



THE CITY OF MADRID'S CITIZEN COUNCIL

ADVICE ON PROCESS DESIGN

newDEMOCRACY

ABOUT THE NEWDEMOCRACY FOUNDATION

newDemocracy is an Australian not-for-profit research group, with a particular focus on best-practice citizen engagement and innovations in democratic structures. Our goal is to deliver trusted public decisions. The core idea that we test is that trust will come from a role being played by everyday people in making important decisions that affect them.

newDemocracy explores and tests engagement methods that enable a **representative sample** of the community to deliberate and seek **common ground**.

By combining the four elements of **random selection**, the **provision of time**, access to **diverse sources of information**, and **independently facilitated forums** for dialogue, newDemocracy believes that a much more robust and **publicly-trusted outcome** can be obtained which can assist the City of Madrid in achieving public acceptance of **hard trade-offs**.

newDemocracy's research and advocacy is focussed on identifying less adversarial, more deliberative and more inclusive public decision-making processes.

newDemocracy's services are provided on a cost recovery basis – consistent with its structure as a not-for-profit foundation, with services provided pro-bono on occasion.

newDemocracy is not a think tank and holds no policy views. newDemocracy also commissions independent third-party research which occurs in parallel to the process in order to ensure robustness and to capture the potential for improvements to existing democratic processes.

ABOUT PARTICIPALAB

The Collective Intelligence for Participatory Democracy Lab is part of Medialab Prado, a citizen Lab in Madrid Destino. Madrid Destino is a public company owned by Madrid City Council. ParticipaLab is aimed at the study, development and practical application of participation processes that can foster **direct, deliberative and distributed democracy**. To this end, it analyses and design **hybrid participation processes that combine physical and digital spaces**.

ParticipaLab aims to contribute to fostering and strengthening a true participation culture in Madrid including **Decide Madrid** as the main tool. ParticipaLab works on how to make hybrid participation more inclusive, collaborative and intelligence and to help participants to reach binding goals.





1. WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE SOLVING?

Across Europe, there is an **absence of everyday people** contributing **substantively** to the decisions that shape the cities they live in, both now and into the future. Democracies are struggling to include everyday people in making trusted public decisions.

The City of Madrid has embarked on a path of major democratic innovation to solve this problem. Implementing the Decide Madrid electronic platform was one big step forward. A bottom-up, citizen-led initiative, it provides an open online platform for the generation and consideration of proposals generated by citizens. This process drew in everyday people but it struggled to make their contributions substantive enough to work as hoped, and to bring their contributions to a public referendum when they were substantive enough.

Without a visible and central role for **'people like me'** shaping their communities, it is impossible to accrue trust in decision making processes. Without trust - and without depth and time - city wide conversations **could** become systems of complaint and campaigning, fundamentally undermining anyone's ability to act with certainty or longevity. Campaigning takes money, so citizen and community processes are often just a veneer with large organisations behind them. It is important to ensure that Decide Madrid does not go down this path - as has happened to most 'citizen initiated' referendum platforms notably in the US.

Deliberative processes that include everyday people in making difficult trade-off decisions for their communities empower decision makers to **resolve problems, take longer-term decisions** and **ultimately restore trust**. Where measuring public opinion may result (for example) in people wanting remunicipalisation of water and sanitation services, with a deliberative process they will understand the economics and logistics required to support

that decision and then be able to make a considered public **judgment** informed by knowledge of the benefits and costs of different alternatives. With this feedback being driven by people clearly **outside** the system with no direct interest, the wider community has a greater likelihood of trusting what emerges, whichever direction it takes.

Today, difficult decisions are often not made, or else they are based on the whims of those most vocal and polarised on an issue. When everyday people are given time, information and authority to make decisions they are able to come up with specific, informed recommendations to specific challenges that would otherwise remain in a stalemate.

For many, the preferred strategy for involving people more directly in decision making has been to **widen the availability of direct participation** through popular petitioning and surveying. While these processes increase the exposure of everyday people to decisions, they also **raise significant problems** in making these decisions.

Decide Madrid, like all other online direct democratic models, has two general problems that are **not unique to the platform itself**, but to the approach of popular direct participation. First, these processes often draw on a self-selected group - limiting the scope of participatory diversity by hearing from the **loudest and most frequent voices** on any topic. Second, direct participatory models also struggle with information diversity - often proposals and recommendations from direct processes **do not draw from a wide variety of sources** or are simply under-researched.

These general problems lead to two more acute challenges with Decide Madrid. First, it is **too difficult to gather the required number of signatures for any given proposal**. Very few proposals have gathered enough signatures to go to a vote, even though many of them reveal genuine local concerns and offer real community insight to the City Government. This is a loss to

the city, and discouraging to the citizens who participate through Decide Madrid. Second, **many recommendations**, while well intentioned in nature, are **poorly informed**. Some of the proposals that have gathered enough signatures suffer from a lack of basic research, with the result that they could not be implemented – for example, a proposal on a subject that was not under the jurisdiction of the city, and another proposal that duplicated an existing law.

SOLVING THE PROBLEMS WITH DECIDE MADRID

To solve these issues with Decide Madrid, and improve the quality of democratic participation in Madrid more broadly, we have developed a deliberative process that combines the positive elements of direct participation with the strength of deliberation by randomly-selected representative groups of people.

The primary strength of Decide Madrid lays in its demonstrated ability to gather a breadth of proposals for improvements to the city. This diversity draws on the experiences of anyone spread throughout the city - something that is different to how political decision are typically canvassed. This is a valuable foundation.

While newDemocracy might not typically focus on direct mechanisms of democratic innovation, there is an opportunity here to find a balance between our core principles and the progress already in local innovation. This balance draws on the strengths of the two different approaches.

Open participatory processes **could just** provide an avenue for the direct inclusion of **public opinion** in considering possible trade-off decisions. Public opinion is useful for **issue identification** but because of how informationally shallow it is – it lacks the depth of knowledge to lift it from wish-list driven content to informative and actionable recommendations.

What is required to **make complex trade-off informed decisions** while including everyday people directly in making them is **public judgment**. Where public opinion measures the public's 5-10 minute response to a question or issue, public judgment is their 20-30 hour response after having access to information, critical thinking and deliberation with other diverse members of their community. This combination of time, information and deliberation produces a deep understanding of a topic and the nuanced trade-offs in making difficult public decisions.

Creating a process that focuses on public judgment not only improves the contribution everyday people can make as a complementary mechanism for elected political bodies. It will improve the experience of Decide Madrid for the people who use the platform itself: contributing citizens now get help by being heard by other people like them, and their proposals can be chosen for a public vote based on their merits, **not only** on the strength of a campaign.

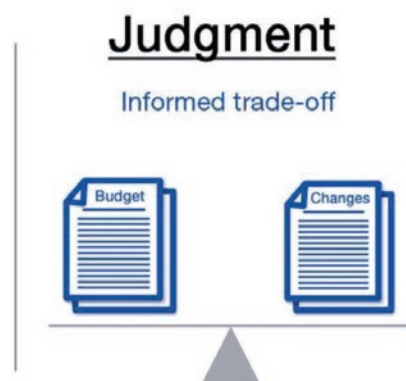


Currently, proposals on Decide Madrid are required to devote significant energy to a race to gather the required votes. **This means that there is a bigger incentive for marketing and campaigning for a proposal than there is for developing an informed and nuanced proposal.** By giving everyday people the time and knowledge to assess proposals on the quality of their ideas rather than campaigning for signatures there is a greater chance for those using Decide Madrid to be more genuinely heard and listened to. The offer to citizens is rebalanced in favour of informed ideas – not **only** campaigning.

Focusing on public judgment also provides an opportunity for proposals that are innovative and unique but do not have the informative substance supporting them to receive closer attention. The Council will be given the freedom to search through proposals on Decide Madrid and get further information to help improve or

substantiate proposals that they choose to focus on. This improves the experience of Decide Madrid for everyday people who may not have the time to do the research required for a proposal to be argued to completion. By allowing citizens to submit proposals that are innovative but require further thinking, Decide Madrid is able to draw on its strength in canvassing a diversity of views and ideas while being complemented by an informationally deep deliberative process.

By allowing the participants to contribute layers of information and nuance to already submitted proposals they improve the process for elected decision makers and everyday people using Decide Madrid. The proposed process enables substantively ‘good’ proposals to be considered without them having to campaign for signatures, while at the same time adding substance to innovative but brief proposals. Additionally, the Council will be able to draw on their own inspiration in an agenda setting



exercise of their own that gives them free roam to come up with issues or ideas outside of Decide Madrid (though it is likely that within the thousands of submissions to Decide Madrid that some foundation exists for any topic).

By producing recommendations that are **written entirely by everyday people**, deliberative processes combine the principles that informed Decide Madrid with local knowledge, diversity and a focus on common ground to create a **bridge** between innovative citizen-led proposals and informed recommendations to the legislative body. Bridging this gap between the people of Madrid and their elected representatives allows for **precise and understandable** community trade-offs to be paired with trusted long term decisions. It includes the everyday people of Madrid in substantively making decisions for their future.

ASPIRATION

The City of Madrid will deliver referendums in areas first proposed on Decide Madrid. Proposals are first explored and refined by a 57-person council of randomly-selected people of many different occupations and backgrounds who then ultimately make a group decision to proceed to referendum. As the voter opens their ballot, they are informed by a report of a single page of pros and cons for each proposal, written by the citizens of the Council as a trustworthy source to help them ultimately make their own considered decision.

The Council will also develop proposals of its own which will proceed to referendum.



2. AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO MORE

By harnessing the progress Madrid has made in democratic innovation and improving it, this process aims to take three other **bold steps** in expanding the level of participation for everyday people in trusted public decision making. These steps build on the work of the City of Madrid and the opportunity provided by establishing the Council.

First, adding the Council to Decide Madrid will **solve a long-standing, universal, and serious problem of direct democracy** – that proposals go to a referendum not based on the quality of their ideas, not based on considered public judgement, but on the effectiveness (and, often, funding) of campaigns. This will be a worldwide first.

Second, creating a standing citizens body that can develop its own proposals and send them to referendum **establishes a permanent role for everyday people** in making decisions for their city that is equal to El Pleno both visually and in substance – **something that has not been done before.**

Third, the Council will provide a working example of the potential for citizen-led deliberation to take on difficult decisions for the City. This example encourages El Pleno to first test, and then incorporate on an ongoing basis, **the use of issue-specific Citizens' Juries** when faced with politically difficult issues. This will significantly improve the ability for the elected representatives of El Pleno to make **trusted long term decisions for the City of Madrid.**

The non-partisan makeup of the Council, information diversity, time and critical thinking allow the group to come to an agreed **common ground** resolution to otherwise divisive issues.

The City of Madrid is taking a large step forward in democratic innovation by committing authority to a randomly selected group of everyday people from the community. Equipped with time, information and a focus on common ground, the Council will improve outcomes for both the elected El Pleno and the people of Madrid - while leading the world in democratic innovation.

These complementary roles for randomly selected everyday people in modern democratic processes improve the already established political systems by making them more trusted and able to act with conviction on difficult policy problems facing cities such as Madrid.

3. DESIGN CHALLENGES – WHY IS THIS HARD?

The design for this process must overcome three challenges inherent to an annually recurring citizen body on the scale of the City of Madrid's Citizen Council:

1. The variety of potential topics for this project is **incredibly broad**. This makes it difficult for **everyone** to become well informed on all aspects of the various topics. This in turn places a stronger emphasis on the prioritisation of specific topics and the quality of the briefing material. In bringing the participants up to speed on a number of topics in a way that includes enough depth to make informed decisions, the material must be presented in an understandable way so that time is not prohibitive to making informed decisions. To tackle this, the Council will work within the Decide Madrid platform to find common themes and issues that arise frequently enough to be seen as city wide issues. This provides a structure to the broad deliberations of the Council while maintaining the direct agenda setting power of Decide Madrid, and returns the emphasis to the quality of submissions rather than campaigning.

Additionally, meetings will operate in regularly-mixed small groups that **share the learning exercise**. This combination of diversification and

focus allows for participants to gain considerable depth of knowledge in an area of their interest, which they can **summarise in their own words** for fellow citizens, while getting nuanced insights from the other participants on different topics. This shared learning approach distributes the time and knowledge burden while retaining the required depth.

These decisions in dealing with the possible broad scope of proposals coming from both Decide Madrid and the Council itself are made to ensure that the Council is efficient. By including information on initial proposals, at no time will the Council be idle, waiting for information to continue their deliberation.

These decisions are made to ensure that the participants of the Council are able to gain considerable depth of knowledge in the subjects they are making recommendations while at the same time making these decisions in such a limited time frame. Without these restrictions, it is possible that the Council would either be hampered by a too-large workload or that their time would not be utilised optimally. Randomly selected participants are very different from self-selected participants, who tend to be more invested in a single topic, and as such their time will have a different limit.





2. A commitment of this time frame significantly increases the **difficulty of recruitment**. Requiring participants to be available for an entire year obligates people to plan longer than they might otherwise. In these instances, people tend to be non-committal rather than make long term plans. For this reason, it is even more important that participants see involvement in the process as worth the time investment and influential. People must feel like this process is worth making a year long commitment to, and that the commitment fits into their life without large compromises. Eight meetings should be considered a hard limit.

The project must clearly show that there is a visible and central role being played by everyday people in making decisions for Madrid, and this commitment must be reiterated throughout the lead in to the project.

3. Randomly selected deliberative mini-publics are unique in their ability to resolve fraught political issues. This sometimes means that there is a **temptation to give them a lot of difficult topics** in the hope they will be able to solve a lot of problems. However, deliberative process such as the Council take a lot of time and resources to come to a considered and informed conclusion on a single topic. When introducing different elements and purposes to a single group, there can be a **dramatic loss in the quality of engagement with any single topic in favour of a shallow engagement with many topics**.

For this reason, this proposal **encourages the creation of individual citizens' juries** on specific topics that require a level of depth that is beyond the time scope of the Council. This retains the singular focus of the Council on proposals and improving the citizen experience of Decide Madrid while at the same time addressing specific concerns of El Pleno, the Mayor or Councillors.

4. Given the diversity and specificity of the proposals on Decide Madrid and the possible topics that could be raised by the participants themselves, there is the danger of being **pulled down into the granular**: the infinite details of proposal-specific local street-level concerns for a long period of time. To avoid this danger, this process places emphasis on themes and the categorising of specific proposals or issues in a way that does not overload the Council with amending each specific issue but pulls them up to a city-wide perspective.

The Council also requires recommendations to be supported by a super-majority (80%) of the 57 Council members - the only exception being the most supported proposals on Decide Madrid at any given meeting (requiring only a majority). Again, this serves to raise the discussion away from the site-specific concerns of any individual interest group toward a principled discussion of how to treat general instances of concern and improve proposals more generally. In this way, the panel discussion is able to resolve specific issues with large group consistency because of the way they apply the same principles to problem solving.

4. WHAT DOES THE PROCESS DO?

This process will convene a randomly selected body of Madrid residents, who will:

1. Review the most supported proposals in Decide Madrid, and decide which ones can proceed to a popular referendum (without a campaign to gather enough signatures) and which ones need amendment
2. Develop proposals of their own which go to a public referendum.

A 57-person Council of randomly selected everyday people will meet on 8 Saturdays over 12 months. By dividing the task and encouraging mixing, people with different perspectives from all across Madrid will meet to discuss proposals originating from the Decide Madrid online platform, and identify additional issues that are important for the people of the city. This is an initiative focused on giving power to citizens.

These discussions will directly result in proposals and issues being sent to referendum, referred to their author for amendment (with considered suggestions) or rejected by the Council. **The Council will not make final decisions or recommendations on particular topics** – instead – the Council performs a sorting and prioritising function that adds additional substance to proposals arising from Decide Madrid, and also develops their own proposals. **This produces advice to the citizens of Madrid as to the pros and cons of particular referenda and improves the overall function of the Decide Madrid platform .**

The Council goes beyond typical deliberative processes in the way it ambitiously establishes a permanent role for everyday people in public decision making. The different aspects require a nuanced process that adapts for different information inputs and Council outputs, resulting in a fluid complementary role for everyday people - that is also very useful to El Pleno.

4.1. THE PROCESS

Participants are selected for the Council through a stratified (broad demographic match) random recruitment process operated by the City Government with oversight from newDemocracy and ParticipaLab. The participants are stratified demographically and geographically according to demographic data. This produces a panel that includes people from all walks of life.



They come together to answer these questions:

We need to select which of the most supported proposals in Decide Madrid should go to a city-wide referendum. What proposals should proceed?

What other issues should be brought to a city-wide referendum?

The participants all receive briefing material in the form an information kit produced by the City Government. The information kit contains:

- A summary of the top 40 proposals on Decide Madrid, with 1-2 pages covering each individual proposal. This section is the initial source of information for the participants – and works to inform the first round of information requests arising from the Council. While the Council may not address each of the top 40 proposals (only guaranteeing to address the **top** proposal), it enables the participants to be efficient and productive.
- A comprehensive list of reports published by the City Government on various areas of the municipal governance. These documents are the baseline information source that informs participants on what is happening in the City right now.
- An introductory summary from the City Government on the role of the Council and how its decisions will be used.

The participants must be able to distinguish for themselves what information they do and do not need. To help them do this, newDemocracy has developed **critical thinking skills training** that the participants will undertake at the beginning of their first meeting. This enables them to interrogate the information in the briefing kit and from experts, and the wider general information they may have picked up in everyday life, while also equipping them with the questioning skills to reveal gaps in their knowledge.

It is important for the participants to hear from a diverse range of sources when deliberating. This foundation of information is provided by a selection of experts who present to the participants on each day. These speakers are nominated by **the participants themselves** when asking for more information at any stage of the process.

The task of speaker nomination is to deliver a more diverse range of additional information than comes from Government alone. Inviting speakers provides an opportunity to incorporate views into the room that may not be already present. For this reason, it is important that speakers are balanced in their representation of a variety of views. One way to achieve this is to have speakers nominated in pairs, with the pairs known to offer differing viewpoints on an issue. Speakers are requested by the Council on a topic basis, ie. for a discussion on the topic of an incinerator; speakers from the operating company and community groups might be asked to present to provide a broad range of views. What is important here is that the decision to invite someone to speak is done by the participants themselves in a transparent way. Their decision is a response to the questions:

“What more information do we need? Is there any information or views we are missing? Who do we trust to inform us?”

Participants arrive having done some background reading and having had a briefing call (preferably with an external body from City Government) explaining the process and answering any background questions. This call is important in building a firm commitment from participants to the process - it should be a roughly 10 minute call that explains how the deliberative process will work and engages the participants in **their commitment to the entire process**.

4.2. DECIDE MADRID AS A TOOL FOR AGENDA SETTING

The Council will meet **eight** times. Each meeting shares a similar structure - it is fundamentally deliberative and relies on regularly mixed small groups to arrive at an agreed common ground. The one substantively different meeting is the final meeting. The Council will meet to discuss their entire work and pass each proposal and issue through a final agreement process.

The initial meetings are focused on the proposals arising from Decide Madrid or any additional issues that draw the attention of the Council. In this way, Decide Madrid is used as the initial inspiration for the Council to frame their own agenda setting around.

Proposals from Decide Madrid and proposals from the Council itself are treated differently throughout the process:

- 1. Decide Madrid** – reviewing proposals from residents. Regularly, the Council will study the **most supported proposal** in Decide Madrid and propose to accept, reject or amend it. Acceptance or amendment, with the author agreement, will take the proposal to a binding citizen vote of all citizens of Madrid. Rejection, or no agreement with the author, will keep the proposal on the website. Each time the Council resolves the most supported proposal, their attention turns to the next most supported proposal (at the next meeting). This ensures that the prioritisation role of direct democracy within Decide Madrid is maintained but balanced through the complementary role of the Council's deliberative consideration.
- 2. The Council** has the ability to create their own agenda to work on certain topics and submit their own proposals. This proposal submission process is informed by their free roam through Decide Madrid proposals. For example: after spending time reviewing proposals, they may decide that some action is needed on local green space rules. Rather than making individual proposals that address a specific street level need for green space, the Council might opt to combined a number of already existing proposals on Decide Madrid and produce their own proposal that contains a broader, city-wide solution. This again combines Decide Madrid's popular agenda setting function with the considered and informed Council process. In the last meeting, the Council will decide which of those proposals should be sent to referendum - each requiring an 80% super-majority threshold.

4.3. HOW THE COUNCIL OPERATES


Each Council meeting follows a similar structure.

The **first** meeting is primarily an introductory day with a heavy focus on introducing the process, establishing how the group will work together and ultimately how decisions will be made within the group. The purpose of this session is to introduce the City Government to the Council and answer any questions regarding the process and their purpose before beginning their year long term of service.

The panel hears an opening presentation from the City Government and the Mayor that includes a direct commitment to the outcomes of the process, establishes a direct connection between the Council and the El Pleno (the elected authority), and includes an explanation of why the process has been undertaken and the path forward for the work of the Council.

It is important that at this stage Council members are able to ask clarifying questions about their role in making decisions for the City. The pathway from their deliberation to El Pleno to referendum should be outlined, and the authority that they have emphasised. This not only provides clarity for the participants, but it invigorates their discussions with a sense of purpose. The Council can see what decisions they are able to make and the direct impact they will have on the City and the people of Madrid.

The plenary session then moves rapidly into small groups. Participants are broken up into their demographic and geographic stratifications so that they can get a sense of exactly who is in the room and also who is not in the room. In processes such as this one, there is an inability to be surgically precise with the numerous potential variables making up "representation." For this reason, we encourage each participant to act as both themselves as an everyday person and also as a member of their community or a voice for those who are not in the room.



After these exercises, the participants begin their critical thinking and biases skills training. This training is designed to encourage participants to think about and critique information, its source, and the context of all of their information. In this sense, participants are equipped to ask for new sources, further clarity or missing information from their deliberations.

The regular meetings bridge Decide Madrid and the City Government. The Council initially **focuses on the top proposal** in small groups, mixing regularly to hear perspectives from across the city. They are given an information kit prior to meeting, allowing them to immerse themselves in the various topics before deliberating in small groups. They then work in small groups to consider **all the proposals within Decide Madrid and any issues arising from within the Council** before making a whole Council decision on the categorisation of each different proposal or issue. These proposals are categorised by the group as either **Accept, Reject or Amend**:

- **Accept:** The Council recommends that the proposal is adequate and therefore may be subject to public voting through a public hearing.
- **Reject:** The proposal is not believed to be appropriate. This may be because the proposal is in the wrong jurisdiction, or essentially duplicates an existing law. Rejection is complemented with an explanation aimed at improving the proposal or explaining why the Council thought it unsuitable for a wider public vote.
- **Amend:** The Council may propose an amendment to the content of the proposal for improvement. If the amendment is accepted by the proposal author(s), the amended proposal will be submitted to public voting through a public hearing; if the amendment is not accepted, the proposal will continue on in Decide Madrid.

The group is given the freedom to explore any issue or proposal, providing the opportunity for the group to identify nuanced proposals that have not managed to successfully campaign for priority or issues that have not been raised on Decide Madrid at all.

At the beginning of each of the regular sessions, the Council addresses the top supported proposal on Decide Madrid. This is assessed once the a decision on the previously most supported proposal has been made.

These **Regular** sessions focus on regularly mixed small group exercises that reveal individual insights to the various proposals and issues before raising these at a whole-of-Council level to make a group decision on each proposals' categorisation. By operating this way, the Council is able to canvas all of the recommendations in a short period of time, while retaining a significant depth to their deliberations.

Participants will get a broad sense of what proposals are out there as they roam through Decide Madrid themselves, while also hearing a diversity of views in the room that ensure the group does not get stuck on any one particular 'street-level' issue.



Decide Madrid functions as an agenda setting tool for the participants in the way that many similar proposals are a heat-map indicator of their priority. As an example, many individual proposals of street-level local park requests may prompt the participants to address local parks at the city level by looking deeply and broadly rather than in a site-specific manner.

Wrapping up the process, the participants' work will be consolidated in a report consisting of their recommendations on each of the proposals they have worked on **at the final meeting**. The report is the compilation of the work the Council has done throughout the year – subject to a final vote and check through the final report. **Each proposal is addressed with an explanation of the decision reached and supporting rationale for why there should or should not be a referendum on any particular issue.** Any proposals that did not reach final group decision because the group did not reach the required threshold of support are

documented in 'minority reports'. These document the reason why the group did not reach agreement and the rationales for decisions for and against. The intent here is to reflect the room and demonstrate to the people of Madrid that the Council could not reach agreement and so did not make a recommendation.

Throughout the process the Council will produce vote guides on each of the supported referenda, written entirely by the participants, that form a bridge that helps inform the community on the nuances of each vote. These recommendations are **summary reports that highlight the case for a referendum** on a particular issue – raising supporting evidence for the need for a decision and any perspective the Council deems necessary both for and against. Each recommendation will focus on clarity of intent with guiding principles and rationale attached – and any supporting argumentation that the Council considers important to their argument.

4.4. WORKING IN SMALL, FREQUENTLY-MIXED GROUPS

The primary method through which participants will work together on each day is through frequently-mixed small group exercises. These allow each participant exposure and hands-on interaction with experts, other speakers and decision making. It is the central way the task is shared. By mixing the groups, there is a cross-pollination effect with information and perspectives, allowing for diversity of views to be heard by everyone, while maximising the number of interactions and information consumed at any one time.

After brief reintroductions to the task and working principles, the participants begin each day by hearing from the set of speakers. Initially these speakers are from the City Government, in each subsequent meeting, speakers have been requested from the Council themselves, to fill information gaps.

The Council works in small groups to develop questions for the speakers. This question exercise is the first instance of group decision-making in that not all questions can be answered, and the participants must settle on which questions are most pertinent. This is also the first application of their critical thinking skills.

Posing the questions to the speakers in a speed dialogue exercise (where each speaker rotates

between groups of 8-10 and answers specific questions in a short face-to-face setting) allows the participants to get more specific feedback to their questions and be more efficient with the information input to the panel (as the speakers are all contributing at the same time).

Throughout each day, the Council mixes and matches in small groups to discuss key insights and information gaps they have become aware of through the first information sessions with speakers (newDemocracy will provide templates for recording these insights and requests in the form of 'What do we need to know?' 'Who do we need to hear from?'). The next key decision the Council must make is nominating speakers and further information. These nominations originate in small groups of 8-10 before coalescing into larger and larger groups, 'bubbling up' the agreed upon nominations before the entire 57 member Council ultimately agrees on the nominations.

The purpose of these nominations is to address any perceived information gaps or gaps in the representation of sources. This process is fundamental to the autonomy of the group and contributes to both how the group works together and the trust they have in the process. Cynicism and declining trust in experts are countered by letting citizens select them.



The Council may not request speakers on every topic. There is limited time in their meetings and the purpose of hearing from more speakers is to fill information gaps. Therefore, the Council may only opt to hear new speakers on one or two topics from the variety they are considering.

At the conclusion of the first meeting, the City Government will have information and speaker requests from the Council on the issues the **citizens** have identified as the priorities arising from Decide Madrid and the issues presented to them through the State of the City introduction.

The City Government will be responsible for providing information from requested organisations and themselves as well as providing additional speakers. The sooner this information is acquired and relayed to the Council through an online platform, the better use the participants will be able to make of their information requests.

4.5. HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

The deliberative nature of this decision making means that a **standard threshold of 80%** agreement in the room is required for decisions on proposals that are 'out of sequence' (not the most supported at the time). There is scope for minority reports at the end of the process - this demonstrates the principles of 'reflecting the room'. This means that when making decisions and expressing them in citizen written reports, they should aim to describe the decision of the whole room. If there was a meaningfully large group that did not agree with the majority, while still meeting the 80% threshold, then this would be documented with rationale and evidence for why and would appear in the 1 page vote text jointly written by the Council.

When addressing the most supported proposal throughout the process, a unique express mechanism only requiring a simple majority of 50%+1 of the room is deployed. This draws on the principles of the direct democratic mechanism of Decide Madrid.

5. DELIBERATIVE ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Deliberative activities are designed around a core set of principles. These are outlined below:

- a. Clear Remit:** A clear, plain challenge or question is placed before a group. This neutrally phrased question goes to the core of the issues and provides a strong platform for discussion about the trade-offs.
- b. Information:** Detailed, in-depth information is provided to the participants to help them understand the dilemmas. A **diversity** of sources will be brought in to the discussion. By doing this the group can move beyond opinion to an informed and more balanced view. Not all participants read everything, but collectively an enormous amount is read, understood and shared in the conversations and decisions. Citizens will also spend extensive time asking questions and identifying sources they trust for the information they need.
- c. Representative:** A random sample of the community is actively recruited to participate. Simple demographic filters (age, gender, location) are used to help stratify this sample to represent broader demographics. In most public engagement, government does not hear from a representative cross section of the community.





- d. **Deliberative:** The processes are built to ensure maximum involvement from all participants: equal access to information and equal share of voice. It develops thinking from individuals, to smaller groups, then to the whole group. Issues are weighed up and discussed in various different exercises, aimed at approaching the problem from different ways, and given plenty of time before final recommendations are made. Time is a crucial factor for the deliberation, it is at the core of arriving at considered public judgement.
- e. **Influential:** The final recommendations must have weight. They need to be considered at the highest level of decision-making power and responded to directly. Some members will be asked to present their report and recommendations directly to the decision-makers to demonstrate the gravitas of the report and the participants' role.
- f. **Blank Page Report:** All deliberative processes enable the participants to prepare their own thinking and report 'from scratch'. We do not provide a draft position for review or ask for comments on a pre-prepared document. This is allowing people to review the evidence, discuss and dialogue about the options, actively negotiate with each other, and finalise a shared solution for their report.

These summary principles underpin the plan in this document.

6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION METHODOLOGY

SELECTION

The Council will consist of approximately 57 randomly selected citizens meeting for eight Saturday sessions spaced roughly evenly throughout the year (every 4-6 weeks).

The participant count is slightly fluid to allow for the demographic profile match to be maintained even if there is a shortfall in a single category. Some participants may drop out because of a number of circumstances. However, it is not possible to backfill once the process is underway. For this reason, with a group of 57 it is recommended that 62 are recruited. This approach places an emphasis on the quality of **descriptive** representation in selection, recognising that the more citizens can identify with individual participants, the greater the chance of having the wider community amenable to the content of the decision.

In order to achieve a descriptively representative sample, newDemocracy recommends using the three standard stratification variables of age (by 10 year bracket), gender and geographic locality (north city, south city, outside north and outside south).

This stratification is not claimed as a statistically perfect method, but it delivers a more representative sample than any other community process. The strength of this selection process lies in the wider community clearly seeing “people like me” in decision making positions. This kind of **descriptive** representation fosters trust in the **substantive** representation of the Council, and ultimately trust in its decision making.

WHY NOT MATCH TO VOTING INTENTIONS? HOW TO AVOID A SKEW.

Typically, participatory exercises have a skew toward particular types of people who want to be involved in citizen-led initiatives. This means that there is typically an **over representation** of people who vote left of centre. This is despite there being a **roughly equivalent desire for people from all sides of politics to be involved in making decisions.**

We find that this skew to those inclined to participate in numbers-based participatory exercises is removed when there is a **clear link to authority** and an emphasis on **common ground** decision making. When people are involved in something that is not a simple voting exercise, there is a stronger attraction for people who are interested in public decisions but **averse to polarising and adversarial debate.**

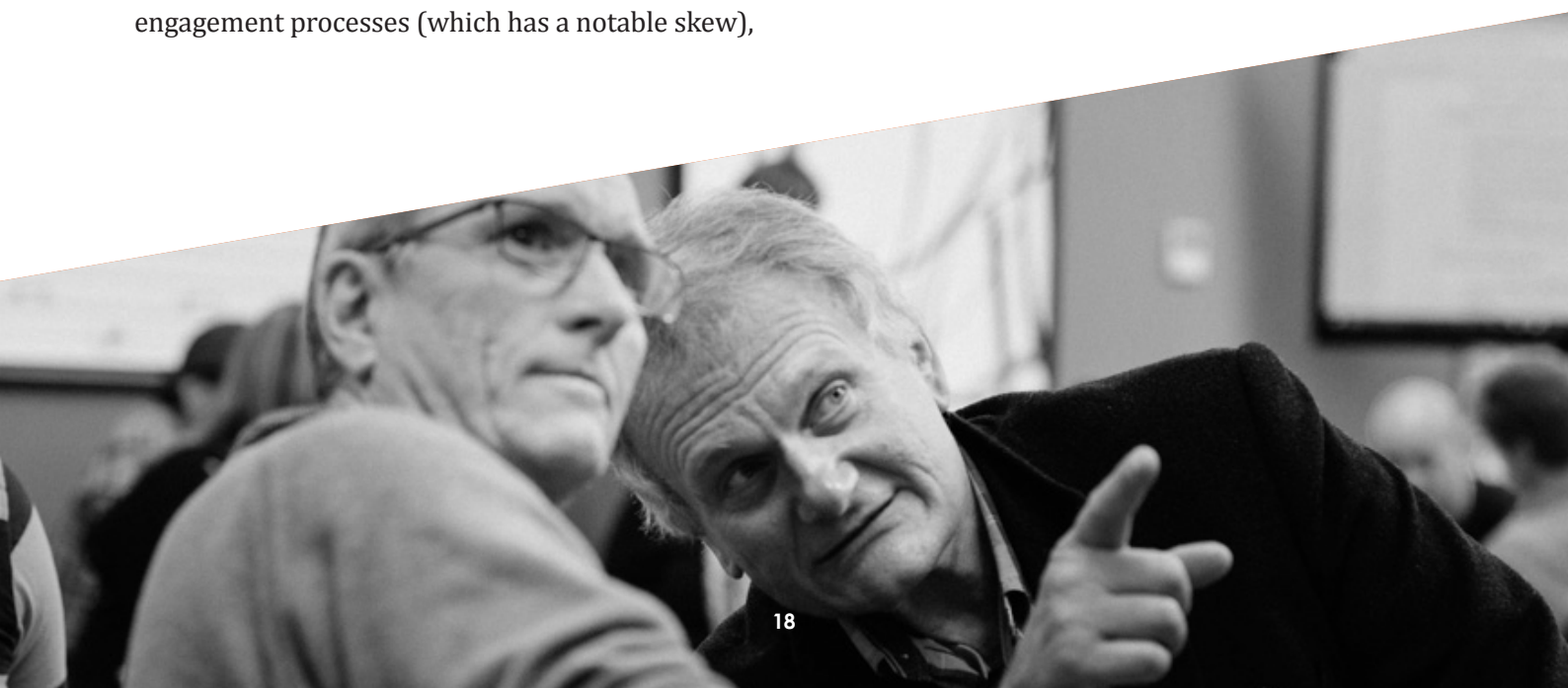
RECRUITMENT

To achieve the appropriate level of randomness in recruitment, it is necessary to avoid an overemphasis on connecting with those who are traditionally likely to opt-in to community engagement processes (which has a notable skew),

while also casting the net of invitations widely enough. Placing a strong emphasis on the role of retention of individuals by limiting the amount of reserves both ensures that each participant feels a stronger responsibility within the Council and improves the recruitment response rate.

To generate a sufficient pool of individuals from which to randomly select, newDemocracy recommends that a high-quality physical invitation is extended to a random sample of 20,000 Madrid residents. These invitations will be sent to random physical addresses, so as to not discriminate between those who own or rent their property. From this round of invitations, an expected response rate of 3% will return a pool of approximately 600. The size of this pool in combination with random selection sufficiently dissolves concerns of the narrowness of the reach and any possible skew that might entail. When combined with the stratification parameters outlined above, the risk of an inherent self-selection skew within the sample is negligible. Any minor imbalances are reduced again by the supermajority rule for decision making.

The invitations will carry the authority of El Pleno, emphasising the remit and commitments made by the City Government to the authority of the Council’s final recommendations. We will also emphasise the independence of the selection process as outside the control of City Government, placing an emphasis on the Council’s ownership of the project. This link to democratic reform and participant autonomy is crucial to capturing participant interest; it builds upon latent social disaffection with public decision making by reinforcing the uniqueness of this opportunity.



These invitations should be used to explain and step participants through the process when asking the recipient to confirm availability for selection. This exercise in personal communication establishes a relationship between the Council's operators and the participants – emphasising the independence of the process and the role of the participants.

Interested participants will register online with the City Government to indicate that they are available for the final selection (as a fall back, City Government will also provide a phone number for people who prefer to respond by phone). This registration process involves collecting relevant stratification data. Based on the registrations received, the stratified random draw will be conducted by newDemocracy, seeking to randomly match to the demographic stratification drawn from the Census. The sample drawn will be contacted by email seeking a confirmation in writing from the participants, and City Government will additionally contact each participant by phone prior to the first meeting to build a strong personal commitment to participating, noting that once underway we cannot backfill for non-attendees.

Just as in criminal juries, payment of per diems is strongly advised to avoid excluding participants who may find participation difficult through hardship: this is proposed as **€100 a day per participant**. Invitations will clearly note that this payment will be made for time, and that **meals** are provided at the weekend meetings.

7. PREPARATION AND INFORMATION

Information and judgment are required in equal parts to reach decisions. While the judgment of randomly-selected groups has been shown to achieve very high levels of public trust, it is imperative that the method of provision of information does not erode that trust. There must be a diversity of sources from all points of view. With that in mind, there will be three key sources of information to inform the deliberations of the Council:

1. A baseline-information kit provided by the City Government. Written in plain language, this outlines the base information required for each session. It should candidly provide essential baseline information. This should not be a brochure, rather it should err on the side of providing **too much detail** rather than too little. Specifically, the City Government should identify the key points that proposals are asking for recommendations or action on. As the information kit is the **primary resource** for the participants – it is crucial that the information clearly **shares the problem** at hand without shying away from detail or data.

It should contain:

- a. A summary of the top 40 proposals on Decide Madrid, with 1-2 pages covering each individual proposal. This section is the initial source of information for the participants – and works to support the first round of information requests arising from the Council. While the Council may not address each of the **top** 40 proposals (only guaranteeing to address the top proposal), it enables the participants to be efficient and productive.

- b. A comprehensive list of reports published by the City Government on various areas of the municipal governance. These documents are the baseline information source that informs participants on what is happening in the City right now.
- c. An introductory summary from the City Government on the role of the Council and how it's decisions will be actioned.

newDemocracy can provide examples of how these kits have been prepared for projects elsewhere.

- 2. Central to the open, non-leading nature of what we do is to simply ask participants **“What do you need to know and who do you trust to inform you?”**. This question will be posed to participants by the facilitator as part of their deliberations. The participants will draw on the stakeholder nominations and their own perspectives to request specific speakers to inform them at later stages of the Council's meetings as they work to decide which proposals should proceed to referendum. Similarly, the Council will be able to request answers to their questions from the City Government and from the wider community. After their first two meetings of the Council, they will be tasked with a refined version of the question – **“What more do you need to know to make an informed decision?”**.
- 3. In the room, the participants will need to be able to sort through different proposals in real time. It is recommended that this is done through the use of laptops or iPads (one per small group). Ease of access to this information will allow the groups to work through the content of proposals in prioritisation tasks faster, in turn allowing for them to get through more content.





8. THE ROLE OF CITY GOVERNMENT

First, the Government is required to **pre-commit clear authority** to the process. This involves a commitment to publicly respond to recommendations where needed, to send issues to referendum when asked, to be responsive to information requests, commit to action on recommendations where required both throughout and at the conclusion of the process, and ultimately demonstrate responsiveness to the recommendations of the Council.

The City Government maintains the current referendum commitment that exists with Decide Madrid. However, it is improved with higher quality proposals being fast tracked through the existing mechanism, based on their quality rather than the campaigns for them. This builds upon the innovation and commitment already existing and improves it.

Second, the City Government is in the unique position of operating the Council while at the same time being the subject of the Council's inquiry. This means that extra care should be taken to maintain as much transparency as possible throughout the process. Without an independent operator – maintaining trust in the process through clear and

regular transparency is mandatory. This means that this design, all the processes that the City Government operates, and the information requests and actions from the Council must be public in an easily accessible online environment.

Throughout the process, ParticipaLab and newDemocracy will lend independent advice, including this document, throughout the Council process in cooperation with a facilitation team. This role covers the conversion of the design into practice by regularly communicating with the facilitation team and observing the process.

Trust comes from citizens being free to write and respond in their own words – governments must be prepared to respond to any proposal and give their own rationale when rejecting a decision or recommendation. For this reason, the City Government must be prepared to allow the Council to write their own recommendations and respond to them publicly and completely.



9. OPERATIONAL DESIGN

There are five critical actions required regarding the design and preparation of this process:

- **Facilitator** – It is fundamental to the process that, from the outset, a facilitator that is capable of running a **task-based deliberative design** is included in discussions of the project. They should be given this document and the supporting Operational Detail.
- **Recruitment** – This process takes 45 days from the sending of invitations through until the completion of recruitment. Invites also have a significant design lead time, because they must be a high quality product. **See section 6 for details.**
- **Information Preparation** – The information kit has the most significant lead time of all the components. It should be started immediately to allow for as much information to be included as possible. **See section 7 for details.**
- **In-room Facilitation** – In the room facilitation is crucial to the success of the process. The facilitation team should be given this document and the supporting Operation Design and be in regular contact with newDemocracy to explain and develop exercises that adhere to the design. **See Part 2. Operational Design for details.**
- **Time** – This design reaches a delicate balance between providing enough time for the Council to reach decisions without requiring a commitment so intensive that it would reduce recruitment quality. It is important that any decision to add time to the process is ultimately made by the participants themselves, like any other group decision.

This design will outline the facilitation task and newDemocracy will be available to go through the specifics of the process.

The Council will meet **8 times** over the course of the year with 4-6 weeks between each meeting. These meetings will vary on topic within the following draft schedule:

Meeting 1 – Mid September

Meeting 2 – Late October

Meeting 3 – Late November

Meeting 4 – Early January

Meeting 5 – Early February

Meeting 6 – Mid March

Meeting 7 – Mid April

Final Meeting – Late May

The meetings follow the same operational detail generally. They are all deliberative processes that focus on small group exercises and information interrogation before merging into large group decision-making exercises. The meeting types differ in the type of information they supply to the Council.

10. PROJECT OUTCOMES AND INTENDED BENEFITS

This project seeks to deliver to the City Government – and the people of Madrid – a considered and **informed view on the future of Madrid** after learning and discussing the city’s agenda, proposals originating from Decide Madrid and addressing specific concerns raised by the El Pleno. This includes the following outcomes and benefits:

- The Council will produce informed decisions about whether to accept, reject, or amend proposals coming in the Decide Madrid platform.
 - Proposals that are **accepted** will go to a vote without gathering more signatures. This will solve the first problem with Decide Madrid - that it is too hard for many good proposals to gather enough signatures.
 - Proposals that are **amended** or **rejected** will go back to their authors for improvement. This will solve the second problem with Decide Madrid – that some proposals that gather enough signatures have “fatal flaws;”
- The Council will also develop its own proposals on important issues that are not adequately addressed through the proposals in Decide Madrid;
- **The Council will provide citizen written reports on specific proposals advising why issues should go to referendum with, rationale and supporting evidence that will inform voters;**
- Voting information produced by trusted everyday people with access to time and a diversity of experts will lead to a vote informed by citizens and not professional advocates or campaigners;

- All this will contribute to a wide public sense that the people of Madrid can not only be heard, but also have a meaningful and substantive input in decisions for the future of the city.

This collective view will be generated by a group of everyday people who weigh competing viewpoints, integrate information and inputs, explore common ground and reach a clear statement of support for different principles and options.

This process cannot be influenced by a single person, interest group, financial interest or identity.

Proceedings will be open, materials will be published online and the participants recommendations and statements will be immediately public. In short, this will be the most transparent city-wide conversation we can design. This design itself must be shared prior to the commencement of the group’s deliberations.

The City Government and El Pleno should expect to receive **a strong connection between the people of Madrid and the issues put to referendum**, improving citizen involvement in the important decisions for their city.

This process document is public and freely available in order to clearly answer questions and concerns that the community perceives engagements are manipulated. Community members who identify concerns are encouraged to contact newDemocracy’s Executive Director (iain.walker@newdemocracy.com.au), Project Lead (kyle.redman@newdemocracy.com.au) or ParticipaLab’s Yago Bermejo (iagobam@gmail.com).



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