



Gathering & Using Evidence

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Overview of Workshop

Aim:

Provide an overview of the purpose of evidence, as well as how to collect and use it appropriately.

Key elements:

- What is the role of evidence and why use it?
- How to access or collect evidence from secondary and primary sources?
- Basic interpretation and presentation.
- Data protection and Safeguarding.

Context: Role of evidence

Quick round robin:

- 1. Name and organisation**
- 2. What do you 'want' from this session?**
- 3. What evidence do you currently use, from where and for what purposes?**

Role of evidence: Context

- Understanding people and places.
- Fundamental to your own understanding and that of others:
 - *Easy to make assumptions which aren't factually accurate*
 - *Crucial to monitor change over time – what's (not) changed?*
- Evidence based decisions/actions may be 'better' and more justifiable.
- Data and evidence are crucial components in decision-making:
"What gets measured gets responded to!"
- Huge array of information is now accessible - but this can be a double-edged sword.

Role of Evidence: Function

- **Analysing and exploring issues**
 - Use information to assess progress and make decisions by:
 1. Identifying relevant sources of information
 2. Organising information to help with analysis
 3. Extracting and presenting information appropriately
- **Demonstrating an impact**
 - The 'story' of a project/programme – outputs and outcomes
 - Project/Programme reporting
 - Funding Bids – making a difference
- **Improving performance continuously**
 - Reviewing performance to identify improvement
 - Determine how to do things better
- **Engaging with change**
 - Identifying and/or implementing change
 - Understanding cause and effect

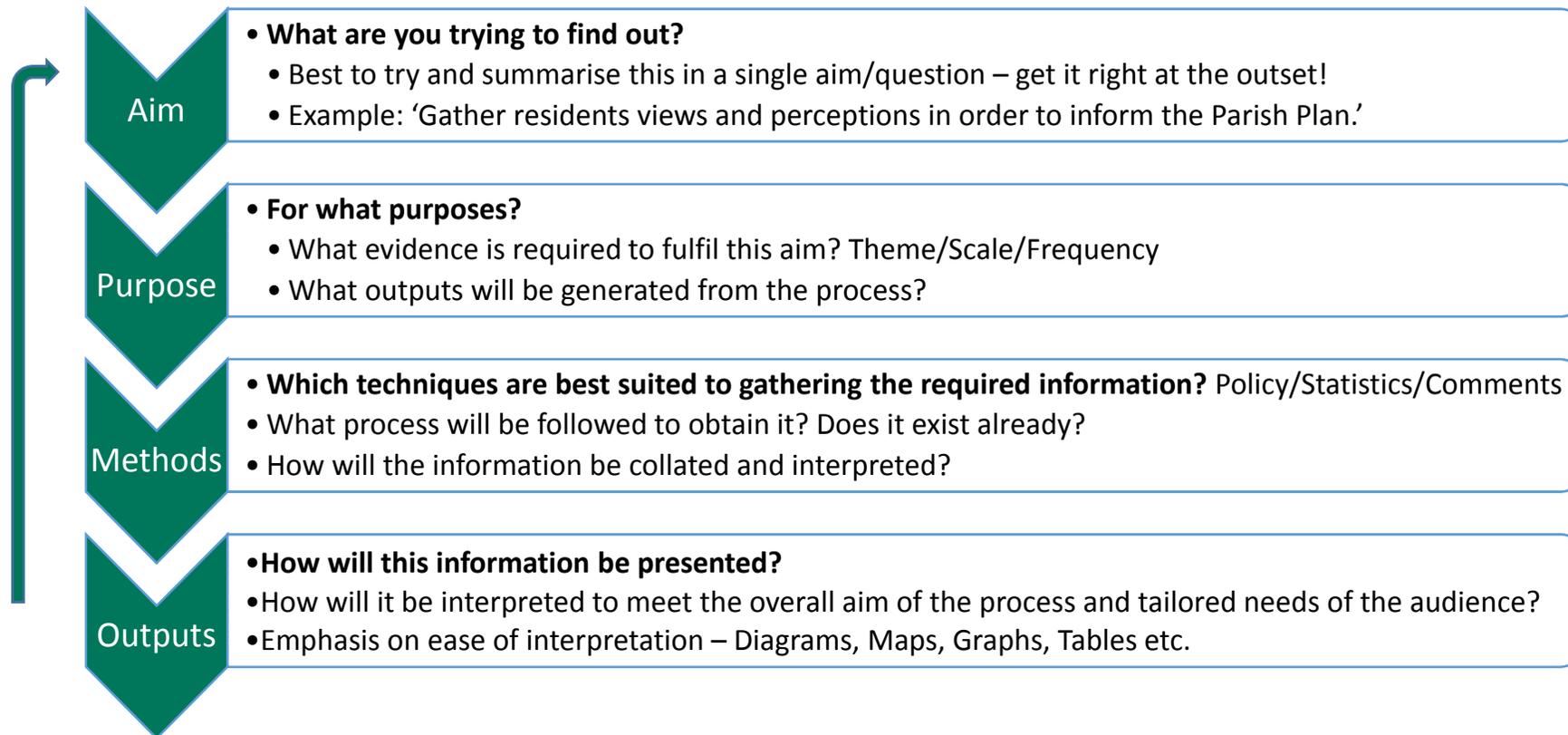
Exercise

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Key attributes of 'effective' evidence

- What factors determine the effectiveness of evidence?
 - Robustness – both actual and perceived ('confidence')
 - Objectivity and recognition of any limitations
 - Ease of communication and interpretation
 - Clarity of purpose - clear and unambiguous
 - Proportionately – Quality vs Time vs Cost
- Limitations or Parameters:
 - Availability
 - Cost(s)
 - Timeframe/Geography/Scale
 - Expertise, skills and knowledge
 - External factors - parameters set by others e.g. required information.

Effectively gathering and using evidence



Collecting ‘Secondary’ evidence

- Secondary sources refer to those collected by another party.
- They are generally legal, policy or statistical information and provide the context for primary data.
- A common issue is the wide array of information available – too much choice!
- Focus on determining applicability and value – prioritise:
 - Robust and reliable sources e.g. Gov. bodies;
 - Identify any definitive decisions or positions e.g. policy/legislation;
 - Relevance and transferability of the information e.g. standard geography/timeframe;

Parish Evidence & Statistics

- People commonly want information at Parish scale.
- A major challenge is the limited availability of parish-scale statistical data.
- Comprehensive parish data is only captured at every Census interval i.e. 2001, 2011 and 2021.
- Despite this limitation, there are often few socio-economic alternatives – it is definitive.
- Other data may be available more regularly (e.g. Ward, LSOA), but this may not align geographically.

Collecting evidence from ‘Secondary’ sources

- **Office for National Statistics**
 - All mainstream public and governmental dataset
 - Data available at all geographical scale
 - <http://www.ons.gov.uk>
- **NOMIS**
 - Historic focus on economic data
 - Parish Level Statistics for 2011 Census
 - https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/data_finder
- **MAGIC**
 - Mapping tool with emphasis on the environment
 - Useful for exploring boundaries and other land-use features
 - <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>
- **Community Profiles – ACRE/OCSI**
 - <http://www.acre.org.uk/cms/resources/ruralplaceprofile.pdf>
- **Gov./Local Authority documents e.g. Ward Profiles – Mid Sussex DC.**
- **Other sources e.g. trusts, foundations, specialist organisations etc.**

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nomis

official labour market statistics



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Search Nomis... Search

Welcome to Nomis

Nomis is a service provided by the Office for National Statistics, ONS, to give you free access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources.

[Information for first-time visitors](#)
[Sign-in or Register](#)

Important note

The Nomis system will be unavailable from 5:30pm on Friday 23 June 2017 to carry out essential maintenance.

Area Profiles

View a labour market profile of an area. Includes some of the data from our key datasets on population, employment, unemployment, qualifications, earnings, benefit claimants and businesses.

- ▶ [Local Authority Profile](#) (district/county areas)
- ▶ [Local Enterprise Partnerships Profile](#)
- ▶ [Combined Authority Profile](#)
- ▶ [Regional and National Profile](#)
- ▶ [2010 Parliamentary Constituencies Profile](#)
- ▶ [2011 Ward Profile](#) (England & Wales only)

Data Downloads

Create a data download from one of our full range of data sets. Data is available at a more detailed level than the Area Profiles.

- ▶ [Query data](#)
Download the figures you need from a single data set.



Census Statistics

2011 Census

2001 Census

Magic Map Search: Choose from the search criteria below County, Place or Postcode...
 Search input: Uckfield, East Sussex

Feature Tools click on an icon below to bring up more options

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Table of Contents

- Parishes (GB)
- Local Enterprise Partnership Boundaries (England)
- Rural areas within Local Enterprise Partnerships (England)
- Rural Development Fund eligibility for LEADER groups (England)
- Local Nature Partnerships (England)
- Lower Super Output Areas with Rural Def 2011 (England & Wales)
- Countryside Stewardship Targeting & Scoring Layers
 - Designations
 - Habitats and Species
 - Land Based Schemes
 - Landscape
 - Marine
 - Aerial Photography
 - Background Mapping
 - OS Colour Mapping
 - OS Black and White Mapping
 - Base Map





Although you probably have a good idea of who lives in your area, knowing the actual numbers – and how these are changing over time – can help you decide which actions and activities to prioritise locally.

For example, if the population size is increasing more quickly than in other areas, it may be useful to think about pressure on housing and services. Similarly, the numbers of lone parents or older people has been used by communities when thinking about what additional services, such as care support for older people, may be needed.

What information is shown here?

The information boxes on the right show the numbers of people and households in Ticehurst, with counts of groups by age, ethnic minority and those born outside the UK. They also show groups who may be particularly vulnerable – lone parents and older people living alone, as well as the dependency ratio (the ratio of non-working age to working age population).

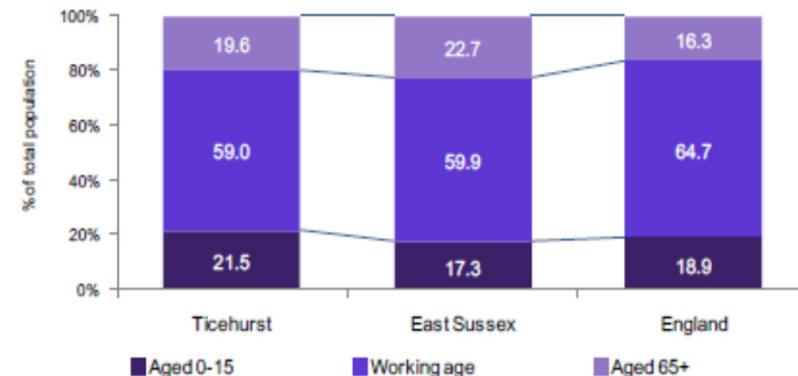
The chart on the right shows the population breakdown by age group for Ticehurst, with local and National comparators. The charts on the following page show the population by 5 year age bands and by gender in Ticehurst, as well as population breakdowns by ethnic group, household composition and those born outside of England, each with national comparisons.

Where next?

On [page 8](#) we show how the population is changing over time, to see if groups such as younger people are more likely to be moving out of the area. Data on community cohesion and belonging can be found on [page 10](#). Information on levels of local engagement is in the section on Governance ([page 42](#)). Information on numbers of houses and housing type is in the section on housing ([page 27](#)).

How many people live locally? 3,875 48.9% male; 51.1% female	How many households? 1,520	Children under 16 830 21.6% (England average = 18.9%)	Working age adults 2,285 69.0% (England average = 64.7%)	Older people over 65 760 19.6% (England average = 16.3%)
Lone parent families with children 80 16.6% of all families with dependent children (England average = 24.6%)	Single pensioner households 220 14.4% of households (England average = 12.4%)	People from Black or Minority ethnic groups 195 6.0% (England average = 20.2%)	People born outside the UK 255 6.6% (England average = 13.8%)	Dependency Ratio 0.70 England average = 0.66

Population by age



Source: Census 2011 (table KS102EW)

Collecting evidence from ‘Primary’ sources

- Community engagement can raise awareness, encourage participation and identify assets – people, community groups and businesses.
- It is important to tailor methods to the purpose of the process e.g. is the emphasis the whole community or a specific group?
 - *How will engaging older people differ from children?*
- Context is key – engaging service providers and policy-makers to determine parameters and gather background info.
 - *What information is required and in what format – scale or impact?*
- Seek promotion and support from local organisations and bodies e.g. MPs, councillors, clergy, businesses etc.

Collecting evidence from ‘Primary’ sources

- Why do respondents/residents take part?
 - Get their voices heard;
 - Because they have an interest in the issue;
 - Complain or moan;
 - To get an incentive (e.g. prize);
 - To make a difference;
 - Something affects them directly or indirectly;
- Keep engagement short, simple and relevant (to all).
- Communicate the purpose and next steps – these are key in stimulating participation.
- Confidence in the process is fundamental to success.

Collecting evidence from ‘Primary’ sources

- A wide range of approaches can be used to engage people and organisations, including:
 - Drop-in events and open meetings;
 - Community Days, Fetes and Festivals;
 - Focus groups and workshops;
 - Walkabouts and House-to-house enquiry;
 - Suggestion boxes;
 - Questionnaires;
 - Semi-structured interviews;
 - Social Media participation.

Primary sources – Who to consult?

- Local organisations and groups:
 - Community groups and societies;
 - Voluntary organisations;
 - Local Businesses;
 - Faith Groups;
 - Young People;
 - Older People;
- Governmental and Statutory bodies
 - Relevant County and Local Authorities;
 - Environment Agency;
 - Natural England;
 - Highways Agency;
 - English Heritage.
- Adapt the techniques employed to the user!

Safeguarding

- When undertaking community engagement, a priority is keeping yourself and others safe.
- Plan and publicise your activity in advance.
- If possible:
 - Work in pairs/teams;
 - Work in daylight;
 - Be obvious and visible;
 - Explain your purpose clearly and politely;
- Many areas now have ‘No Doorstep Caller’ zones, comply with these.

Interpreting & Presenting evidence

- Being able to interpret and present information clearly is vital.
- Too few people adequately prioritise at the outset how they will present the information they gather.
- Tell the story..... Focus on 2 key aspects:
 1. What does the evidence show/suggest?
 2. How can I best explain this to my intended audience?
- Focus on the message you want people to take away, not the mass of evidence gathered.

Interpreting & Presenting evidence

- “A picture paints a thousand words.”
- Make presentation engage the audience e.g. text, diagrams, graphs, tables, pictures and video etc.
 - Change over time or within different groups
 - Spatial differences
- Be bold and be different – use pictures, photos, narrative (social media) and video.
- Plain English is key – don’t use acronyms or technical terms.
- Do not make assertions that you cannot substantiate via the evidence.

Interpreting & Presenting evidence

- Move from the general to the specific.
- State the obvious – this avoids mis-interpretation.
- If you use percentages, explain what they are percentages of and use the same approach throughout.
 - *Avoid the Shampoo advert scenario!*
- Give graphs, tables, maps and images a title and appropriate headings.
- Make narrative simple and to the point.
- Provide source details for background information.

Data Protection Act 1998

- The 1998 Data Protection Act regulates the use of ‘personal data’ – that relating to a living individual who can or may be identified through possession of the information.
- The Act is underpinned by a number of principles:
 - Fair and lawful
 - Purpose
 - Adequacy
 - Accuracy
 - Retention
 - Rights
 - Security
 - International
- A full and detailed explanation of the Data Protection Act is available on the Information Commissioners website <https://ico.org.uk/>

Writing Funding Bids & Applications

- Check the requirements – ask the funder if unclear.
- Answer the question asked – what do they want, rather than what do you wish to say.
- Be engaging and catch the reader's attention.
 - *Why is your bid different from the other applicants?*
 - *What value will you bring – how measured?*
- Try and align existing evidence with future reporting.
- Be realistic when identifying future targets;

Top Tips on Evidence

1. Focus on your aim and don't go off at a tangent;
2. Don't make assumptions about people or issues;
3. Tailor your approach to the task(s) required and don't over-complicate things;
4. Identify what already exists and work from there;
5. Stick to reliable sources of secondary information and quote these where appropriate;
6. Don't gather what you don't need – it will hinder!
7. Be clear and transparent at all times;
8. Comply with the legislation;
9. Communicate clearly and objectively;
10. Test your findings against other examples and independent voices;

Any questions?

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