



University of the
West of England

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

A Resolution to Change: democratic processes and education influencing public control over environments

- **Format:**

Presentation in-person

- **Author(s) Name:**

Dr Jane Thomas

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

University of West London

- **Abstract (300 words):**

This paper discusses work conducted for the British Heart Foundation wherein all elected representatives in one English borough were consulted in face-to-face interviews on their views of, and role, in public health. Public health issues are defined broadly, to include the wider-determinants of health. This data is linked to further research on the views of canvassers about their reporting of built environment problems in the 2017 UK general election.

The publics' varying use, by social class, of elected representatives in attempting to improve environments is considered. Examples are, complaints about alcohol licensed premises and driving-related issues.

In addressing the issues raised by analysis of the role of elected representatives, tools for empowerment and education in motion-writing and debate are reviewed.

The future roles of elected representatives are also discussed. This is in the context of developing trends in information and communication technology that have, according to Patrick Dunleavy, both a decentralizing and centralizing dynamic.

A checklist of questions to consider on the role of elected representatives in improving environments is recommended. This may include:

are the public encouraged to raise issues with elected representatives, such as councilors?

what issues are they encouraged to raise?

are these issues important (using a quantifying risk assessment tool of chance of impact x scale of impact)?

are elected representatives from relevant constituencies, including lower-income groups, supported to stand and to act?

are important issues falling through a 'representative net'?

what relevant issues have been debated at council and assembly level?

should the role of the elected representatives be altered in the light of globalization and destruction in the form of global warming?

can better use be made of ICT in linking public suggestions and demands with resolutions to act?

The paper suggests issues and solutions in improving democratic processes to impact on environmental improvement.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Dr Jane Thomas works as an NHS Consultant in Public Health at North West London Clinical Commissioning Groups Collaborative, where she is an Educational Supervisor. She is a Senior Lecturer in Health Promotion and Public Health at the University of West London. Her research focuses on public influence over the wider determinants of health and health services, pedagogies and public health, and media analysis. She is a Fellow of the UK Faculty of Public Health and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.