



e-Community Council: an e-Democracy Model for Communities

Annexes to the Final Report

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Annex A. Community Profiles

The 6 communities represented in the project are located in central Scotland, mainly in the areas served by Stirling Council. They are Bannockburn, Cambusbarron, Strathfillan, Thornhill and Blairdrummond, and Torbrex. The exception is Steps, which lies in the area served by North Lanarkshire Council.

These are small rural and suburban locales, whose demographic characteristics are detailed in Table 1 below, drawing on the 2001 National Census to compare 5 of the Community Council areas with the corresponding Local Authorities (the source of the statistics shown). These appear to show communities that are relatively affluent and middle-aged. However we should note that the statistics do not convey the economic polarisation that is present in some communities, nor the range of social problems that Community Councils address.

Internet access is likely to be high relative to the population as a whole, given that the participating Community Councils serve populations that are relatively affluent and highly educated. In Scotland generally, the Scottish Household Survey reports that: -

“.. the percentage of adults who make use of the internet for personal use has risen steadily from 29 per cent in the first quarter of 2001 to 47 per cent in the second quarter of 2004. Men make greater personal use of the internet than women with the figures for men generally being around eight percentage points higher than those for women.”¹

¹ Scottish Household Survey: Social Justice Information available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002/11658> (consulted July 2005)

	Stirling	Bannock-burn	Cambus-barron	Strathfillan	Thornhill & Blair-drummond	Torbrex	Stepps	North Lanarkshire
Area	2187 km2	8 km2	33.5 km2	244.5 km2	54.5 km2	0.6 km2	-	
Resident Population	86370	7352	3224	396	1109	1575	4393	
Population Density		920/ km2	96/ km2	2/ km2	20/ km2	2625/ km2	-	
Households	36658	2854	1316	166	423	722	1769	
Housing Stock		2887	1342	171	437	742	-	
Resident Population								
By Gender								
Male	41222	3492	1563	186	547	739	-	
Female	45148	3860	1660	210	562	836	-	
By Age (%)								
0-4	5.6	6.3	6.5	7.5	5.1	3.8	5.0	6.0
5-11	8.5	10.5	9.0	9.5	11.3	5.4		
12-15	5.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	4.3	3.4	15.0	14.0 (5-15)
16-19	5.3	4.8	3.9	2.5	5.4	3.9		
20-24	7.2	5.6	4.3	7.0	4.1	4.5	15.0	18.0 (16-29)
25-44	27.4	30.3	27.5	30.7	26.8	21.9	23.0	24.0 (30-44)
45-59	19.9	18.1	22.7	21.4	23.9	21.9	22.0	19.0
60-64	5.3	4.3	5.8	8.8	5.7	8.6		
65-74	8.5	7.9	9.3	4.0	7.7	17.0	14.0	13.0 (60-74)
75-84	5.2	4.5	5.1	3.8	4.8	7.9	6.0	6.0 (75+)
85+	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5	0.8	1.6		
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participating Community Council Areas

	<i>Stirling</i>	<i>Bannock-burn</i>	<i>Cambus-barron</i>	<i>Strathfillan</i>	<i>Thornhill & Blair-drummond</i>	<i>Torbrex</i>	<i>Stepps</i>	<i>North Lanarkshire</i>
Household Tenure (%)								
Owner Occupied	66.6	63.0	80.9	51.8	74.1	92.4	78	58
Rented from Council	20.0	30.4	13.5	15.1	7.6	2.2	17	32
Other social rented*	2.6	1.9	0.1	17.5	0.2	0.7	0	4
Private rented unfurnished	3.0	1.2	1.7	9.0	10.0	1.5	1	1
Private rented furnished	4.4	0.9	1.4	1.8	2.6	1.9	1	1
Living rent free	3.4	2.6	2.4	4.8	5.5	1.2	2	4
Ethnicity (%)								
White	98.5	98.5	98.9	99.7	99.4	98.1	-	-
Indian	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	-
Pakistani or Other South Asian	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.6	-	-
Chinese	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.6	-	-
African	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Other (including mixed)	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.6	-	-
Highest qualification attained (aged 16-74)								
First/ Higher degree, prof. qualification	26.6	13.7	33.0	16.9	30.8	39.5	-	-
HND, HNC, SVQ 4 & 5	6.5	6.1	6.5	5.4	7.2	8.1	-	-
Highers, ONC SVQ 3	18.3	15.6	16.2	19.7	14.1	17.4	-	-
O Grade, Standard Grade	21.8	29.9	21.4	24.4	21.1	17.8	-	-
None of the above	26.7	34.8	22.8	33.6	26.8	17.2	-	-

Table 1 (continued)

	<i>Stirling</i>	<i>Bannockburn</i>	<i>Cambusbarron</i>	<i>Strathfillan</i>	<i>Thornhill & Blairdrummond</i>	<i>Torbrex</i>	<i>Steps</i>	<i>North Lanarkshire</i>
Economically Active (%)								
Employed full-time	37.8	13.1	43.6	35.8	32.5	34.7	-	-
Employed part-time	11.1	44.4	12.5	8.1	11.5	9.5	-	-
Self-employed	8.9	5.4	8.1	27.0	20.5	8.2	-	-
Unemployed	3.0	3.0	2.2	2.4	1.7	1.9	-	-
Full-time student	4.3	2.6	2.7	1.0	1.5	2.9	-	-
Economically Inactive								
Retired	13.7	12.3	15.8	8.4	10.0	27.7	-	-
Student	6.1	2.4	2.7	2.4	4.0	3.4	-	-
Looking After Family	5.5	4.8	5.7	5.7	6.2	5.8	-	-
Long-term sick / disabled	6.2	8.4	3.4	6.1	7.1	3.8	-	-
Other	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.0	4.9	2.0	-	-
Social Class % (All aged 16+ in households)							Note²	
A/B: Higher & Intermediate managerial/admin/professional	25.0	15.0	33.9	14.3	26.6	42.0	25	18
C1: Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/admin/professional	27.3	25.6	29.5	34.7	30.0	30.4	30	27
C2: Skilled manual	13.0	18.8	11.1	14.3	20.5	4.8	11	12
D: Semi-skilled, unskilled	15.7	19.1	10.3	25.5	10.9	6.2	23	30
E: Unemployed, on benefits, lowest grade workers	19.0	21.5	15.1	11.2	12.1	16.7	10	13

Table 1 (continued)

² N. Lanarkshire Council figures are based on the % of persons 16-74 *in employment*, i.e. excluding those who are unemployed from the social class breakdown.

Annex B. Guidance on Best Practice

This Annex gives further information intended to help community councillors use e-Community Council tools to best effect. It focuses on moderating and facilitating online discussion, a task that is likely to be new to most community councillors.

Sources of further information are given on related topics-

- Citizen journalism and 'blogging'
- Moderation and facilitation, including legal issues
- Consultation methods
- Writing questionnaires

Citizen Journalism and 'Blogging'

Community councillors who are not experienced or confident in writing items for the public to read online can find a great deal of guidance on the web itself (including 'blogs'). *Citizen journalism* is a term coined by U.S. news media. Many newspapers, not only in the US, now have online versions that include mechanisms such as web forms and email addresses for the ordinary public to contribute news stories, or respond to items by professional journalists.

An overview and list of resources is given in *The 11 Layers of Citizen Journalism* by Steve Outing http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=83126

Citizen journalism is related to *blogging* (referred to in Chapter 1 of the main report). The distinction is that blogs are online journals that are usually without print equivalents and independent of traditional news media. There are now thousands of politically related blogs- at time of writing more than 370 are listed for the UK alone (see <http://www.voidstar.com/ukpoliblog/>)

Until recently it has been the norm for blogs to be written by a single author, with others contributing comments. Now collaborative blogs, like the e-Community Council, are increasingly being seen as a tool for communities to exchange news and views. The US has several well established examples:-

Northfield online: This Minnesota city has one of the longest running e-democracy sites, run on a voluntary basis at <http://northfield.org>. The site has been organised as a blog since 2003. It is featured as a case study on the UK Local e-Democracy national Project site at:-

<http://www.e-democracy.gov.uk/casestudies.htm>

iBrattleboro: <http://www.ibrattleboro.com/index.php?topic=Political> a very extensive site reporting on news and events in the Montana city of Brattleboro, including political developments.

Note that although these sites (Northfield in particular) are intended to influence political decision makers they are not (to the best of our knowledge) directly connected to any tier of local government.

Moderating and Facilitating Online Discussion

Moderating and facilitating are the two main roles needed to handle public discussion. These are not new skills for any community council experienced in chairing a public meeting, although the online environment changes how the skills can be applied and the consequences of doing so.

One simple but important difference is that, since exchanges between the individuals involved can take place over days or weeks, the skills do not need to be embodied in a single person but can be shared. Another difference is in the possible consequences of online discussion. Unlike comments spoken at a public meeting online comments are written, and available to anyone who cares to look. They are therefore subject to different legal constraints.

Definitions of what we mean by 'moderating' and 'facilitating' are appropriate: -

- *Moderation*: checking that all comments remain within reasonable limits, as set out in a Conditions of Use statement, and taking appropriate action if they do not.
- *Facilitation*: encouraging people to contribute and helping the discussion to progress.

Together these roles aim to ensure a fair and impartial debate by enforcing rules and (in the case of facilitation) a more 'hands on' and visible role. This involves ensuring that the discussion stays focussed upon the topic, introducing new issues or material, and stimulating interest by asking and answering questions and clarifying matters as necessary. The moderation and facilitation roles are described in turn below.

Moderation: setting and enforcing rules of fair play

Establishing boundaries

Publishing a *Conditions of Use* statement provides boundaries for the online dialogue that e-Community Councils are intended to promote. Those boundaries contribute to fair and

effective debate by specifying what those concepts are held to mean. That is, there needs to be a clearly visible and clearly worded statement. It should include a privacy policy if any personal data is collected on the site, in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

A privacy policy is a statement to defining how any personal details (e.g. address) that site visitors enter will be used and who will have access to it. Comments that can be attributed to individuals are potentially 'sensitive', meaning they are afforded added legal protection.

Currently the e-Community Councils collect personal data from community councillors. Data is also collected from members of the public submitting items to the home page, though personally identifying data is available only to authorised community councillors.

The Conditions of Use must be clearly understandable, both to community councillors (so they can enforce them unambiguously) and to the members of the public who are invited to take part. Clearly, the statement will need occasional re-drafting to be responsive to practice and need. If questions are regularly being raised regarding the 'suitability' of messages, then the Conditions of Use may need strengthening.

An *escalation procedure* is advisable. That is, if a moderator is unsure whether a contribution is (e.g.) defamatory or racist they should know who else's judgement they can call upon. For example the procedure may be to contact the community council's chairperson or, if there is still uncertainty, seek advice from the local authority or other source.

Keeping track of public contributions

To sustain public involvement a regular level of activity is necessary. Timing is important when responding to messages; it is better to reply immediately or if more information or reflection is needed at least give an acknowledgement. In any case replies should be short, to the point, and friendly.

We recommend that messages are checked and if necessary replied to at least three times a week, depending on how frequently comments are being added (which is likely to depend on whether current issues are very controversial).

Moderators should apply rules in a fair, consistent and impartial manner but avoid being dogmatic. There is a fine line between freedom of speech and the need for rules against offensive behaviour. It is necessary to judge how productive individual comments are towards the overall debate, whilst trying to remain consistent.

It is relevant to re-state here the two main forms of moderation: pre-moderation and post-moderation. With *pre-moderation* all contributions are first sent to a moderator who decides whether to accept them and make them publicly visible. This is how e-Community Council *items* are moderated.

In the case of *post-moderation* all contributions go online and are publicly visible. The moderator then monitors the comments on a regular basis, removing any that breach the Conditions of Use. This is how e-Community Council *comments* are moderated.

Post-moderation is generally preferred on e-participation sites. This does have a higher risk factor than pre-moderation, since it introduces the possibility of legally offensive material being posted and going unnoticed. However contributors can see immediately that their opinion is visible. The delays implied by pre-moderation risk conveying the impression that free speech is too restricted. For e-Community Council sites it was nevertheless felt appropriate considering the prominence that items have on the home page.

Facilitation

Community councillors are likely to understand the importance of facilitation skills for face-to-face meetings. Equally similar skills can be applied online, so that responding is more than simply replying to matters raised on the site. Online facilitation can help contributors to increase understanding of complex issues, mediate disagreements and enable them to reach conclusions.

Where community councillors use the site as a platform for their own views, whether as a 'devils advocate' to provoke debate or just to inform, it is worth considering having one or more others who consciously take a neutral role in replying to comments. Facilitator involvement can be controversial, especially in formal consultations – since it can be argued that the facilitator has unduly influenced opinions. It is important to balance facilitator involvement so that they are not 'central' to discussions, are not always involved in every discussion and are not involved in starting many new topics themselves. The facilitator intervenes by response, rather than instigates by example.

Disagreements are common online and it is important to reply sensitively to upset or disgruntled participants. Remaining neutral in such situations can be difficult. One approach to deflate conflict is to first restate the participant's point of view in order to acknowledge it, before making a suggestion to consider alternative viewpoints, or challenge them. It may be best for the facilitator to avoid making assertions or being absolute by speaking from a personal perspective or making it clear whose perspective the coordinator is speaking from. It may be helpful to end such messages with an open question, and a request for confirmation or other's views on the matter.

During online discussion information can also be used to spark new interest and new lines of argument (i.e. in addition to information already provided on-site). Information can be typed out or sources can be referred to e.g. web addresses (URL's) and why they may be interesting.

Much of the online facilitators' role is simply directed towards creating a positive environment. Characteristics of such an environment might be described as:

- Making newcomers feel welcomed and all contributors valued.

- Enabling people to make contact with like-minded others if appropriate (but also ensuring that young people do not disclose physical contact details).
- Enabling a feeling of ownership, where people work out for themselves where the conversation is going and how to avoid conflicts.
- An environment that promotes cooperative action to address local problems and share knowledge of them.

Summarising comments periodically

Where issues attract regular comments over some time, it is helpful to provide visitors with periodic summaries. The Hansard Society uses the terms weaving and summarising³ to refer to two e-facilitation skills. *Weaving* is the process of gathering together elements of various messages in order to present a new idea, focus the discussion and show participants that they have been heard. This is usually achieved by selecting various quotes from the discussion (crediting the author) and meshing them together in a way that creates a new and possibly unforeseen point of view. This can help people to reflect on what they have written and possibly see it in a new light or a new line of argument.

Summarising is the act of drawing together the main points of a discussion. In a consultation it is a very useful tool for acknowledging participant's contributions and allowing young people to feel a sense of accomplishment by being recognised. Summaries at regular intervals throughout the e-engagement can provide a useful resource for latecomers, as well as acting as a recapitulation of the debate for participants. This can help them to reflect on what has happened so far and re-focus the discussion. Important areas that have not yet been covered may become apparent and new debate can be sparked. Some conclusions can be made in summaries, which can be agreed upon or negotiated further. Summaries help to finish off and round up a debate; they also provide a useful record for compiling final reports for partner organisations.

Legal issues

Publishing a website carries legal risks and responsibilities. These are similar to those faced when publishing a print newsletter – but need to be taken more seriously because the audience is (potentially) anyone on the internet, and any perceived liability can be spread worldwide in less time than it takes to deliver a newsletter around a small village. Community councillors may be held responsible for whatever members of the public contribute to the community council website. The main legal issues relate to:-

³ See <http://www.hansard-society.org.uk/programmes/e-democracy/e-moderators>

Copyright, Defamation, Discrimination and Obscenity

A useful guide *Civic Leadership Blogging: Legal Guidance* was prepared by the Hansard Society for the Local e-Democracy National Project, and can be downloaded at:-

http://www.e-democracy.gov.uk/knowledgepool/default.htm?mode=1&pk_document=358

Data Protection

Organisations that collect personal data are obliged to register with the Information Commissioner, to indicate what kinds of data are held. However the Local Channel report that the Information Commissioner has issued guidance to them that community or parish councils using the Local Channel to host their own site do not have to register individually, given that the Local Channel are themselves registered (as are Napier University). This is on condition that parish/community councils: -

“only process personal data for the core purposes of staff administration, accounts and records and marketing of their own products or services. It is more important to the Office of the Information Commissioner that they treat the personal data in accordance with the eight data protection principles contained within the Act.”

(<http://tellmeabout.thelocalchannel.co.uk/home.aspx?p=0&m=142>)

These principles are that data must be: -

- fairly and lawfully processed;
- processed for limited purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate;
- not kept longer than necessary;
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights;
- secure;
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection

See: <http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk> for further information.

Child Protection

The main point of good practice for e-Community Council moderators is to ensure that no identifying details are included in any item or comment that may conceivably have been posted by a child.

The Scottish Executive provides guidelines to schools on child safety issues on school websites. These state that:-

“The use of images and information about children on school websites is an issue for three reasons: a child might be identified and targeted by an individual (for example, an estranged parent or a paedophile) on the basis of material published online, placing the child at physical risk; a child's image might be stolen and manipulated by someone using imaging software to create offensive or illegal pornographic images; or another person may use the child's information to impersonate them.”

Community councils should be aware of the guidelines, most especially if they are aware of, or promoting, the use of their site by schools. The guidelines are available at: -

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/doubleclickthinking/school/schoolwebsite.asp>

Guidelines on consultation methods

A useful resource *Focusing on Citizens A Guide to Approaches and Methods* is published by COSLA⁴ and available at: -

<http://www.communityplanning.org.uk/documents/Engagingcommunitiesmethods.pdf>

Writing survey questions

Many guides to questionnaire design are available, mostly considered as part of social scientific survey research. Community Council questionnaires are advised to get expert advice if they aim to survey a representative sample of the local population. The e-Community Council questionnaire tool can be used for simple questionnaires, intended only to explore the range of local views on an issue, rather than to get a detailed profile of *how* those views vary and are inter-related. Even designing exploratory questionnaires needs skill in asking questions that are clear and unbiased. A useful guide is available at:

http://www.cros.ac.uk/question_design.pdf

⁴ Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Annex C. Stirling Citizens Panel Survey Responses

This Annex comprises the background information given to members of Stirling Council's citizens' panel, the questionnaire and responses to it.

Panel members were not identifiable to Napier University. Numbers assigned to each questionnaire were used to match the responses with socio-demographic data supplied by Stirling Council (age group, gender, urban/rural residence, home internet access).

The number of responses received⁵ by the closing date was 626 of 1300 sent, i.e. 48%

⁵ Excluding duplicate and incomplete questionnaires

Background information

Community Councils

Community Councils represent the views of their community to the local authority and other public bodies. For example, Stirling Council must consult them on planning and some licensing issues. They also have an important role to play in commenting on how plans and issues affect neighbourhoods across our area. In the next few years it is possible that Community Councils will have more influence on local services, as a result of changes being considered by Stirling Council and the Scottish Executive.

Other groups involved in local democracy

These include Stirling Assembly, local Community Planning and regeneration groups, Area Community Planning Forums, plus many voluntary organisations.

e-Community Councils

The Scottish Executive has been funding a project with 6 Community Councils in the Stirling area and other partners. These pilot “e-Community Councils” should offer people an online voice in their Community Council, and help them to represent local views to Stirling Council and other organisations that make decisions affecting Stirling. Each eCommunity Council is intended to help local people to:-

- Read about the issues and projects the Community Council is working on
- Comment on anything shown on the home page
- Write an item for the home page, and submit it for approval
- Respond to consultations from Stirling Council and other bodies
- Answer questionnaires
- Find dates of forthcoming meetings
- Find contact details for local organisations

Your feedback

Would this work in your area? Your views are being sought to help the project partners make decisions on its future. You do not need to have internet access to take part in the survey – you can return it by post. If you do have internet access, please:

1. **Check out any of the pilot e-community councils**, and think how a similar site might work in your neighbourhood. The e-Community Councils for Bannockburn, Cambusbarron, Drymen, Strathfillan, Thornhill & Blairdrummond, and Torbrex can be accessed from: <http://www.ecommunitycouncil.org.uk>
2. **Complete the questionnaire online at:** <http://itc.napier.ac.uk/stirling> - please use the password “Wallace”, and enter your questionnaire number.

Please respond by **20th December**. Thank you!

Section A. You and Your Community Council

1. Do you live in any of these areas? : Bannockburn, Cambusbarron, Drymen, Strathfillan, Thornhill & Blairdrummond, or Torbrex

Yes 21% No 77% Not sure 2%

2. Which Community Council area do you live in? (Whether or not it is one of the above, please name it or tick "Don't know" and go on to the next question)

Don't know 9%

For Questions 3-9, please tick the appropriate answer for each one.

Over the last 12 months -

3. I have contacted a Community Councillor about an issue affecting my area-

Many times 6% One or two times 23% Never 71%

4. I have contacted the Council or another organisation about issues affecting my area-

Many times 11% One or two times 48% Never 41%

5. I have been to Community Council meetings

Many times 9% One or two times 22% Never 69%

6. I have had some involvement with other local democracy groups

(e.g. Stirling Assembly, local/area Community Planning groups, local regeneration groups)

Many times 6% One or two times 24% Never 70%

7. I use the Internet (for reasons other than work)-

At least once a week 67% Less than weekly but at least once a month 7% Less than monthly 4% Never 23%

8. I have heard about the e-Community Council project before today-

Many times 3% One or two times 20% Never 77%

9. I have *visited* an e-Community Council website-

Many times 1% One or two times 7% Never 92%

Section B. Your interest in having a say

10. I would be interested in using an e-Community Council website to give my views on...

(please tick as many as apply to you)

Consultations that Community Councils are asked by other bodies to comment on (e.g. Scottish Executive, Stirling Council, Parks Authority, transport/ utility companies)	52%
Local issues the Community Council can influence, e.g. Community planning and regeneration, local licensing and planning applications, Council services in my area	69%
Issues affecting all areas covered by the Local Authority, e.g. Council-run services	59%
National and international issues affecting everyone	34%
Nothing <i>online</i> - but I am interested in giving my views by other methods (post, telephone, public meetings, door-to-door surveys)	22%
Nothing- I am not interested at all.	10%

11. If each of the organisations below ran a website offering comments and discussion on local issues, which would you be interested in visiting? *(please tick all that apply)*

	Interested	Not sure/ no opinion	Not interested
My Community Council	69%	16%	15%
Community Planning groups	56%	25%	19%
Stirling Assembly	31%	45%	24%
Stirling Council	65%	20%	14%
Another organisation (please describe)...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28 responses listed below

Community Trust; Police (Advice on local crimes, statistics) library Service, Business Enterprise (STEP); Scottish Executive; National Park; Education Services- Employment; Lochearn Tourist Initiative; Logie Archive Project.; Executive Planning affecting local area.; Any aspects of any multi-cultural groups or organisations. Any ethnic minority

group, racial equality etc.; Dunblane Development ; Demo-crazy (Scottish Exec) ; Scottish Executive, Forth Valley Health NHS, Central Scotland Police, Central Scotland Fire and Rescue, Forth Valley Enterprise, Communities Scotland; LL & T National Park; Area Network; Not interested in websites; Any organisation concerning elderly, disabled and children; Housing; Political Party; National Park; I would rather speak personally on certain issues as people can take the wrong thing out of something that is written; Arts organisations; University; police, fire, health service, education; Stirling Heritage; NHS Local/Nat +transport /roads; Loch Lomond Park Authority; National Park Authority

Section C. Your expectations

For questions 12 to 14 please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree

12. If I gave my views to my Community Council I would expect them to be considered by the appropriate decision-maker.

Strongly agree	40%	Agree	52%	No opinion	3%	Disagree	2%	Strongly Disagree	1%	Don't know	2%
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13. I would expect an e-Community Council website to keep people informed more effectively

Strongly agree	29%	Agree	55%	No opinion	10%	Disagree	2%	Strongly Disagree	1%	Don't know	4%
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14. I would expect an e-Community Council website to help a wider range of local people have a say on local issues

Strongly agree	28%	Agree	52%	No opinion	10%	Disagree	4%	Strongly Disagree	1%	Don't know	5%
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15. I would expect to visit an e-Community Council site for my area-

About once a week	12%	About once a month	50%	Less than monthly	22%	Never	16%
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16. If I added a comment to an e-Community Council site for my area, I would normally expect a Community Councillor to respond to it within:-

A few days	11%	One week	59%	Several weeks	27%	6 weeks	3%
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17. What in your view would be the main factors that would encourage people to use an e-Community Council website?

18. And what in your view would be the main barriers to people using it? (you could include here any improvements you think are needed in any e-Community Council you visited)

Responses follow below:-

17. factors that would encourage	18. main barriers
We would have to be informed of it's existence in the first place. It would have to be kept well up-to-date, and we would have to see that any submissions made via the website are acted upon and responded to.	Apart from people feeling that they don't have anything valuable to contribute I don't see ANY barriers.
availability of necessary equipment Accessability of website finding it effective - ie getting a response to comments and feeling that one's opinions were considered being able to have your say in isolated rural areas without having to make a lengthy journey	difficulty in accessing a computer/the website difficulty negotiating the website (eg correct case password if case sensitive) lack of response to comments made - an acknowledgment of receipt of comments made by automatic return email (as on some shopping sites) would be good issues of confidentiality
better knowledge of what was happening in their own village, no face to face involved, more likely to receive honest opinion	no access to internet, fear of technology, would exclude many elderly therefore not a true picture of public opinion
	taking off out of date items. lack of knowledge of their existance
EASY ACCESS GOOD FEEDBACK RELEVANT INFORMATION EVIDENCE OF ACTION BEING TAKEN	THE POINTS MADE IN QUESTION 17 NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED
If it was user friendly and that when people sent in questions or views they were responded to	Not everyone has access to the internet and many people don't know how to use it. Many older people happy with the way they have communicated with the council before may be unwilling to change to a new medium
planning issues recreation facilities location information	not regularly updated too complex no local information such as info on local group, classes , facilities
Good design Good feedback A demonstrable impact upon decision making Focus on issues that are most relevant	Poor design Too much content Lack of focus on key issues Lack of feedback Lack of impact
Up-to-date content. Feedback on comments /	Website not maintained. Content not well

issues raised. Items posted of direct relevance to the community	organised / summarised. I've looked at the Thornhill community council website and I can see a few examples of items not being updated (e.g. Craigforth Civic Amenity has not been updated now that I understand plans are to develop this at Polmaise).
convenience the ability to make a point and have it considered in a rational manner rather than at heated meetings anonymity in the first instance avoid attending meetings where people have a particular agenda	suspicion that points will not receive action some people prefer face to face activity
It would be beneficial to be able to comment at home rather than go to meetings where people do not have time. To be able to have their say and get feedback.	Improvements in area; comments/issues on local schools and public parks; any planning issues; issues that will involve Community Police
Clearer information on what is being considered	Too much detail at any one time, and (from an existing culprit) - a lot of blanks in forms that hide the useful bits. (You could steal the 'Mail Merge' system of 'don't print blank lines')
clarity of info/topics covered. impact locally, ease of use, evidence that my input helps make a difference, or changes the outcome. An auto update service to let us know when something new is posted	If the website is not up to date people will stop using it. There needs to be clarity of thought about how much time and effort goes into maintaining these websites and what additional cost/resources are needed to make them effective. (this of course would need to be balanced against what the perceived gain would be...it could all just be too expensive for the return?)
Publication of up to date planning applications/hearings/results. Good quick responses to queries. Council proposals before reaching planning	Poor out of date info being posted. Have only visited one would like opportunity to comment later - but did like the Cambusbarron one particularly the ability to 'chat' comment.
VISIBLE ACTION TAKEN NOT BEING PASSED FROM 'PILLAR TO POST' EXPERIENCED PEOPLE TO ANSWER, NOT JUST A PAPER QUALIFICATION. PEOPLE BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS	LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL ISSUES. YOU NEED LOCAL PEOPLE TO HANDLE LOCAL ISSUES. STOP GETTING TIED UP WITH BUREAUCRACY
to be seen that ones comments are being listened to	that the site is used to push forward council preconceived decisions
EASY TO ACCESS AND USE. ATTRACTIVE AND INTERESTING. WIDE PROMOTIONAL ADVERTISING OF SITE. INCENTIVE(S)?	MINORITY OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO INTERNET - ALTHOUGH PUBLIC LIBRARIES WOULD HELP. LACK OF INTEREST BY YOUNGER ELEMENT. COMPUTER ILLITERACY AMONG MORE SENIOR CITIZENS, INCLUDING THOSE

	WITH FORMED AND INFORMED OPINION.
The provision of relevant local information and message boards / discussion groups, kept up-to-date (many local sites fall into disrepair). Links to relevant council information would also be useful.	Information not kept up-to-date. Access to internet. Slow servers / overuse of extensive graphics / animation.
Make it less slow than the existing ones. Make sure people respond to issues raised on it and make sure they respond promptly (within 3 working days).	Lack of Internet access Site too slow
Site kept up-to-date (current Torbrex site does not seem to be) Content of relevance and interest to community	Not convinced that those within the area all feel part of the same community; Apathy, scepticism about what CCs can actually do ie do they have any real power to get things done? Busy lives - no time to respond to meaningless consultations! need for easy-to-remember web address
I think of none. The cost I assume would come out of Council Taxes which are high enough already. The last thing we need is another layer of bureaucracy.	The need for access to the internet.
Important, but difficult question. We are overloaded by information, but yet we want more information that is relevant to us. The availability of relevant information on an e-Community Council website would need to be publicised more widely. It's unlikely people will review the website regularly, but they are much more likely to visit it if they hear elsewhere that something of interest is being discussed there.	The main problems I foresee are the sheer volume of data people are exposed to, and the need to have updated information very regularly (even when there is little indication of a lot of interest in previously posted information).
IT WOULD BE VERY USEFULL TO MYSELF AS I WORK OUTSIDE THE AREA AND THE TIMING OF MY TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK DOES NOT ALLOW TIME TO CONTACT MY COMMUNITY COUNCIL.	I WOULD EXPECT TO BE GIVEN MY PRIVACY WHEN I REQUEST IT.
Publicity re access to site	Confidentiality of comments made / their source Perception that community councils are run by small self-interested groupings Perception that whatever views were offered by participants / community council these would be ignored by decision makers
If they believed that their view would be considered by the appropriate decision maker. Also if the website was kept accurate and up to date.	Lack of access to the internet or IT Skills.

Quick and efficient response.	PC Accessibility. Older generations possibly fear of modern technology and use of pc's.
Publicity. Ease of use. Feeling of real communication.	Lack of access to the internet and lack of knowledge of internet communications.
Local interest.	Slow responses.
Advertise more and point places for access eg. library.	Access to a computer.
The site included all information on the area including whats on etc or was attached to a site that gave information.	Too much of a message board, which is useful but more local information needed. Some were better than others.
Convenience.	Not having a PC. Unable to access E-Community.
Simple Language.	
All people could have a say.	Opinions made could be accessed by anyone on the internet.
Letting people know it is available.	The internet is a vastly overated facility for accessing information. Other methods of accessing information are just as adequate.
Accessibility.	Time constraints.
Council Day Info.	Lack of knowledge and age.
An easy address to remember. Proof that inputs / opinions were considered.	Complexity of access. Lengthy searches and waiting times.
Evidence that their comments were valued and influential.	Technical problems accessing the site. Little evidence of others using it.
A current significant local issue.	Individuals time constraints and access to the site. (Interest in and effectiveness of the site will also influence its use)
If they knew it existed.	People would have to have a computer and online facilities. You would also need to be computer literate.
	List of email addresses could be compiled.
Quick and easy access. If people felt that their views were taken notice of.	Not updated regularly, slow or no response.
Publicising it. Ease of use. Relevance.	Lack of all of the above!
Convenient, easy access, quick response.	

Feedback / belief that voice is heard / changing a council decision.	Access / Deaf councillors / Propoganda.
Advertising, easy to use site.	Access to IT.
Dont know	Dont know
If it was shown to have a positive effect and community councils were listened to.	Biggest barrier is that community councils appear to have little influence on District Councils! If this continues then people will simply give up! Improvements - See 17.
Their ability to access it, its relevance to their everyday needs.	Their ability to access it. Ease of use, speed etc.
Good access to the Internet at public facilities.	Not all of the Bannockburn area has broadband and this is a hindrance using a dial-up connection.
	Apathy and lack of awareness. Availability of access.
General interest in local affairs.	Cannot think of any barriers.
Local access to internet.	Access to Web.
Information updates; awareness (Publicity)	Internet Access, Lack of awareness.
Give them prompt feedback to let them feel they are being listened to.	Older people not being able to use a computer.
Interest in whats going on in their area.	Not everyone has a website.
Making everyone aware it existed. Easy access.	People still want face to face contact. Its inpersonal.
Being able to get information at any time outwith council meetings.	Not everyone ahs access to the internet or knows how to use it.
	Do not have a computer.
More information how to get on to it for elderly.	People not knowing how to work a computer.
Important information.	
Action stemming from community.	Apathy. Poor access to site.
	Lack of internet access. Lack of time. Danger that a 'Clique' of the 'Politically Correct' could hi-jack opinions on such a site.
Ease of use / access i.e. Not having to make meetings at specific times / places.	How often it was updated & responses given to comments.

	Sorry, I am not a computer user.
	Not having a PC.
Having a computer on the mobile libraries.	Not having access to the Internet. Not having it translated into Gaelic for people whose first language is Gaelic.
Give people worthwhile and good information.	Not having internet access.
Publicity	Lack of Access
	Don't have a computer so don't really have an opinion.
Knowing that they are listened to.	Lack of feedback.
Encourage chatrooms for community councils. Ensure internet access in Community Centres etc.	Lack of training / knowledge / usage of Internet - most people accessing community councils are older and some (not all) not as adept at using IT. Need to ensure info available in a variety of languages.
If it was kept up to date.	Too slow. Doesn't have the info you are looking for. Is not kept up to date. Don't know how to use / navigate the Internet. Perceived as expensive to run.
If their views were acknowledged and taken into account when decisions were taken.	If their views were routinely ignored and played no part in decision making.
Don't know	Don't know
	Not having access to the website.
Rapid response to comments in terms of feedback.	Poorly designed site with no feedback within 24 hours.
People would have to be aware of its existence and its purpose. People have to have any queries responded to & news would have to be kept up to date.	Access to the Internet. Computer literacy. There is a lot of information posted over a long period of time. People would have to keep up to date with their visits to the site or there is the risk of people switching off!
Convenience.	Not everyone will have regular access to the Internet.
Having access to the system in the house.	
If they thought their opinion counted.	Not everyone has Internet access. Library has restricted opening hours.
Easy website address.	Time constraints.

Publicity	Not knowing about it. Information out of date.
Easy to use site.	Fear. Complicated site.
Have more say and be listened to.	
None.	
	Lack of broadband access locally.
Easy to use.	
Easy to use. Up to date info. Usefulness of site to communities.	System crashing puts people off. Not updating information frequently enough.
Having computer knowledge.	
Unfortunately the e-community council meeting in Drymen Library was cancelled.	Time.
Check what is going on in their local area.	N/A
immediate access to a community council at a time convenient to e-community council website user. No need to wait until next meeting.	Lack of publicity about the e-community council website. Website needs to be user-friendly and offer confidentiality areas.
Community access to a computer, awareness, results of its effectiveness being shown.	Disbelief that it would make a difference. Computer access.
To keep an eye on threats to conservation of natural amenity.	Apathy. Lack of Internet access. Time and energy.
Responses to queries / questions quickly.	Possibly lack of face to face contact.
Contact for local organisations. Put your views forward.	
No idea.	No PC.
Access to information, latest plans, ability to influence.	Lack of Internet access. Site not easy to use. Language and 'terminology' not 'people friendly'.
Easier access living in rural area. It is hard to get out.	
Easy to use. Easy access to a computer.	lack of computer use, slow response by councillor etc.
Concise coverage of developments /decisions.	Poor structure of site.
ease of access.	lack of either skill in use of internet or no convenient access to it.

easy access and simple language	disinterest in anything political
A well publicised web site, which was well laid out and easy to use. Downloads should be available e.g. emergency phone numbers with addresses and the name of a contact within the particular office, coucillor's surgery times and locations, local bus timetables etc.	Lack of publicity about the existance of the web sites.
User friendly -possible accessed through links from stirling council website	inconsistency in layouts - too many links to drill down through - as in finding this questionnaire.
Up to date easily accessible info on what is happening. Info should be in plain english - easy to understand.	
I looked for the purpose of completing this survey at the up and running e-sites. I was impressed by a) The clear presentation of the sites visited. b) The convenience and economy of seeing council meeting minutes on line. c) The possibilities of keeping everyone informed about social gatherings.etc, Would save a loyt of time and money	The obvious one that not everyone has access to a computer.
Ease of access easy to comment on local issues	Lack of internet access Lack of interest Not knowing it exists
advertising it easy access easy to use	do not have computer computer illiterate difficult to navigate site
instant information at home at any time anonymity	no access to internet waiting for feedback
* People could have their say without speaking up at a meeting. * Issues could be considered for some time, so more thought could go into the comments.	* The usual apathy found in local politics. * The site I looked at had no comments logged at all. Makes me wonder if anyone has visited the site. Is a tally of visitors possible?
Getting information quickly	Don't know of any
Relevance of the information. A dynamic website with info that is regularly updated + updates on actions taken.	Irrelevance of information on website. If people perceive it is 'spinning' info, rather than actually showing actions taken as a result of feedback.
Ensuring, albeit, long term, that internet access was in everyone's home.	Education
Make it matter to the community, easy to move around.	Not all community members have internet access. More outlets should offer access, i.e. community centres as well as libraries.

Free access to internet.	Ease of use. Quick access.
Ease and speed of using the internet.	
Gives the chance for local people to have their opinions voiced and in turn make a change.	Internet access - There are no Internet Cafes in Stirling for people who don't have it at home.
Speed of response possible as opposed to postal.	Older generation not being able to access the technology or knowing how to.
Convenience	No Internet Access
Information about local events and clubs.	Lack of internet access, not being computer literate. Put the minutes of the community council meetings directly onto the e-community website (Not on Stirling Council website).
More publication about site.	No involvement or access to website.
Quick response from community councillor.	Whether they have computer / internet access.
Inspirational Community Councillor	Lack of access to email
Simple and easy access to the site, with easy navigation. Use of plain english and computer language.	The general public are not very computer literate if they do not have access during their normal work.
To find out about housing developments in the area, proposed news (if any), leisure facilities; Changes to Stirling Councils.	IF the website is not user-friendly and over complicated. The wording should be clear and free of jargon and in large enough print for people to read it! Too many websites require a microscope to read then!
Making it more accessible to all.	Having access to a computer / making website easy to navigate.
Relevant issues : Effective reaction	No response or action
Knowing that views / opinions would be listened to.	Being ignored.
Council Offices having public access to council internet.	Not knowing how to access websites.
Quicker and mroe efficient way of getting info required.	Lack of access to pc's.
Quick response to comments from site.	No access to internet / lack of knowledge on use of internet.
Having a pc	

User friendly site. Access to computer. Knowledge that it was available and how to access it.	
Get some educated councillors.	Frustration of non-action by councillors. Take the Stirling Roads condition as an example.
Dont know	No access to the internet in the home.
Update it regularly	Lack of interactivity
Easily Accessed	Not having access to a computer.
Faster answers.	Dont know how to use a computer. No computer to use.
Positive Results	
Simple explanation.	
Busy people cannot always attend meetings at set times but can log on anytime.	If information is not kept up to date people will lose interest.
Instant accessibility. i.e. not having to wait for c.c. meeting.	
Easy to use, easy to understand.	Asking too much.
Simple, easy to use website.	Internet fear, many older residents dont use internet.
Free access to computers in libraries / other community run services.	Lack of awareness, lack of volition to influence local community, no internet experience / access.
Awareness and accessibility. Availability of internet access.	The expectation that it was cosmetic, and would be unlikely to have much, indeed ANY influence.
If they were assured of obtaining a seriously considered response.	Badly designed 'non user-friendly' website.
Local issues of current interest.	No access to computer. Not skilled in use.
	No computer or the knowledge to use one.
Easy access from the users home if computer literate. Could be accessed when the user has time (24/7 availability).	Not everyone has computer or access to one. Especially the elderly. It would be an enhancement to the service and the information provided but not as a replacement.
Time!	The main barrier would be that not enough people over a certain age are e-minded. i.e. age groups of over 35, which is the biggest group in business.
Wide and widely publicised access to internet.	Lack of access to internet for private use.

	Lack of motivation.
	Doubts about being bombarded with spam emails. Possibility of intrusive viruses.
Provide key information that people need to use rather than is incidental.	Overload - I browse the web to get information I need to do things. I have no remaining time for casual browsing in the hope that I may encounter something of interest!
With important issues I think it is better to personally debate them.	As I have said before and I don't mean to be negative - Important issues should be openly debated by round a table or meeting.
Some proof that it can be effective.	Personal access to the internet.
Immediate access.	No access to computers + equipment.
Important or contentious issues, ease of access to information.	Lack of access to computer / internet / broadband; preference for dealing with things face to face in a small community.
Ease of use... not too many clicks.	Not loading quickly, error messages.
Keep it simple and user-friendly.	Too much waiting.
Convenience	Poor IT skills
Ease of access	
If it was interesting, relevant + interactive.	Too complicated?
Not sure you could - one school has helped many in Torbrex cc.	The problem with everything being online is that it restricts people to responding all on screen.
Tangible results of their issues on the ground.	Lack of computer facilities.
Adequate responses to their issues / Comments / complaints.	No responses (Opposite to 17)
knowledge of its existence	No computer
Free use of a community pc. Good advertising to raise awareness of the site.	Lack of home pc.
More local advertising of site in libraries, local shops, post office.	Ignorance of existence of site. Lack of easily accessible computer.
The belief that views exposed would have some use.	Lack of internet literacy. Lack of interest in community affairs.
Prompt response to any enquiry I made.	Difficulty getting into, or around a website.

Quick response	not on the internet
If its easy to access + gives simple clear information	As above
If it means that your voice can be heard without having to find time to go to meetings.	Access to internet, not enough time.
Convenience	If in possession of computer - no barriers.
Having access to / availability to use a computer.	As in no. 17. Also time, i.e. lack of it.
Better access to internet via public locations	not enough publicity as regards to access.
If they had a burning issue that could not wait for a meeting.	People using it wrongly. Non access to it.
Interactive in expressing views + feedback	Lots of words, little action on issues.
	Access to computer
Things being done.	
Don't have a computer.	
Time to do this. Time to consider issues. Ease of contact.	not interactive enough.
Possesion of a computer	Access to a computer
If it was providing useful, relevant information.	
If they saw action being taken.	Not knowing about it.
Simplicity of use.	Lack of computer literacy
Broadband access.	Speed of access, IT literacy.
Awareness of site - finding that their opinion matters.	No internet / never used internet / disinterest in local business / too busy.
Ease of information	The mass amount of information available.
Useful - up-to-date info	Bad site design - Need lots of useful links.
If using the website you saw improvements to the area being taken up & also individual matters being promptly attended to.	Individual situations being generally discussed on site.
Easily accessible to people with limited computer skills.	Difficult to understand.

	Access to broadband; with for time to time interaction.
	No access, do not own or access to a website
Local detail. Simplicity.	
Interesting and informative data	Lack of response by council.
Relevance, level of detail and objectiality	If it were too superficuous or portrayed views of one sector.
Easier to access than meetings, always able to make your views known.	Not having access to a computer and able to access the internet.
An early response to their comments.	Dont have a computer, cant operate one.
	Sorry, dont have a computer for email.
Dont know	Dont have access to internet.
Convenience	people without access to the internet.
	Up to date information on local issues.
Ease of use	The older community would not be able in many cases to involve themselves.
Easy access, free use of computers to do so.	24/7 access if possible and access from mobile phone websites.
It would have to demonstrate that using it brought about necessary changes.	Persuading people that it would be helpful. Ideally, the existence of the website should be advertised in the media, as the system would only become useful, when representing the majority opinion on any subject.
Publicity - reminders.	Lack of up-to-date info
proof that it had influence over decisions.	Not understanding its powers.
Knowing their comments will be considered and a response received.	Feel ideas not taken on board. Lack of feedback; dont know it exists; not keeping site up to date.
Effective publicity, public internet access in the village.	Apathy
To access information quickly. To keep abreft of what is happening with minmal effort.	Not available. Ignorance of possible benefits of the internet.
achievement in decision making.	None
More people would log onto a website than attend meetings. Shift workers and people	Cant think of any reason for interested people

with children in particular could become more involved.	not to use this service.
No internet so cannot comment.	As above.
They can access it at any time that suits and do not have to talk one-to-one as can be intimidating.	If they had no access to computers.
Evidence that everyones views are worth considering.	technical and availability problems. Cost of internet.
Local issues	No computer
Awareness of site - Ease of use	
Tried to access site to give opinion could not.	As above.
If community councils had any powers to actually do something and not just comment on what others do.	Email access is not universal - We have ahd trouble getting a broadband connection.
Effective marketing and assurance that views/comments will be considered.	Difficulty in finding the site - confusion about the site's use.
In first instance, advertising in local papers (Observer, Shopper). Could choose more anonymity by not enquiring face to face. Time saving factors i.e. dont have to attend meetings.	I have not visited any e-community councils but, overall, I think it would be a great way for people to have their say.
	IT access. No IT skills. Not knowing it existed.
Easy Access.	Some people can't use computers.
Keeping the website up-to-date & Give essential information like meeting dates and minutes.	Apathy. The Style of the best website should be adopted by others.
Views passed on to the local council / questionnaires rather than asking people to make up comments.	has to be easy to browse around / Has to be a system for feedback to Stirling Coucil Elected Members & Forum for views to be listened to. Community Councillors are volunteers - Views should be fed back to appropriate officer in the council for answering.
Computer literacy - At present there are still a lot of people who are not used to using a computer.	As above - as time goes on, more and more people willa ccept this means of communication.
availability	Know how to use a computer.
Site easy to use	No easy access toa computer. Site difficult to use / confusing.

Regular updates and ability to feedback with personal responses and acknowledgments.	Availability of resources within households.
To find out what is affecting them.	Do they know you are there or could not be bothered.
It would have to be user-friendly and relevant.	Access to computer / Literacy. Also, if it became apparent that opinions expressed were not being taken into account or acknowledged then it could fall into disuse. It must be 'seen' to be effective.
Nice looking website that is fast and easy to navigate. If it is slow or hard to use it won't get used.	Must be seen to be effective giving feedback on consultants. If it doesn't then people will think it is irrelevant.
Website Content	Apathy - The reason no matter the opinion of the public those with the power do what they want.
Perhaps start early with schools to start the habit.	Risk of Spam after posting any comments.
	not online.
To see a report after each community council meeting.	
No Comment at this time.	As Above
HAVING ACCESS TO INTERNET LOCALLY	NO LOCAL ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND INTERNET
The fact that they may get an answer to questions quicker if Community councillor responded within a week instead of waiting until the monthly Community Council Meetings	People who don't have access to the internet and never visit libraries. Lack of computer skills.
immediacy no envelopes and stamps to find and no trek to the postbox	Not everyone has a computer and internet access. People would need to be reminded somehow.
Awareness about the information contained	Detailed log in procedures Difficulty in accessing link until I was sent an email reminder.
Keeping it regularly up-dated and relevant.	I haven't visited one, so it's difficult to say.
Publicity; Accessibility; User-friendly	Accessibility
Quick and easy access to info on current local issues	I think the majority of people who would express opinions are of older generations - they might have no computer / internet experience.

Information made readily available	Access to computer
If they gave free lessons on how to use internet it would be good for old and young people.	I think the above reason I gave.
Being up to date with relevant information. Sending monthly email with links to current items would be good.	Home access to internet - time availability
Knowing that it made a difference.	
If minutes of meetings are recorded on it.	Lack of awareness of facility.
It must be well publicised and shown to be effective.	Apathy.
Up-to-date and accurate facts and information.	Unsure.
Ease of communication and time considerations.	Lack of IT skills.
Access to internet at convenient locations; information must be relevant to area and have issues relevant to user needs / interests; feedback on how views have been acted upon should be provided.	No or poor / inconvenient access to internet; users feedback not being acknowledged and /or acted upon (Not enough for a community partner to just consider views) These could be perceptions that 'gatekeepers' to site present their own pet issues and not those of the wider community; business advertising.
Access. When I followed the instructions for doing this online I was asked for a password not in the instructions.	Wariness / unfamiliarity with web / computers. Expectation if not making a personal difference.
Minutes of meetings, Planning applications, complaints database and action on those complaints.	Time to visit site, access to home computers, persons put off by spin + official gobbledegook.
Initially access to a prize draw would raise the profile of the website. Email notifications at certain times would act as reminders.	If the information is good and of value people would look at it. If not, they will ignore it.
	Unemployed people are very poor and cant afford a computer, so wouldnt bother to use library or whatever computer access they might have.
That their views would be noted.	That it wasnt relevant to their life or that they were unaware of the service.
Understanding about what it would achieve having questions / concerns answered and addressed.	Lack of advertising.

More information shown in local areas e.g. shop / libraries.	People under the impression that their views are non important.
Relevant discussion topics	Lack of action from decisions / discussions.
	Many people like myself are not interested in computers.
Self interest should be enough motivation	Computers or lack of.
Positive Feedback.	Lack of response to input.
Ease of access / uncomplicated website.	No knowledge of existence of site + lack of interest.
Easy and quick to send your views.	Lack of access to internet, poor IT skills.
People who we email often, may if they were aware of the e-community council website rather use this than attend meetings. (not me!)	I personally like to meet people in person or speak to someone not automated telephone im afraid rather old fashioned and dont enjoy using email, avoiding it if I can.
Free instruction.	No experience.
	No computer.
If they feel that their views are considered.	If their views are ignored.
Response to serious commitment.	lack of equipment, lack of information. Generally keep people up-to-date with events and plans. i.e. what on earth is happening in the Raploch area!
To give information in each field from jobs opportunities to legal information and other more basic information.	Not be aware of this service. Not able to use a computer and scared of it. Not maybe available enough information or the specific information I need to know.
Knowing about it and then visiting it would make a difference.	Access.
Lots of information and good site map / links.	Not being kept up to date and maintained.
	Encourages people to sit around on their backsides or drive around in their cars and are unaware of what goes on in the community.
No double talk. Truth, honesty with easily understood presentation.	Not everybody can afford internet fees, especially broadband charges. Pensioners are particularly affected by this and many are not computer literate.
An easy to use website that is updated regularly and responses posted quickly.	Many people still do not have pc's or only use their pc's for games and shopping.

Planning. Traffic. Roads. Waste disposal.	
Quick responses to problems or complaints.	An easy to read layout and links would be necessary.
Provide a quick method of reading up-to-date information / changes.	That it may be considered to be useful only for anonymous complaints.
Fast response to questions, show opinion polls on various decisions / changes etc.	Not aware of it; lack of internet access; no comment boxes where people could request items to be covered on the site.
An honest caring community council.	Knowing we have useless councillors.
If they thought their views would be taken into account.	Not understanding how it works and it would need to be well advertised.
Convenience.	Lack of IT equipment.
Opinion being heard	Action would not be taken Time
Rapid Feedback.	not all people use email.
Ease of use and effectiveness.	Need to keep it simple - Avoid gobbledygook. Cause + Effect + Action really work.
It would be helpful to working people or those who use computers like second nature and to those who do not take the local paper or walk about this area.	Too impersonal! Dont have a computer!
Less red -tape. More user-friendly.	Lack of internet access.
Where it covered very topical / controversial views and was well advertised.	Lack of intimacy, irrelevance of interest.
Easy access to information.	
Easy access. Clear messages in plain language.	Complicated site / language.
	Cant really reply to above, dont ahve a clue as regards websites etc..
To learn more about what has been happening + being planned.	I wouldnt use it if suggestions went unanswered.
A positive response to issues raised.	Lack of personal contact.
easy to find way around site regularly updated	difficulty finding issues
Issues that re interesting to all the different kinda of people in the area and for it to be	If they did not have access to the internet

advertised more.	
To keep in touch with current council affairs / projects.	Not owning a computer and therefore not having a website.
Rapid response - A feeling that it is in any way given attention.	Time, lack of access, clumsy interface.
To access it easily.	
Free money or the offer of paying my council tax!	Time, more pressing matters.
Knowledge that it is effective.	It is just being a talking shop.
Flexible wage, main issues up for discussion at your fingertips. Would keep more people involved.	It would possibly put more pressure to community councillors, their workload.
	In my view intense dislike of computers.
Timely updates, relevant information, evidence it was effective / made a difference.	Lack of access to electronic media & the issues in it not being in place.
Interesting and informative website.	Uninteresting and uninformative website!
Easy to use, transparent i.e. comments published are viewable to all users (where originator happy with this!). Effective, not window dressing. Could we have a 'portal' for residents giving access to all relevant sites via a single web address?	Ineffective - going through the motions, site not properly maintained.
Ease of access and clarity of details.	Difficult to access for infrequent users.
	Sorry, but I do not use any computer / website.
Personalised communication not mechanistic.	Complex user interface / input screens.
Local information - regularly updated!	Poorly constructed website + out of date info.
Availability and location.	Times and availability.
	Dont have internet like lots of elderly people.
Good feedback.	Lack of internet availability.
Sending monthly or quarterly circular emails to highlight what issues are ongoing.	No idea of site, its address, what is on it. Why would people look at this site, how would they find it so try to get their address and give summary type emails to start an interest.
	No computer.

Convenience.	Maybe the older generation or people who have no access to a pc would prefer more conventional ways of contact.
Accessibility, information, discussion.	Computer literacy levels.
Older people don't have computers and are the most likely to need the council or have concerns dealt with.	People prefer to have a person on their doorstep to deal with Councillor O'Brian for plain very helpful.
Regular updates / feedback on local issues.	
Ease of access and user friendly.	Lack of easy access and for older members of the community - using a computer hence the reason to still allow other means of contact.
In my opinion it would be to feel that their views were actually listened to and discussed than to be just a political showcase or so-called 'democratic process'!	At the moment, the difficulty for people using computers. I think until the generation of children now used to using computers in schools are grown-up you won't find that the majority of ordinary people will participate.
nothing- will be used only by those who are already engaged in those actions	Social / age / lack of ability or interest in the web. I consider ecommunity service would not get a new audience.
Easy to use.	Slow running / complicated.
Having a computer.	Not having a computer.
None	Consultation does not exist in practise. Community councils are seldom listened to. There is no point in giving views as they are not listened to!
Evidence of effective influence on Stirling Council decisions.	Poor computing (IT) skills.
People who have a computer and funding to be on the net.	Lack of money to purchase a computer and net services.
Future events, whats on in that area. When council surgeries are on etc.	No computer experience. No computer at home.
	I am a member of numerous commercial / supporting / financial groups who all run websites however I am to try to visit more than a few - certainly not many on a regular basis. If I had a problem to raise I would much prefer to do it via telephone, at least to know that the message has got through the blizzard of junk email associated with the website.
Exchange of information being of value.	Fast access - BroadBand.

Dont know	Dont know
None, people who are interested will, the rest wont.	Not everyone has a pc or knows how to use it to access the internet. Time. Preference for other methods. Lack of Privacy about opinions - everyone can see.
Convenience of contact.	Internet access. Computer literacy, available time.
Cant think of any.	Lack of time.
Convenience	Privacy
Ease of internet access	Lack of online facilities for the general public.
	Access to computers online (Internet).
Only if have computers	up to date happenings.
Access to decision making independent of time.	Lack of computer use (education)
	Many of us older ones are not computer literate.
If they could see that action was being taken on issues raised.	Access to Internet facilities.
Website ease of use + if it was kept up to date regularly.	Apathy + Getting involved with the community or not.
Quick response from councillor.	Lack of knowledge of computers.
Awareness of the advantage to the whole community of such a resource.	Lack of awareness
Easy access to information. information needs to be current and website advertised locally. Could meetings be web-casts?	out of date information, lack of advertising.
Accessibility. I cannot attend meetings because of childcare. Incentives e.g. discounts at council facilities / completion of questionnaires. Emails asking us for opinions.	Lack of access to email facility. Time needed to access site and use site. User friendly site. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete this.
If they actually responded to peoples comments.	Getting no responses at all.
Planning issues - development of local amenities.	Time, lack of advertising facility. Lack of response and follow up.
Good response to questions / points and feeling they make a difference.	Access, IT literacy, Internet.

If community council minutes were quickly put on site not 2 months later.	No computer at home, no computer skills.
Ease of access / avoid paper work.	Access to computers / IT Skills.
Ease of access.	Unfamiliarity of internet access.
Ease of access.	Ignorance of its existence.
It would be more immediate, not having to wait.	Not everyone has a computer, also broadband is not available in our area.
Responsiveness of both the council and councillor - both in reply and action.	Lack of knowledge it exists / confidence that it can make a difference.
Results	Lack of Interest.
A quick check may solve a problem.	The fact it is all in the open.
Ease of access from your own home.	Not all people have internet access readily available although this will continue to increase.
Explain how easy the process is.	Not aware of it.
Instant feedback	The current assumption that all people have internet access - many do not! Having to wait for a response - feedback.
Easy to use, find way, search.	Not familiar with computers, internet.
More info that such a site exists.	Fear of the internet.
Seeing problems being discussed.	Opinions not being considered.
Ease of access	Knowing about it in the first place.
Not interested	not interested.
More publicity e.g. in libraries and then encourage people to use computers by having demos how to log on to their websites, free of course.	Apathy, lack of time, no motivation to do so. Non awareness. Tap into the pensioners. They have the time and the experience and would be happy to be involved - Just teach them how to use a computer. Et Voila!
Publicised.	Does everyone have access to the internet?
Replies.	E-people friendly
More rapid reply.	No access to internet.
The convenience of using it at a time that suits them.	
They dont have to attend prolonged meetings. Advertise: At local library where free access is	Lack of internet, lack of pc knowledge. No

available or local council offices. 24hour access online.	knowledge of site.
I can't envisage an E-Site encouraging anybody.	People (By which, of course I mean me) want to discuss ideas and problems with real people. Please dont waste any further money on E-community Councils.
A sense that opinions were heard and acknowledged.	The opposite of above.
If it was relevant to local life and was proven to be effective.	Apathy, social exclusion in an IT sense, no confidence that such a website could make a practical difference. Lack of clarity on such a vehicle's objectives and aims.
Convenience of using the internet.	Not being able to have access to a computer. ** Online password did not work!
Convenience. Accountability.	
	People (like myself) who do not have a computer and do not know anything about how to work a computer.
Promotion and increasing awareness of the website & highlighting the issues that you can commeten on. Also explaining how it works and what happens to your comments.	Access to the internet, lack of awareness about the website or lack of interest in the issues covered.
Good feedback	no feedback
Only if it was clear that a 'decision maker' in Stirling responded with appropriate action.	Strathblane Community Council feel that Stirling Council do not respond adequately to reasoned requests.
To be up to date and accurate.	Apathy. One cant believe that using the website would do any good.
Honesty	Not interested as opinions in my view don't matter.
Knowing it would elicit a response.	A badly designed website, usually out of date.
If they feel it was functional and worthwhile.	A lot of people do not ahve internet access.
Give them powers to influence local affairs and have their views taken account of.	Community councils are ignored as far as decision making is concerned. They are not contacted because they are a waste of time. Decisions made by Stirling Council and the Community Council appears to be brought in as an afterthought.
immediate feedback - even if only	inability to obtain boradband by these people

acknowledgement.	who would benefit the most.
Owning or having access to a computer. Feeling they had something of value to add. Interest in Community affairs.	No interest in community. If the site did not work as expected.
Frequent updates - Easy to use.	Not removing old items - Hard to find the issues you are interested in.
Ease of access and speed of reaction / response	More welcoming front page.
Things that directly benefit those participating.	Not being able to gain access to the internet.
Easy, immediate access to information.	Many older people might not have access. Many younger ones might not be interested.
Firstly you have to have a computer....	?
Ease of use	Access and knowledge of computers.
Guaranteed action	Not having a computer. Where can I use one? And who will show me how to use it?
If it was kept up to date with proper, meaningful info & if it was easy to use.	Dont have / Cant use a pc / Internet. Poor response times / reliability / design.
Email / mailing list	Lack of Advertising / information.
Quick responses, easy access	Slow responses, difficult access.
Easy to use website.	
Cannot think of any.	Many people who ahve community concerns are not on the internet.
Greater community awareness of this facility.	Lack of interest or enthusiasm in community affairs.
Knowledge that any questions asked are promptly answered.	A long winded site that doesnt explain things in plain language.
1 receiving a reply 2 some success with whatever the issues raised are.	1 no reply 2 repeated lack of success
Ease of USE. Local issues made clear. Opportunity to give an opinion, and/or poll.	Slow response, difficult to use.
Local issues	No access to pc
Receiving feedback / or response back.	Public unaware that they could make comment in this way.
Lots of information	Not having access to the internet.

Availability (Stirling Council Routinely ignores questions written to them.	Technology, but this will fade with time.
Instant decision making.	Lack of internet access especially for older members of the community.
non e-publicity eg newspaper, circular.	Lack of relevant and vital issues.
Keeping in touch with proposed developments in their area and being able to influence them.	The website not being kept up-to-date.
Getting a response.	Apathy. Lack of skills - older people.
Up to date website. Relevant to local issues. If they felt their views were taken seriously.	Some people have no computer access. Time constraints.
Have access to a pc. See that councillors respond i.e. that their involvement makes a difference.	
They would only be encouraged if it was an effective Community Council.	The fact that some Community Councils are not effective.
Local area questions and answers.	Not having eye to eye contact with persons in your local office.
Ease of use.	Not having access to internet which older people may not have and these people probably have more to say.
Ease of use / Easy to navigate.	
Response and action.	A lot of older people in the area with no access to the internet. Prefer traditional methods of communication.
Access to the internet.	Not having access to the internet.
Ease of access / prompt response.	Not updated. No PC at home.
If they access, they could have a say in things.	No feedback / response. Internet is what the community wants.
Ease of access, in their own home, in their own time.	No internet access at home.
Proof that participation was being noted.	Lack of time i.e. if forms were too complicated leading to long participation times.
If they felt that it made any difference to the policy of the council.	Scepticism as to what effect their input would have.
Being convinced that its more than a talking shop.	
Information about it and response to issues	Not knowing anything about it. Too complicated to get info or too many replies

raised.	asked for.
Feedback from community councillor, especially if my views not accepted.	Ignorance as to existence of website. It has to be widely and regularly publicised.
Results from queries.	Not being listened to.
Need to inform them that it is available.	
If they believed it would make a difference.	Access to the internet and knowledge of its existence.
Pertinent information and ease of use.	Apathy.
	Lack of internet access.
Positive action taken on issues raised by public in a timely manner.	Lack of action on behalf of the Community Council.
Ease of use, evidence that news are considered and responses made. Would be more used during times when the major issues are involved, such as major planning developments.	Lack of access to the internet. Feeling that no-one bothers to read or respond to issues raised. That there is still no way to influence essential outcomes.
Easy to use and access website.	Access to website.
Easy access and not a long website address. Confidence that local opinion was being heard. Info on what is on website. Local issues etc Proof that website articles + opinions counted in decisions at a local level.	Lack of knowledge that a website exists.
	No computer.
	Lack of computers and technology.
Comments and views to be seriously considered. To be aware of it.	Access. Views and comments being dismissed without consideration.
Awareness of website, availability, internet access.	
	Poor connections to internet in rural areas.
If I felt that my opinion was being taken into consideration and that it was not just another talking shop.	Ease of access and time.
Good local advantage.	Internet access is not universal, particularly to the older population.
Anonymity	Too difficult if not got a computer.
Availability of info quickly & all from the same	Access to internet.

place efficiently.	
Relevance of contents. Ease of use. Knowledge of it. Knowing it would get results.	The reverse of above.
Dont know	Do not use website.
Having a computer!	
Making it more widely known that it exists.	
Appropriate response to any input.	Community councils are important for personal contact, discussion. Face to face debate. This would be lost though over reliance on e-councils.
That their views are considered.	Being ignored.
To see what goes on in their area.	Meetings and leaflets, newsletters.
Ease, speed and accuracy of info.	Lethargy.
To complain about road conditions etc...	Privacy.
Finding out about whats happening locally.	Access to internet, confidence in using computers.
Knowledge it existed & opinions / decisions sought.	Converse of 17 & that it was not kept up to date.
Flexibility - People are busy and sometimes not available to go to meetings etc. This gives them the chance to voice their opinions.	Not having access to a pc or internet.
Interest in the community.	Lack of spare time.
People could be encouraged if they felt that their views and concerns were being listened to and if they could see some result, although that is not always possible.	Lack of computer access, not sure of how to use a computer and a bit suspicious of them.
Knowing their opinions are being read and responded to.	If they consider they are not being listened to people wont spend time making comment.
1) I feel if there are real problems people would be on to you constantly so yes, you are a product of your own success. Yes I am a labour voter. But seriously, if there was lots to complain about, people would learn where to access you. 2) Tonight 6/12/05 6pm unable to enter site as wont accept 'Wallace' as password. 3) My PC Dr Brother could not get on to it either so I dont think its just me. 4) I am a retired nurse who worked with computers a lot in intensive care, I had a stroke but was instructed by my husband with lots of patience until I was able to use my pc. 6) I think people have a fear of computers, but learn whenever they have to or find an interest which involves a pc.	
Local info	Ease of use and access.

If they felt it was effective and made a difference.	Lack of interest, being unsure of their effectiveness.
instant access to relevant issues.	lack of internet access.
More information.	
If it brought about real change and took all opinions into consideration.	Not knowing about it.
If community council proposals were not a 'fait accompli' and whether people objected / the c.c. would do whatever they want anyway.	You assume, wrongly, that everyone has access to a computer and can use it. Many members of our ageing population will not use a computer, let alone website.
If it was seen to work.	No internet access.
Devolving power to local communities.	Stirling Councillors.
Info regarding local issues. More involvement in local issues.	
Much more convenient to put forward their views.	Access to a computer / internet.
	Despite the widespread use of internet - Most elderly (and interested) members of the community do not use this means of communication.
If the views expressed had an influence or taken into consideration.	If the site was yet another piece of window dressing.
A letter to update with instructions + complete web address.	Time - slow dial up, not familiar with internet.
Having their opinion noted.	Some people, like me, do not prefer to use computers. I prefer to talk to someone face to face. Although I do see some advantages of this system.
	Access to a computer. Awareness of its existence.
Advertising in local library, post office, shops, local radio.	Not everyone has web access, particularly the older, more vulnerable people whose opinions, needs are important. Arrange free computer literacy courses in local libraries.
	Internet access, up-to-date material.
Quick responses to any comments to Community Council.	
Get a computer	I do not have a computer and do not currently intend to get one.

Ease of accessability.	Availability of internet access + lack of knowledge about the whole e-community issue.
Getting up-to-date information ad reply's to queries.	Not having access to the internet.
In our area the chair of community councillor is against it.	lack of encouragement by present head of community.
To find out about local issues - anything local.	Just lack of interest or no knowledge of system.
Access at anytime.	Not personal.
Specific 'happening' or concern relating to area.	Lack of interst in general about council issues. Perhaps the council should be changed eg just 'Causewayhead Community Site'
Dont know, dont have a website.	Dont know. As Above.
Convenience - CC Meetings are not easy to attend.	Lack of a computer & Internet! Concern over effect on attendance at CC Meetings.
The idea of being responded to and heard will encourage people.	People who struggle to gain access to it.
Regards any problems in own area.	
Current events listings / Services listings.	Poor design.
Home	No internet access.

Annex D. Field Test Materials

This annex comprises-

- Background Information and Consent Form
- Test scenarios for public and community councillors
- Quotes on “pros and cons” used as discussion prompt
- Questionnaires

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND CONSENT

Evaluating “Strathfillan e-Community Council”

October 2005

Background

The Community Council has been piloting an ‘e-Community Council’. It is intended to help local people have a say in the Community Council, and help them to represent you to Stirling Council and other organisations that make decisions affecting your area.

Now the e-Community Council is being evaluated to explore whether it helps people to find out about their Community Council activities and get involved if they wish. Researchers from Napier University, under the supervision of Professor Ann Macintosh, are carrying out this work with local people and Community Councillors.

What’s involved

If you take part you will be asked to try out the e-Community Council. This is to check whether you find it straightforward enough to use. Then we will ask about what you think of pros and cons of using this website for its aims, how useful you think it is in practice, and what impact you would expect from it. We would like to **record your views** on tape so that we have an accurate record. We will also ask a few questions about you, to make sure we are involving a wide enough range of people in the study. We will be publishing a reporting on the results in the next few months.

Your privacy and consent

- I understand that if I give my consent to being involved I can at any time choose not to take part any further.
- The views I express to the researcher are my own and should not be assumed to represent the views of anyone else. If my views are quoted in any research publications I will not be identified by name.
- I also understand that no contact details will be recorded. My real name will not be used for any purpose except to show that I have given my informed consent to take part.
- I understand what I have been asked to do and consent to my views and actions being recorded.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Postcode area: _____

Scenarios for Hands-on Testing

Scenarios are short descriptive 'stories' putting a software tool into a context – of the people who would be expected to use it, the activities it is meant to support, and the typical circumstances that are envisaged. The purpose is to get feedback from people like those depicted, on whether and how the tool is fit for its purpose and context.

There are different scenarios for members of the public and community councillors.

Participants will be asked to read the scenario introduction, then work in pairs and take it turns to try the main tasks (listed below) and comment to their partner on what they are doing. Their interactions with the system will be recorded, and notes taken of what they say. Support will be offered where needed when any pair of participants is 'stuck'.

After the event, analysis of notes and recordings will focus on problems with, and concerns voiced about, the evaluation criteria and usability factors (navigation, comprehension, accessibility, etc.).

Problems will be rated in terms of 'seriousness' as follows:-

1. Participants could carry out the task with little difficulty/ some distraction
2. Participants could only carry out the task by 'working round' a difficulty and trying several options.
3. Participants could not carry out the task with or without support

Scenario for Public

Participants are asked to read the introduction, put themselves in the shoes of the person who is described, then with a partner take in turns to try tasks numbered 1-3 and then 4, 5 or 6.

Introduction

Jean moved to the area almost a year ago with her two children, both at school. She works part time, but as a single mum has not much time to go out to meetings in the evening. Her brother encouraged her to get a pc and get to grips with the Internet, mainly so they could keep in touch by email. Having conquered her fears of the computer she is now quite keen on following her interest in bird-watching on the Internet. Getting up in the hills with the kids and her binoculars at the weekend reminds her of why she moved here in the first place.

Yesterday Jean saw a notice in the village store about the community council and recalled a neighbour saying they were 'doing something' about the speed limit on the roads near the school, though she wasn't sure what. Now she is on the Internet and

thinks she should check up on it. She finishes ordering some Christmas presents online, and goes online to search for the community council.

Tasks

1. Read about the issues and projects your Community Council is working on

- Go to Google and search for “strathfillan community council”.
- Follow the link and see what is on the home page.

2. Comment on a consultation

- Search for school roads
- Look at the search results and follow the link from the *third* one.
- Read the item
- Have a look at the document from the Scottish Executive.
- Jean thinks it would be worth asking what has happened since. - Add a comment, using the name Jean McNab: “We had a letter from the school saying they were concerned about this. I take it something is being done about this real danger to our children?”
- Submit this comment

3. Write an item for the home page, and submit it for approval

Jean skims over the items on the home page, thinks about some ideas she had about bird watching, and wonders if there is anything already on the site about that.

- Check if there is anything about bird watching on the site
- Go to the home page and click a link to add your own item
- Give your name, Jean McNab (Or make up a name if it has been used already)
- Write in the box: “This is a great place for bird watchers. Have the National Park people or anyone else thought about catering more for bird watchers, to help attract more tourists to the area?”
- Give some contact details: the phone number 01838 12345
- Have a look at the “Conditions of Use for Discussion”
- Submit the item

4. Respond to a questionnaire

Something on the home page catches Jean’s eye. It’s headed “Building a Health Service Fit for the Future” and asks for views

- Find and read this item

- Answer the questionnaire, but only questions 1 and 13 (Please don't think too long about your responses!)

5. Find out about a meeting

Jean wonders what happened at the last Community Council meeting.

- On the home page, have a look for the date of the most recent Community Council meeting
- Look at the Agenda for that meeting
- Go back to the home page

6. Find contact details for a local organisation

Jean wonders if there are any local groups that might be interested in her ideas for encouraging bird-watching in the area.

- On the home page, find where the contact details for local organisations are.
- Find the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers and get their address.

Scenario for Community Councillors

Jack has been a member for 2 years. Although he is not an office bearer he takes an active interest in any environmental issues, especially anything to do with the National Parks Authority. He occasionally helps Bob the secretary to respond to their consultations, but would rather spend his time helping local people to develop 'grass roots' ideas.

Jack bought a computer and modem six months ago as in the longer term he wants to set up a website for his B&B which is losing out to people who have done that already. Recently he agreed to Bob's request to take turns about monitoring the Community Council site, to approve things people have submitted to it and write the occasional item. They agreed he would do it every other evening this week, and now it's his turn. He checks his email and finds that Jack has asked him to do one or two additional things.

1. Look over the most recent items and comment on a 'private' item

- Go to Google and search for "strathfillan community council"
- Login as a councillor (ask us for your login id and password if you cannot remember)

- Find the item called Community Conference Stirling, and make a 'private' comment, saying you are interested but can't go.

2. Check a comment from the public

Jack knows the Councillor-only pages on the site show the most recent items, but he has found it is worth looking at the public home page as sometimes people add comments to old items, even closed consultations. Sure enough he noticed there were more comments on the "20mph speed limit by Crianlarich Primary School" than he remembered from last time.

- On the public home page find this consultation and note when it was added
- Login and go to Consultations, then find this consultation
- Check the comment from 'Jean McNab'

3. Approve an item submitted by a member of the public

Go to Items from Public

4. Add a consultation

Skills Toolkit for Community Organisations

Comment- no questionnaire

5. Add a questionnaire

Building a Health Service Fit for the Future

6. Edit event details

Agenda for 10 October meeting

7. Edit contact details for a local organisation

British Trust of Conservation Volunteers

Discussion Prompts and Questions

[introduction for Community Councils]

Following the introductory sheet below (aims of the evening), are some *quotes*. These are drawn from meetings with Community Councils and Steering Group discussions. The quotes are not verbatim and are not being used to attribute views to individuals- only to highlight some key points for and against the e-cc and its aims, as a prompt for discussion.

After that the discussion questions are listed. These are for researchers to use, and will normally follow the *hands-on testing*, and the *questionnaire*.

The questions asked in each evaluation session may differ, depending on the balance of Community Councillors and members of the public, whether there are sufficient numbers to form separate discussion groups, and on the progress of the hands-on testing that precedes this discussion.

The discussion part of the evaluation session may take two forms:-

1. A 30-40 minute discussion with a group of six to eight members of the public, with a Community Councillor present if this is appropriate.
2. A series of two or three 20 minute discussions with (preferably) two people at a time.

The first option is preferred where people have been invited to attend at the same time and there are sufficient internet-connected computers. The second option is more realistic where the number of internet-connected computers is limited, or where people are not likely to attend at the same time.

Questions are sub-divided to match the topics and allow flexibility in which questions are asked of which individuals.

Additional discussions with Community Councillors may be held by phone or in-person.

Discussion questions relate to the main evaluation criteria and topics, and issues arising from Steering Group discussions. The box below shows topics applicable to both the public and community councillors' discussions: -

1. Take-up
 - 1.1. Expectations of the project and its aims (coordinate consultation responses, support public engagement, support communication with other bodies).
 - 1.2. Ease of access
 - 1.3. Ease of use
 - 1.3.1. Accessibility
 - 1.3.2. Navigability, Ease of learning, Trust/security
 - 1.4. Usefulness considering working practices and environment
2. Impact on Community Councillors work
 - 2.1. Expectations of take-up compared with phone, letter, in-person encounters
 - 2.1.1. Public- expected impact
 - 2.1.2. Community councillors- usage and expected impact
 - 2.2. Experiences of using online documents and communicating online in private and public
 - 2.3. Impact of above on regular Community Council meetings
3. Sustainability
 - 3.1. Any examples of benefits or good practice experienced that would interest others
 - 3.2. Any expected or unexpected barriers and risks

In practice we expect the discussion to range across several of the above topics at once, so while the topic structure will be helpful for analysis the questions have been structured around simpler headings as follows: -

1. Pros and cons of using the Internet to support Community Councils.
2. Usefulness of the e-cc in practice
3. Expected impact

The questions and some discussion prompts follow below under each heading.

Cambusbarron e-Community Council

Our aims today:

1. Consider the Aims and Expectations of an “E- Community Council”

A research prototype * intended to help Community Councils to...

- Respond to consultations
- Inform and involve the public- and help the public to get involved
- Promote communication with other organisations

2. Hear your views of the pro’s and con’s

- Is it useful?
- What kind of impact do you expect, now and in the future?

**** A 2 year project funded by the Scottish Executive and involving Napier University, the Association of Scottish Community Councils, the Association of Community Councils for the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park area and Stirling Assembly.***

Aims and Expectations: E- Community Council should help with...

Responding to consultations

“The e-Community Council could widen the numbers of community councillors involved in decisions”

“It’s easier to discuss planning applications online than emailing round everyone – with file attachments and their problems”

“People don’t want to be burdened... they want us – their Community Council - to be a filter, making judgements to work out which of the consultations we get are relevant locally and respond on their behalf”

Informing and involving you (the public)- and helping you to get involved

“It’s hard to get people involved, especially the young...some might use this... it’s understandable that they can’t be bothered to sit through meetings”

The average level of public attendance at meetings is 5 persons. [Association of Scottish Community Councils survey 2004]

“I can’t see people bothering to comment online- we do a newsletter and rarely get comments back about that”

Promoting communication with other organisations

“Community Councils are being driven to form bigger clusters.. it’s a problem for Councils to consult 40 community councils... e-community councils could let them do this and be a more effective lobby”

Is the “e- Community Council” Useful?

Previously we got comments mainly from people stopping us in the street.. the e-cc is a big step forward

It takes time to access the site from thinking about logging on to getting the extension cord out of the cupboard, moving the settee to plus in, connecting the computer etc.- would a phone call be easier?

I can't see if anyone has added anything to the web site that needs me to moderate it unless I log in - which takes several screens - far too laborious to bother with.

How can we justify doing an online questionnaire when we know most people?

What kind of impact?

“It's a great thing for CC's like us that cover a wide area because you can get people's views about planning applications before the meeting”

“It's like a running Secretary's report- before people would look at the report at meetings, with the e-cc they can do so on a daily basis – so if something comes in people can see it and think about it”

“We had a useful bit of public feedback on the website which helped us decide a way forward on a local contentious issue”

“Most community councillors only take part at meetings and expect office-bearers to do all the work in between...It's not replacing anything so it's an additional effort for CC secretaries”

“The website doesn't fit with the way councillors work, which is very sporadic. We don't all eagerly attack every little item of information that arrives – we are all volunteers, we all have other lives, most of us other jobs too, so we only pick up things when and if we can”

So what do you think?

About using the e-community Council...

Please tick one box for each statement below, to indicate how much you agree.

1. The text was clear enough to read

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

2. The language used was difficult to understand

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

3. The home page showed the kinds of information I expected to find

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

4. It was difficult to find my way around

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

5. It was easy enough to find information about Community Council activities

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

6. Finding contact details for a local organisation was difficult

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

7. It was easy enough to give my own views

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

8. I would be worried about my privacy if using this site

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

9. Overall I am satisfied with this website

Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know / No opinion

Your expectations of the e-Community Council site...

1. I expect it will help the Community Council to keep people informed more effectively

Strongly Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Don't know /
agree Disagree No opinion

2. I expect it will help a wider range of local people to have a say on local issues

Strongly Agree Neither Disagree Strongly Don't know /
agree Disagree No opinion

3. I would visit this website-

About once a week About once a month Less than monthly Never

4. I would prefer to discuss my views about local issues on a website run by-

The Community Council The Council (Local Authority)

Another organisation (please describe) _____

5. People should be able to use an e-Community Council website to have a say on (please tick as many as you think are appropriate) -

- Planning and licensing applications
- Consultations that other bodies ask Community Councils for their views on
- Issues affecting the Community Council area
- Issues affecting all areas covered by the Local Authority
- National and international issues affecting everyone

Some general questions about you

Please note- We ask these only to check we are getting replies from a cross-section of the community. We do not record anything that identifies you personally.

19. My age-

Under 16 16-24 25-44 45-59 60-74 75 or over

20. My gender-

Female Male

21. My educational qualifications-

None O' grade, Standard Grade Higher, or ONC SVQ level 3
HND,HNC, or SVQ Level 4 or 5 Degree, postgraduate or professional

22. I use the Internet-

About once a week About once a month Less than monthly Never

23. Before today, I have heard about the e-Community Council website-

Many times One or two times Never

Over the last 12 months-

24. I have contacted a Community Councillor about an issue affecting my area-

Many times One or two times Never

25. I have been to Community Council meetings

Many times One or two times Never

26. I have expressed my views on local decisions another way-

Many times One or two times Never

27. I have given up time to help as an organiser/volunteer for another local organisation-

Many times One or two times Never

THANK YOU

Annex E. Community Councillor Questionnaire Responses

The questionnaire was sent by post to 59 community councillors listed as current members of each of the 6 participating community councils. Telephone interviews were carried out with 10 of those who had contributed to their e-Community Council site, during which their questionnaire responses were noted. A further 5 community councillors took part in a group discussion of the questions before returning their questionnaires by post.

Respondents were asked to state their name and community council, and informed that these would not be disclosed to anyone outside Napier University. This anonymity was to encourage ‘dissenting voices’ to be heard, to help assess the full range of views regarding the project.

There were 22 responses from 59 community councillors, i.e. 37% response rate.

These were unevenly distributed between community councils; the least being 1 out of 7; the highest being 7 out of 12 community councillors responding.

The questions and responses follow.

Q. 1 In the past 3 months approximately how many times have local people given you views on Community Council issues? (*Please estimate as closely as you can, for each of the methods below*)

	min	max	average
Conversation face-to-face	2	30	9
Door to door survey	-	-	-
Telephone call	0	30	3
Letter	0	6	1
Email	0	100	6

Q.2 What type of access to the Internet do you have (if any)?

At home: None 1 Dialup 14 Broadband 7

At work: None 1 Dialup 1 Broadband 7 (not applicable 12)

Local community centre or library:

None 4 Dialup 3 Broadband 13 Don't know 1

Q.3 How often do you use the Internet, if at all?

At least once a week 18 Less than weekly but 3 Less than monthly 1 Never 0
 at least once a month

Q.4 How have you used the e-Community Council? *(please tick all that apply)*

- 16 x Browsing to catch up with news and opinion
- 7 x Responding to consultations or questionnaires
- 4 x Setting up questionnaires
- 7 x Finding contact information
- 11 x Checking or updating the diary dates
- 8 x Writing items on the public or Community Councillor pages
- 7 x Approving items and comments
- 3 x I have not used it yet.

Q. 5 Which of the following have you found **helpful** and which do you think most **needs improved before it can help you?**

Please tick any that apply to you

Helpful Improve first

- (a) Publish a consultation/ planning application
- (b) 'Check out' a consultation
- (c) Publish item on a topic of current interest
- (d) Upload a document e.g. minutes
- (e) Check item or comment added by the public
- (f) Use topics to categorise items
- (g) Set up a questionnaire
- (h) Make 'private' comments, e.g. on draft minutes.
- (i) Edit the events & meetings diary
- (j) Edit contact information

9	1
11	-
12	-
13	-
12	-
5	2
8	1
10	-
10	-
5	1

Q. 6 How satisfied are you that ...

(a) It is **easy to learn** to use the 'Community Councillor' pages

Very satisfied	7	Quite satisfied	10	Neutral	4	Quite unsatisfied	1	Very unsatisfied	-	Never used/ don't know	-
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(b) The 'Community Councillor' pages are **easy to use** after a few hours practice

Very satisfied	9	Quite satisfied	8	Neutral	4	Quite unsatisfied	-	Very unsatisfied	-	Never used/ don't know	-
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(c) Using the 'Community Councillor' pages **saves time** at meetings

Very satisfied	5	Quite satisfied	3	Neutral	9	Quite unsatisfied	2	Very unsatisfied	-	Never used/ don't know	3
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Q. 7 How does the website support your role as a Community Councillor?

The statements below describe aspects of a Community Councillor's role and how a website can support that role. How closely do these correspond to your views?

a) Having an e-Community Council website implies that we should give attention to the views of those who respond to it.

Strongly agree	6	Agree	13	No opinion	-	Disagree	1	Strongly Disagree	1	Don't know	2
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b) People want to see Community Councillors involving and responding to the public they represent, using the Internet and other means.

Strongly agree	6	Agree	10	No opinion	1	Disagree	2	Strongly Disagree	2	Don't know	1
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c) A website should help us act in a 'filtering' role to alert local people to decisions that are relevant to the local community.

Strongly agree	4	Agree	12	No opinion	2	Disagree	2	Strongly Disagree	-	Don't know	1
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d) A website should help facilitate debate with individuals, interest groups and public bodies that informs us of the concerns of each.

Strongly agree	5	Agree	10	No opinion	4	Disagree	2	Strongly Disagree	-	Don't know	1
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Q. 10 Are there any specific ways the e-Community Council has *hindered* your Community Council? If so, or if you have any particular fears please describe them here.

- No, helped in every way apart from those not pc literate and those who see technology as a hindrance, e.g. the Chair expects others to do it.
- No its an.. extra handle to get views across.
- ..The discussions are not open, in public and minuted...the only proper way to proceed is [for an issue] to become an agenda item for a meeting, the item is discussed in public, motions are put, votes are taken and minutes recorded. I believe there is some way to go in developing the proper etiquette for the new technology and until that happens we should stick to what we know.
- Wasted opportunity to involve wider public in community council decision making. The project set out with a thesis and was not open to wider access beyond community councillors. Those involved in the CC were already connected and networked. We missed a big opportunity to involve those with no access to computers. Project emphasised that CC activities focus on those with resources.
- Need to remember its not the main or only method [of communication].
- [lack of] functionality and take up by other councillors

Q. 11 What are the main constraints on *you personally* making use of an e-Community Council site?

- Lack of time/ volume of other work/ pressure of other business
- Dislike of reading lengthy documents on screen/ Do not like spending lengths of time sitting in front of my computer.. would prefer to get the papers themselves...so that I can make notes in the margins and generally get a proper handle on what the paper is all about.
- None, use daily
- The structure of the web interface is designed to manage administration of the site. Menus etc are structured to suit the project objectives and not community needs.
- Lack of training (doing another job on days when training arranged)/ time needed to learn the system.
- Unwilling to attack the e-community council after work and dealing with own emails.
- It is less specific than responding to requests from the public or the Secretary for particular relevant action. It can generate unnecessary and time consuming work if misused.
- Lack of interest. There are many far more exciting websites for people who want to live by the screen.

Q. 12 What in your view are the main constraints on *people living in your area* making use of an e-Community Council site?

- Lack of access to pc at home/ no public access in our CC area
- Apathy, disinterest in community issues
- Lack of time
- Lack of computer literacy
- Ignorance of our existence
- Reluctance to use the internet, fear of the unknown/ Older generation don't use the internet
- Confidence to use the site.
- In our area a sizable majority do not bother with the web, or only use it for emails to distant family members...other people who are using it at work don't necessarily want to spend their evenings gazing at the screen, they tell me. I think in time this will change but I believe that is the situation as of now.
- Poor involvement and marketing of the issues.

Q. 13 How satisfied are you that the e-Community Council website...

(a) Enables a wider range of people to raise issues & give their views

Very satisfied	5	Quite satisfied	9	Neutral	6	Quite unsatisfied	-	Very unsatisfied	2	Never used/ don't know	-
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(b) Gathers views that are useful/informative for the Community Council

Very satisfied	8	Quite satisfied	6	Neutral	6	Quite unsatisfied	-	Very unsatisfied	2	Never used/ don't know	-
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Q. 14 What future for e-Community Council websites?

The e-community councils have been set up to interact with the public, with the aim of revitalising local democracy. It takes time to keep them updated, especially to check anything added by the public and respond to it if necessary. Mostly that work has been carried out by one or two people in each Community Council, which has proved difficult for some.

Leaving an interactive website unattended has some legal risks for Community Councils. The public may add material that breaks the laws on defamation, obscenity or discrimination- and the Community Council could be liable!

The e-community council is a pilot project and the current phase ends in January. Considering the effort involved and any benefits the interactive aspects of the e-community council can bring for your Community Council **please tell us:** -

(a) Do you think e-community councils should be taken forward on a wider scale?

Yes 17 No 1 Don't know 4

(b) What management arrangements would be most realistic?

1. *Individual e-Community Councils* take the initiative and are responsible for their own interactive site. They just need better facilities for checking new additions by the public, time to set up working arrangements for that, and a suitable organisation to look after the system.
2. *Community Council share responsibility* for the interactive aspects of a website, with an area-wide shared e-Community Council. When the public respond, an administrator appointed by the local association can handle routine matters and forward others to the appropriate Community Council.
3. *Local Community Planning groups or Assemblies* take the initiative and responsibility – since they are ‘participatory’ organisations and have some administrative support.
4. The *Local Council* takes the initiative and responsibility, adding Community Council interactive facilities to the information they already provide. A Council administrator can handle routine matters and forward others to the appropriate Community Council.

In my view the most realistic arrangement is: (1) **6** (2) **8** (3) **5** (4) **7**

Includes one response for each of following combinations-

- All 4, to spread the effort
- #2 with participation of community planning groups (#3) and support of council (#4)
- Aim for #2, evolving from #1
- #3 with support from council (#4)

“My reasons are -”

1. To maintain local control/ general topics may not reflect local problems/ council should not control debate or edit views expressed.
2. To benefit from administrative support
3. More participatory and have administrative support
4. Lack of public interest/ own interest/ CC's do not have time to support/ CC websites allow small groups to dominate discussion.