

The North West Plan

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS)

Partial Review

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Facilitating a 'Do it Yourself' Workshop for the North West Plan Partial Review

This guidance looks at some key issues and concepts in facilitation that are useful to think about if you are running a 'do it yourself' workshop for the North West Plan Partial Review.

The guidance includes;

- What is facilitation?
- The role of the facilitator;
- Key skills for facilitators;
- Facilitation top tips;
- Consultation information; and
- How we can help

What is facilitation?

Facilitation is a process through which an environment and group process is created through which participants are enabled to contribute to a debate equitably and collectively. In the case of a workshop to think about options for the North West Plan Partial Review this would be providing the opportunity for people to think about the evidence base and issues that have led to the development of the options, as well as the options themselves.

The facilitation of a group is different from other types of group leadership roles in that it places the needs of the group members before the needs of the leader or the project.

It is helpful to think about facilitation within a range of group leadership styles. One way is to think about two extremes of types of group leadership

and how facilitation fits in with them. The table below looks at two such extremes.

Leadership style	Authoritative	Participative (facilitation)	Permissive
Definition	The group leader is very much in charge, they set the agenda and lead the discussion, encouraging some formal input from others	The group leader focuses on enabling constructive contributions from group members within a well defined and shared process	The leadership is based on members being happy and doing what they choose to do at the time
Usage	Formal committee meetings	Participative training events & community engagement	Some community activities and social groups

When planning a 'do it yourself' workshop think about how you are going to lead the group and make sure that the group are having as many opportunities to think through the issues, ask questions and discuss the options.

The role of the facilitator

Given then that the facilitator is taking responsibility for the group 'process' and making sure that the outcome is one that comes from the group, what is their facilitator's job?

It has been said that in a consultation setting like the North West Plan Partial Review suggested that to ensure a successful outcome a facilitator takes on five types of roles. These are;

- **instructive** – inputting technical information into the discussion, whilst posing probing questions to draw out the knowledge and insights of others;

- **decision-making** – *"identifying areas of agreement and disagreement, seeking consensus, acknowledging contributions, prompting discussion and assessing its efficacy"¹*;
- **social** – *"promoting human relationships, affirming and recognizing students' inputs, providing opportunities for students to develop a sense of group cohesiveness, maintaining the group as a unit, and helping participants to work together in a mutual cause"²*;
- **managerial** – ensuring that all the procedural, administrative and decision making protocols are set, shared and understood and that good planning and preparation has taken place; and
- **technical** – making sure all the equipment works and is available when needed.

In order to fulfil these roles facilitators needs to be able to provide a neutral leadership in a group in a way that;

- focuses the group and the discussion;
- promotes an appropriate environment, in which all participants can contribute equally through negotiation;
- stimulates all group members to join in useful debate, whilst respecting their feelings;
- supports all participants to contribute in a constructive way, this may include both quiet and noisy participants;
- recognises and affirm all contributions;
- builds a collaborative group over time;
- ensures that agreed timings are kept to, but that the group is not run by time pressures; and
- makes sure all the practical arrangements are sorted out.

Before running your workshop think through your roles and make sure you explain it to the group well.

¹ Anderson et al 2001

² Berge 1995

Key skills for facilitators

The skills needed to be a facilitator include some personal qualities. Such qualities are summarised in the table below, and are really helpful to be aware of before starting your workshop.

Flexibility	The ability to fulfil different group roles so that the group process fluid and reaches its potential while changing methods as the need arises in the group.
Confident	To instil confidence in the group process by its members by appearing purposeful
Trusted	Being trusted by the group by employing open methods that are acceptable to the group and not moving the goal posts or developing hidden agendas
Presence	To develop a presence within the group in order to manage the process and any group problems
Perceptive	To be able to recognise the overt and hidden activities in the group and act on them.

Facilitation top tips

Workshops can be really fun, but for the facilitator there can be some challenges, here are some essential action points to remember when facilitating. These are some 'must do' action points for facilitating 'do it yourself' workshops;

Planning

To decide what to do and how to do it consider **who** are you consultation on the options, **how** are you going to consult on the options, **where** is your workshop going to take place and **when** will it all happen. The answer to these questions will inform what happens next.

Establish purpose

Be clear that you understand the purpose of the North West Plan Partial Review consultation and that you can explain it to other people.

Set the agenda

Set a clear agenda for the people coming to the workshop and plan for your own facilitation. You can use the one supplied with this pack and adapt it if you like. Make sure you share the agenda with others and ensure they are happy to use it as the process for the session.

Sample ground rules

- **Start and finish on time**
- **Listen to each other and respect other people's views**
- **Stay on track**
- **Give credit where it is due**
- **Avoid side conversations**
- **Mobiles switch off or to silent mode**

Ground rules

List the ground rules for the session, refresh and revisit them when needed and use them as a reference within the session if necessary (see box)

Focus the meeting

At the start of the session restate why we are there what is going to happen, when it will all end and remind the group of the ground rules

Keep on track

Ensure that the debate flows, but doesn't stray off track. (See below for ideas on dealing with problems)

Handle information

It is essential that the information that emerges from your session is fed into the consultation and that all [participants know what is going to happen to it. (See below for input options)

Consultation information

The key purpose of a 'do it yourself' is to provide an opportunity for people to feed into the wider consultation. It is essential therefore that information from the event is sent back in to the consultation or that all participants are made aware of how to feed in.

Feeding back

In the workshop use the framework of the questionnaire to gather consultation information. After the workshop you can either, send paper forms to the consultation address below, send electronic forms, or enter the data on the web site consultation.

Signposting

If it is more appropriate for consultees to feed into the wider consultation after the workshop, then please make sure that they are aware of all the methods available including.

- Paper questionnaire, which we can send to consultees
- Electronic questionnaire on the web site
- The free phone line

See below for contact details.

How we can help

CAG Consultants are on hand to help if you need us to help out with a 'do it yourself' workshop for the North West Plan Partial Review. We can;

- Help with planning
- Help get agendas and facilitation plans sorted out
- Supply North West Plan Partial Review Packs for participants
- Co facilitate, depending on dates
- Supply North West Plan Partial Review presentations and other resources
- Talk through ideas
- Help with feeding back in consultation information

How to get in touch

Post -

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