

1. Reboot Democracy - improve decision-making and increase public engagement by developing forms of Deliberative Democracy

This Council notes:

- That the Administration has a genuine desire to engage with citizens, as demonstrated by continued support of the Citizens' Panel and efforts made to promote engagement in consultations on important decisions for the City;
- That present actions do not go far enough to truly engage all Bristolians. We are not reaching, or actively engaging, the majority of citizens in deprived parts of the City and we respond to the loud voices of the few who fill in consultations or who use Full Council to express their views.
- That barriers to participation are complex and potential participants may need training, incentives and different kinds of support to participate, with disabled people particularly marginalised due to inaccessible process, meetings, and information;
- That processes for setting the agenda and designing the mechanisms for participation should also be participatory;
- That the forms of engagement used presently take citizens' views but do not allow for input into direct decision-making; ~~which does not encourage engagement. Often, people are not given enough information to be fully informed, which undermines the consultation process;~~
- ~~That the value of consultations has been undermined by past failures like the Library Consultation in 2017, where citizens were presented with three very limited options and they could not support any one of them, or by the Western Harbour engagement when lack of~~

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~~information increased community fears and made constructive discussion very difficult;~~

- That the majority of the citizenry are not engaged in decision making and feel disenfranchised;
- That Bristol has a vibrant culture of community organisations with local knowledge, existing community networks and experience of using participatory approaches. These organisations have the potential to contribute to processes of engagement and participation for under-represented groups;
- That the Council has a history of developing structures which involve equality groups, including an effective Commission on Race Equality and Women's Commission, who need to be involved in any rebooting of democracy;
- That **Deliberative Democracy** is an umbrella term, of which **Citizens' Assembly** is the best known. Citizens' Assemblies have been used effectively in many countries to solve complex political or social issues and are truly representative, as selection is stratified (like jury service) and people who attend are paid a stipend which validates the action. **Citizens' Jury** is a scaled down version of an assembly. Another form of deliberative democracy, used quite extensively in the UK between 2002-2010, is **Participatory Budgeting** which was shown to improve accountability and allow for the redistribution of funds. **Deliberative Polling** is an effective way to develop an informed citizenry, as this process takes a stratified group, captures their understanding of a topic, then fully informs them of the issues and once again surveys their opinions. The benefit is that the administration gets the views of citizens who have a holistic understanding of complex problems;
- That the Labour administration has provided officer resource and space for this topic to be explored at Hot Coffee Hot Topic.

- That although there is a cost in running deliberative actions, the value of high-quality decisions, based on informed, reasoned debate makes it good value for money and delivers a stronger mandate to the Administration.

This Council believes:

- We trust our citizens to make decisions;
- Deliberative democracy complements consultation and makes it more meaningful. The difference is that a stratified selection is made and this is truly more representative of ~~the people~~ all residents from all backgrounds in all areas of Bristol;
- Directly elected local councillors and politicians play a valuable and important role in representing their communities, with the current chamber and executive now more representative than it has ever been;
- Deliberative processes are not intended for everyday politics and are best used for complex issues which are divisive or where there might be political gridlock;
- That types of deliberative democracy should be piloted in Bristol, with at least two projects within the next year. Examples could be: devolving some funds to the Area Committees through a Participatory Budget or a Citizens' Assembly on how to on get to carbon neutrality by 2030.

This Council proposes:

- That a group/commission is set up to establish the terms of reference for Bristol ~~'s adoption of piloting~~-Deliberative Democracy, ~~which would come back to this Council for ratification within three months~~. This process should itself be participatory, be cross-party and include people from Bristol's different and diverse communities, localities and socio-

economic backgrounds with a role for Bristol's existing community organisations – targetting communities who are underrepresented in the city's civic/public life, including on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and all other protected characteristics;

- That once the terms of reference are agreed, a sum of money (to be decided) will be set aside to fund the actions and a wider programme of deliberative democracy initiatives – including participatory budgeting around £5 million to £10 million of elements of the capital programme;
- That, once the terms are ratified, there will be a trial of at least two projects within the financial year 2020-2021 and I suggest the following 2021-22 with the following considered:
 - A participatory budget, using the Area Committees or another means of neighbourhood working/localised community decision-making as a delivery method
 - Citizens' Assembly, Jury, or Panel with a theme chosen via a participatory process
 - Citizens' Assembly, Jury, or Panel- on how Bristol should respond to the Climate Emergency, building on the Climate Assembly UK which has been established by six House of Commons Select Committees, and in consultation with the expert independent One City Advisory Committee on Climate Change

Some interesting reading:

Some examples both within the UK and internationally - <https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/beyond-the-ballot-how-citizens-can-lead-the-climate-change-conversation/>

Video on how participatory budgeting can involve the whole community <https://pbscotland.scot/film>

Deliberative polling and how it solved sectarian problems in Northern Ireland -

https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/5900776/omagh-report.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DA_Deliberative_Poll_on_Education_What_pr.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A%2F20191128%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20191128T114631Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=8ea70cb3d53690e96800327c595a3949fb8dbd5c90a905ecf2f7a41346b6290d

Motion to be moved by: Cllr Paula O'Rourke, Green Group

Date of Submission: 2nd January 2020