckmere: Evidence Presentation Stage 2 (Public Event)
12 April 2011	Options Assessment Pilot (Intensive Workshop)
7 June 2011	Planning for Change at the Cuckmere (Public Event)

Appendix 2

The Pathfinder Project Board

The Pathfinder Project is led by a project board made up of local residents and members of the County Council and Cuckmere Estuary Partnership (CEP). The members are:

- Michael Ann, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Jane Cecil, National Trust, CEP
- Alan Edgar, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Councillor John Freeman, Seaford Town Council and CEP
- Richard Mann, Cuckmere Community Forum
- Carolyn McCourt, Cuckmere Community Forum and CEP
- Andy Robertson, East Sussex County Council
- Chris Wick, Environment Agency and CEP
- Tony Whitbread, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Community Forum and CEP

Appendix 3

Cuckmere Pathfinder Project

Pilot Options Assessment (Intensive Workshop)
12 April, Seaford Town Council Chambers

Programme

(Please note that timings are approximate)

1. Introductory Remarks	10.00-10.20
○ A short welcome by East Sussex County Council	
○ An introduction to the Pathfinder Project	
○ An introduction to this Intensive Workshop	
2. Weighted Criteria Review	10-20-11.30
○ Editing of the criteria agreed on 8 March	
○ A review of the weighting agreed via email	
Break & Evidence Summary	11.30-12.10
3. Plenary Session: weighted criteria	12.10-12.30
Lunch	12.30-13.00
4. 1st Facilitated Options Assessment Session	13.00-14.15
○ Option A: Partial breach managed realignment (EA)	
○ Option B: Full breach managed realignment (EA)	
○ Option C: Engineered reactivation of meanders & meandering creeks	
5. 2nd Facilitated Options Assessment Session	14.15-15.30
○ Option D: Maintain the existing defences (EA Option 2a)	
○ Option E: Sustain the existing defences (EA Option 2b)	
○ Option F: Sustain the existing defences	
Break	15.30-15.45
6. 3rd Facilitated Options Assessment Session	15.45-16.15
○ Summarising Assessment of group	
○ Preparation for Plenary session	
6. Plenary round-up	16.15-16.40
7. Closing remarks and reminder of next steps	16.40-16.45

Appendix 4

Short-list discussed by participants and amended to define a workable, community lead list of criteria.

Theme	Criteria
Access - to the Estuary	Safeguard the A259
Access - at the Estuary	No overall detrimental effect, ideally an enhancement to access on site
Cost	Acceptable benefit cost ratio (the acceptable level to be agreed during the workshop?)
Ecology	No overall detrimental effect, ideally an enhancement
Education	Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Estuary
Flood management	No increase in flood risk upstream of the A259 Protection of existing properties
Heritage	No overall detrimental effect, ideally an enhancement
Landscape	No overall detrimental effect, ideally an enhancement
Sustainable scheme	Become increasingly self-running over time
Timing	Provide enough time for people to adapt to change
Tourism & local business	No overall detrimental effect, ideally an enhancement

The final list of criteria agreed by participants in the workshop.

- Sustain the A259
- Maintain the current level of access for all in the Estuary
- No overall detrimental effect to ecology, ideally an enhancement
- Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the Estuary
- No increase in flood risk upstream of the A259
- Protection of existing properties
- Sustain the historic environment
- Sustain the high quality of the landscape character
- To minimise maintenance requirements
- Encourage tourism and local business

Appendix 5

Transcripts of Plenary Discussions

Comments on cost as a criterion

- Cost: differentials are relevant there are substantial differences in current climate general public will want to know
- We are not saying that cost is not important it was about coming up with clear criteria to answer the question: to what extent does this option affect.... (criteria). There are a lot of variables when looking at cost
- It will be noted that cost was discussed but not taken further at this stage as it is about first deciding best, 2nd best option, then cost comes in

Givens

- Sustain A259
- At same point in time how chosen option will be funded needs to be addressed (at the business planning stage)
- Educational value cuts across whichever option is selected - there will always be an educational value to the Cuckmere, its past and its future
- Allow for flexibility which takes into account environmental change

Notes to criteria to be included on each participants score sheet

- Definition of current level access (beach, car park, concrete footpath)
- How do we define ecology
- Definition of what is meant by flood risk management
- Define properties we're talking about
- Definition what the historic environment is, you can't enhance a historic asset
- Definition of landscape character and high quality

Transcripts of Small Group Discussions

Group 1 (HH)

Summary Criteria From Group 1 recorded by facilitator on to flip chart:

Note: text underlines means the form of words selected by that group for the criteria

1. Combine:

- Access to and within the estuary
- Best option whatever it costs
- A259 is far more valuable than just the estuary – opens up the valley to business
- Relative importance of access – A259

2. Sustain the A259

- Whatever option is pioneered the A259 is going to be there
- The road can be engineered to whatever the option requires
- Different

3. Maintain access to the estuary

Maintain the current level of access in the estuary and improve current level at access

- Interpretation of enhanced access can mean different things to different level

- Clarity of current levels
- Height of banks not being maintained
- We aren't talking about height levels but access

4. Cost

- Cost not very important for this exercise not something the general public can assess this
- The better cost benefit analysis is more why to attract funding
- We need scheme we can find money for
- We are looking for the best long-term option for the valley
- Scoring cost benefits now is putting the cart before the horse
- Looks at cost twice here and later in the business planning process
- EA assessments were initially based on cost but they had to build trust again
- Difficult to attach costs to other value
- Don't include it as a criterion but bear in mind you may not be able to deliver it
- Cost / benefit comes later in the process

5. Ecology

No overall detrimental effect to ecology, ideally an enhancement

- Agreement that this is the best criterion for ecology

6 . Education

Potential for improved education and better interpretation of the estuary

- Always the potential for education. Potential for education cuts across all the options it hasn't been explored properly yet as a resource
- Reactivation of meanders

7. Flood risk management

No increase in flood rise upstream of the A259

Protection of existing properties South of A259

- Sea defence should come into flood management, flood risk take in one piece
- Consultants have said therefore if you keep the mouth clear there will be no effect on flooding upstream. All options keep mouth clear ro? varying degrees
- Drift and possible rise on levels – accommodate
- If mouth clear how does that accommodate sea level rise?
- Drainage affects flooding upstream – too specific
- Does the option accommodate / anticipate change caused by natural processes.
- Bolt on to every option. Can't just say we are going to let these properties go. We can't use these as a criterion. Can't make the situation worse for people.
- Is this something we want to achieve?

8. Heritage

Sustain the historic environment (not used)

Sustain the high quality of the landscape character (used)

- Not altogether happy with heritage criteria – imprecise, combines too many elements
- Preserving the most significant aspects of heritage – include an explanatory note. Where there is going to be an effect mitigate it through understanding.
- Could say reactivating meanders is heritage
- Heritage is the archaeology and the history, not the natural processes
- The effect historic environment (include man-made note)
- To what extent does this option.....
- Make it clear its landscape aesthetics

- It is iconic landscape – effect on visually stunning landscape

9. Sustainability

To minimise long-term maintenance

- Preserve self-running
- Does it need to be negative?
- We don't want a landscape you have to do things to
- You have to maintain any landscape

10. Timing

- Remove criteria
- Timing don't agree
- Long transition – could be a period of mess and disruption want to keep that phase to a minimum to bring community along with us

11. Tourism & business

Encourage tourism and local business

- Agreed as a criterion

Options discussion recorded on a flip chart by facilitator

1. Points on clarity of information and the piloting the process

- Economics are not now a criteria but that should change to tourism and business
- Are we taking it that the modelling is correct?
- It is based on best assumptions of data. Yet to be convinced that the modelling is a true representative of status quo
- Fact / opinion - we have to make the difference clear in our comments. If it is fact it can be proved one way or the other; opinion is not the same.
- Comfort in seeing technical data available
- Tourism and economics based on very approximate assumptions
- Assumptions of visitor numbers
- Can't take assumptions as facts
- Effects of each of the options
- Reminder needed that local experts are taken into account
- Pictures are worth 1000 words
- Careful about formulating a response
- We are not seeing a full tidal cycle so the visuals will need to be explained very carefully
- Economics: looks like a cost benefit analysis?
- Should be about income to the area. Number of tourists seems to be rather an exact number
- Make wording on reports / options and criteria consistent to aid public understanding
- Have narrative description for each participant
- Simplify the information
- Too much to take in
- Any options over complicated? Don't need the moving 3 cells from an animation point of views if we concentrated on 1 or 2 things that are happening in certain cells
- Cell A – what happens to it under each option? (and the same for Cell B and Cell C)
- Take stills at certain points, it would be easier to digest. Meanders silting up happens under a number of options and could focus on cells A&B as the areas of biggest interest

- How things develop in cell A over 100 years....
- I feel the animations are making the viewer supine and powerless
- It will be important to allow catching up time for people who haven't been involved – slow build up snapshot, in depth to look at animation
- Popular local myth: 'they are going to the flood valley', the animations won't help with that misconception
- The animations must say what they have to say in a short time so that people can understand and make their decisions. You have to take them with you in 1st 15 minutes
- Also at the visitor centre a display, visual displays before the event.
- Prior information required for all participants
- Issue of block organisational voting - to be avoided

2. Baseline

- 50 – 100 years meanders are still identifiable – would they not be silted up by then? Barely visible clarification: running cycle does not give the right impression. Spring tide – can be of similar height start to get tidal inundation on 1st day and not enough time for water to clear completely. Combined effect of repeated Spring and neap tides
- Explain the difference
- Illustrative – no storms in the animations
- Impact at major storms?
- Meanders are already silting

3. Option A

- Show more clearly where the breaches are made. Show more than 1 breach.
- Did we see the additional embankment?

4. Option B

- Comments as for Option A

Option C

- Landscape = has been interpreted as being negative, appears to have come from DH report which comes in on A259 modification
- Original road
- Medieval structure – restoration back to its original height negative based on A259
- Proposal non-specific in terms of A259 not as destructive as DH thought.
- Economics – yes then negative
- Tourism and businesses – then positive
- Take economics out
- Negatives therefore should change to neutral dynamic river
- We want silvery and shiny meanders
- This is the only option which would make them silvery and shiny.
- Landscape: embankments will not still be in place - remove that from the summary
- Spell maintenance correctly in the descriptions
- Modelling has misinterpreted the following:
 - there should be more islands – all across
 - using excavated materials to create areas of high saltmarsh from the start
 - paths will be higher
 - lattice of creeks would be denser / more intricate than modelling shows
 - same meanders width as they are now
 - A259 – bridge would be rebuilt (not reinforced) embankments reinforced.

- No reason to suppose the meanders will move

Option D

- River mouth needs remodelling to show regular cleaning. If under managed realignment schemes more water coming out on outward tide
- Long term meanders should have disappeared because they would have silted up? Chopped up into smaller pools rather than one long one strip of water
- Assumption that it will all be grassland; ground water hasn't been factored in. Water table will be higher. More water so grassland will be turning into marsh. More saline influence

Option E

- Same as D – not allowing for a rise on water table. Could get more fresh water seeping in
- Same point as D on meanders at best you'll get little patches – issue of overtopping
- Material put on – chalk, we assume. Historically what's happened before. Meanders are still showing brown grass coloured in long term and D

Option F

- *same point as on meanders
- Landscape of 50-100 years – right description
- Channel: you won't have salt marsh and mudflats it will be eroded and lost
- Cost options around this issue. If they are assumptions might sway peoples opinion rather than seeking the best option
- There is a lot of maintenance that probably won't be carried out. More you spend in capital less you spend on maintenance.
- Reactivating sluices cost not high and modest dredging of the meanders they are silting up. And operation of the sluices 1995 drainage scheme! Elements of options.
- Landscape options: overwhelmingly landscape character has been considered a very important character
- E&F plus dredging of the meanders is a further option
- Look at variations on a theme

Manage expectations

- Highest scoring will be the option that's selected
- If cost ruled that option out would we move to the second preference?
- Costing has to follow on at the second stage
- What happens if we can't find the money?
- Don't overload people with data
- Modelling show people in the long-term as that's what you're heading to (short term, medium term is what that will give you)
- What if we score 5 or 0 for each criteria?
- What if our favoured option is scored 5 and we score the rest 0?
- Visual prompts on the table so that we can be reminded of what we have seen for each option
- Diagonal criteria 45 degree line
- Issue of timing of sessions must not exclude working people
- Use of zero, 3 = neutral
- 0 = this option doesn't achieve against the criteria
- 5 = this option scores very highly against the criteria
- Everyone must be given clear guidance on completion of their score cards

Group 2 (AVM)

Discussion recorded by facilitator onto flip chart paper

Discussion on criteria

1. Comments

- How do we deal with people who are new to the process and coming to 7th June event?
- Need to discuss timescale with respect to every criterion short / medium / long term
- Deliberate enhancement of a facility separate from an option should not be considered
- Flood risk take into account long term flooding event!

2. Access

Access within the Estuary

- To beaches East and West both along the river and valley side plus car parking

Allow for flexibility which takes into account environmental change

(short / medium / long term)

Tourism & business

No detrimental effect in tourism and local businesses and ideally be an enhancement

- Local economic effect of capital cost should be included in cost/benefit ratio

Heritage

No overall detrimental effect on heritage and ideally be an enhancement

- E.g. improving setting and time to reward what's there
- Is this to do with the project?
- Should it be access to heritage?
- Feeds into educational requirements
- Enhancement will mean different things to different options
- We need examples of what we mean by enhancement: what would enhancement look like?

Sustainability

Become increasingly self-running over time

- Will it ever be?
- How important is this?
- Same option come to self-cleaning of mouth over time more easily than others

Timing

Provide enough time for people to adapt to change

- Avoid an instant fix
- Is this a criterion?
- 'provide' is not right, we're not in control of elements
- It's not about appropriate communication with community
- Tie in with info provision about short / medium / long term

Landscape

No overall detrimental effect in the landscape

- Concept of landscape is subjective and not quantifiable
- Meanders, green valley, coast guard cottages, salt marsh? Mud?

Flood management

No increase in flood to properties upstream of the A259

Protect existing properties

- By maintaining beach shingle re coast guard cottages or revetment

Ecology

No overall detrimental effect on ecology and ideally be an enhancement

- Potential for improved education and better interpretation
- Is not within project
- As long as there is access it will happen
- Need more info what it is why teachers bring groups? And Estuary life trust
- Educational value will change irreversibly
- Add if tourism criterion

Cost

- Acceptable cost benefit ratio?
- Not sure we can identify appropriate ratio at this stage
- Depends on funding available and what we can afford to do
- DELETE: Will come at later stage

Safeguarding A259

- Safeguarding A259 (*see 'move to flood management)
- Can be done without guarding access to estuary
- To allow traffic between Seaford and Eastbourne
- Shouldn't we consider including enhancing A259 – improve traffic flow. Is this relevant to the project? We don't want to miss opportunity

Options discussion recorded on to flip chart by facilitator

Option A

- Economics includes visitor spend, capital cost and maintenance
- Costs are relative to baseline
- Economics positive compared to baseline, why? As it costs more and brings less people, doesn't seem right. We can't hand out this piece of paper if not right as long as it is not wrong then fine
- Economics visitor numbers are increase against baseline and for time period indicated in top row. Can it be presented per annum rephrased: the additional net present value of the estuary over 20 years is estimated etc – for all three columns
- How are engineering figures used in this overview and spin off figures of engineering
- Heritage doesn't look negative at all when you read detail!

Option B

- Should full inundation take place it's mentioned that it would be very low flood; however history shows it's high flood (before cut was built) – can this be checked?

Option C

- Raising A259 is not possible, re-address or explain
- 2 views raised A259 is no go or can be done without landscape value

Option D

- Original height was higher than it is now

- Ecology negative as baseline would create greater diversity
- Not necessary to make banks impermeable - raised costs unnecessarily

Option E

- As sea levels rise / don't rise we can then decide what to do
- Vital piece of info missing: how sea level is behaving in short / medium / long term. Capita has taken average national figures 2003, should be brought up to date and adjusted to local context
- Maintain defences at beach better than more land inwards. Hold flood damage at beach is probably less expensive. Answer: this is assumed in modelling, needs to be drawn out more clearly

Option F

- See previous comment about raising costs unnecessarily as we have the sluices
- Specification of option has changed – that's not on!

Comments / Questions

Options baseline

- You would expect reduction in visitor numbers to reflect on economic performance and neutral but negative, however as baseline is neutral to function as baseline – explain baseline better! And explain terminology in overview 'neutral' 'negative' 'positive' - specialist report summary is causing big confusion – must improve: let's not have it, lost too much detail
- EA will continue maintenance beyond 15 years if needed
- Where does shingle go when valley is flooded: will be absorbed in system, no net gain / loss in long term
- Groynes are in terrible shape!
- Shingle is topped up to very top: huge amount shingle could be moved and out back. Overtime beaches will be gradually moved back over time across all options

How can evidence analysis be presented in better / easier way?

- To what extent does this option affect.....(criterion) And how important is this to you
- 0 is an option for ranking too (no relevance to me at all)
- NB change 'ranking' to 'scoring'
- Score the baseline
- NB are we scoring for short term? Should do all 3. We have done short term.

Management of 7th

- Make available map and description of each
- Filling out form quite hard because of 3 timescales
- Ask people what they want to see under each criterion and then match their responses later with options?
- Must remember that options will be ranked in order and it will then depend on which one can be actioned
- Do it on discussion basics in groups. Explain sustain and what it means for option A and then score as a group

Comments about scoring process

- To be able to score you need to go back to quite detailed information
- Make information available as far in advance as possible to allow public to digest it
- Bullets for each option / criteria highlighting impact in short / medium / long term

- Should there be further amalgamation of info given / decisions taken on 7th June to project team / community forum / stakeholders for further decision making and final conclusions?
- None of options reflect positions of coast guard cottages we should have had an other options....we lack information (AVM: options agreed 14th December)

Animations

- Voice over?
- Useful? 21 animations – info overload or use the stills
- They are brilliant accessible to everyone, much better than all the reading!
- Can they be around when mentioned in narrative?
- Use colour for saltmarsh / green space / mud etc.
- Lacking details
- Would it be possible to get cd with all of this? (AVM: will be uploaded on website)
- Present 2 sets of 3: defence options – outgoing options
- Have booths for projection at 7th June event?
- Only project / present if baseline information is accurate

Summary

1. Explain baseline better
2. Don't use specialist report summary in present form terminology neutral . Position is confusing
3. Issue short / medium /low (complicated). Should we not base decisions on short term and be clear about which positions closed off?
4. Process
 - review wording of criteria?
 - Complicated, not easy, confusing
 - Require a lot of information, standardised grid of information what quality is 5 and what is 0?
 - Do it in group discussions per criterion? (max 10 people)
 - Short / medium / long term remains an issue
 - Should we not offer decision making on information we have about short term?
 - It's not complicated to bear in mind medium/ long term as well
 - repeat process in time
 - Make clear that you're closing off options for medium / long term when you're making certain decisions for short term
5. Animations
 - Brilliant /need to combination of animations and panel exhibitions
 - Voice over
 - Put on cd / upload to website
 - Number (21) is impractical

Group 3 (HI)

Discussion recorded by facilitator onto flip chart paper

Summary Criteria From Group 2 as set out in the plenary session:

Issues concerned about the criteria process

1. Flood risk management and access – safeguard the A259

- None of them affect the A259
- But you have to be sure
- They will therefore come out with the same score
- One option included protections of the embankment
- We will all do what is necessary to protect the road
- Retain appropriate access for all on East and West beaches (ie concrete path on East and vanguard way on West NB some concerns about cyclists on vanguard way)

2. Cost

- A lot of uncertainty in the costs
- Relative cost – group would prefer

3. Ecology

- How do you define enhancement
- There will be different impacts in different parts of the estuary
- Adaptation is an important term
- Can live with criteria – need details of what criteria covers but not too long

4. Education

- Yes, we can live with this statement

5. Flood management

- No increase to flood risk up stream at A259 (group can live with this)
- Protection of existing properties (coastguard properties, Foxhole, canoe barn) – don't list? We can live with this

6. Heritage and landscape

- Heritage is a broad term it is not just physical aspect
- The criteria becoming too bland?
- Give examples of what they mean eg unique landscape, inspiration
- Keep all these criteria as they are and add detail

7. Timing?

- Is this needed?

8. Sustainable scheme?

- Too much direction?

Discussion on the options recorded on to flipchart by facilitator

Baseline:

- Baseline isn't neutral in long term in real terms
- Does modelling take into account coastal erosion? – No. Covered in a separate study

Option A – partial breach

- Clarification – embankment but if no protect fox hole farm
- Footpath may need rerouting; this needs to be made clear especially as ranking re access criterion and cycling, people will e.g. a board walk with suitable gradient
- 24 accesses needed both sides? There isn't at the moment we don't have that level of access now

- Board walk has to be sufficiently wide e.g. similar to width of concrete path at the moment
- There will be time to plan for these improvements re access
- Lets treat improving access as an opportunity – consider with all options
- People may be concerned about A259 – suggest a clear statement from East Sussex on what they will do to maintain / protect it
- Nothing we do in the estuary will negatively impact the road
- Discussion about what is actionably needed to protect the A259, the canoe barn etc.
- Concern that the animation does not match what happens at the A259

Option B – full breach

- Protection of the A259 again! This needs to be clear when discussed on June 7th
- Why wouldn't meanders have water in them?
- Expert views and individual views may diverge?
- Modelling shows where conditions are right for saltmarsh
- Question asked about excavation area
- Concern about what modelling shows with regards to coastguard cottages
- Sea wall would be sufficient to protect against coastal erosion
- Suggest a statement re: coastguard cottages for all the options that addresses the maintenance of the coastal erosion and sea defences and possible impacts re options
- Do any of the options change situation at coastguard cottages?
- Coastal erosion is out of scope of this project but maintaining banks does have an impact

Option C – reactivation

- A259 would need raising
- Underlines option – why?
- Does it need apply to other options?
- Is it really necessary under this option?
- Either apply to other options or take out?
- This could affect the cost
- More detailed engineering will be need for all the options at a later stage
- Challenge the cost on B&C
- With this option, wouldn't you have to get rid of the canal completely?

Option D

- This is back to what the EA used to do
- What about over topping and silting up of the meanders? (They are overtopping now – what bout in 100 years? Surprise this isn't shown in the modelling)
- They would need some improvement to be maintained
- We would need collective plan for maintaining the river mouth
- Is there a problem in the modelling – surprised at picture re over topping surprised it isn't shown in the model
- Is this under costed? It might be more expensive than we think e.g. numbers of storm surges
- Need further clarity on this model especially overtopping

Option E

- Who would supplement this? Money would need raising collectively it won't meet EA criteria, EA will fund to keep mouth clear until self-sustaining

- Discussion about how often water is currently let into the meanders – there are two parts that are fed with water. There isn't oxygen in the water. It is maintained for canoeing and visual amenity at the moment
- Devices e.g. statistics could be put into improve the flow into the meanders any flow would stop them silting up
- But the meanders would also need dredging

Option F

- Same points relate to the sluices as Option E

Comments on ranking

- What time frame are we meant to be thinking? Short / medium / long?

Final points

General points

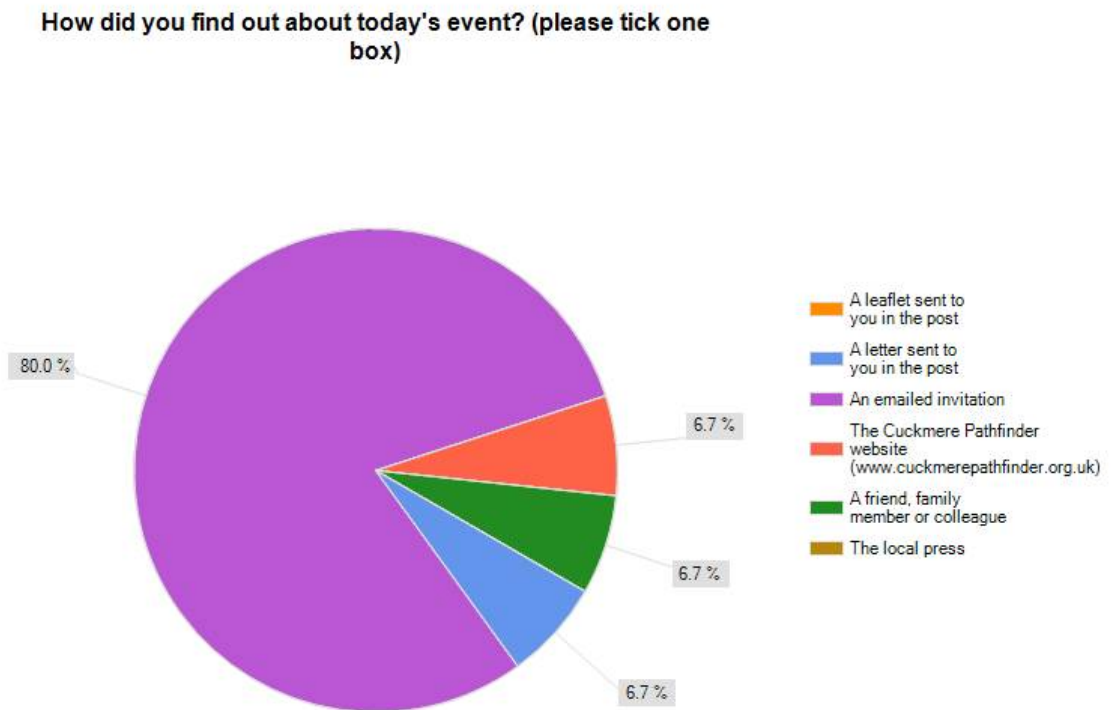
- Access and rerouting footpaths
- A259 – general statement needed, and options B& C suggest money ways – necessary for all or none?
- General statements needed and query whether need to be criterion
- Coastguard cottages
- Challenge cost - B&C and D, E & F
- Clarity re overtopping option D
- Mechanism for operating meanders? Eg sluices, dredging
- Options D, E & F need collective plan for maintaining river mouth

Modelling/visualisation

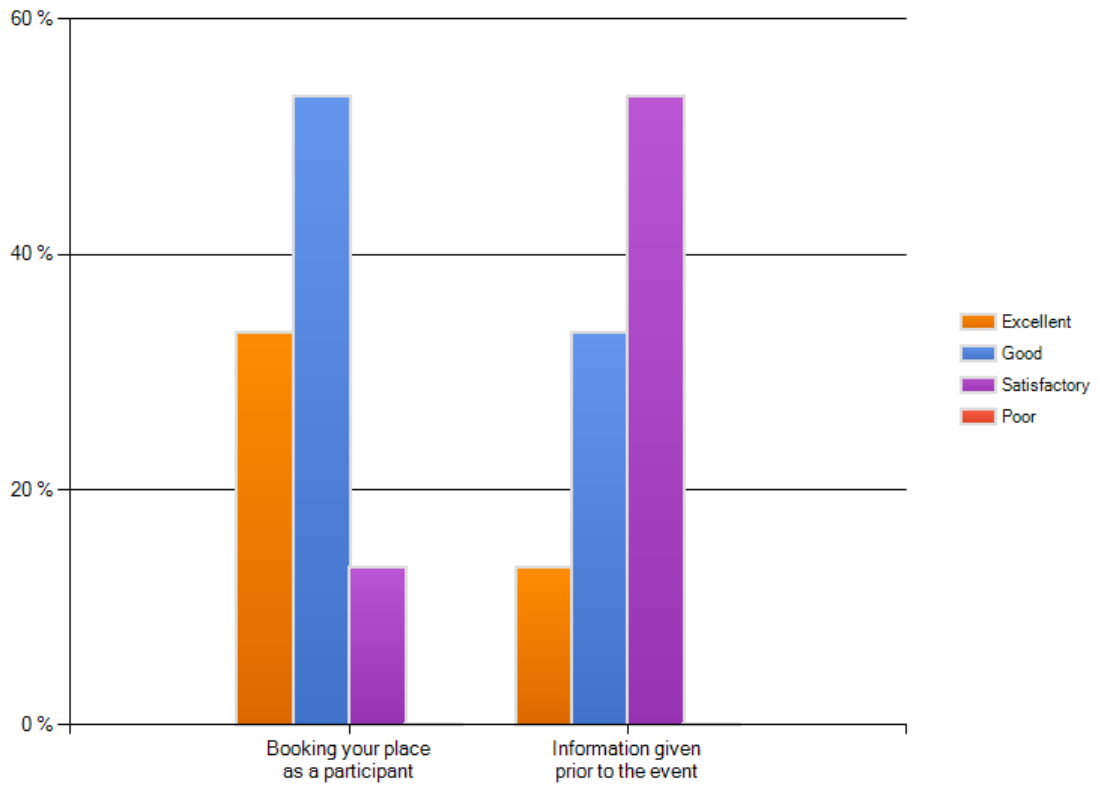
- Not sure it will work with the public
- Question value of using for too long
- Changes which should be made before June 7th:
 - meanders
 - where there is grassland
 - include the road
 - is it possible to change the background?
 - views too far away from Cell B where many of the changes will happen
 - how about view from carpark / beach / near cell B?

Appendix 6 - Evaluation Summary

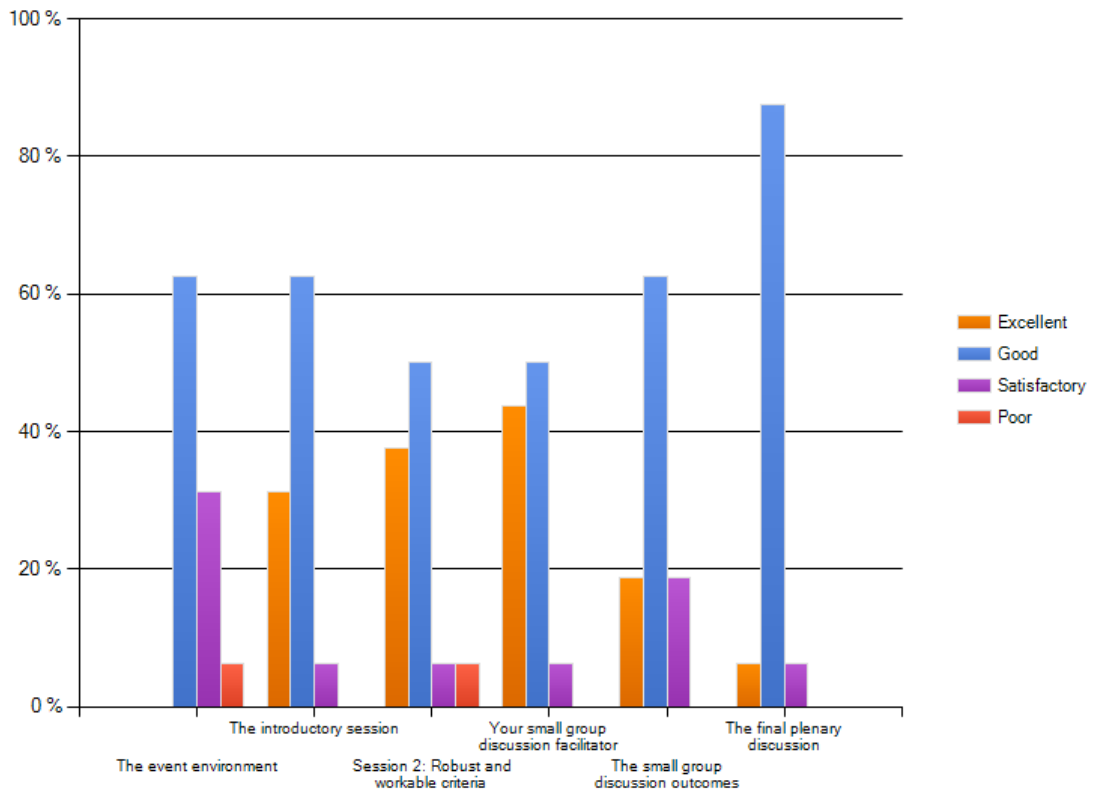
100% of participants said they had enough opportunity to express their views



How did you find the following pre-event activity?



How did you find the following during the event?



In your view did the workshop meet its objectives?

