

# Engaging with Energy: Pop-up community engagement in place-based decarbonisation



## Introduction

This document is a 'how to' guide for conducting in-person 'pop-up' Community Engagement activities in place-based decarbonisation projects. It provides detailed instructions of activities that can be used to engage community members with energy at a range of different in-person community events where there are a range of different stalls, for example markets and street parties. These activities were designed by Keele University and New Vic Borderlines as part of the Zero Carbon Rugeley project, a project designing a Smart Local Energy System (SLES) for Rugeley, Staffordshire, UK. This project was funded by InnovateUK as part of the [Prospering from the Energy Revolution programme](#).

Pop-up engagements were part of Keele University's Community Engagement and 'User-centric design' work that centred around informing the energy system design and building local understanding of the energy transition, covering smart energy systems, building retrofit, energy generation, and different aspects of mobility. Although these activities were designed as part of this specific project they can be adapted to other areas. . The activities discussed in this document are designed to specifically engage participants with issues of mobility, buildings, and energy efficiency and generation.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What are pop-up engagements?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Pop-up activities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Level 1 and Level 2 Activities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Level 1 Activity: Buttons in jars (30 seconds).....</b>	<b>5</b>
.....	<b>5</b>
<b>Level 2 Activity: Mobility and buildings.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Level 2 Activity: Mobility.....</i>	<i>6</i>
.....	<i>6</i>
<i>Level 2 Activity: Buildings .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<b>Monopoly Boards .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Setting up the board .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Using the board .....	9

## What are pop-up engagements?

Pop-up engagements are any type of in-person engagement that takes place in a community setting that participants haven't intentionally come to attend. These engagements are a method of engaging with a greater breadth of a community than those who may choose to sign up to participate in a workshop. Typically pop-up engagements involve a stall or table where activities can take place. There are three distinct spaces where pop-up engagements can take place. The activities discussed in this document are suitable for all three types, with the activities themselves designed to be adaptable to the needs of the engagement piece.

Types of pop-up settings include:

1. Events hosted by other groups or organisations.
2. Events hosted your organisation.
3. Pop-up stalls in community spaces not part of any event.

## Pop-up activities

This document contains details of two different types of pop-up engagement activity. The first follows a 'level 1 and level 2' structure, whereby the level 1 activities are pitched as a quick introductory activity, and level 2 activities cater towards passers-by who want to engage for longer. The second includes the use of an oversized blank monopoly board which can be used to explore specific topics in detail.

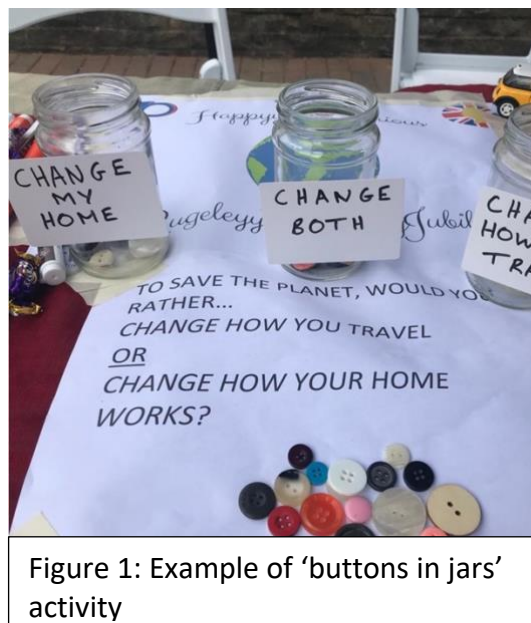
## Level 1 and Level 2 Activities

For pop-up activity it is not possible to know ahead of time how long each participant will engage, so it is important to design activities which allow for anything from 30 second passing engagement (level 1) to around 10 minutes of detailed engagement (level 2). The activities in this section are designed to follow on from each other, with the level 1 activities pitched as a quick introductory activity, and level 2 activities catering towards passers-by who want to engage for longer.

### Level 1 Activity: Buttons in jars (30 seconds)

On the table or stall place three empty jars or bowls labelled 'travel', 'home', and 'both' accompanied with the question "to tackle climate change would you rather change how you travel, how your home works, or both?". The facilitator places a bowl containing small buttons next to the jars and asks passers-by to put a button into the jar in answer to the question (figure 1).

This short activity is intended to act as an entry point for passers-by to engage in a conversation with the facilitator. If the participant chooses to place a button in a jar, the facilitator then asks the participant if they would like to take part in the level 2 activity that corresponds to their answer.



### Level 2 Activity: Mobility and buildings

Once participants have answered the 'buttons in jar' question, the facilitator gives the participant the choice of a mobility activity or buildings activity. Participants can choose to take part in both.

### Level 2 Activity: Mobility

The facilitator presents the participant with a printed map of the local area, along with tape, pens, blue tac, and paper (figure 2). Participants use the materials to mark out journeys on the map and whilst the facilitator explores the following questions with them:

1. What journey do you make most often? (What do you like about it? What don't you like?)
2. If you weren't going to use your car, how would you make this journey? What would be the benefit of not using the car? (to individuals/communities).
3. What's stopping you from walking/cycling/using public transport?
4. If you were going to label this map for someone else to make this trip, what would you want them to know? What would you like to know? How could it make your journey better?

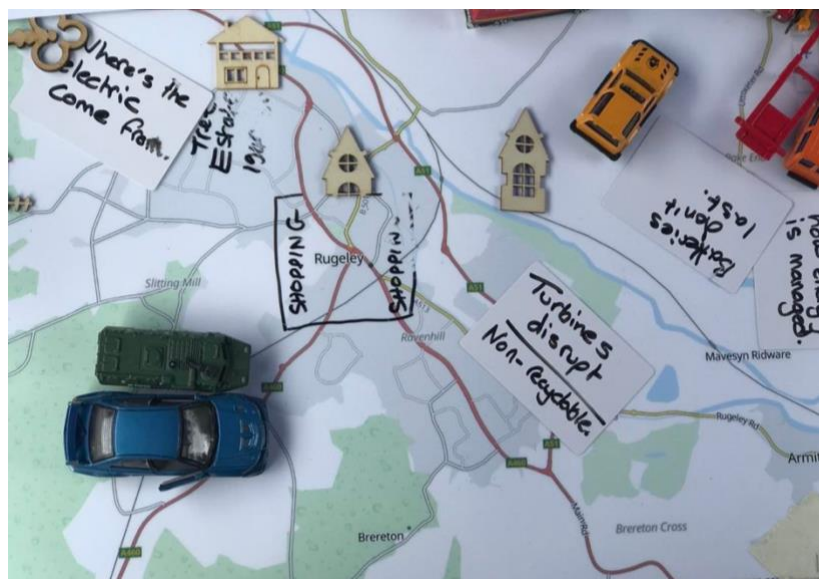


Figure 2: Example of mobility map.

### Level 2 Activity: Buildings

This activity requires a wooden dolls house, blank playing cards<sup>1</sup> or post-it notes, and mini objects that would typically be found in a house. The facilitator can also fill the house with several props such as felt to simulate insulation layers and printed solar panels for the roof

<sup>1</sup> These can be purchased online.

(figure 3). The facilitator uses the doll's house to stimulate a discussion with the participant about how their home uses energy. The facilitator should encourage the participant to consider the following questions:

1. How do you use energy in your home? (heating, electricity)
2. What do you know about where the energy comes from? How do you feel about it?
3. Has it always worked this way? (Have you ever been in a house with a coal fire?). How did you feel about it?
4. Where energy comes from is changing again. What about the house needs to change? What would you want to stay the same?
5. What do you do to reduce wastage of energy in your home? What else could you do? What stops you doing this?



Figure 3: Example of dolls house building activity.

## Monopoly Boards

This activity involves the use of oversized blank Monopoly Boards<sup>2</sup> to pitch a series of questions to participants about a topic of choice. The Monopoly Board adds an element of

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<sup>2</sup> Blank templates can be purchased or downloaded online.

familiarity to the activity and helps to make the exercise more interesting to participants than simply asking them questions.

### Setting up the board

Use the red rectangle in the middle to capture the overarching theme of the activity. For example, the theme could be 'Out and about in...' if the questions are themed around mobility. Use the four sides to pitch four different questions. For instance, within a mobility theme, questions could be 1) Where do you travel to? 2) How do you currently travel? 3) How could travel be improved? 4) What are the barriers to more active travel (or public transport)? Participants answer the questions by placing post it notes/cards around the outside edges of the board (figure 4).

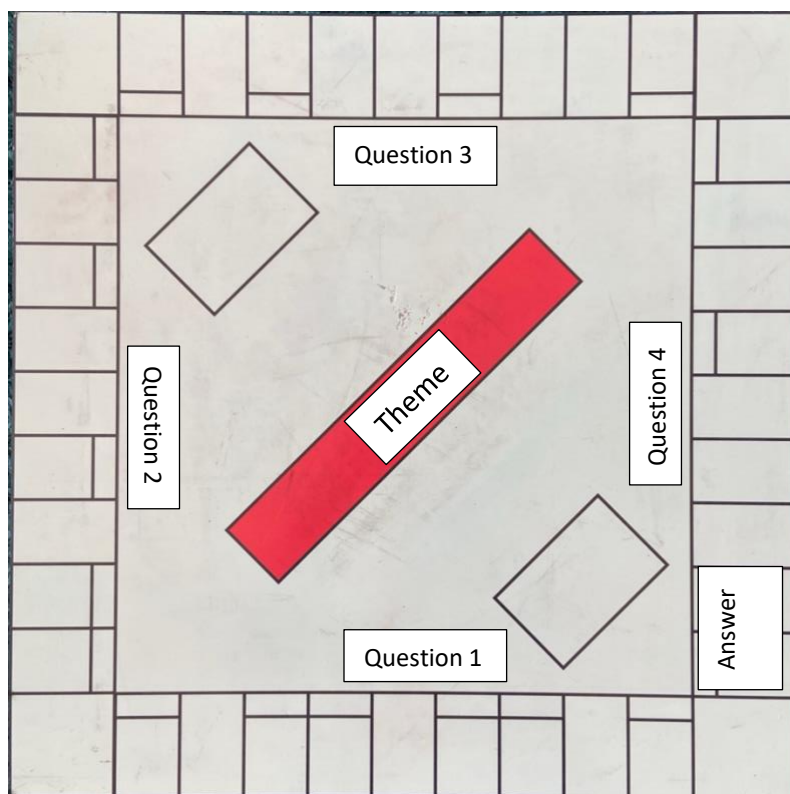


Figure 4: How to set up the board.



## Using the board

The Monopoly Board is extremely versatile as any theme can be placed in the middle with four accompanying questions. During pop-up engagements, multiple boards can be used with a facilitator stationed on each board to provide several engagement opportunities at once. As the activity progresses, participants will be able to see what other people have said and respond to the existing comments. For instance, figure 5 provides an example of what a board can look like at the end of a day long engagement activity.

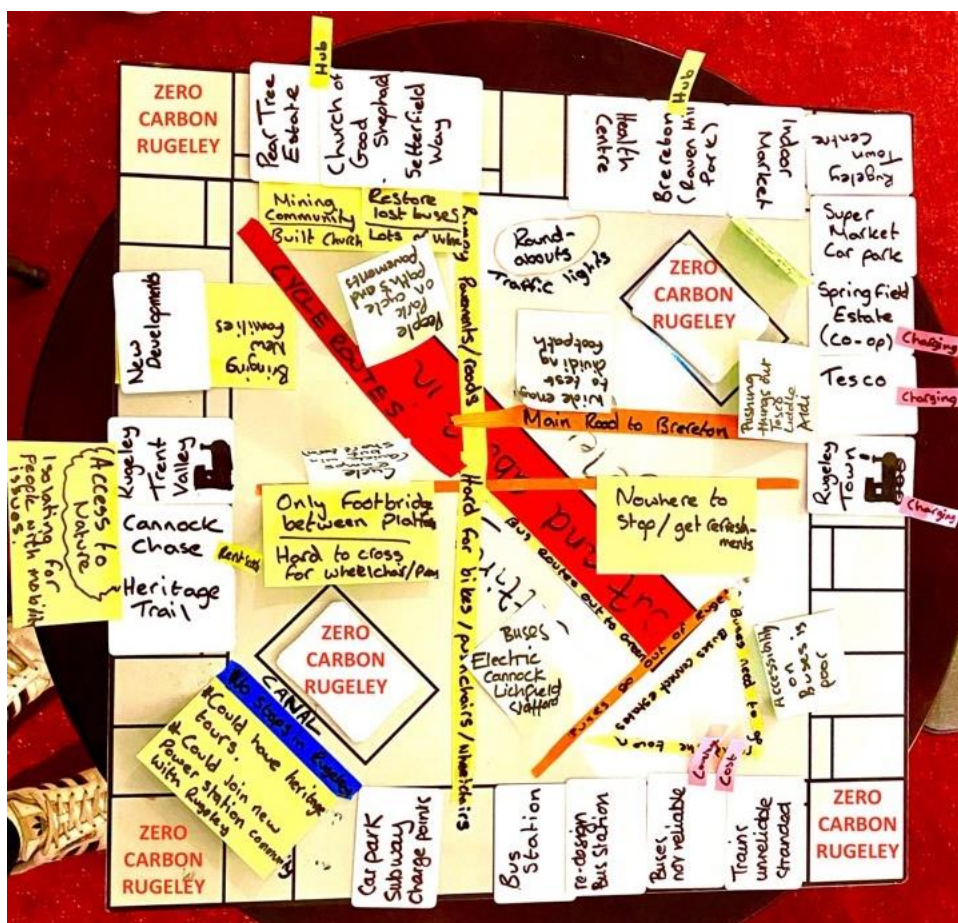


Figure 5: Example of a monopoly board at the end of an engagement day.