

Testing the Water: The importance of public (and stakeholder) engagement

Planning for Marine Renewables – The Environment, friend or foe?

Aberdeen 21st May 2009

Background research context

- 'Beyond NIMBYism': 8 case studies (10 projects) of 4 technology types, different scales, refining 'theoretical framework' of engagement.
- Two marine case studies: Strangford Lough (MCT SeaGen) and Pembrokeshire (two projects: Wave Dragon and Lunar-E.ON)

Research methods

- Interviews: Strangford 5, Wave Dragon 6, Lunar-E.ON 5.
- 8 Focus groups, Strangford 33 participants, Wave Dragon 16, Lunar-E.ON 12
- Survey: 281 Strangford (Portaferry 167, Strangford 114) 144 Wave Dragon (Dale 60, Marloes 84), 245 Lunar-E.ON (St Davids).

Significant Environments

- Strangford Lough:
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protected Area
 - “a body of water completely surrounded by committees” (multiple interviews)
 - “It won’t last long if some baby seals are found without their heads on the beaches, I can tell you.” (Strangford A FG)

Significant Environments

- Pembrokeeshire Wave Dragon:
 - Pembrokeeshire Marine SAC, near Skomer & Skokholm SPA and Skomer Marine Nature Reserve
 - “as beautiful as Pembrokeeshire and as environmentally important, of conservation importance” (Regulator)
 - “you don’t know what damage it’s going to do to the whales, dolphins, porpoises or anything like that” (Marloes FG)

Significant Environments

- Pembrokeeshire Lunar Energy-E.ON:
 - Pembrokeeshire Coastal National Park, Pembrokeeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation
 - “Ramsey Sound is...I can hardly think of anywhere that would be more sensitive” (NGO)
 - “Concern that projects like this could damage the environment, and impact on our main income of tourism” (St Davids B FG)

Significant Environments

- Wave vs Tidal?
 - “Wave Dragon ... we’ve surveyed the area and we’ve never found ... much in the way of wildlife ... that you would say is dependent on it, whereas Ramsey Sound we know is a habitual feeding ground for porpoises, seals and other sea birds, and they’re observed and we can prove it” (NGO)

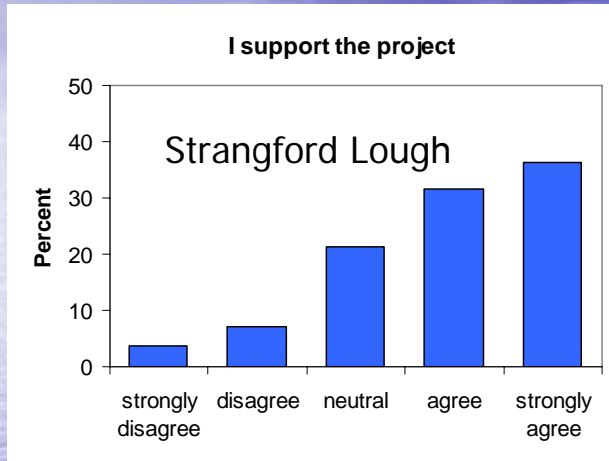
Significant Environments

- Wave vs Tidal?
 - “the areas where there are very strong tidal currents [have] a very rich diversity of ecology and marine life which is the areas they want to protect” (Developer Tidal)

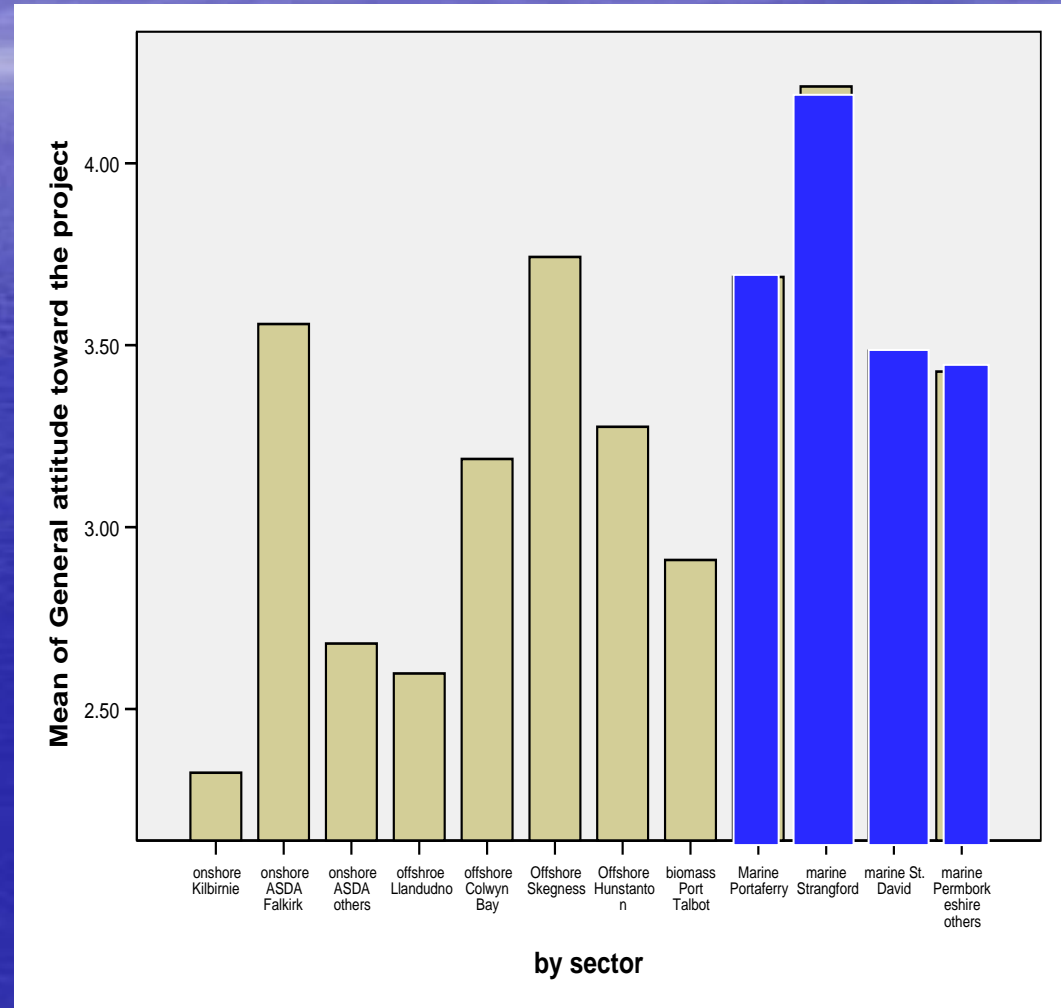
Environment: Friend or foe?

- “if it goes in there and you kill, you start killing seals or something or you start chopping up whales or whatever, this technology’s dead you know, so basically we’re working in...a shop front here” (Developer)

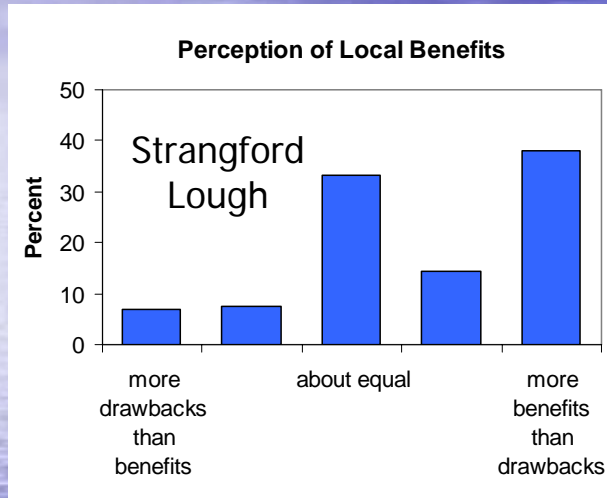
Support for project?



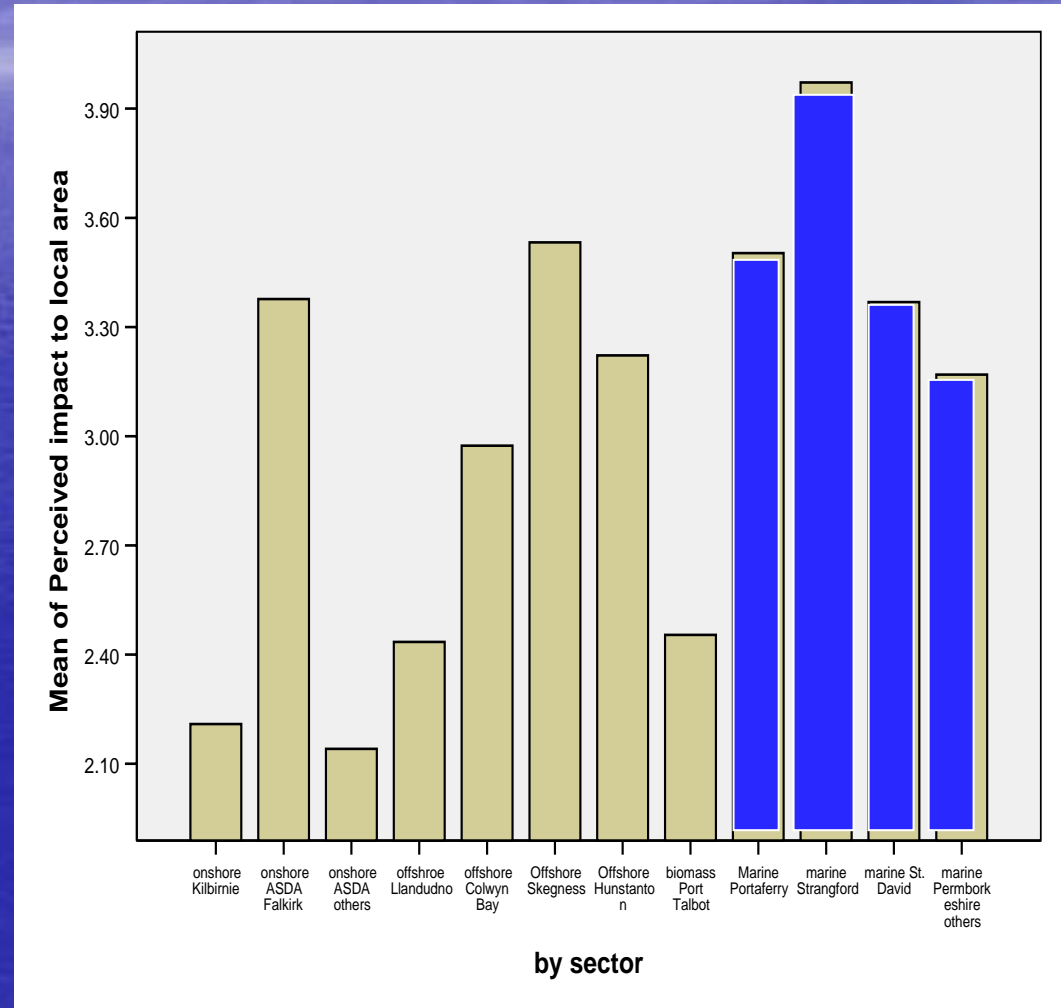
- Installed device has highest support of cases



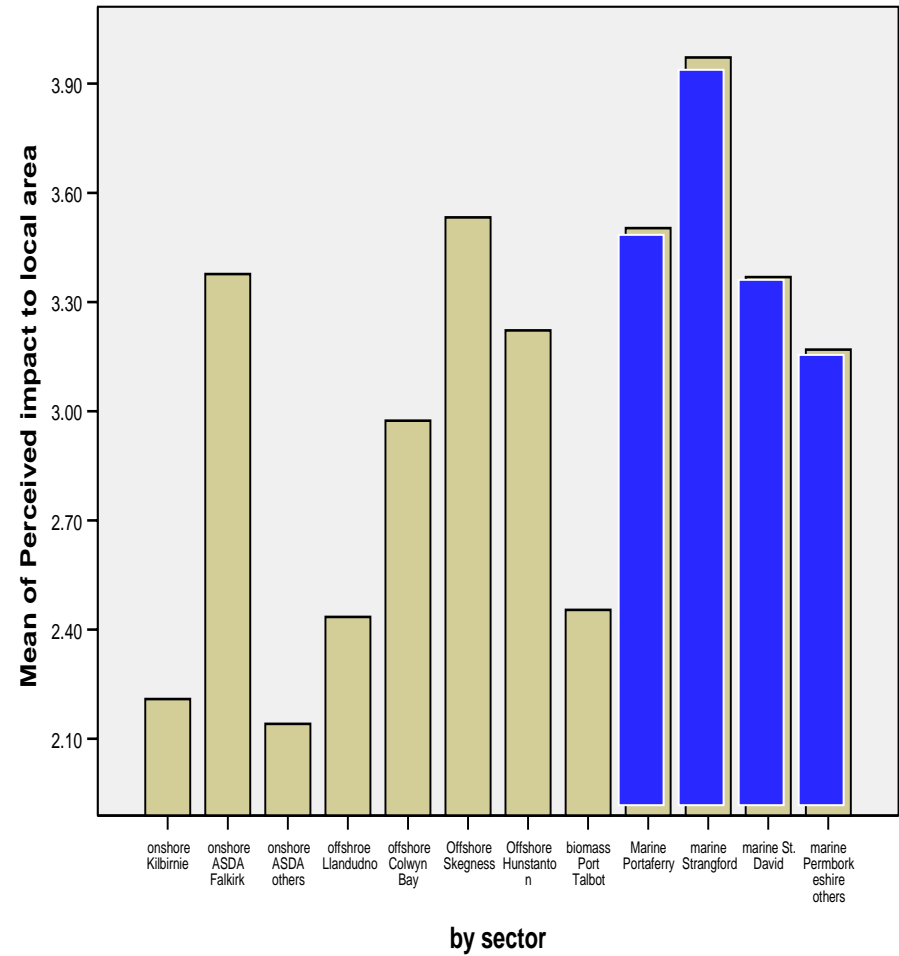
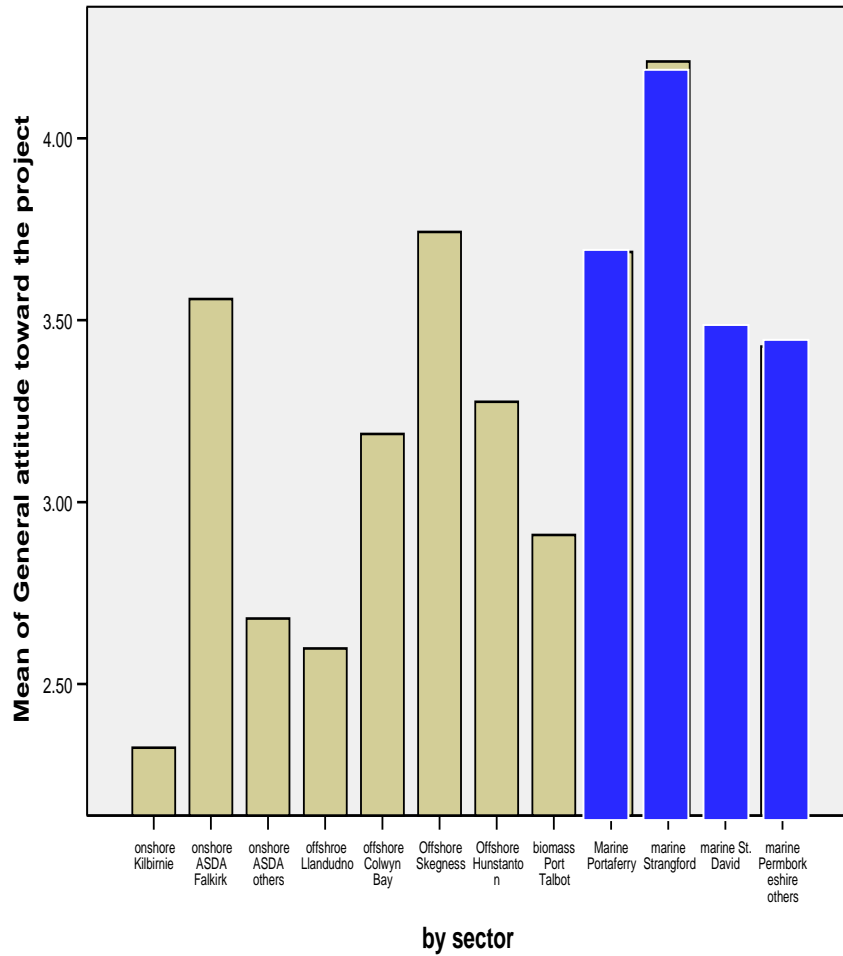
Beneficial overall?



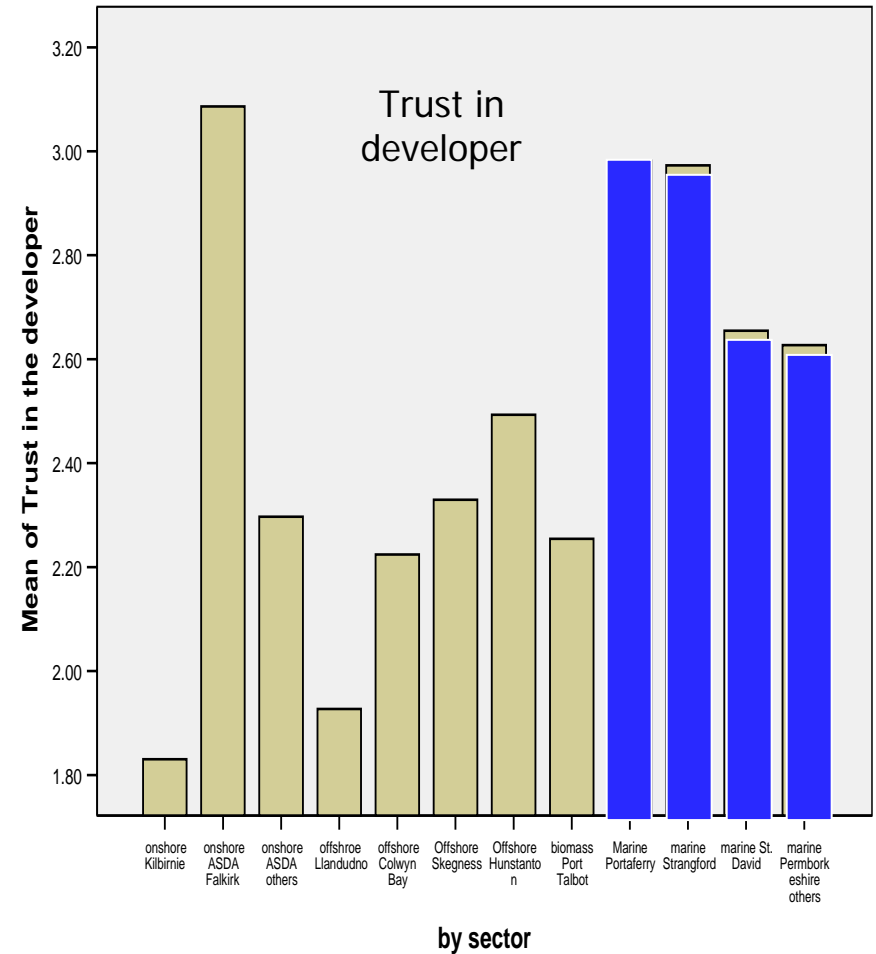
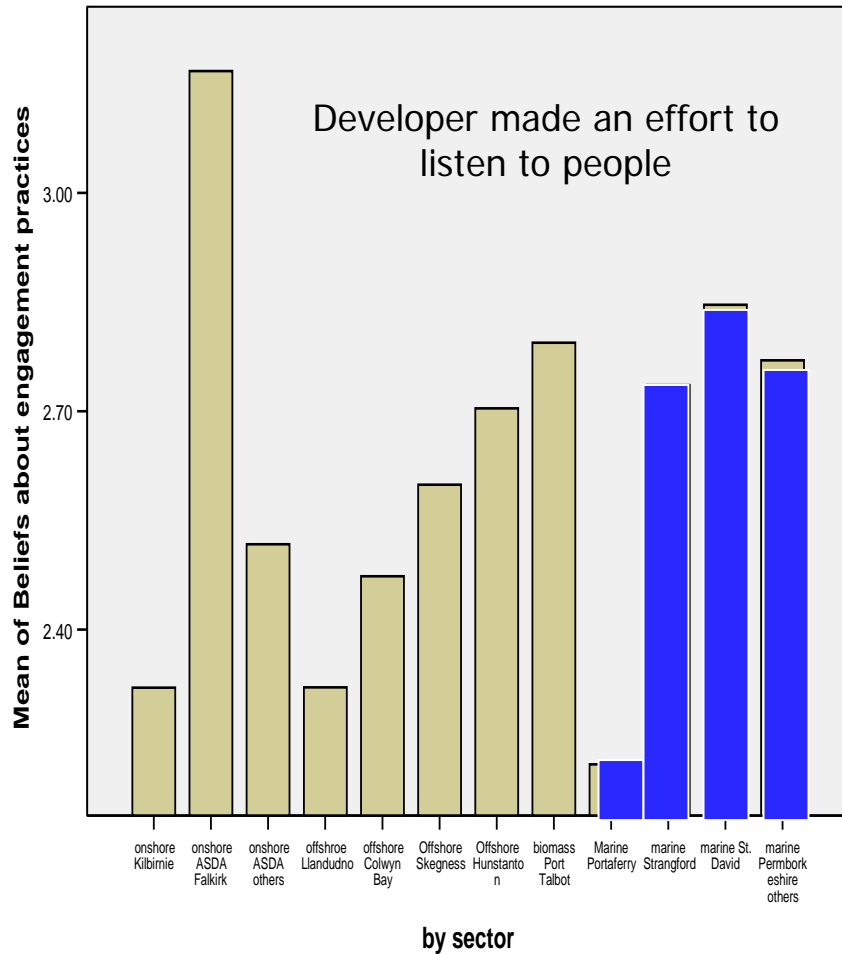
- Installed device seen as most beneficial case



Beneficial overall?



Engagement and Trust



Summary of survey findings

- Marine technologies assessed highly in comparison to other sectors
- Installed device most supported, seen as most locally beneficial, with high trust in developer
- Installed device's public engagement assessed as not listening, despite support

Explaining Strangford support

- High level of fatalism

Explaining Strangford support

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- Trust in institutions

Explaining Strangford support

- High level of fatalism
- Trust in institutions
- Community Benefits?

Explaining Strangford support

- Consents process
 - FEPA licence
 - Crown Estate and landlord agreements
 - S.36 generating licence
 - NO planning permission required

Explaining Strangford support

- Consents process
- Demonstration: temporary and ongoing

Explaining Strangford support

- Consents process
- Demonstration: temporary and ongoing
- Stakeholder engagement: Gamekeepers turned poachers
 - “By taking time to find local expertise and involve us in the planning stages of a project, a relationship of mutual trust and a respect has been developed” (NGO)

Explaining Strangford support

- Consents process
- Demonstration: temporary and ongoing
- Stakeholder engagement: Gamekeepers turned poachers:
 - “from reading the local press release, it was a done deal...We sort of went, “what?”...And, and I found that quite, quite upsetting really, and I think several other people did, several other stakeholders” (NGO)

Explaining Strangford support

- Consents process
- Demonstration: temporary and ongoing
- Stakeholder engagement: Gamekeepers turned poachers
- The personal touch

Explaining Strangford support

“If he’d come in with a complete set of strangers, there’d have been a huge amount of cynicism. But, actually, having [consultant] involved, it, actually, helped a hell of a lot.” (Developer)

“I think the, the personal element has played quite a large, I mean, people who knew people who knew people and, and were trusted” (Chair, monitoring groups)

Lessons?

- Engagement continuous and long-term, not 'one-off'
- Experimental nature taken as a positive (learning and licence process)
- Designation has benefits (stakeholders, gamekeepers, opponents)

For further information

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[http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/
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