

Scenario planning: What is it and why/how are we doing it?

Purpose of this document

This paper provides an outline of a proposed scenario planning session (or sessions) for the whip consultation project, and potential options for running/managing these sessions, recognising the time constraints on members of the Steering Group.

Steering Group members are asked to:

- Read the information about the scenario planning, to ensure you understand the purpose and importance of this work
- Consider the various options for running the scenario planning, to enable us to plan this work in line with the group's preferences

What is scenario planning and why do we need to do it?

Scenario planning is sometimes known as “war-gaming” (though we won't use this phrase in relation to the whip project!). We need to do this in order to:

- Assess the likely outcomes of various potential scenarios or outcomes arising from this project.
- Help us to plan for these eventualities, anticipate issues that will need to be managed, and ensure we are ahead of the game.

Scenario planning won't *necessarily* help the Steering Group to reach its conclusion. But it will help us to understand the likely reputational and communication implications of a range of potential options.

Process for scenario planning

The basic process that is followed in scenario planning is:

1. Identify the range of potential scenarios (e.g. no change, removal of the whip, and a range of options in between)
2. Identify the main audiences with an interest/stake in these scenarios & their likely reactions
3. Assess the level of probability and risk in each scenario
4. Assess the arguments likely to be deployed by audiences in each scenario – so we put ourselves in their shoes
5. Can risks in each scenario be managed and, if so, how (N.B. If risks can't be managed, this *may* help the group to start ruling out some options)

Timing

We would want to do this scenario planning a few weeks into the consultation, so we can make use of any early emerging themes. This would likely be in the window 20-23 July, though this is up for discussion.

Who will run the session?

The session, or sessions, will be run by an experienced, independent facilitator who has undertaken similar scenario planning work in a range of industries and organisations.

Options for running the session

This work is an important element of the process. Our biggest challenge in running the scenario planning, however, is likely to be the availability/time commitment of Steering Group members. The ideal would be to run this session as an all-day workshop attended by all members of the SG.

Recognising that this may not be possible, we have scoped out various options – there will be pros and cons of each approach.

1. Run the “ideal” of an **all-day session, attended by the whole Steering Group**
2. **Split the Steering Group into subgroups and run multiple sessions** – outputs collated and fed back to the whole of the Group at a later meeting
3. Run an all-day session consisting of a **subgroup of the Steering Group and members of the BHA project team** – outputs then fed back to rest of the Group at a later meeting for further discussion & refinement
4. **BHA project team does the scenario planning separately** – outputs fed back to the Steering Group at a later meeting for further discussion and refinement

Which of these options would you prefer? And which would get the best outcome?
(Recognising that the answers to these two questions may not, for some Group members, be the same)

Format/location

Decisions about the format/location of the session (e.g. zoom meeting vs physical meeting) will be made on the basis of the most favoured option