

PILOT WORKSHOP | SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

This document contains information on the following:

1. CONSENSUS BUILDING
2. SPOKES COUNCIL
3. STEEPLE OVERVIEW

1. CONSENSUS BUILDING

This workshop will facilitate a process of consensus building to answer the following questions:

- How do we achieve decarbonisation of UK energy supply in the short and long term?
- How much can the UK reduce its energy demand in the short and long term?
- How much carbon can be removed from the atmosphere in the short and long term?

Consensus building seeks to develop an approach to net zero acceptable to all participants. This does not mean that everyone must completely agree on their favourite solution at all times. Rather, the process facilitates the exploration and weaving together of the best ideas that address key concerns for all participants to develop a solution that works for everyone (or at least that everyone can live with). This is a creative process and can unearth approaches and solutions that may otherwise not have come to light.

Expectations of participants:

- **Be willing to work towards the solution that works for everyone.** Be flexible and willing to give up your favourite idea if there is another solution that meets your core needs.
- **Help to create a respectful and trusting atmosphere.** Make space for everyone to express their ideas and opinions, and be open and truthful about your own.
- **Listen actively to what people are trying to say.** Seek to understand someone's position, and if you don't understand, seek to discuss this further.
- **Don't be afraid of disagreement and conflict.** Differences of opinion are natural and we need to know what they are in order to come up with a good decision. An easily reached consensus may cover up the fact that some people don't feel safe or confident enough to express their disagreements.

Adapted from [Seeds for Change](#)

The consensus building process relies on cooperation between equals. Whilst the exact process will vary, keeping this value in mind is key to making consensus work. This approach facilitates the respectful exploration of differences, essential to understanding different perspectives for solutions to be recognised.

1.1. The Process

Consensus building consists of a journey that begins with a divergence of ideas; an opening out to explore the views of all participants. The complexity of these ideas is explored, and convergence around a best possible solution is identified. The workshop will facilitate the following aspects of this process, which will be supported by times of lone reflection away from the group:

1. Opening out: Group exploration

This session presents the opportunity for everyone to express their views clearly, getting the potential options out into the open. This provides the information around which a solution can be built that finds the common ground and resolves differences. At this stage, any areas of consensus are noted but parked for discussion at a later stage.

2. Closing in: Group consensus building

This session consists of exploring the potential ideas and pathways identified to weigh up different options and understand any concerns. It is here that common ground can be found using the ‘**levels of agreement**’ framework, described below.

3. Finalising and refining: Group consensus building

This session will involve reflection on the pathways identified in the consensus building exercise. Participants should refine and strengthen their ideas, weed out aspects that won’t work and identify gaps in the evidence base.

4. Plenary consensus building: Can we converge around one narrative?

This session will seek to arrive at some level of agreement across all the groups, to converge around one narrative. If consensus cannot be achieved, then it is important to note the areas of disagreement at which the narrative branches.

1.2. Levels of agreement

As discussed above, building consensus consists of developing a solution that is acceptable to all participants. We will utilise a 'levels of agreement' framework to indicate the extent that participants accept the proposals. This enables the process of consensus building to continue whilst capturing and considering complexity and disagreement.

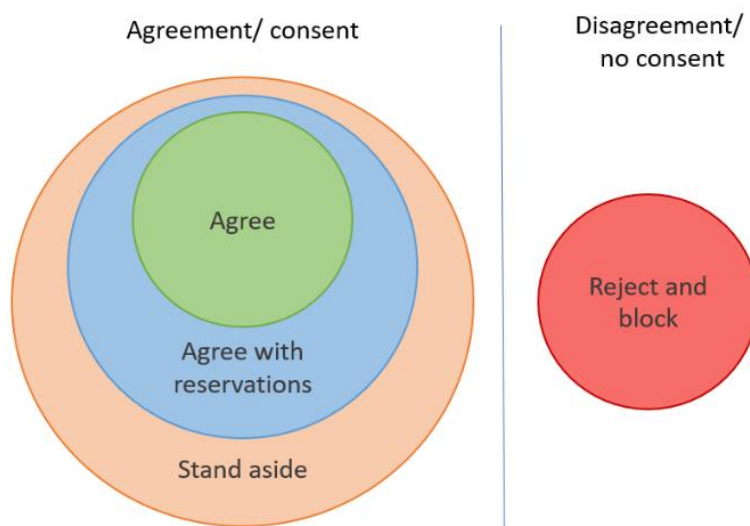


Figure 1 – The four levels of agreement

As groups begin the consensus building process, the 4 'levels of agreement' depicted in Figure 1 will be used to indicate support for proposals:

- Agree**
 This is the highest level of agreement available, indicating **'I fully support this proposal.'**
- Agree with reservations**
 You are willing to support the proposal but have reservations. This indicates **'I support this proposal but want my concerns to be acknowledged'**. Your reservations will be recorded.
- Stand aside**
 You have serious reservations about the proposal but do not want to block it from further consideration at this stage. The group may be happy to accept a 'stand aside' or may seek to reach a more agreeable proposal. This indicates **'I have serious reservations about this proposal but will not block it at this stage'**. Your reservations will be recorded. Participants may also want to stand aside if they feel that they do not have a sufficient knowledge base to pass judgement on the proposal.

- **Reject and block**

You fundamentally disagree with the proposal and do not consent to it moving ahead. This moves beyond “I don’t really like it” or “I liked the other idea better” to mean “*I cannot support the outcome if this goes ahead*”. If this occurs, the group can develop another proposal or seek to make amendments to overcome the objection. This indicates ‘**I fundamentally disagree with this proposal and block it from moving forward**’.

In an ideal consensus process a block would not happen as any major concerns would have been identified and discussed throughout the process. Where a block cannot be overcome, some scenario branching may be necessary.

1.3. Using levels of agreement

In the workshop, we will be testing the levels of agreement in the ‘Closing in: Group consensus building’ session. **To do this, we ask you to use the four cards from the A4 consensus cards sheet provided in your information pack to hold up to your webcam to signify your level of agreement.**

2. SPOKES PERSON OVERVIEW

The ‘Spokes Council’ process allows decisions to be made across several smaller groups by replacing the need for everyone to come together in larger meetings. In the process, each topic group has a ‘Spokesperson’ who will observe the group deliberations and then attend a Spokes Council meeting, where they will communicate the ideas and issues that have arisen in their meeting to the other Spokes and report back to their topic groups. The role of the Spokes is to ensure an effective flow of information between the topic groups, acting as a voice for everyone in their group. Spokes should also help to provide oversight and ensure that a holistic approach is taken to the narratives the groups develop. Spokes are therefore selected based on their broad knowledge of the net zero challenge alongside their specific subject knowledge.

2.1 The process

Each topic group will contain a designated Spoke. They will be involved in observing and contributing to group discussion, then will move into a ‘Spokes Council’ with Spokes from the other groups to reflect on the overarching issues and to identify where and how they may wish to challenge the groups. They should consider how the topic group proposals may interact, challenge, or support other proposals. They should also consider how the emerging narrative takes into account overarching systems architecture, governance and ethical issues. The challenges from the Spokes should then be communicated back into the topic groups as they continue to work towards a common narrative. The Spokes move between the topic groups and the Spokes Council at specific points, maintaining their oversight role and helping their topic group to understand and respond to the challenges from the Spokes Council. In this way, the power to make decisions lies firmly with the topic groups, not the Spokes Council.

3. STEEPLE OVERVIEW

During the workshop we will ask you to reflect on the items you have discussed in relation to the STEEPLE criteria.

STEEPLE is an acronym for Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, and Ethical, bringing these different dimensions to light when considering decisions. The descriptions below provide an outline, but by no means a complete list of areas that could be considered through the criteria¹:

Social Factors

- Social practices and behaviour
- Demographic changes
- Attitudes towards energy transitions
- Local acceptability of infrastructure
- Racial and gender inequalities
- Role of grassroots organising and social movements

Technological Factors

- R&D activity
- Speed of technological change
- Technology incentives

Economic Factors

- Paradigm of economic growth vs de-growth
- Economic inequality
- Finance
- Changing structure of the economy and work patterns
- Consumption patterns

Environmental Factors

- Land use change
- Impacts on biodiversity and habitats
- Pollution impacts

Political Factors

- Types of policy instrument to achieve change
- Ideological preference for neoliberal thinking
- Role of local governments
- Lobbying and political influence of fossil fuel industry
- Short-term political cycles
- Role of democratic innovations (e.g. citizens assemblies)

¹ Adapted from: <https://pestleanalysis.com/difference-swot-pest-steep-steeple-analysis/>

- Role of the media

Legal Factors

- Existing legal and regulatory framework
- Legal instruments to drive change

Ethical Factors

- Unequal distribution of emissions
- UK's role in 'common but differentiated responsibility'
- Just transition for workers
- Distribution of the costs of the net-zero transition
- Intergeneration and interspecies justice