

Notes from Workshop 2: Campaign for Deliberative Democracy 7th November 2018 The RSA

1. Overview and recap

This roundtable discussion was the second in a series of three workshops organised by the RSA and Involve which is looking to develop a set of campaign asks that can increase the visibility, quality and take-up of deliberative approaches in the UK.

The first workshop focused on two key areas:

1) Why deliberative democracy now?

*Note: Highlighted **text** indicates the ideas that participants felt to be most important.*

Democracy in its current form is not working well
Deliberative democracy (DD) improves decision-making – e.g. tackling difficult and long-term issues, consideration
DD is more inclusive and equal – eg equality of voice/power, minorities
DD improves public feeling about politics – eg legitimacy, trust, ownership
DD is a gateway reform
DD provides benefits to society - eg bridging polarisation, quality of public discourse, model for wider society
DD provides benefits to participants
DD provides a unique combination of benefits

2) What are the critical barriers for the widespread adoption of deliberation?

Decision-maker buy-in – e.g. failure to commission and political will, reluctance to cede power and control, lack of understanding, need for cross party support
Limitations of DD – representation and legitimacy, scalability, cost, damage when it's done badly, media not interested in process
Issues with the DD sector – precious about the process, need to expand
Lack of public support – lack of understanding and trust, consultation fatigue
DD lacks relevance – not on important issues of the day, symbolic
Lack of evidence – to back up benefits
Status quo – hard to change

2. SUMMARY OF OPENING PRESENTATION

Ed Cox:

- This workshop is an important part of developing a campaign that truly reflects the interests and concerns of collaborators. We are aiming to identify campaign priorities which reflect what we believe are ideal criteria for successful policy asks of government
- Our discussions here are vital to the development of our asks which will be used to initiate the discussion on final workshop the 6th December.

Sarah Allan:

- The workshop will ask participants to look into three areas: 1) what are the 'dream' long-list of policies that would scale up deliberative democracy in the UK; 2) what makes a 'good' policy ask and 3) where are the 'best' asks that would meet those criteria and can get agreement from the diverse group.

3. CAMPAIGN ASKS

In the first session of the workshop, participants were asked to list of potential campaign asks.

There were 21 'dream' asks identified:

1. **Topic-based experiments**
2. **A 'What Works Centre' for deliberative democracy**
3. **A deliberative democracy bill**
4. **Training / qualifications for deliberation**
5. **"Payback committees" using deliberative methods**
6. **Every mayor / city leader to be supported to deliver one citizen deliberation activity**
7. **Establish a "Second Chamber" in combined authorities**
8. **Requirement for Select Committees to consider the use of mini-publics**
9. **Training on engagement**
10. **Poverty Truth Commissions**
11. **Replace the House of Lords with a citizen's assembly**
12. **Introduce a Citizens Jury Service**
13. **Convention on shared vision for the country**
14. **Demand policy always considers lived experience of people affected by policy**
15. **Ministerial submission checklist to include deliberative engagement**
16. **Citizens assembly in parliament (as well as chamber)**
17. **Citizens assembly on:**
 - a written constitution
 - "Too difficult box" issues
18. **Deliberation to be binding**
19. **Requirement for every local authority to build in deliberative processes in their engagement with citizens**
20. **Local Enterprise Partnerships democratisation**
21. **One major parliamentary bill per year to have deliberative process**

4. EMERGING THEMES

Six broad areas emerged from responses

1. *Creating new institutions*

Whether this be a What Works Centre or an extension of a government department or civil society organisation, creating institutions that could develop the skills and competencies or help develop a broader 'sector' in public participation was highlighted in several table discussions.

e.g. "What Works Centre for Deliberative Democracy"

e.g. "Payback Committees using deliberative methods"

e.g. "Training on engagement"

e.g. "Know-how in civil society sector"

e.g. "Training, professional qualifications for deliberation"

2. *Legislation and regulation*

One primary lever identified frequently was through primary or secondary legislation or through amending regulation.

e.g. "Deliberation to be binding"

e.g. "Ministerial submission checklist to include deliberative engagement"

e.g. "Demand policy always considered those with lived experience of people affected by policy"

e.g. "One major parliamentary bill per year to have deliberative process"

e.g. Requirement for every local authority to build in deliberative processes with their engagement with citizens

e.g. "A Deliberative Democracy Bill"

e.g. "Requirement for Select Committees to consider the use of mini-publics"

e.g. "Introduce Citizens Jury Service"

3. *National assemblies*

A suit of issue focused (social care, drugs policy) deliberative assemblies were deemed important to enlighten the debate on issues deemed divisive or intractable.

e.g. "Topic based experiments"

e.g. "Replace the House of Lords with a Citizen Assembly"

e.g. "Convention on Shared Vision for the Country"

e.g. "Citizens Assembly in Parliament (as well as Chamber)"

e.g. "Citizens Assembly on a written constitution"

4. *Regional / local assemblies*

A large focus on the local as well as regional was referred to, particularly important in the context of devolution.

e.g. "Establish a 'Second Chamber' in combined authorities"

e.g. "Every city mayor supported to deliver one citizen deliberative activity"

e.g. "Local Enterprise Partnerships democratisation"

5. *Extend existing initiatives*

e.g. "Poverty Truth Commissions"

e.g. "Those in power need to listen"

e.g. "Civil society must play a leading role"

e.g. "More funding for Innovation in Democracy programme"

5. CREATING A CRITERIA FOR PRIORITISING ASKS

In the second session of the workshop, participants were asked to consider what criteria we might need to identify 'good' policy asks for the campaign.

GROUPED CRITERIA:

Table 1:

Policy asks must be:

- Simple
- Practical
- Cost effective
- Have clear benefits
- Sustainable
- Hook-able
- Easy to catch-phrase
- Strategic
- Inclusive
- Timely

Note: Highlighted text indicates the ideas that participants felt to be most important

Table 2:

Policy asks must be:

- Hard to disagree with
- Tangible
- Have diverse champions
- Specific
- Simple
- Cost-effective / affordable
- Have cross-party support
- Made to be a requirement

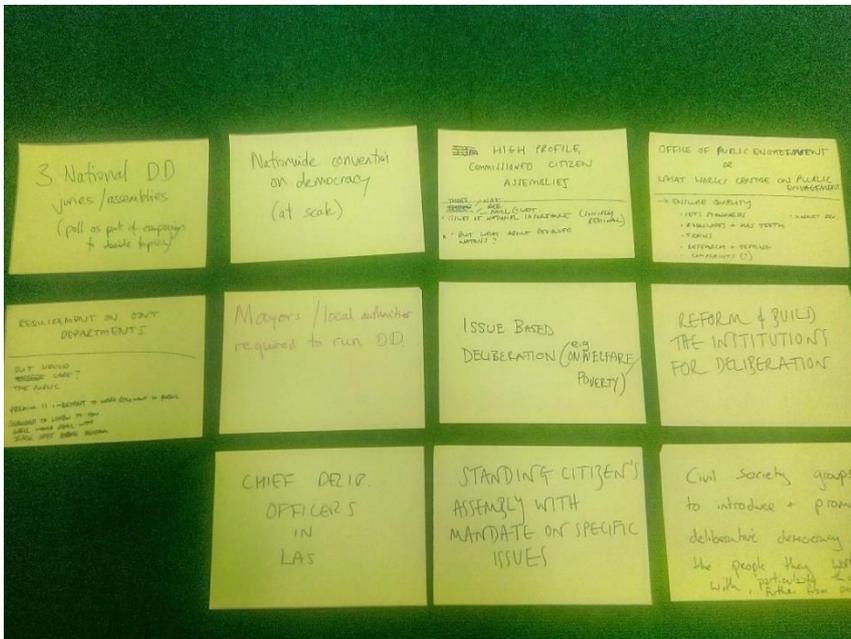
Table 3:

Policy asks must be:

- Able to have diverse public buy-in
- Underpinned by a quality product
- Memorable
- Sustainable

6. Prioritising campaign asks

Taking the priorities which had been developed in the second session, the third session asked participants to consider how to prioritise campaign asks that meet those criteria outlined above.



1. Three national deliberative juries / assemblies

2. Standing Citizens Assembly with mandate to deliberate on specific issues

3. Nationwide convention on democracy

4. High profile, commissioned citizen assemblies

5. An Office for Public Participation / What Works Centre for Public Engagement

6. Mayors/ Local authorities required to run deliberative processes

7. Issue based deliberation

8. Reform existing and build new institutions to drive deliberation

9. Create 'Chief Deliberation Officers' in local authorities

10. Civil society groups to introduce and prioritise deliberative democracy

11. Require government departments to reform ministerial check-lists and the way consultation is generated and informed.

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your involvement in the second workshop. These discussions with key stakeholders and experts in democratic reform will be pivotal in shaping the nature and form of the campaign in 2019.

Any comments and queries on this note please contact tom.harrison@rsa.org.uk

REMINDER

Revitalising our Politics Through Deliberation public event with Professor James Fishkin

Venue: Great Room, RSA House, 8 John Adams Street, WC2N 6EZ

Date: December 6th 2018

Time: 6:00pm – 7:00pm with drinks reception 7:00pm – 8:00pm

<https://www.thersa.org/events/2018/12/revitalising-our-politics-through-public-deliberation>