



# NATTERGAL

## Report on Stakeholder Engagement Best Practice in Landscape Scale Nature Recovery Projects



# Executive Summary

**“Public and stakeholder engagement are key to improving environmental land-use decision-making, natural resource management, and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, and society”**

Developed for the Boothby Wildland Landscape Recovery project, and funded via the DEFRA Landscape Recovery Development Phase, the report was led by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at the University of Gloucestershire and the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery at Oxford University, with the objective of establishing a framework for enhancing and embedding stakeholder engagement.

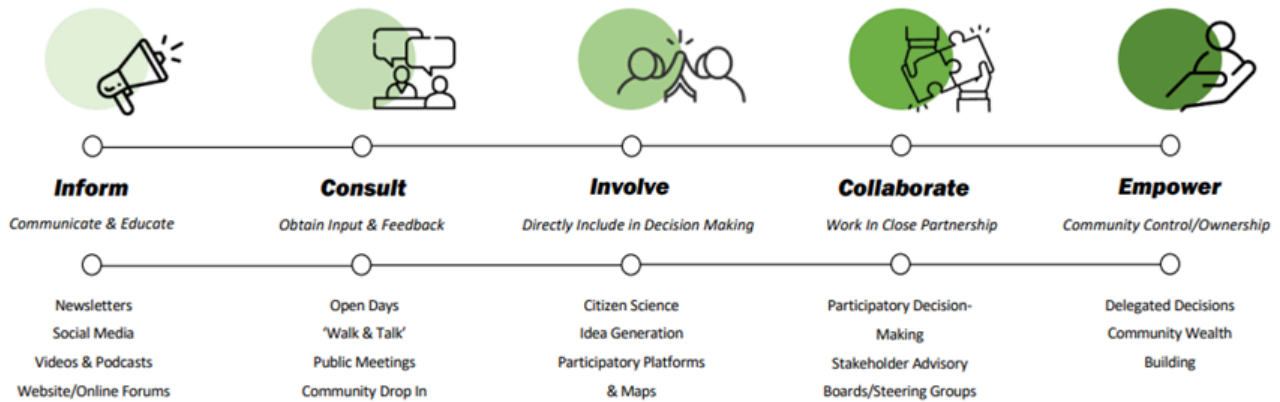
Expanding on earlier evidence-led research, the report provides a series of tailored considerations designed to inform engagement strategies for land-use decision-making, with a view to achieving wide-ranging environmental, economic, and societal benefits.



Key elements of a best practice programme can be identified as:

1. understanding context
2. prioritising stakeholder identification/analysis
3. choosing suitable methods of engagement
4. co-identifying community benefits
5. processes of feedback/evaluation
6. institutionalising engagement.

It is recommended to deliver the programme of community engagement activity across a broad spectrum of engagement, moving from passive to active collaboration, as shown here:



### Summary of Recommendations for Best Practice

Based on the research within the report, 10 evidence-led recommendations for engagement best practice in landscape-scale nature recovery have been set out, as below:

1. Treat engagement as an ongoing process, not a 'one-off', 'add-on', or 'tick-box' activity.
2. Prioritise understanding of the local context, purpose, and rationale for engagement.
3. Engage stakeholders in dialogue as early as possible in decision-making processes.
4. Integrate local knowledge alongside scientific expertise for robust decision-making.
5. Understand and manage power dynamics effectively, building trust and encouraging two-way dialogue.
6. Recognise there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to engagement – processes should be adapted to local contexts and use varied participatory (in-person and digital) tools and approaches.
7. Embed monitoring and evaluation of social impact to inform future practice.
8. Think big, by acting local to ensure organisational ambitions are rooted in local communities.
9. Develop organisational capacity for engagement through increased training, resource, and human capital.
10. Frameworks for engagement best practice should be institutionalised – embedding equity, accountability, and inclusivity at the centre of nature recovery efforts.

The report evidences that effective engagement is essential for managing risk, and can minimise conflict, foster representation of marginalised groups, enhance local values, culture, and heritage, and promote collaboration across landscape and catchment scales.

Access the full report at [nattergal.co.uk/research](http://nattergal.co.uk/research)