

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

6th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), 20 April 2022

Evidence Session: Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 20 April 2022 the Committee will take evidence from members of the Scottish Government's Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy (IPDD) Working Group on their recent report. The Committee will hear from a panel of representatives of that group: Dr Oliver Escobar, Fiona Garven, Kelly McBride, and Talat Yaqoob.

Background

2. The IPDD working group was established in Summer 2021. Its objectives were to:
 - define participatory and deliberative processes, including (but not limited to) Citizens' Assemblies
 - define standards, values and principles for their use
 - set out the aims, benefits and risks of using participatory and deliberative processes
 - identify methods of governance for delivering credible and trustworthy participatory and deliberative processes
 - set out for Ministers options for their routine use
 - provide an indication of the resources necessary (both within public services and in the wider community) to establish and deliver these routinely and sustainably

The working group's report

3. On 25 March 2022, the Scottish Government published [Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy \(IPDD\) Working Group: report](#), along

with [a supporting document](#). The report was published alongside the third version of [the Open Government Action Plan](#).

4. The report sets out a range of conclusions and recommendations for “how the Scottish Government's ambition for transformative change can be delivered to make Scotland’s democracy more participative and inclusive.” It defines key terms and sets out what the group sees as the benefits of this approach.
5. The supporting document “provides further information on the values, principles and standards that the IPDD Working Group recommends are collectively adopted”.

Issues for discussion

6. Members may wish to discuss:
 - The operation of the group
 - Definitions
 - The benefits of participatory and deliberative democracy
 - The group’s vision
 - Recommendations (summary in Annexe A)
 - Next steps and the Scottish Government’s response

Next Steps

7. The Committee has agreed to hear from George Adam MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, on the Scottish Government response to the report. That meeting will take place in June 2022.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe A

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations: Participation and Democratic Innovations

Early, Foundational Actions

1.1 Adopt values, principles and standards for institutionalising participatory and deliberative democracy.

1.2 Establish a Unit within Scottish Government with responsibility for Participation, including establishing Citizens' Assembly infrastructure.

1.3 Organise a children and young people's democracy symposium to co-develop a Citizens' Assembly for under 16s.

1.4 Organise a local government roundtable and work with local government to progress opportunities for participatory and deliberative democracy.

Current Parliament

2.1 Support upcoming reviews and legislation to embed participation and deliberation across the system.

2.2 Initiate the co-creation of a National Participation Strategy

2.3 Work towards improving training provision, including by establishing Scotland's Participation Academy, in partnership with academia, the public sector, and civil society.

Longer term ambition

3.1 Work towards establishing a National Centre for Participation in Scotland

3.2 Consider the proposals of the Citizens' Assembly on the Future of Scotland for new infrastructure associated with the Scottish Parliament

Recommendations: Citizens' Assemblies

Guiding Principles

- Long-term investment and guidance for democratic innovation.

- Good governance
- A central source of knowledge and
- Clear expectations on required commitment of contributors

1. Put in place infrastructure to deliver on commitments to run routine Citizens' Assemblies, starting with Citizens' Assemblies already scheduled by Scottish Government.
2. Support further work to develop the Citizens' Assembly for under 16s, building on the outcomes of a children and young people's democracy symposium.
3. Adopt the values, principles and standards set out in this report to underpin all future Citizens' Assemblies, and work to build a trusted system that supports and understands these.
4. Ensure development of annual Citizens' Assemblies are sponsored and organised by a practice-led Unit that has clear responsibility and can ensure continuity of approach across policy areas.
5. Collaborate with local government, public services and Parliament to establish and agree clear agenda setting guidelines for all Citizens' Assemblies.
6. Establish a common research framework to apply to all future Citizens' Assemblies, and ensure research is at the core of learning, monitoring and supporting the impact of democratic innovations.
7. Connect to the Scottish Parliament Committee system for scrutiny of Citizens' Assembly processes and recommendations.
8. Adopt the initial governance proposals set out in this report to provide reassurance on independence and an ethical and credible process, with commitment that governance for new democratic innovations will be set out in a National Participation Strategy.
9. Establish an Oversight Board, bringing in external expertise to review and guide democratic innovations.
10. For each Citizens' Assembly process, establish an independent and practice-led Secretariat with delegated authority to organise and deliver the process.