

**Engaging with Energy: Cultural animation
workshops in place-based decarbonisation
community engagement**



Introduction

This document is a 'how to' guide for conducting Cultural Animation (CA) Workshops in Place-based Decarbonisation and should provide a detailed description of how to replicate CA workshops. These workshops were designed by Keele University and New Vic Borderlines¹ as part of the Zero Carbon Rugeley project that designed a Smart Local Energy System (SLES) for Rugeley, Staffordshire, UK. This project was funded by Innovate UK as part of the [Prospering from the Energy Revolution programme](#). The Cultural Animation workshops 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 workshops were designed as part of this specific project they can be adapted to other areas. There are five individual workshops outlined in this document themed around Mobility, Buildings, and Energy. These workshops are designed to first explore the nature of a place, and then explore in detail specific aspects of a smart local energy system. The workshops are titled:

1. Who is Rugeley?
2. The First and Last mile
3. Sustainable housing: Myths and Realities
4. Mobility through making
5. Smart Retrofit

¹ More information about the long-standing collaboration between Keele University and New Vic Borderlines and the development of Cultural Animation can be found here: <https://www.newvictheatre.org.uk/education-and-community/borderlines/work-with-universities/>

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What is Cultural Animation?

Cultural Animation is a participatory research engagement approach that uses art-based creative methods for knowledge co-production. It was developed by New Vic Borderlines, an outreach department of the New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, in collaboration with the Community Animation & Social Innovation Centre (CASIC) at Keele University. Although broad in scope, cultural animation is typically characterised as a workshop style approach that uses creative activities and games to engage with participants in a manner that attempts to dissolve power hierarchies in knowledge production. It is typically led by one facilitator, or ‘animateur’, and can have supporting facilitators. Fundamentally, the method is designed to allow for levels of abstraction within activities, taking complex topics and pitching them at the correct level for the participants. The methodology is suitable for both online workshops and in-person workshops and can cater to smaller groups of around 4 participants up to significantly larger groups. It is important that everybody in the workshop actively participates and there are no project bystanders.

Cultural Animation workshops in Zero Carbon Rugeley.

This section summarises five Cultural Animation Workshops designed and delivered as part of Zero Carbon Rugeley.

Workshop 1: Who is Rugeley?

This workshop is designed to explore the nature of a place and to understand community perspectives on energy on a very broad level, through exploring the perceived barriers and solutions to decarbonisation alongside community understanding of where the most carbon is emitted in a place. This workshop can be conducted online with a duration of roughly two hours and focuses on the ‘local’ component of a SLES. This workshop is intentionally broad in scope, encouraging participants to think about their town as a whole. This workshop is particularly well suited to act as an ‘introductory’ workshop if the delivery team are new to

the area or participants and want to gain an understanding of how a community views their area.

Game: Name and Action (15 mins)

This game is designed to be an introductory ice breaker activity. The animateur asks participants to say their name and assign themselves an action (actions can be anything, for example, saying your name and putting your thumbs up). Once all participants have introduced themselves and assigned themselves an action, the animateur begins by saying their own name and own action. The animateur then says the name of one of the participants and repeats that participants action to them. If the animateur gets the other participant's name and action correct, the participant they selected must say their own name and action, and then say the name and repeat the action of another participant. This cycle continues, and if someone gets the action of another participant incorrect, they are then out of the game. The participants pass names and actions back and forth until there are only two participants left, at which point the game ends. This activity is designed to 'break the ice' amongst participants and help to make everyone comfortable with taking part in activities.

Game: Scavenger hunt (10 mins)

The animateur asks each participant to find an object in their home that, in their view, represents their local area. The participants are then asked to take it in turns to explain to the group what their object is and why it represents their area. This activity is designed to help the group understand who is in the workshop, and what their connections or perspectives of the area are.

The animateur then encourages discussions amongst participants about each other's objects, as well as asking participants to think about what other objects (that weren't shown) may represent the area. This activity is designed to encourage participants to think about what represents their area and to think about whether these objects represent the area in its current state or whether they better represent the area's history.

Activity: Draw on the white board map creation of Rugeley (20 mins)

The animateur presents the participants with a low detail map of their local area and asks them to discuss key places that they feel should be included on the map. The animateur then draws onto a map of the area what the participants choose to discuss. This could involve participants identifying key community spaces such as parks and community centres, or transport links such as roads and railway lines. The aim is for participants to build up a picture of what their area looks like and what places are important to the group. Once the map has a selection of locations drawn on or highlighted, the animateur asks the participants to identify 'carbon hot spots' i.e., places in the local area that participants believe the most carbon is emitted. This is designed to encourage a discussion into where participants believe carbon is emitted in the area in order to feed into later discussions around barriers and solutions. If participants struggle to identify carbon hot spots, the animateur can encourage the participants to think about where areas of high energy consumption may be in their area.

Game: What are the barriers to decarbonisation bingo? (15 mins)

Each participant creates their own bingo card of five barriers to decarbonisation that they believe currently exist in their area. Once each participant has completed a card, the group takes it in turns to raise one barrier and discuss it. As barriers are raised, the first participant to tick off all 5 barriers on their card wins.

Activity: Barrier plotting map (20 mins)

As a group, the barriers to decarbonisation identified in the previous exercise are plotted onto a map of the area. This can be a blank map, or it can be the map from the previous activity. If some of the barriers identified are not geographically specific, they should be recorded on the outskirts of the map by the animateur. Once plotted, the participants are encouraged to discuss each barrier as a group and think about possible solutions to each barrier. For example, a barrier to decarbonisation could be poor cycling infrastructure - a solution could be protected cycle lanes. Once the participants are satisfied with the barriers

and solutions identified, the animateur should encourage the participants to reflect on all of the activities and how the workshop has made them think about their local area.

Workshop 2: The first and last mile

This workshop focuses upon mobility and can be conducted online or in person with a duration of two hours. The aim is to understand methods of travel, key patterns of mobility, different types of sustainable transport solutions for the area, and the potential for actioning change locally. It is designed to encourage participants to think about mobility and transport in their area, and how energy consumption and carbon emissions are connected to mobility.

Game: Warm up - The movement train (20 mins)

Participants take it in turns to use different actions, that they come up with themselves, to pass energy from screen to screen in an order agreed by the animateur. The actions are created by the participants and can be any action that they feel represents energy or movement (for instance, imitating a throwing movement). Each participant must come up with a new action as their turn comes around. As the game progresses, participants will run out of actions. When this takes place, the animateur highlights the delays and stoppages in the movement train, with these used as a metaphor for seamless travel being difficult to accomplish. A key point for the animateur to make here is the importance of everyone taking part and being included in the movement of 'energy'. This activity is designed to 'break the ice' amongst participants and get everyone comfortable with taking part in activities.

Activity: Cinquain Poem and Haiku (40) mins

Participants split into 'transport groups' based on their main mode of transport. If the groups are too large or unequal in numbers, add an additional option of 'preferred' method

of transport. The animateur then instructs each group to create a Cinquain poem describing a journey in their area, and a Haiku describing a journey in their area. This activity may seem challenging to participants at first, therefore, the animateur may need to drop into each group to kickstart the activity and help them with structuring their poem and Haiku. Once all groups have completed both tasks, the groups are asked to present their poem and Haiku. Once presented, the animateur pitches the following three questions to the groups: 1) What are the differences and similarities we see between people's responses? 2) What are the positives and negatives? 3) What does this tell us about transport in your area?

Cinquain Structure

Journey. [Trigger word]

words [Two words that describe first]

words [See, feel, hear in relation to first word]

words [Doing words in relation to the first word]

1 word [What has changed from first word]

Haiku Structure

3 lines and 17 syllables total

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

Mobility Mapping exercise (30 mins)

The animateur shows the participants a map of the local area and asks the following questions:

Where are current mobility issues?

Where do you think the most carbon emitting transport areas are?

Where do you think the least carbon emitting transport areas are?

What would improve mobility (for everyone)?

As participants discuss the questions, the animateur annotates the map with their responses. The aim is to build up a picture of mobility in the area.

Break activity: Low Carbon Transport (5mins)

The animateur asks participants to stand up and spend a few minutes looking and thinking about transport outside the building that they are in. Participants are encouraged to think about green, eco-friendly forms of transport.

The animateur then asks each participant to discuss a form of sustainable transport that they came up with and to think about the feasibility for Rugeley.

Activity: Cinquain Poem and Haiku for “sustainable” journey (50 mins)

Participants split back into their ‘transport groups’ based on their main mode of transport. The animateur then instructs each group to create a Cinquain poem describing a sustainable journey in their area, and a Haiku describing a sustainable journey in their area. Once all groups have completed both tasks, the groups are asked to present their poem and Haiku. Once presented, the animateur presents the following three questions: 1) What are the differences and similarities we see between people’s responses? 2) What are the positives and negatives? 3) What does this tell us about sustainable transport in their area?

Cinquain Structure

Journey. [Trigger word]

words [Two words that describe first]

words [See, feel, hear in relation to first word]

words [Doing words in relation to the first word]

1 word [What has changed from first word]

Haiku Structure

3 lines and 17 syllables total

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

[Workshop 3: Sustainable housing: Myths and Realities](#)

This workshop is designed to look at perceptions of building retrofit and encourage participants to think about energy consumption in their home. This workshop can be conducted online or in person with a duration of roughly two hours. The participants are asked to personify their house as a way of thinking about how it consumes energy.

Game: Name and Action (15 mins)

This game is designed to be an introductory ice breaker activity. The animateur asks participants to say their name and assign themselves an action related to an action they carry out in their house. Once all participants have introduced themselves and assigned themselves an action, the animateur begins by saying their own name and own action. The animateur then says the name of one of the participants and repeats that participants action to them. If the animateur gets the other participants name and action correct, the participant they selected must say their own name and action, and then say the name and repeat the action of another participant. This cycle continues, and if someone gets the action of another participant incorrect, they are then out of the game. The participants pass names and actions back and forth until there are only two participants left, at which point the game ends. This activity is designed to 'break the ice' amongst participants and help to make everyone comfortable with taking part in activities.

Create the Character of the House (45 mins)

The animateur asks each participant to draw their own house. The participants are then asked to consider the following questions that are aimed at personifying the house:

How old it is?

Who is it?

Where does it get its energy from?

What food is it eating?

Is it healthy?

Where is it losing its energy?

Is it overworked?

How content is it?

What areas of the house represent parts of the character?

The participants are asked to draw responses to the questions onto the picture of their house for roughly twenty minutes. Once they have completed this task, each participant presents their drawing back to the group so that each house can be discussed for the remaining twenty-five minutes.

Decision making in retrofit: Utopia, unlimited funds, unlimited power (30 mins)

The animateur asks participants to think about the drawing of their house and if time and money was not a barrier, to reflect on the following questions:

Can you improve the house's quality of life? How?

Where are the unhealthiest houses in the local area?

What would you address in your own home and why? What is the priority?

The animateur then asks the participants to think about the following questions related to the retrofit process and how they could make their ideas a reality:

Who would you go to in order to make this a reality?

What is the cost of your project?

Decision making in retrofit - in your current position (30 mins)

The animateur then asks participants to think about the following questions looking broadly at the pros and cons of retrofitting their house and the wider impact on society:

What are the short-term disruptions to making the house healthier?

What are the long-term benefits?

How do you create positive impact for everyone?

Are we prepared to address these issues as a society?

Workshop 4: Mobility through making

This workshop is designed to take place in person with capacity for around 12 to 16 participants. Participants will be asked to stand up and move around in this activity, so consideration of people's different levels of personal mobility need to be factored into the design. The focus is on mobility, and the aim is to understand participants' perceptions of mobility issues and opportunities, as well as understanding their vision for low carbon transport in their area.

Ice Breaker Game: Name and Action (20 mins)

Participants and the animateur stand in a circle and the participants are asked to say their name and assign themselves an action related to mobility (i.e., riding a bike). Once all participants have introduced themselves and assigned themselves an action, the animateur begins by saying their own name and own action, and then the name and repeating the action of one of the participants. If the animateur gets the name and action of another participant correct, the participant they selected must then say their own name and action, and then the name and repeat the action of another participant. This cycle continues and if someone gets the action of another participant incorrect, they are then out of the game. The participants and animateur pass names and actions back and forth until there are only two participants left. This activity is designed to 'break the ice' amongst participants.

Game: Paper not floor (30 mins)

This game is designed to help participants to think about mobility in their local area. It is pitched at a high level of abstraction, with pieces of paper representing places in the local area. The animateur lays out several pieces of paper and places them around a room. There must be more pieces of paper than participants to begin with. The animateur then asks the participants to walk around the room in any direction they choose. When the animateur makes a signal (such as blowing a whistle), all of the participants must stop walking and be stood on a piece of the paper, not the floor.

Once everyone is stood on a piece of paper, the animateur encourages the participants to assign different pieces of paper on the floor to locations in their local area. This is intended to be extremely broad and not geographically accurate. The aim is for participants to be able to imitate journeys that they make in their local area by traveling between the pieces of paper. The animateur then makes a signal and everyone can walk around the room again. As participants are walking around the room, the animateur slowly removes a few pieces of paper from the room, reducing the number of places participants can stop when the next signal is made. As the game goes on, participants will start to struggle to stop on a piece of paper, making their mobility more difficult. Eventually, the animateur will have removed enough pieces of paper so that there is not space for each participant to stand on an individual piece of paper meaning participants must share the paper. As the game progresses, it gets harder and harder for participants to stop on the pieces of paper each time the signal is made, with the game concluding when there is not enough space for participants to comfortably stand on pieces of paper.

When the game is finished, the animateur asks the participants to think about how their mobility changed throughout the game. The removal of the pieces of paper is intended to make their journeys harder and is used to encourage participants to think about what aspects of their current journeys are difficult. Key questions to ask could include: 1) How did you feel when the paper began to be removed? 2) How did you react to the paper being removed? 3) Did the game remind you of traveling around your area?

Game: Slow Lane Game (20 mins)

The animateur sets out chairs in the room. To begin with, there should be one more chair than the number of participants in the room (excluding the animateur). The animateur asks all participants to take a seat and then explains that the animateur will begin to slowly walk around the room weaving in between the chairs. The animateur explains to the participants that between them, they must make sure that the animateur does not sit in the one spare chair. The participants must do this by standing up one at a time to take the spare seat that the animateur is nearest to. As one participant at a time stands up to sit in the spare chair, the animateur will then change course to walk slowly towards the newly vacated chair. After a few cycles of this, the animateur will add another empty chair to the room. This makes it easier for the animateur to make it to a chair. When the animateur successfully reaches a spare chair, the last person to stand up takes on the role of walking slowly around the room. If they successfully make it to a spare chair, then again, the most recent person to stand up takes on that role. The animateur continues to add chairs to the room until it becomes too difficult for the participants to stop the person slowly walking around from making it to a chair. This game is intended to encourage participants to think about the difficulties of seamless transport. As a group, they are required to work together to stop the person walking around the room from making it to the spare chair. This provides an abstract way of thinking about how mobility often requires multiple people to consider others around them and to communicate their intentions.

Once the game concludes, the animateur leads a discussion around how the participants felt about the game. Throughout the game, participants may make comments that can be picked up in conversations afterwards. For example, the game can become intense, with participants having to quickly communicate who is the next person to stand up. The animateur should then explore these feelings with participants at the end of the activity and ask whether the game reminded them of aspects of their current travel experiences. Key questions to animateur could consider are: 1) What difficulties did you experience whilst trying to stop the person from making it to a chair? 2) How did it feel being the person trying to make it to a chair?

Activity: Net-Zero town re-design (40 mins)

The animateur splits the participants into small even groups of 3-4 people. Each group is given a table, post it notes, buttons, toy cars, string, and masking tape. The animateur instructs each group to re-design their town from a sustainability perspective, with a particular focus on how they could make low carbon modes of transport easier (figure 1). Each group is free to design the town however they like using as many or as little of the props that they are given.

Once all groups are happy with their design, all participants rotate around the room with each group getting an opportunity to present their design to the group. The animateur encourages other participants to ask questions about each groups design. This activity is designed to close the workshop, allowing participants to reflect on the activities and record their feelings towards mobility through re-designing their town.

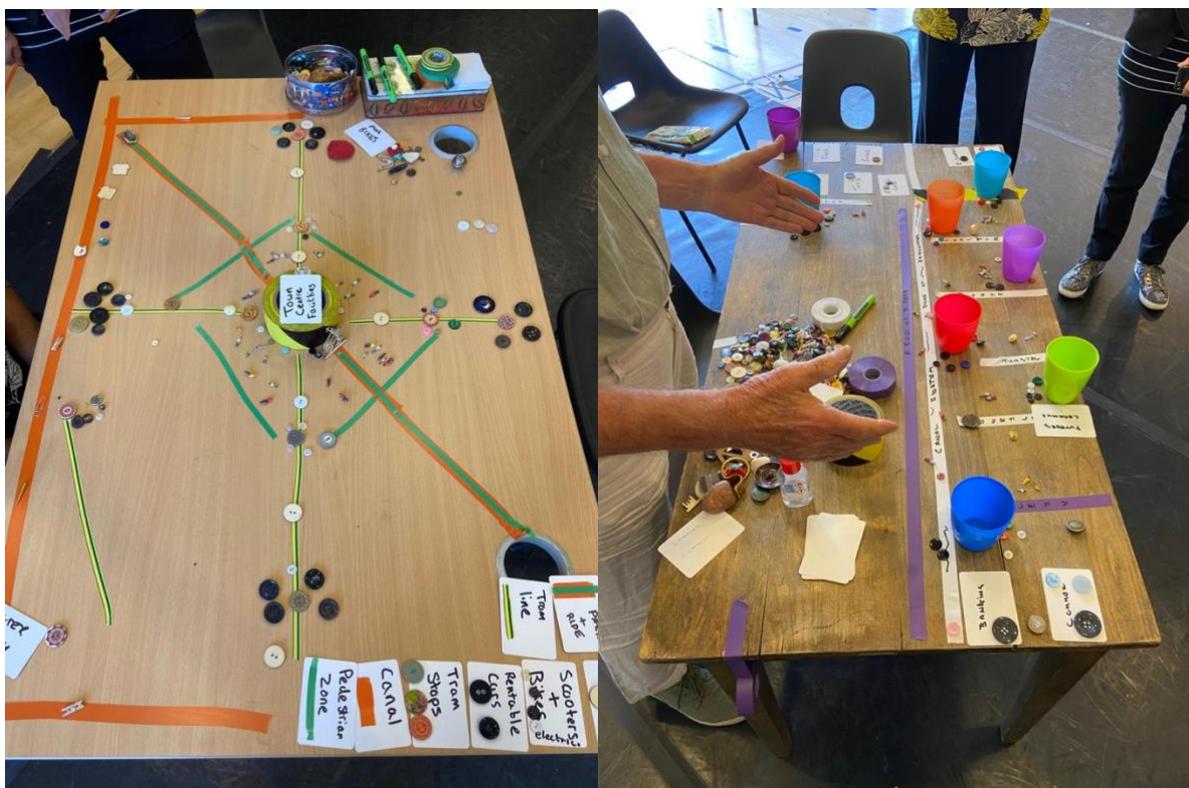


Figure 1: Example of Net-Zero town re-design.

Workshop 5: Smart Retrofit Workshop

This workshop is designed to work both online and in person. It consists of a set of power point slides that the animateur must present to the group. The workshop focuses upon building retrofit by telling the participants a story about three characters who are experiencing the retrofit process. Throughout the story, the characters have different reactions and questions to the retrofit process, and the idea is that the participants have an opportunity to relate to or disagree with certain characters. The core aim is to enable the participants to engage with the retrofit process through the characters. The slides are available as a separate set of power point slides.