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Innovation in Democracy Programme Expression of Interest Guidance

This guidance gives you information about the Innovation in Democracy Programme and explains how to complete the Expression of Interest (EoI) form to apply to take part in the programme.

Before you complete the EoI form, please ensure you have read the programme information carefully, including the eligibility criteria, which is set out below.

## Programme Information

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) are delighted to introduce the **Innovation in Democracy Programme**. It is a new programme that will run from January 2019 to March 2020.

The IiDP will involve citizens in decision making at local government level through innovative models of participatory democracy. We are looking to support to 8-10 local authorities to open up a policy decision to citizen deliberation through a Citizens' Assembly process, complemented by online civic technology tools in order to extend the reach, transparency, and accountability of the process.

To support the successful local authorities to implement the Citizens’ Assemblies and civic tech, we will be providing up to £60,000 to cover costs and you will have the assistance of an expert Democracy Support Contractor. For more info on the support you will be given, see **section 5**.

The aims of the programme are to:

* increase the capability of local people to have a greater say over decisions that affect their communities and their everyday lives;
* encourage new relationships and build trust between citizens and local authorities;
* strengthen local civil society by encouraging participation in local institutions.

## What are Citizens’ Assemblies?

Participatory democracy is the process of involving people meaningfully in decision making where citizens can deliberate on issues that can then be implemented. One model that can be used is Citizens' Assemblies, with participants chosen from the local community through sortition (random selection) and ensuring a representative cross-section of the local community is involved.

The Citizens’ Assemblies allow for sufficient time for participants to deliberate on the issue/s, and they have access to experts to help in their deliberation. These experts could come from the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector, the local authority, the relevant policy, academic or professional field. For more info on Citizens’ Assemblies, see **Appendix A**.

## Background

The Innovation in Democracy Programme is led by teams at the Office for Civil Society, which is part of DCMS, and the Communities Team in MHCLG.

DCMS helps to drive growth, enrich lives and promote Britain abroad. We protect and promote our cultural and artistic heritage and help businesses and communities to grow by investing in innovation and highlighting Britain as a fantastic place to visit. We help to make places where people want to live, work, and visit.

The Office for Civil Society is committed to programmes which support people to come together to actively shape the places where they live and work and to build a vibrant civil society. OCS is responsible for building a stronger society and it does this by promoting volunteering, charitable giving and philanthropy, community action, socially responsible business and social investment. It also acts as the cross-Government hub for relations with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector.

The Communities Team shares in the mission of the whole Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: ‘to help create great places to live and work and give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area’. The Communities Team sits within the Integration and Communities Directorate, whose focus is on helping to create strong communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

## Context

This Government published its [Civil Society Strategy (CSS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-society-strategy-building-a-future-that-works-for-everyone) on 9 August 2018 which sets out how government will work with and for civil society in the long-term to create a country that works for everyone. The Strategy focuses on the role and contribution of citizens in civil society and details the government’s ambition to pass meaningful power to local places, not just through devolution, but through innovative participatory democratic methods to involve people in the decision-making that affects their daily lives.

The Office for Civil Society and Communities Team believe that local people are best placed to understand the needs and strengths of their communities and the places where they live. As such, local people should be involved in finding solutions to local issues.

The Community Life Survey found that only 27% felt able to influence decisions affecting their local area, but 58% thought it was important to be able to do so.[[1]](#footnote-1) As such, there is a significant opportunity, matched by demand, to afford local communities a greater say in local decision making processes. This programme offers a way of tackling this and giving people back the sense of control promised by the government after the Brexit[[2]](#footnote-2) vote.

## Support to complete your EoI

DCMS and MHCLG are running three introductory events to introduce the programme to Local Authorities. At each of the workshops, we will spend a half day considering the design of the Citizens' Assemblies, exploring how to implement them locally and helping you prepare your Expression of Interest.

Attendees will participate in a number of activities throughout the workshops which will:

* Introduce the theory and case studies of participatory democracy
* Consider how the programme could work in your area, plus potential challenges
* Roadmap the actions that need to be taken to implement a participatory approach

Events will take place in London (23rd November), York (26th November) and Bristol (27th November), and will be facilitated by the Cabinet Office’s Policy Lab. They are free but places are limited. You can attend any one of the events, at your convenience.

[Book your place on an Innovation in Democracy Introductory Event](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/innovation-in-democracy-introductory-events-tickets-51807817577)

## Support on offer to take part in the Innovation in Democracy Programme

For most LAs, running a Citizens’ Assembly will be a new undertaking. In addition to this process, each LA will be developing a digital strategy that complements the face to face participation and extends the reach, transparency, and accountability of the process.

In order to support the participating LAs, we are offering a package of support. This will be delivered by a Democracy Support Contractor (to be appointed. This contractor may be a single organisation or a consortium of organisations).

The package will comprise:

**Democracy support**

Support to design, implement and facilitate participatory deliberative processes that work in your local authority context, using a Citizens' Assembly model. The Democracy Support Contractor (DSC) will work with LA staff to extend the learning beyond the core staff involved in the pilot to embed the learning across the LA; to set up a peer network for participating Local Authorities; and to share the learning from the pilots with other Local Authorities.

**Digital democracy support**

Advice and support for each participating Local Authority to enable you to develop an appropriate online engagement strategy to complement the face-to-face work. The aim is for the digital element of the process to broadcast the democratic process beyond its immediate participants, improve transparency and legitimacy, and provide opportunities for local citizens not directly involved in the face to face deliberation to feedback their views.

In addition to this support package, DCMS will be providing up to £60,000 to each participating Local Authority to cover the costs of the participatory democracy pilots, including venue hire, facilitation, participant recruitment, marketing etc. This money will be held and distributed by the DSC.

## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for this programme, you must be able to demonstrate that you have:

* The **support of your Chief Executive** - you will be asked to supply a letter of support setting out the local authority’s commitment to the Programme, including why your LA is keen to participate.
* A **Councillor Champion** – you will need to provide a name and a short statement from a Councillor setting out their interest in the programme, and how they will champion it within the council and across the LA.
* Adequate **staff resources** – whilst you will be provided with funding and support throughout the programme, there will also be a time commitment from your staff to ensure the successful running of a Citizens’ Assembly and implementation of the civic tech. The amount of time that LA staff will need to put in to the programme will vary throughout the process but on average, it will equate to 1-2 days per week. Other staff teams are likely to be involved in addition, for example: staff involved in preparing background info for the Citizens’ Assemblies, Comms, IT etc.
* A **suitable issue** that could be opened up for deliberation at a Citizens’ Assembly. Ideally, your topic will be:
* a council priority, on a contended topic with scope for debate, and of prime interest and importance to the community
* one that the council needs to and will take action on.

But see note below about exclusions to the issues that can be opened up to Citizens’ Assemblies.

## Planning and housing

Please note that because the statutory planning regime contains a quasi-judicial decision-making process which cannot be cut across by recommendations made in a Citizens’ Assembly, **planning issues are out of scope of the programme**. By planning, we mean anything that would usually be addressed through the planning process.

In addition, **any issues relating to housing are out of scope of the programme**.

## Innovation in Democracy Programme details

### **Phase 1 - Design and development**

### **January to 31 March 2019**

The successful LAs will work with the Democracy Support Contractor to design the format of their Citizens' Assemblies, refine the policy issue/s to be deliberated upon by the assemblies, identify the experts to be drawn on, lay the groundwork for the deliberative process and how it will be incorporated into existing decision making processes and policy-making structures within the local authority.

This will involve working with staff teams across the LA (eg: policy or delivery teams, IT, and comms), as well as political leadership and councillor champions.

Development of the digital strategy will start in this phase. It will complement the face-to-face process, and may involve developing a new, bespoke platform or using existing LA technology, or any other appropriate plan for meeting the aims of the digital element of the process. It will be important that the digital strategy enables people to interact with the Citizens’ Assembly at key moments, has opportunities for people to input their ideas and feedback, and shows that the LA is listening and responding to the process.

The DSC will also support the LA on awareness raising and pre-engagement communications with local stakeholders, community and local media to let them know that the Citizens’ Assembly will be happening and to get buy in for the process.

Participating LAs will be invited to join a peer network so they can support and learn from each other.

The DSC will hold and distribute up to £30,000 to each LA to support the development of the Citizens’ Assembly and digital strategy, and cover expenses during this period. The DCS will work with each LA to determine the most appropriate use for the funds, but could include: awareness raising, capacity building within the local community and other costs associated with the development phase of the Citizens’ Assembly.

### **Phase 2 - Delivery and learning**

### **April 2019 - March 2020**

Each LA will be supported in all aspects of running their Citizens’ Assembly, both the face-to-face deliberations (exact number of times the Citizens’ Assembly will meet over how many weeks/months will be decided with each LA) and the digital strategy. This will involve all aspects of the process from random selection of assembly members (for example, using a tool such as a [true random number generator](http://random.org/) and using best practise guidance such as [How to run a Civic Lottery](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55af0533e4b04fd6bca65bc8/t/5ba3d47fa4222f29d61e7688/1537463429853/Lotto_Paper_v1.4_LTR.pdf) by Mass LBP), invitations, organising expert presentations, facilitating the deliberations, logistics, and reporting on progress and outcomes throughout the process.

**Appendix B** includes best practice guidelines for running Citizens’ Assemblies, which we expect will form the basis of the Citizens’ Assemblies run as part of the IiDP.

This phase will also include implementation of the digital strategy for each LA, to complement the face to face deliberative process and ensure maximum reach, engagement and transparency. Implementing the digital strategy could mean
developing a bespoke online platform, using off-the-shelf civic tech tools, or building on an existing LA platform, or any other appropriate and cost-effective means to meet the aims of the digital element of the process.

The DSC will work with LA staff, media and stakeholders to generate positive coverage of the process.

All of these responsibilities will be carried out in close collaboration with the LA so that the process works for the local context and as much learning and replicable process as possible is left in place after the programme finishes.

In the later part of this Phase, we will work with the LA to extend the learning beyond the core staff involved in the pilot to embed the learning across the LA, including senior political and officer staff. We will also work with each LA to share the learning from the pilots with other Local Authorities and wider stakeholders. This might be in the form of working with DCMS and MHCLG to set up a conference and/or series of workshops on participatory democracy.

In this phase, the DSC will hold and distribute up to £30,000 to each local authority in order to put the plans for participatory democracy into action, including the digital strategy.

## Completing the form

The EoI form is made up of two sections:

1. Some basic details about you and your local authority.
2. Seven questions (with sub-questions) which will help us decide which local authorities to participate in the programme.

The deadline for submitting your EoI is **23:59 on Friday 4th January 2019.**

Officials in the Office for Civil Society in DCMS and the Communities Team at MHCLG will use the information you provide to review your application, and make a recommendation to the respective Secretaries of State for both departments on which local authorities to select to participate in the programme.

If you have any questions about Innovation in Democracy Programme or completing the Expression of Interest form, or if you need it in a different format, please contact Hannah Dale at hannah.dale@culture.gov.uk.

### **Section One - Your Details**

1. Local Authority Name
2. Main Contact Details

We require the details of a person who can speak for your local authority if we have any follow-up questions.

### **Section Two - EoI Questions**

We'll use your answers to the next series of questions to review your application. Please take note of the **word count** for each question.

#### Question 1 - Motivation for participation

* 1. Explain why you are interested in taking part in the Innovation in Democracy Programme.
	2. Explain how participating in the Innovation in Democracy Programme would fit with your local authority strategy.
	3. Tell us about a piece of citizen engagement work that you have done in the LA that you are proud of.

*Think about any challenges you faced and how you overcame these. Why were you particularly proud of this work?*

* 1. Tell us about a piece of citizen engagement work that has not gone so well and what you learnt from this experience.

*Think about what you would do differently next time if given the opportunity.*

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| **What we want to see:*** Clear rationale for participation
* Evidence that this builds and complements council strategic direction
* Evidence of commitment to working with their community
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#### Question 2 - Significance of issue

1. Outline 1 or (max) 2 potential issue(s) your LA would open up for deliberation at your Citizens’ Assembly.

*Select a topic that you, as the LA, would need to make a decision on in the future. The issue would ideally have various potential outcomes that could be deliberated upon, with the input of professionals/experts in the field.*

**As stated earlier, housing and planning issues are out of scope, and any LA that submits potential issues around planning and housing will not be selected to take part in the programme.**

1. Why have you selected this issue?

*Set out how you know that this is of interest and importance to your community. Is this issue a priority for your local authority and will you be taking action on it?*

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| **What we want to see:*** Selected issue is a council priority, on a contended topic with scope for debate, and of prime interest and importance to the community
* Issue is one that the council needs to and will take action on.
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#### Question 3 - Risk Awareness and Management

1. What are the barriers/risks to implementing a Citizens’ Assembly in your area, and what could you do to mitigate these?

*Consideration to be given to both internal and external factors that might be potential risks including legal risks and awareness of proper practice on process for public consultation.*

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| **What we want to see:*** Consideration given to both internal and external factors that might be potential risks
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#### Question 4 - Commitment of Resources

* 1. What staff resources will you dedicate to this programme?

*Please name senior responsible officer who will have decision making responsibilities for the programme, and any other staff teams who will be involved (service delivery teams, staff involved in preparing background info for the Citizens’ Assemblies, Comms, IT etc). Set out their responsibilities and time commitment.*

* 1. Who is your Councillor Champion?

*Please provide a name and attach a short statement from the Councillor setting out their interest in the programme, and how they will champion it within the council and across the LA. If you can demonstrate cross-party support for this programme, also include this here.*

* 1. What other resources will you put into the process?

*Match funding is not a requirement for selection, but if you have resources that you can invest in this programme, tell us here.*

* 1. Please provide a letter of support from your Chief Executive setting out the local authority’s commitment to the Programme, including why your LA is keen to participate.

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| **What we want to see:*** Commitment to providing the necessary staffing resources to be able to implement this programme
* Named senior official and politician who are committed to delivering and championing the programme in the LA
* Chief Executive support for participation in the programme
* Ability to lever in further resources to the programme
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#### Question 5 - Raising public awareness and buy in

1. If you are successful in your bid to join this programme, how do you propose to raise public awareness of the Citizens’ Assembly and buy in to the process in advance of the process starting and throughout?

*Include in your answer here how you will use the online engagement platform to increase reach, accountability and transparency. Also consider how you will reach those that you have found it harder to engage with in the past.*

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| **What we want to see:*** Commitment to involving and communicating with the wider public, including those that the LA finds it harder to engage with
* Understanding how they will make maximum use of the online engagement platform
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#### Question 6 - Sustainability and commitment to citizen voice

* 1. Explain how the Citizens’ Assembly will be integrated into your existing democratic and decision- making structures.

*Give an outline of your decision-making structures and explain how participatory democracy could be incorporated into those.*

* 1. How do you plan to respond to the recommendations that come out of the Citizens’ Assembly?

*We expect - as a minimum - that LAs will commit to publicly responding to each recommendation made by their citizens, with a presumption in favour of implementing what comes out of the deliberative process and a clear explanation why not if a recommendation is not to be implemented. Tell us if you will commit to this and anything further you want to say about the council being bound by what comes out of the Citizens’ Assembly.*

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| **What we want to see:*** Demonstrable commitment to embedding Citizens’ Assembly into existing structures
* Commitment to publicly supporting the Programme and responding to the recommendations that come out of the Citizens’ Assembly
* Provide assurances that what comes out the process will materially affect your policy and actions in the future.
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#### Question 7 - Sharing Learning

* + - * 1. How will you share learning from participating in the Innovation in Democracy programme across the rest of your local authority teams?

*This will be important to ensure that participating in the programme has a legacy beyond its life. Set out how you will ensure that learning is embedded across your LA.*

* + - * 1. Are you willing to join a peer network of other participating LAs to share learning and troubleshoot issues?
	1. What ideas do you have for sharing the learning from the Innovation in Democracy Programme with other (non-participating) LAs?

*We would like to hear ideas of how the learning from this programme could be spread to those LAs that did not get the opportunity to take part, and how you could contribute to this.*

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| **What we want to see:*** Plan for how the LA will share learning across different teams
* Commitment to joining the peer network
* Plan for sharing learning across non-participating LAs
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## Timetable

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| Invitations to Local Authorities for introduction workshops sent out | 26 October |
| Expression of Interest form for LAs published | 21 November |
| Introduction workshops for Local Authorities to introduce IiDP and help them to prepare their Expression of Interest | 23, 26, 27 November  |
| EoI form closing date for LAs | 4 January (23:59) |
| DCMS and MHCLG officials sift LA EoI forms | 7-8 January (tbc) |
| Meeting to decide which LAs will participate (DCMS, MHCLG, Democracy Support Contractor) | 10 January (tbc) |
| Ministerial sign off on decision of which LAs to participate | 18 January (tbc) |
| Announcement of successful LAs | 22 January (tbc) |
| Preparation for LA participatory democracy pilots; peer networking; training | January - March 2019 |
| Participatory democracy pilots; peer networking; training; sharing and disseminating learning across LAs nationally | April 2019 – March 2020 |

## State aid

Our funding is regarded as a state resource, so if it could give you a competitive advantage over other organisations offering similar services, it is likely to be deemed as State Aid and you will need to consider your State Aid position. There are exemptions for State Aid (e.g. de minimis) but these are applied on a case-by case basis.

Should you have any State Aid concerns, we recommend that you obtain a formal legal opinion in order to ensure your project is State Aid compliant. A legal opinion should set out:

1. How our funding would affect your (or other organisations) competitive or financial position in relation to other organisations providing similar goods or services
2. The amount of funding you’ve received in the last three years that was classed as State Aid and whether this was classed as de minimis.

For more information about State Aid visit the [State Aid website](http://www.gov.uk/state-aid).

##  Equality Considerations

Under the Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Bodies have a legal duty to assess equalities issues and consider the needs of all individuals in shaping policy and delivering services. Participating schemes should support DCMS in adhering to this duty.

For more information on the Public Sector Equality Duty visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty).

# APPENDIX A - Citizens’ Assemblies model



# APPENDIX B - Best practice guidelines for running Citizens’ Assemblies

## Random selection of participants

All members of a citizens’ assembly are selected by lot. Ideally, every member of the population eligible to take part in a citizens’ assembly should be able to potentially receive invitation to participate.

## Demographic representation

The composition of a citizens’ assembly should broadly match the demographic profile of the community participating in the process. A set of criteria may be used to ensure demographic representativeness of the group, like age, gender, geographic area, or others. The aim is to create a community in a small scale that “feels like us”. The size of the group should allow for inclusion of a wide diversity of views. A stipend should be provided to all participants to the amount that would at least cover the costs of attending the citizens’ assembly.

## Independent coordination

The citizens’ assembly is run by an independent team of coordinators, which is responsible especially for preparing the process of random selection, developing the agenda, and inviting experts and facilitators. If the citizens’ assembly is organized by local authorities or the parliament, it is important that all members of the coordination team are not part of the civil service. The coordinators should be impartial, e.g. not active politicians or direct stakeholders.

## Citizens’ assembly can invite experts

Despite the programme being prepared by the team of coordinators, the citizens’ assembly can invite additional experts of their own choice. This may be in the form of a speech in person, a video streaming, a recording, a written note or other.

## Inclusion of a widest practical range of perspectives

If there are diverse solutions and perspectives on a subject, ideally all of them should be presented during the educational phase of the citizens’ assembly (by expert speakers). A method of combining perspectives due to a limited time or other practical considerations may be applied. Presentations may have the form of a speech in person, a video streaming, a recording, a written note or other.

## Inviting all stakeholders

Any organization, informal group or an institution whose area of work and expertise is related to the topic of the citizens’ assembly has the right to present its opinion to the citizens’ assembly in person. The role of the team of coordinators is only to identify the stakeholders – they don’t make a selection. Due to limited time and a large number of stakeholders, a method of choosing their representatives may be used. In this case, a diversity of perspectives should be taken into account.

## Deliberation

Discussions which include listening to others mindfully and weighing options are the key elements of a citizens’ assembly. The programme should involve discussions in small groups as well as in the plenary in order to maximize opportunities to speak and to be heard. The deliberation phase should be run by skilled facilitators.

## Openness

All members of society should be able to provide input to the citizens’ assembly in the form of comments, proposals or suggestions.

## Sufficient time for reflection

Providing a sufficient amount of time for reflection is necessary to achieve well-thought-out decisions. If the matter is not urgent, it is best not to rush. The citizens’ assembly should be able to prolong its meetings – their length and number – if it chooses to do so (subject to budgetary limits).

## Impact

The follow-up to the citizens’ assembly’s recommendations should be clear from the outset. Ideally, recommendations that receive the support of the citizens’ assembly at an agreed threshold should be treated as binding (to such an extent that is legally permissible in the given situation).

## Transparency

All presentations during the educational, plenary phase should be transmitted live and recorded. All materials presented to the citizens’ assembly should be made available online. Clear information about how recommendations of the citizens’ assembly will be implemented should be provided online and updated as actions occur. A report presenting details of methodology used for organizing a citizens’ assembly should be provided by the coordination team.

## Visibility

Each citizens’ assembly is an important event in the life of a community and citizens should be informed that it is happening and information on how they can get involved and follow it should be provided. The citizens’ assembly should be publicly announced before it is formed.

Best practices guidelines taken from the [Citizens' Assemblies website](https://citizensassemblies.org/). The author Marcin Gerwin is on the Innovation in Democracy Programme Advisory Panel.

1. DCMS, ‘[Community Life Survey 16-17](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-2016-17)’ (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In your civil society speech on 16 May 2018, you (SoS) said: “Despite its enormous benefits, too many people feel globalisation is leaving their communities behind, and that they can’t do anything about it. We need to make sure that the independent UK that we are creating responds to that feeling. Deliberate action is required to help people take back control, not just of our national borders or our global trade, but of their own communities.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)