

enhancing social capital. An exemplar of this is the Bovey Tracey Climate Action Community.

Places can be shaped to encourage a greater appreciation and valuation by those using that place. If communities understand the value of features within their local space, as outlined above, and not only value but actively engage with these features, it is likely that social capital will be enhanced. The promotion of positive norms and the fostering of community-led projects with reference to place-shaping has strong potential to introduce positive change to urban landscapes.

To achieve this, an understanding of the spectrum of social factors present within our communities, and an appreciation of place and what works for them is critical when we engage with them to bring about change. This can be through a combination of open public consultation, multimedia consultation (paper survey, online survey, social media focus groups), reaching less visible groups through 'already trusted envoys' of those communities.

A third consideration is: what barriers prevent communities from laying claim to values of place, and enhancing their social capital through place-shaping?

Historic forces, environmental conditions and social factors, including ideas of social class, hierarchical roles and gender have played a big part in the development of our current urban environments. The communities that inhabit these places have often inherited an urban form which was designed not for their demographic, but usually by a body of people from a different socio-economic background. Therefore the physical space is at odds with their needs and values.

One of the tools we use to understand how people engage with place measures the factors that people value about certain aspects of the physical environment. The features being measured range from green infrastructure and public spaces, to museums or arts-focused venues, heritage places and eating and drinking venues. The tool calculates the degree to which our perception of place is affected by external influences such as health, accessibility, ethnic background and employment status. The tool allows us to identify the strength of these external factors on our perception of an area and how they affect our value. The measuring of these factors allows us to



Our tools help us to understand how people engage with place by measuring what they value about certain aspects of the physical environment

identify community profiles that are not benefiting from a place or feature in a positive way, this then allows these communities to receive more attention, and the reason for their lack of positive values to be addressed. Empowering communities to lay claim to places and to enact change, requires the identification of these barriers.

Our fourth concern is: how are these barriers and challenges being overcome so as to enhance value and identity of a place for the future? It is in identifying those community groups who will invest in a place that sustainability for the future can best be achieved. Consultation with community groups is aimed at defining concepts of significance of place

from the perspective of all groups claiming interest or investment in a place. Often these interests are based on 'intangibles', associated with memory, oral history, and metaphysical perceptions of the place, as well as physical or commemorative structures. Sometimes, although all groups want to be involved in the consultation process, tension between groups can develop regarding rights to speak, and which group's interpretation of appropriate use is valid. Mediating this potential for tension is a key part of the process of empowerment. Also important is the need to recognise and engage those trusted with the role of speaking for the group, and those with the ability to 'translate' cultural norms and