

## Deliberative and Participatory Processes – Weekend 4 Recap

At the end of the Weekend 4 (13-14 November), some members asked for greater clarification about deliberative processes. This document provides a summary.

### Deliberative Processes

‘Deliberation’ involves thinking carefully about an issue. It means listening to and weighing up different arguments and points of view before coming to an overall conclusion. It is different from ‘debate’, where each side of the argument tries to win, and there is little attempt to come to a balanced view.

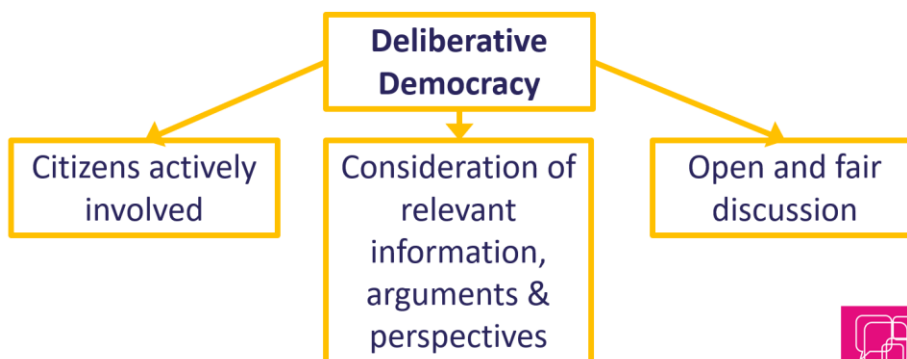
‘Deliberative processes’ are ways of organising discussion and policy-making in order to encourage deliberation. A citizens’ assembly, like the one in which you are currently participating, is an example of a deliberative process.

A ‘deliberative democracy’ is a democratic system in which deliberative processes play an important part.

Deliberative processes are based on the idea that people should have access to balanced and accurate information about an issue, hear what other people think, and have time to think through their own views. The aim is to reach better-informed decisions. This slide below, from Jamie Pow’s [talk](#) at Weekend 4, sets out some guiding principles.

## Deliberative & Participatory Approaches

The idea that democracy is about much more than voting in elections – it’s also about *how* decisions are made every day.



As Jamie said, deliberative processes are generally designed in similar ways. Members are selected at random, with the group representing the relevant population as a whole. Members then have the opportunity to learn about and discuss the issue under consideration, before coming to recommendations as a group.

## **Participatory Processes**

Another way in which the public can get involved in democracy is through 'participatory processes'.

Like deliberative processes, these encourage citizens to get involved in policy-making. But there are important differences. Unlike in deliberative processes, in which participants are randomly selected so as to be representative of the wider population, anyone who wishes to take part in participatory processes can do so. In addition, participatory processes tend to place less emphasis on careful deliberation.

An example of participatory democracy is 'participatory budgeting', a process in which the public can decide how a portion of public money is spent, normally at the local level.