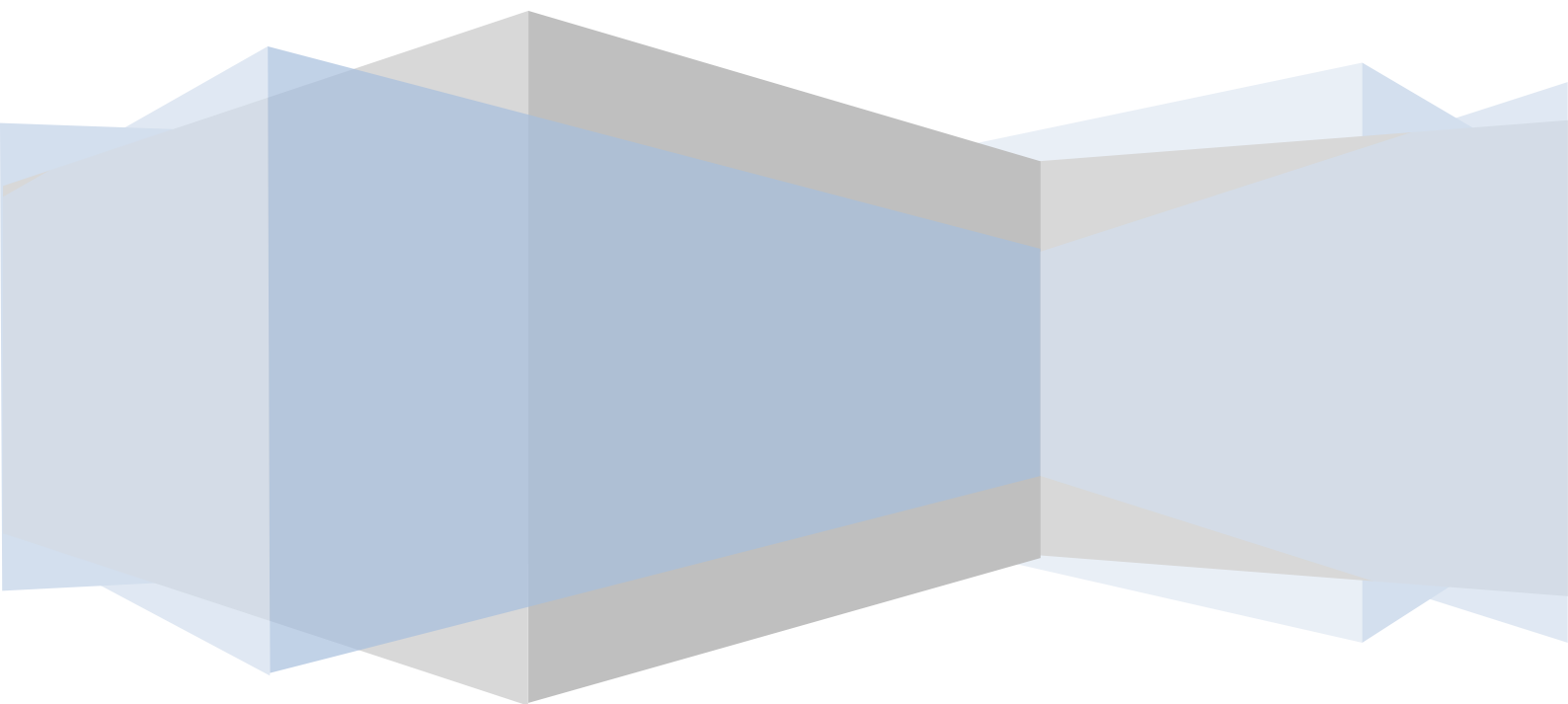


# **Regional Policy Collaboration Project**

**An experiment in collaborative futures work for  
the Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre's Futures  
Analysts Network**

**Steve Wells**



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## **1. Acknowledgements**

The views and ideas expressed in this work have been made to help stimulate thinking about the future and do not represent the formal or official opinion of the individuals concerned, their organisations or official Government policy.

Participants from the following organisations have contributed to this work:

The Scottish Government  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland  
Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland  
Fujitsu Services

## 2. Executive Summary

This is not a futures report in the traditional sense; it has been designed to describe the experimental journey in collaborative futures work undertaken by the participants.

As well as describing the context, project goals, project process, and the process to build collaboration, the report calls significantly on the feedback provided by the participants as well as the ageing content explored by the team. Ultimately, the report seeks to inform choice about engaging in collaborative futures work and offers some specific choices to those who have been involved in this work, and those who would like to get involved to carry the work forward.

The Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre (HSC) / Futures' Analysts Network (FAN Club) Collaboration Programme was launched in October 2009. Through this programme, we sought to promote, stimulate and pilot collaboration in futures analysis. The *Regional Policy Collaboration Pilot* project was one of the work-streams.

This partnership project involved Fujitsu Services and officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government and was sponsored and supported by the HSC. The initiative was formally launched at a meeting of the FAN Club in Belfast in November 2009.

Having established the partner's mutual interest in futures analysis, a willingness to explore a collaborative approach and an ageing population profile in each of the three devolved countries that was significantly different to that seen in England, this pilot project sought to consider the issue of an ageing population through a collaborative futures approach.

We started by forming connections at the personal level, sharing and examining expectations and assumptions about the project, identifying the future ageing issues we wanted to explore, creating a roadmap in Fujitsu's FutureScape / Shaprcloud (futures analysis visualisation) application and conducting some analysis to gain insight.

In the context of the roadmap, *events* included demographic trends shaping the size and structure of the population; the consequences of these changes; trends and issues which enabled or restricted opportunities for an ageing population and external trends, like climate change, which are independent of an ageing society.

Having identified and assessed 60 futures events for their potential impact on the societal and economic opportunities of an ageing population and the likelihood that the events would play out, 24 high impact and likely events were identified.

The most impactful and likely of these were:

- Climate change** - Climate change (and its additional costs) has various implications for an ageing population.
- Elderly population growth** - Elderly population grows ahead of other age groups within the overall population (in Scotland).
- Fewer children, older parents** - Not only will there be fewer children, but parents will have children later in life.
- Unaffordable healthcare** - As medical treatments become more advanced and expensive the cost of providing healthcare to an ageing population escalates to an unsustainable level.
- Dementia costs significantly impact NHS** - Dementia care funding tops £35Bn (up from 2010 at £17Bn) leading to cuts to other areas of the NHS.
- Increasing incidence of diabetes and obesity** - Due to poor health, young people begin dying at a faster rate than the old.
- Negative dependency ratio** - Parts of the UK now have less than one working person to support each non-working person (children, students, retired, long-term ill or their carers).

We also drilled down into another of the significant events; the *Silver Workforce*, i.e. an increasing number of older people in the workforce.

*Silver Workforce* was chosen simply as an event felt to be of interest to those participating in the workshop at the time and in part for the number of relationships with other futures events. For this event, we co-created a sense of the strategic objectives required to create opportunities from this potential trend, started to consider the policies required to meet these objectives and the resources that might be deployed to deliver the policies.

The pilot was ambitious, and while it did not fully achieve all the goals set, it did provide informative insight to collaborative futures work and the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application in multi-partner collaboration.

The most positive aspects of the collaboration relate to the opportunity to work informally with colleagues in other organisations and sectors. It was also felt that the pilot demonstrated the potential value of collaborative futures work (as well as the challenges) and the potential for the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application to support this approach.

## Introduction and Context

The HSC / FAN Club Collaboration Programme is a series of pilots and exploratory conversations to consider and experience creative ideas, tools and techniques together with a collaborative working approach in public sector futures work.

This programme of work was informed by an inquiry undertaken to explore the experience of collaborative working within the FAN Club membership, examine collaborative working within the context of futures work, challenge and validate the initial findings and develop some ideas for enhancing collaboration across the FAN Club – both within and outside of FAN Club meetings.

The hypothesis that led to the inquiry was that a focus on collaborative working - within teams and between organisations - can help maximise the return on investment in futures thinking.

The headline feedback from the inquiry was that problems are becoming “bigger” and are felt to be “impossible to solve by working alone”. In addition, there is greater connectivity between issues; an acknowledgement that effective sense-making needs to consider the whole system and that solution development needs a more appropriate – collaborative - approach.

One of the recommendations of the work was to introduce sub-groups to follow up on specific issues raised at FAN Club meetings; e.g. devolved government. Another was to establish a project specific sub-group to run a futures project under HSC sponsorship; test assumptions and implications of a specific futures project.

The *Regional Policy Collaboration Pilot* is a partnership project involving Fujitsu Services, officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government sponsored and supported by the Foresight HSC.

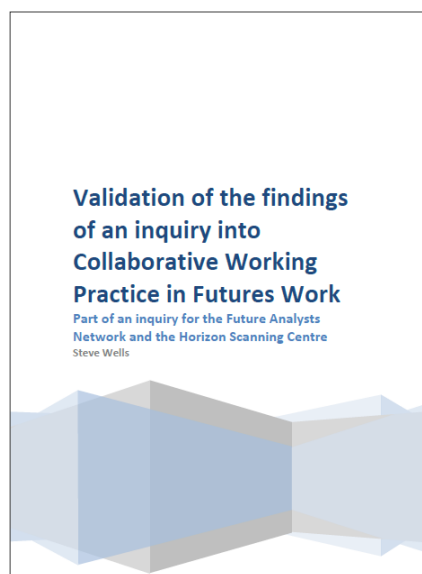


This initiative was formally launched at a meeting of the FAN Club in Belfast in November 2009.

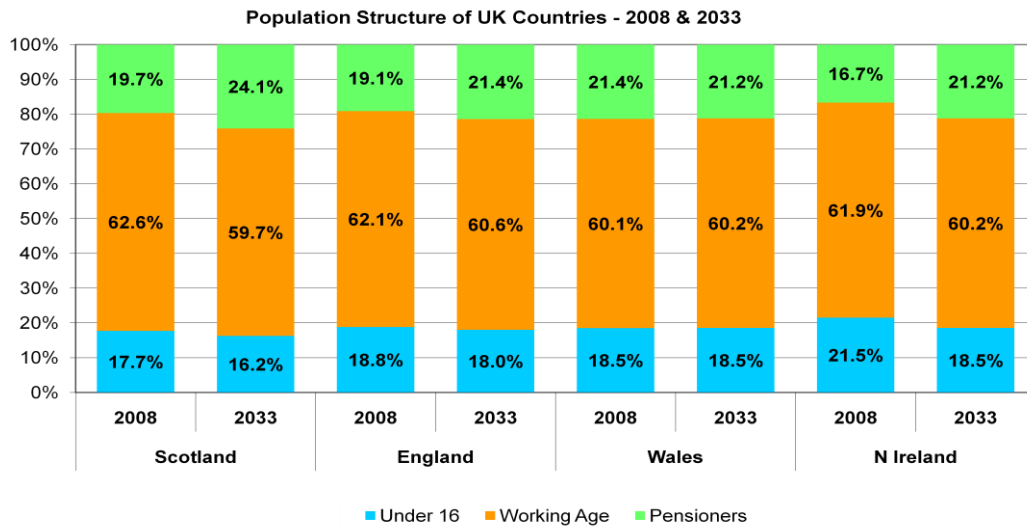
There have been two elements to this work:

- ❑ Bringing together futures practitioners from the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh administrations to work on an issue of common interest with Fujitsu’s FutureScape / Shaprcloud (futures analysis visualisation) application.
- ❑ Developing evidence of, and communicating successful collaboration between FAN Club members including increasing use of the Strategy Exchange.

The issue of an ageing society was established early on as the area in which stakeholders from the devolved administrations with connections to FAN Club had an interest, together with a willingness to explore collaborative working and new ways of conducting futures analysis.



The populations of Northern Ireland and Scotland are ageing at a quicker rate than seen in England, with the proportion of people at or above pensionable age projected to increase by four percentage points over the next 25 years.



Source: GROS, ONS

In Wales, the situation is slightly different in that although the proportion of people at or above pensionable age is projected to remain broadly stable over the next 25 years, it is already above that of England.

### 3. Goals

The goals set were ambitious and multi-faceted. They were co-created and covered collaborative working and the futures work, including the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application. We collaboratively developed core questions to guide our futures work and shared our interest in taking part to reinforce the goals set.

On collaborative working, we wanted to:

- Identify the common agenda for future policy development initiatives through collaboration.
- Look for innovation in sharing collaborative working skills, know-how and develop new thinking.
- Develop new connections and new networks through collaborative working.

On futures analysis, we wanted to:

- Identify the common agenda for policy development initiatives through futures analysis.
- Look for innovation in sharing futures skills, know-how and develop new thinking.
- Develop new connections and new networks in futures analysis.

On the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application, we wanted to understand:

- How easy was the software to use?
- How has FutureScape / Shaprcloud informed our insight generation and decision-making?
- What impact has FutureScape / Shaprcloud had on our futures work and our collaborating?
- How has FutureScape / Shaprcloud allowed the tracking of content throughout the initiative?

The core questions that we sought to answer through our collaborative futures work were:

- What are the possible future social and economic opportunities presented by an ageing population?
- What are the challenges that need to be addressed that allow us to capitalise on the opportunities?

At our first workshop, we sought to understand and share the interest that participants had in taking part in the work. So we asked: "What is your interest in participating in the project?"

This is what the participants said:

- To experience futures work.
- I have an interest in the issue of an ageing population.
- The topic links strongly to my operational role.
- I want to look at futures analysis as an aid to supporting evidence based policy making.
- I am interested in working collaboratively in futures work.
- I am looking for approaches that could stimulate interest in futures work across my organisation.
- We are looking for experiences that support ongoing FutureScape / Shaprcloud development; both in futures analysis and collaborative working.
- I am looking to build on my limited previous experience in futures work.
- I am seeking to understand the needs of futures analysts and gain their opinions.
- I want to experience a multi-organisational collaboration.
- I want to gain insight to the questions that are asked in futures work.
- I want to consider how stakeholders can be encouraged to NOT view the (potential) future through today's lens.

The guiding questions were designed to help us take a positive perspective on the issue of an ageing society, while still paying attention to the challenges. Also, rather than focusing just on areas traditionally the subject of ageing futures work, e.g. pensions, benefits, health and social care, we agreed to include other societal issues and opportunities such as housing, sport and leisure, transport and volunteering.

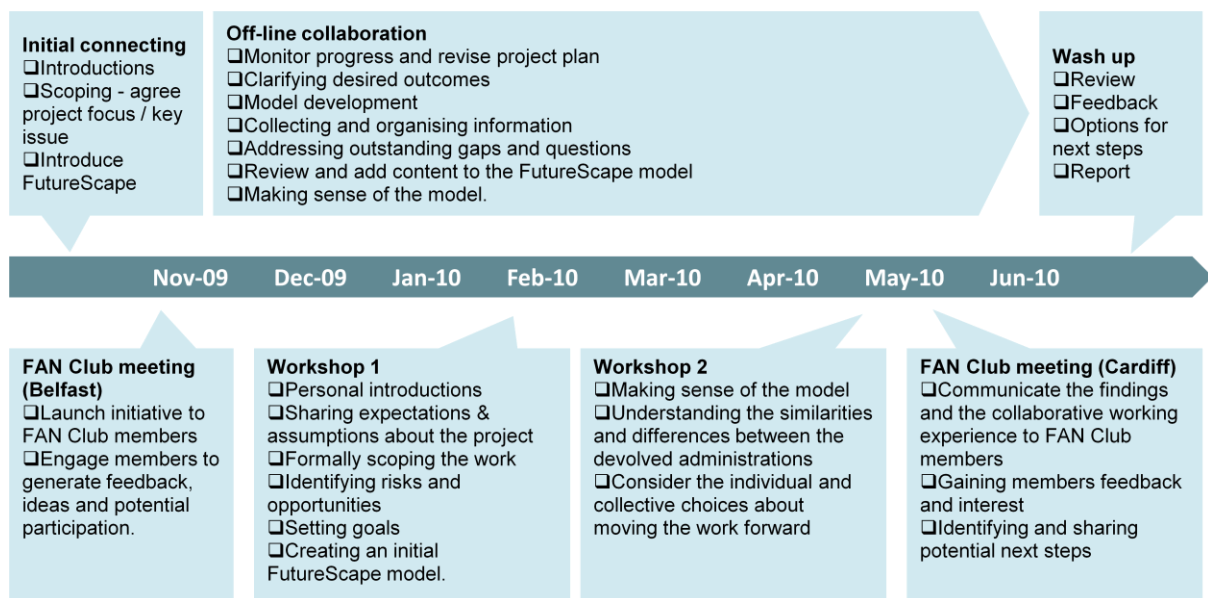
#### 4. Project Process

The project plan was designed to pay attention to the collaboration as well as the futures analysis from both content and process perspectives. We sought to bring together stakeholders with a shared interest in a critical issue into which futures analysis could provide new insight to support future policy development.

The observation that Scotland particularly has a different ageing population profile to England and that the growth of the ageing population in Northern Ireland will exceed that in England were key drivers in seeking to explore the potential opportunities and issues arising from an ageing population. But in addition to tackling a practical issue, the desire to understand how futures analysis and collaboration can help in work to support policy development were also considered as critical.

The project plan could be considered from the perspective of the project timeline and the collaboration cycle.

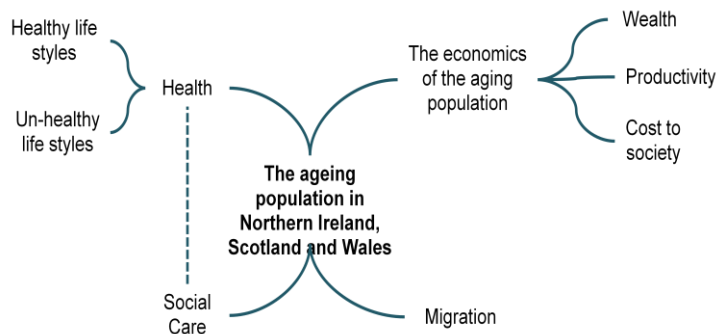
#### Project plan: Time-line view



#### Initial Connecting

We sought to collect questions from the representatives of the three national administrations so that we could gain a sense of the similarities and differences of the areas of interest, and consider the opportunity to converge on one substantive issue. The questions posed covered both the futures content and the collaboration itself.

In the initial discussions to shape the work, it became clear that the system, of which an ageing society is part, is vast and complex. The team identified the risk that the work could become bogged down with the connections to, and issues relating to, other parts of the system.



This awareness, together with how we had framed the core questions and the lens through which we wanted to view an ageing society – one of opportunity but mindful of the challenges - would help us to make informed choices about how we progressed.

## FAN Club Meeting (Belfast)

The Belfast FAN Club meeting saw the formal launch of the initiative. The meeting was an opportunity for the key stakeholders to meet in person and to share their perspective on futures work within their own devolved administrations and on the issue of ageing specifically.

### Off-line collaboration

With the participants in the project working in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London, establishing mechanisms and resources to support collaboration were critical. A teleconference service was established and a dedicated community area on the National School of Government's Strategy Exchange to help share project documentation was set up.

Throughout the project, ongoing dialogue was essential so telephone calls provided opportunities for the exchange of views, as well as decision making points.

The FutureScope / Shaprcloud application is web-based which allowed participants to add information (futures events) to the model, rate existing events (see section 8 below) and review the model at times convenient to each participant.

### Workshop 1

Workshop 1 was designed to build on the initial connection, work through the details for how the project was to work and to start to build a FutureScope / Shaprcloud model.

The agenda of the workshop was:

- Share assumptions and our expectations about the project.
- Agree the principles of the partnership and agree the scope of the project.
- Set measures for the futures work and partnering.
- Co-create a FutureScope / Shaprcloud model.

This work included group and plenary sessions to discuss and share assumptions and expectations. In plenary, the core question was discussed with input on how the question could be perceived by policy-makers. This exercise resulted in a *balancing second question* to consider the challenges as well as the opportunities presented by an ageing population.

Subsequently, we developed a series of futures outcomes we wanted to explore and the identification of a number of futures events. This flip chart and post-it exercise provided the raw material for the construction of the model.

Further updates to the model – adding new events, rating the events - were then made off line after the workshop.



### Workshop 2

The purpose of Workshop 2 was to build on the initial work completed at Workshop 1 and the off-line additions to the model.

The agenda of the workshop was:

- Rating of futures events against impact and likelihood.
- Assessment of the strategic implications of a selection of high impact, likely events.
- Assessment of the policy and implementation issues.
- Assessment of an unlikely event for comparison purposes.

Rating the futures events against their potential impact on the societal and economic opportunities presented by an ageing population and the likelihood that the events would take place was a critical

step. The process itself stimulated debate and discussion and provided the basis for an objective review of those events perceived to be most important.



For these events, the team drilled down to explore strategic objectives, policy implications and the activities and resources required to support implementation of policy. Given the available time, this was based on the knowledge, experience and judgement of participants rather than a rigorous review of the evidence base.

As a result of this work, we wanted to explore the similarities and differences between the devolved administrations for the priority events. These were downloaded from the model into an Excel workbook developed to record and report the ratings from the three administrations. This showed similarities and differences across the administrations.

### FAN Club meeting (Cardiff)

At the Cardiff FAN Club meeting, we presented a review of the pilot project, covering:

- The context for the project.
- Observations and feedback from participants.
- An overview of the pilot and some of our findings.

There was also an opportunity for FAN Club members present to work with the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application in a workshop environment.

### Wash up

The *Wash up* process involved two key activities. Firstly, to review the project and consider the choices available to the participants; namely:

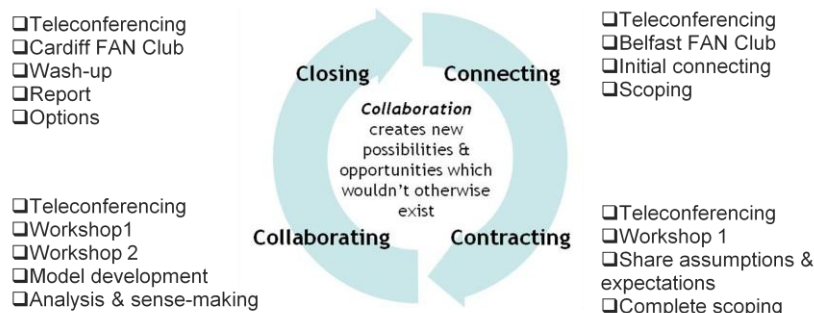
- Choose to take the work forward in collaboration with each other.
- Choose to take the work forward within our own organisations.
- Choose to take the work forward with a number of the participating organisations.
- Choose to take the work forward by engaging other organisations.
- Bring the FutureScape / Shaprcloud model and our work to the attention of other colleagues and stakeholders.
- Choose to do nothing.

This exercise represents a crucial close element to the initial pilot project.

Secondly, this report represents the *public* close of the pilot.

### Project plan: Collaboration Cycle view




Given that the project was a collaborative initiative, the project plan was also viewed within the context of the *Collaboration Cycle*. The Collaboration Cycle is a helpful model to consider in many collaborative working situations (see Appendix 2).






## 5. Establishing the Collaboration

A critical part of establishing the collaboration was to consider and share the partner's expectations about the project and their assumptions; both in terms of the futures work and the partnership itself.

In this work, six themes emerged. They were content and questions, external context, organisational context, project outcomes, the partnering process and resources.

Themes	Expectations	Assumptions
 <p>Content &amp; Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Objective / subjective modelling.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will focus our attention on taking a positive perspective on the issue but not ignore the challenges.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We need to agree what we mean by "ageing".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Certain core areas are common to all devolved administrations. What are they?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will have content, ideas, subjective and objective narrative, models and will need to combine both.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some content already exists; data, outputs (reports, research) etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Futures thinkers / strategists (can) look at timelines way beyond 2 or 3 voting cycles.</li> </ul>
 <p>External Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Government policy is trend based rather than discontinuity based.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Most challenges facing western society are the same: de-ruralisation / urbanisation, ageing populations, climate debate (change), security of food supply, energy security.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A functional society needs to help politicians driven by today's votes, to make decisions about resources now that won't have the desired impact for 15 - 30 years.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Society's views of ageing are changing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There's no question that we need to do something (about the question of ageing).</li> </ul>
 <p>Organisational Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should allow sufficient flexibility for each devolved administration to develop the project in their own way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All three countries are at a different place in their policy development, futures analysis and partnership working capabilities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants' stakeholders will be focused on short term operational activities causing tension with this work.</li> </ul>

Themes	Expectations	Assumptions
 <p>Project Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Should lead to the identification of future collaborative research agendas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Out of this we will find a way to soften the barriers that can impede informed policy making (rather than dogma).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will deliver something of value.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The value we create should be clear but the issue is complex.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The project / process will raise more questions than answers it provides.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It's not going to be easy to create value, but we can.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The project can help tackle (the issue of) ageing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We could use the project to understand what older people's lives will be like.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We can use the project to capture and map citizen's expectations (about ageing).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Content we generate and share with FAN Club in May will not be the end of the work.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This project could be used to encourage a greater uptake of futures work in the policy field.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This will be valuable where we don't duplicate other work.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We might be able to connect this work with other work.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This might point us in some interesting directions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This may help us identify future research that is common (across countries) that we could divide up.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are clusters of people: this could help us map them and connect to them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All partners will use the outcomes of the project to meet their own needs.</li> </ul>
 <p>The Partnering Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will learn a lot about the collaborative process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> People will debate and challenge.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants will pull out ideas / stories from the data.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There will be tension as a result of stakeholders' different objectives.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We will successfully engage other colleagues / stakeholders about this work.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partnering behaviours of honesty, respect and mutuality are observed by the participants.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tension will arise in issues such as resourcing, definitions of terms but we will make progress with consensus.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants will make common and separate journeys.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> None of us want <i>hares running</i>: we need trust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> People are reticent about sharing information and processes outside their own area / department / administration.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> When any group of people get together willingly at work to talk about something: it's probably important; it's probably tough.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We can learn from each other.</li> </ul>
 <p>Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low resource = high risk?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Timescales are clear and realistic.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The resource we can dedicate to this is squeezed by short term (operational) need.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The time we can commit to this is limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> People have limited time and resources.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Politicians are driven (influenced) by votes today. Policy is driven by politicians.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (We're) going to struggle to find the resource.</li> </ul>

## 6. Participants' Feedback

In retrospect, this was clearly a “challenging” and “ambitious” project, but as a pilot it succeeded in bringing stakeholders together to consider a futures issue of great significance. The project also provided the participants with an opportunity to experience a new tool to support futures thinking (the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application) and the opportunity for the application to be road-tested in a multi-organisational collaboration setting.

Time and resource were the major challenges in part impacted by the increasingly operational nature of the public sector as a result of pressure on expenditure and the pending general election. So the tension between experimenting and operational delivery was acutely felt across the team. This situation has resulted in the project falling somewhat short of the ambitious futures goals established at the beginning of the pilot.

*“The policy collaboration feels like it is just beginning to take shape.”*

Feedback on the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application and support from Fujitsu was universally positive but there was limited work on the model between planned telephone conference calls and workshops, and limited success – mixed at best - in effectively engaging other potential stakeholders beyond the project team.

In addition to the resource and time challenge – which extended to the project management and facilitation - it could be hypothesised that extending the project to engage other stakeholders represented a significant leadership and cultural challenge as well as a futures and collaboration challenge. There were a number of cases where ideas were expressed during and between telephone conference calls but not followed up by the individual making the proposal or the team collectively.

There was reluctance to more formally commit to – or explore – the adoption of a partnership charter which would have helped to surface issues of resourcing and timing earlier in the process. (Partnering experience suggests that even where collaboration is happening on a more informal level, the process of considering and signing a charter to make expectations explicit, acts as a catalyst for a more open relationship between participants.)

### Working collaboratively on futures analysis



#### Positive feedback

Feedback was positive in respect of the opportunity to make new connections with other futures practitioners and extend participants' own network. The opportunity to work in new ways with colleagues from different sectors and learn from their experience and way of seeing the world was felt to be of significant benefit.

The collaborative approach of the project helped to focus attention on the specific issues of shared interest to each devolved administration and there was a sense that there was significant value in combining a collaborative approach with FutureScape / Shaprcloud.

The pilot took on a new dimension towards the end of the fixed project term with the prioritisation of the futures events (in terms of their impact and likelihood), and the introduction of a template to help assess the similarities and differences of the perspectives held by the three devolved administrations.

*“I have really enjoyed the chance to work informally with colleagues involved in academia and business sectors – it's great to learn from their experience and way of seeing the world.”*

While there was a sense that the collaboration felt like it was really getting off the ground as we came to the close of the pilot, there was equally feedback to say that the pilot had achieved what it could realistically have expected to achieve; given that pilot projects are primarily designed to demonstrate proof of concept rather than produce a finished product.



## Challenges

Time and resource represented the most significant challenges experienced by the participants. The work was conducted alongside operational activity with a hard end point to the pilot. Resource was particularly limited for the devolved administrations and the project sponsors; the HSC. These factors have restricted the outcomes and also had an impact on the ability of the participants to engage their organisational stakeholders.

Given that the pilot was seeking to explore an innovative futures approach with collaboration – regarded as innovative in the field of multi-organisational futures work – the project has ultimately not been awarded the time and opportunity to “take a few risks.”

There was some feedback concerning the scoping of both the content element of the project and the collaborative working process. A formal scoping document would have provided greater clarity about what the team were trying to achieve and defining the parameters for collaboration could have provided valuable guidance, not only for the team when working together but also to support organisational / colleague engagement.

*“There is no quantifiable payback in ‘thinking’ so it may be even harder to justify such luxuries going forward in the impending (public sector funding) famine.”*

A sense of *unfinished business* was expressed given that only limited work had taken place to “synthesise and discuss the policy implications of the things we’ve noticed” and that the team had not really experienced genuine innovation in futures thinking.

A number of potential ideas emerged through the feedback that it was felt could have had a positive impact on the collaborative futures process, for example:

- Introducing peer review or critical friend analysis;
- The establishment of one or two working groups to take forward specific areas of research.



## Observations

There was a sense that with the right level of support, involvement and motivation that the collaborative journey started could be extended; potentially achieving more of the ambitious goals set at the beginning of the pilot. The fact that the three devolved administrations were at different levels of experience in futures work was also acknowledged, perhaps in part related to the relative maturity of the respective administrations.

Participants in the pilot took something positive from the experience; be those new learnings about collaboration and partnership or the reinforcement of previous experiences or assumptions. Some interesting observations were made:

- Collaboration is a means to an end, and not an end in itself.
- Collaboration takes time, energy and effort in its own right.
- Do people really *want* to collaborate?
- Do people *know* how to collaborate?
- There needs to be a significant external or internal threat or opportunity to motivate people to collaborate across boundaries.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration is even more difficult as we have found.

*“There needs to be some external or internal threat to cause people across functional or geographical boundaries to sit around a table and collaborate.”*

There was also a sense of frustration that even though the participants all had some futures analysis responsibility and accountability to their organisations, that the group’s overall ability to dedicate significant time to the pilot was so challenging.

A connected assumption was made that operational pressures have been squeezing the ability of futures analysts to think more strategically as organisations become increasingly focussed on the short term.

The question of influencing stakeholder organisations to buy into the value of futures analysis was raised at the beginning of the pilot and was identified as an increasing challenge in feedback. This situation is likely to hamper – and certainly challenge – any proposal to extend the collaboration across all three devolved administrations further.

### **The FutureScape / Shaprcloud application**

The FutureScape / Shaprcloud application was viewed positively by the participants; feedback suggesting how it might be deployed in a large scale consultation exercise where the input from a range of stakeholders could be recorded and displayed.

The second workshop (in London) clarified the significant potential of the tool to support collaborative futures work.



#### **Positive feedback**

The positive feedback on FutureScape / Shaprcloud focussed particularly on the ease of use – enabled by on-line support from Fujitsu – and the powerful visualisation. This visualisation provided support and stimulus to thinking and discussion and overall, the application had a very positive impact on collaboration.

There was also positive feedback about the support provided to users by Fujitsu, and particularly their willingness and ability to listen and respond to feedback *in the moment*.

The combination of the visualisation capability of the tool and the download to Excel functionality to provide additional off-line analysis options was very helpful and gave significant help to the latter stages of the pilot; particularly when looking at how the different devolved administrations rated the impact and likelihood of the selected events.

*“I think FutureScape has had a very positive impact on collaboration purely by giving us an innovative approach to explore and test issues together.”*



#### **Challenges**

There was a sense that the team’s use of the FutureScape / Shaprcloud had not fully explored the analytical capability of the application; that to date it had predominantly been used to record events / driver information. This could have been completed with flipcharts and post-its. But participants did see how FutureScape / Shaprcloud could support greater analysis and insight generation.

Some feedback suggested that a glossary of terms or application handbook would have helped to maximise the potential benefits of using the application and that some sort of report writing functionality would also be helpful.

## 7. Futures Content

In order to provide some context for the 60 futures events identified, we considered a number of other components for the development of the model; categories, characteristics and outcomes.

FutureScape / Shaprcloud provides the ability to **categorise** the events identified. In the pilot project roadmap, we chose to consider a STEEPL structure, so each futures event was allocated to one of the following macro-environmental factors:

- Social
- Technology
- Economic
- Environment
- Political
- Legal

Typically, for futures analysis we need to understand the potential impact of identified events and the degree of uncertainty. The structure of the Ageing roadmap therefore included the following **characteristics**:

- Impact
- Likelihood

The FutureScape / Shaprcloud application provides scope for futures analysts to explore the events in the context of up to eight futures **outcomes**. At the first workshop, the team identified these potential outcomes:

- Carbon emissions
- Connectivity between the young and old
- Cost of delivering public services (e.g. health and social care)
- Evolution of public services
- GDP
- Grey vote
- Healthy life expectancy
- Increasing "younger" older people
- Increasing grey engagement
- Normalisation of the elderly population
- Number of non-working life years
- Positive attitude towards older people in society
- Poverty
- Quality of leisure life
- Quality of working life
- Retirement age - a choice for the individual
- Social capital
- Social cohesion
- Social inclusion

These outcomes were reviewed and prioritised and the following outcomes built into the model:

- Evolution of public services
- Increase healthy life expectancy
- Increase GDP
- Increase positive attitudes (to the elderly)
- Increase social capital
- Increase working life years
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Reduce cost of care

A number of future **events** were identified at the first workshop. These events were designed to be futures based and reflected the issues that were felt to be directly and indirectly connected with the issues of an ageing society. As each event was added, it was assessed as being significant across a particular time-frame.

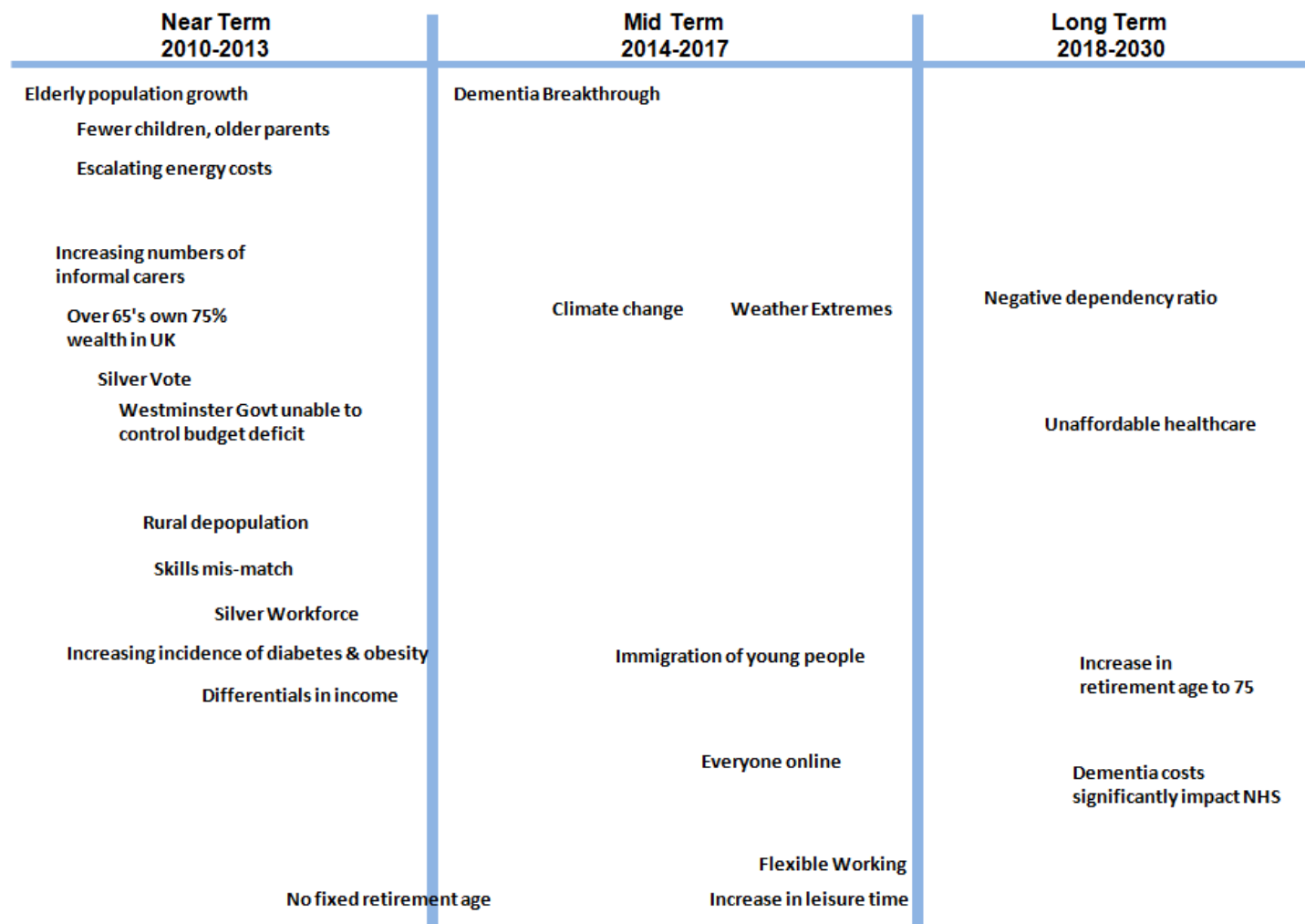
## Futures Events – Time line

Near Term 2010-2013	Mid Term 2014-2017	Long Term 2018-2030
<p><b>Elderly population growth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer children, older parents</li> <li>Escalating energy costs</li> <li>Increased isolation for certain groups</li> <li><b>Increasing numbers of informal carers</b></li> <li>Over 65's own 75% wealth in UK</li> <li><b>Silver Vote</b></li> <li>Westminster Govt unable to control budget deficit</li> <li>Financial crisis deepens</li> <li><b>Rural depopulation</b></li> <li><b>Skills mis-match</b></li> <li><b>Silver Workforce</b></li> <li><b>Increasing incidence of diabetes &amp; obesity</b></li> <li><b>Differentials in income</b></li> <li>Energy Poverty</li> <li>Increasing retirement age to 68</li> <li>Unfit housing</li> <li>Youthful emigration and brain drain</li> <li><b>No fixed retirement age</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Dementia Breakthrough</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in Disabled</li> <li>Rise to power of the grey vote</li> <li>Tele-medicine and self-diagnosis from home</li> <li>Care in other countries</li> <li>Care Robots</li> <li><b>Climate change</b></li> <li>Devolved Administrations enhance their influence</li> <li>Elderly abuse cases increases</li> <li>EU legislation re elderly</li> <li>Free Education for elderly</li> <li>Elderly skills gap</li> <li>Increase in Inheritance Tax</li> <li>Increased 3rd sector involvement in public services</li> <li>Increased volunteering</li> <li><b>Immigration of young people</b></li> <li>More cancer becomes non-fatal</li> <li>English National Devolution</li> <li><b>Everyone online</b></li> <li>Pension company fails</li> <li>Gender Imbalance</li> <li><b>Flexible Working</b></li> <li>Increase in leisure time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ageing is halted</li> <li>Elderly emigration</li> <li>First 50yr old Premier League player</li> <li>Freedom of movement</li> <li>Housing crash</li> <li><b>Negative dependency ratio</b></li> <li>"Old" no longer in dictionary</li> <li>UK adopts the Euro</li> <li><b>Unaffordable healthcare</b></li> <li>Next financial crisis</li> <li>Politicians use research evidence</li> <li>End of the State Pension</li> <li>Euthanasia legalised</li> <li><b>Increase in retirement age to 75</b></li> <li>Inter-generational conflict</li> <li><b>Dementia costs significantly impact NHS</b></li> </ul>

See Appendix 1 for a description of each event, listed alphabetically.

At a second workshop, an exercise was then undertaken to select a number of events based on their potential impact on the economic and societal opportunities for an ageing population and the likelihood of the event playing out, for more detailed investigation. The rating of this selection of events was conducted with a focus on Scotland. Here we can see that the events with highest potential impact and greater likelihood are expected to take place mainly over the near term.

### Futures Events - 24 Futures Events




To explore how this analysis might help us consider the policy and implementation implications, we focussed on one of the futures events as an exemplar; the *Silver Workforce*.

*Silver Workforce* was chosen simply as an event that was of interest to those participating in the workshop at the time and in part for the expected number of relationships with other futures events. (Following issues of personal interest rather than selecting through logical analysis can help to inject greater energy into a piece of work.)

For this event, we considered the strategic objectives that could be associated with the event, the policy implications, the actions the administration could choose to take and the resource requirements.

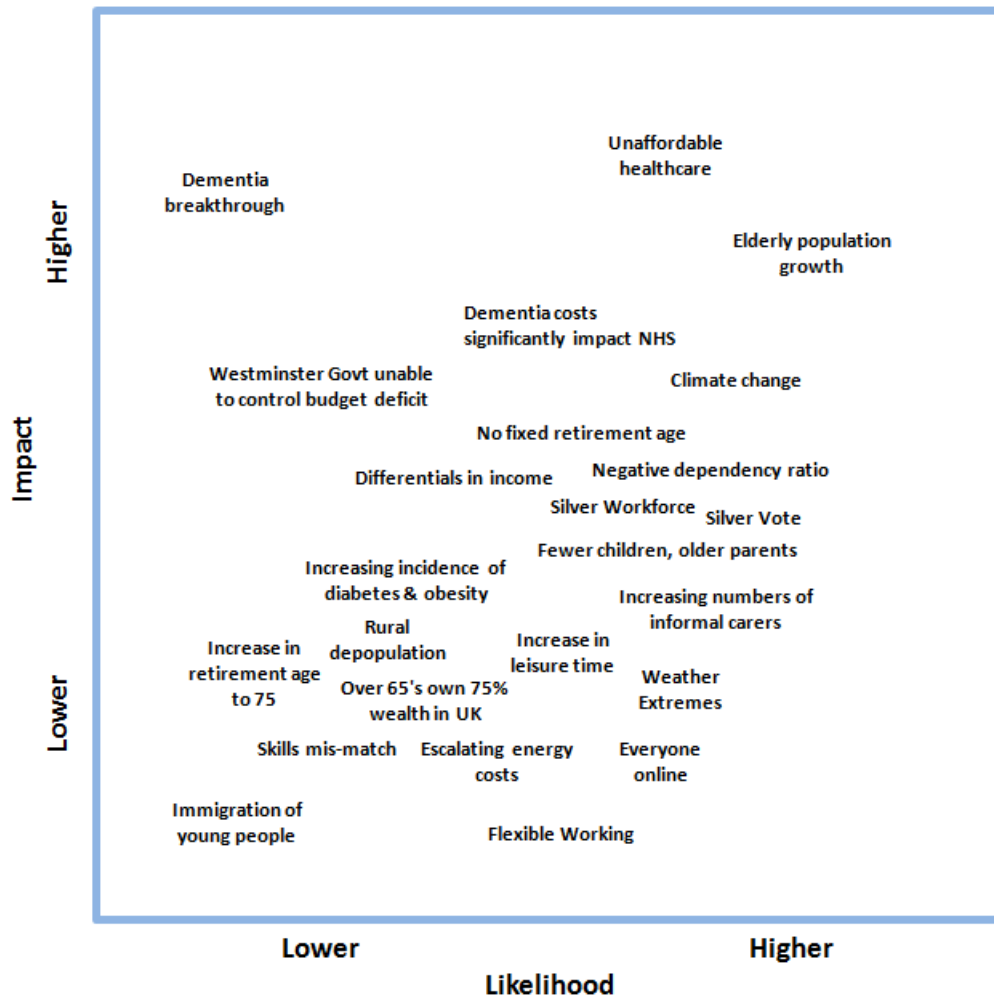
This structure was established within the FutureScope / Shaprcloud application and helped to shape and challenge our thinking.

Strategic Objectives	 <b>Silver Workforce</b> Older age groups becomes economically active through performing intellectual, expert or manual tasks		
Policy	Reduce barriers to employment	Ensure <i>work – life</i> – <i>care</i> balance	
Actions	Enable flexible working practices  Support jobs and skills matching	Changing attitudes to older people  Provide skills and training for older people	Create incentives and penalties to encourage older people to work  Make work pay for older people
Resources	Create supportive public sector  Reduce pensions and benefits	Enhance capacity of education and training sector  Introduce skills transfer schemes	Increase minimum wage  Supportive employers

In developing this analysis, we also noted the relationships between the strategies, policies and resources with other events identified in the earlier work, indicating that multiple dependencies were likely to exist.

In seeking to gain an overall assessment of the significance of these events, the three devolved administrations considered their rating of impact on the societal and economic opportunities of an ageing population and likelihood of the events taking place, for each of the 24 selected events. The results were aggregated to provide an overview of the team’s perspective.

### Futures Events – Relative significance of the high impact / high likelihood events



### Assessing similarities and differences between the participating stakeholders

One of the challenges in working collaboratively is finding time and space to consider the differences as well as the similarities between the partners. In this analysis, we saw limited agreement on the potential impact of the events but a reasonable degree of agreement on the likelihood.

	Impact	Likelihood
Agreement	6	11
Unclear	13	6
Disagreement	5	7

The degree of agreement or otherwise could be the result of different interpretations of the underlying data - the definition of an event and its implication, for example - so further exploration would be required to assess the potential for ongoing collaboration in these areas. While there is scope for further potential discussion, just one event – Negative Dependency Ratio – saw agreement across the three administrations on both impact and likelihood.

## 8. Conclusions

The events identified and the pilot work completed on the prioritised events have shown the complex nature of the system around the issue of an ageing society. Initial analysis was drawn towards the challenges but the focus on the *Silver Workforce* quickly started to reveal opportunities and potential solutions. The work has also provided a potential launch pad for further research, the integration of existing research, and importantly has demonstrated the potential value in collaborative futures work.

We learned that collaborative futures work can add real value to strategic analysis and policy development, but needs more effective scoping, resourcing, project management and partnering.

Collaborating was harder than we expected - it almost always is. Limited clear contracting including explicit recording of how the pilot was to be resourced and the partnership was to work were contributory factors here as was the lack of an explicit client.

But the over-riding sense is one of the benefits that accrued from forming new connections, networking and exploring different people's perspective on the same issue. These benefits are however, typically very difficult to articulate and even harder to measure.

There was limited real innovation in our futures analysis; the innovation came in the form of the FutureScape / Shaprcloud application. We did observe that we felt more comfortable raising issues that related to futures events that were close in terms of time and about which we were confident would play out in reality. Our sense was that in these circumstances, policy-makers were more likely to connect with the potential implications.

The FutureScape / Shaprcloud application proved to be an excellent tool for visualising our futures work.

While there was a sense that we moved some flip chart and post it work from the wall to the computer screen, our ability to manipulate the information, perform sense-making and some analysis, and hold insightful discussions in the moment were very beneficial.

The application proved to be easy to use, versatile and most valuable in supporting conversations about uncertain and complex issues. It does though need discipline and commitment from participants to update and contribute information including their own perspectives to really maximise the potential that the tool clearly has.

## 9. Choices

Following the conclusion of the pilot, there were a number of choices available to the partners:

- Take the work forward by maintaining the existing partnership;
- Take the work forward with a number of the participating organisations;
- Take the work forward independently;
- Take the work forward by engaging other organisations;
- Bring the FutureScape / Shaprcloud model and our work to the attention of other colleagues and stakeholders; or
- Do nothing.

The choices taken saw one partner seeking to build on the work within their own organisation. A second partner would hold a *watching brief* on how any future work develops and take an opportunistic approach to taking the work forward locally.

The FutureScape / Shaprcloud model developed through the work would be made available through a public directory and brought to the attention of FAN Club members. It would be left to the partners to direct other stakeholders to the road map. (See Appendix 3 for the link to the road map and other related resources.)

But in addition to the choices for the partnership, choices are available to HSC in potentially taking the basis of this work to English or UK stakeholders, potentially to develop informative scenarios.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Futures events listed alphabetically

The listed *events* include demographic trends shaping the size and structure of the population; the consequences of these changes; trends and issues which enabled or restricted opportunities for an ageing population and external trends, like climate change, which are independent of an ageing society.

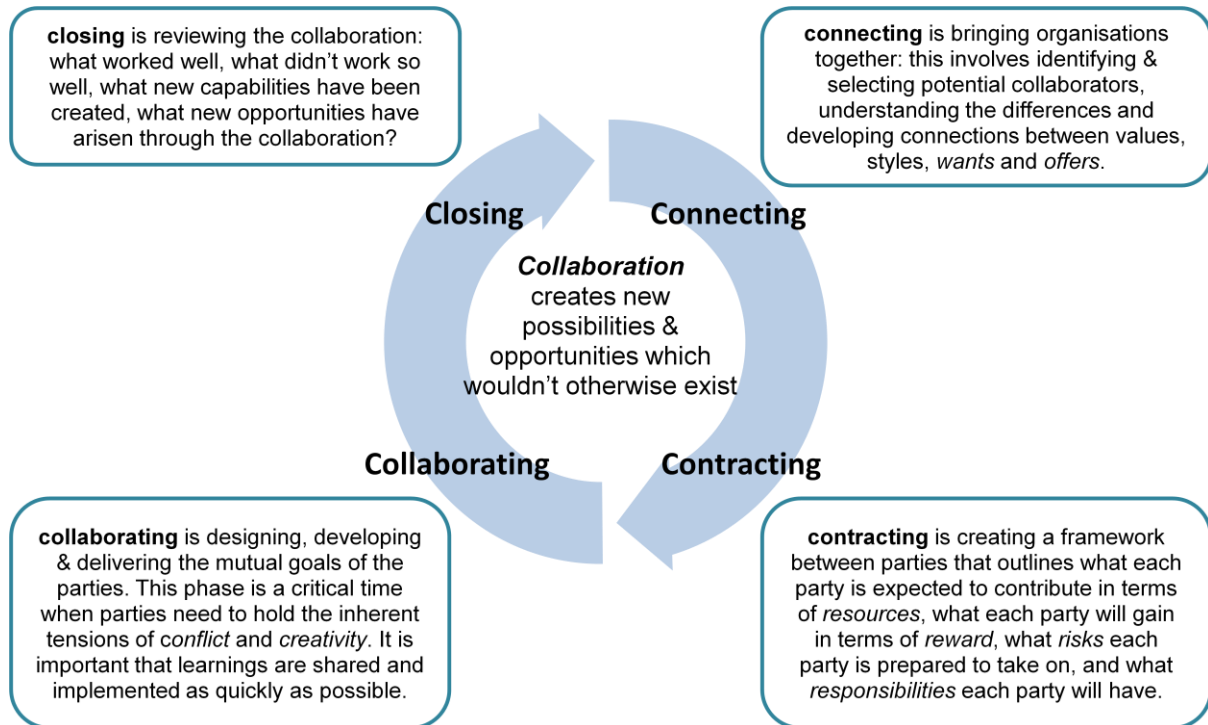
This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but it does recognise the knowledge, judgement and experience of the participants. The underlying evidence base for each event differs; in some cases we were confident of the event and aware of underlying evidence but in others it was more a judgement based on an understanding or awareness.

Event Name	Event Description
Ageing is halted	Research into the telomere 'caps' on DNA believed to be the cause of ageing leads to treatments which can halt ageing forever.
Cancer becomes non-fatal	People with cancer no-longer die but instead suffer a chronic condition.
Care in other countries	Other nations offer the UK the ability to outsource the care of the elderly to them.
Care Robots	Home robots take on many aspects care duties offering 24/7 care and greater independence to the elderly.
Climate change	Climate change (and its additional costs) has various implications for an ageing population.
Dementia breakthrough	Funding into dementia research creates a medical breakthrough saving the public purse £ billion each year.
Dementia costs significantly impact NHS	Dementia care funding tops £35Bn (up from 2010 at £17Bn) leading to cuts to other areas of the NHS.
Devolved Administrations enhance their influence	Though the powers to promote age equality & tackle poverty are reserved to Westminster, devolved administrations have now forged distinctive programmes on a scale that is significant enough to show up at national level.
Differentials in income	The income gap between young and old increases as the elderly become more financially dependent on state benefits.
Elderly abuse cases increases	Cases of abuse of the elderly (by younger people) increase.
Elderly emigration	The elderly migrate to parts of the world where they seek to make their pensions stretch further, or other criteria (good weather, social values that respect the elderly, quality and cost of medical care).
Elderly population growth	Elderly population grows ahead of other age groups within the overall population in Scotland.
Elderly skills gap	Older people have less of the skills required in the modern economy and so struggle in the labour market.
End of the state pension	Lack of public money and an increasing pension bill cause governments to close the state pension and force people to make private provisions.
Energy poverty	The price of energy is driven up 2012-2015 by a lack of generating capacity and then by peak oil output and increasing competition for energy resources from China, India, Russia and Brazil.
English national devolution	An English national assembly is created with equivalent powers to that held by the Scots. The relationship between the devolved countries and the UK central government begins to develop along lines similar to that existing in the U.S.A.
Escalating energy costs	Rising energy costs result in higher levels of fuel poverty for the older population + excess winter mortality within this sector.
EU legislation re elderly	EU legislation offering full legal rights in the areas of medical care, work and education carries implications for all member states.

<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Event Description</b>
Euthanasia legalised	Assisted suicide is legalised in parts or all of the UK.
Everyone online	Everyone is online via a variety of devices.
Fewer children, older parents	Not only will there be fewer children, but parents will have children later in life.
Financial crisis deepens	A worsening financial crisis puts severe and sudden limits on public spending.
First 50 year old Premier League Player	Fitness training, bio-tech and medical advances allow a 50 year old player to be signed by a Premier League club.
Flexible working	Flexible working practices and supporting technologies such as part-time working, job share and tele-working allow older people to stay in some form of employment longer.
Free education	Free education offered to older people.
Freedom of movement	
Gender imbalance	As the population ages, the gap between the number of men and women in society increases.
Housing crash	A fall in house prices reduces the wealth of the elderly.
Increase in disabled	As the population ages so does the number of people with mental and physical disabilities.
Increase in inheritance tax	Inheritance tax is increased to encourage the self-funding of healthcare.
Increase in leisure time	The ageing population has more time for leisure and cultural activities with commercial implications for many types of service providers.
Increase in retirement age to 75	Retirement age is increased to 75 years old.
Increased 3rd sector involvement	Increased involvement and reliance on the 3rd sector to provide public services.
Increased isolation for certain groups	For those unemployed or inactive aged over 50, they face a bleak future as most new jobs will require at NVQ 4 or higher.
Increased volunteering	Numbers of volunteers are increased to support the work of the 3rd sector.
Increasing devolved power	Power is increasingly devolved from Westminster to the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Increasing incidence of diabetes and obesity	Due to poor health young people begin dying at a faster rate than the elderly.
Increasing numbers of informal carers	Carers not paid through the public health / care or privately.
Increasing retirement age to 68	Retirement age is increased to 68.
Inter-generational conflict	Young people resent paying for what they feel are overly generous pensions, medical care and homes whilst they struggle to pay for their own. The power of the 'silver vote' limits their access to political power to fix this, creating tension.
Immigration of young people	Inward migration of young, working age people.
Negative dependency ratio	Parts of the UK now have less than one working person to support each non-working person (children, students, retired, long-term ill or their carers).
New Bill of Rights	Enhanced powers for Older People's Commissioner for Older People leading to greater scrutiny of cases of discrimination against older people and punitive fines.
Next financial crisis	The UK enters another recession and public spending is scaled back in the face of increasing demands.
No fixed retirement age	
'Old' no longer in dictionary	The word 'old' is now meaningless when applied to people as genetic engineering has halted ageing and worn body parts can be replaced with new grown parts.
Over 65's own 75% wealth in UK	Currently over 65's control 75% of all UK wealth. This will continue to grow.

<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Event Description</b>
Pension company fails	A major pension company fails, leaving tens of thousands of pensioners without the income they depended on.
Politicians use research evidence	Politicians decide to use research based evidence when coming to decisions.
Rise to power of the grey vote	Older people become a key political group able to mobilise votes which can sway an election one way or the other.
Rural depopulation	People move into cities, reducing spatial variation.
Self and tele-medication	Automation and tele-presence technologies allow medical services to be delivered at home either via self service or with remote guidance. Care givers needn't be even in the same country as the recipient.
Silver vote	An ageing population and a disengaged youth mean that the older demographic will proportionally have more political influence.
Silver workforce	Older age groups become economically active through performing intellectual, expert or manual tasks.
Skills mis-match	People have less of the skills required in the modern economy and so struggle in the labour market.
Tele-medicine and self- diagnosis from home	There will be a significant leap forward in tele-medicine where individuals will be able either to self diagnose or obtain a roadmap for their future likely health prospects.
UK adopts the Euro	
Unaffordable healthcare	As medical treatment become more advanced and expensive, the cost of providing healthcare to an ageing population escalates to an unsustainable level.
Unfit housing	Lack of money means that many elderly are living in housing that is becoming unfit, diminishing the housing stock and creating issues for people within and outside of this group.
Weather extremes	Hotter summers and colder winters affect the elderly.
Westminster Government unable to control budget deficit	As a result taxation will have to be increased or expenditure reduced meaning that we are unable to meet the needs of the older population and an unacceptably large sustainability gap in public finances acting as a drag on UK economy for decades to come.
Youthful Immigration and brain drain	Young people leave the UK to seek opportunities in emerging economies, avoid tax rises to pay for care costs, move to areas where the 'grey vote' does not hold all the power and look for affordable homes.

## Appendix 2 - The Collaboration Cycle



## Appendix 3 – Links to related resources

### Original inquiry into collaboration in futures work

Blog:

<http://collaborativeworkingpracticeinfutures.blogspot.com/2008/11/introduction-to-this-initiative.html>

### The HSC / FAN Club Collaboration Programme

Blog:

<http://collaborativefuturesprogramme.blogspot.com/2009/12/welcome.html>

### Public Ageing Model

FutureScape / Shaprcloud roadmap:

<https://directory.shaprcloud.com/#roadmap/b955e546-79bf-4b04-934c-7f3d90792cdc>