Making decisions real: designing artefacts to enable democratic localism and inform approaches to participatory policy making

Cara Broadley & Brian Dixon

Published online: 16 Mar 2026.

Submit your article to this journal 🗗

View related articles 🗗

View Crossmark data 🗗

Making decisions real: designing artefacts to enable democratic localism and inform approaches to participatory policy making

Cara Broadley [a] and Brian Dixon [b]

aSchool of Innovation and Technology, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, UK; bBelfast School of Art, Ulster University, Belfast, UK

ABSTRACT

Participatory governance and policy making are gaining momentum globally, with design approaches supporting the development of novel processes and outcomes. Focusing in on the potential of participatory design approaches in particular, this article advances notions of design as a mode of intervention that can be mobilised in response to legislative assets and deficits in specific policy landscapes. This is explored through a case study drawn from an ongoing programme of design research investigating the potential of participatory design in the political context of Scotland. Reflecting on this case with reference to the democratic vision of the pragmatist American philosopher John Dewey, the core argument is that if such efforts are to yield meaningful results, institutions require agile and flexible approaches to design. It also proposes that the way forward is not a universal solution, but a strategic response defined by critical reflection on existing legislative and policy instruments. We emphasise the importance of designing infrastructure that facilitates dialogue and collaboration between governments and communities. This allows for a final set of proposals relating to design's potential contribution to policy *making*, specifically relating to the role it can play in influencing how legislation is implemented, evaluated, and, ultimately, reimagined.

1. Introduction: bridging policy and participation – design, democracy, and localism in action

Participatory approaches to governance are gaining momentum globally – not in isolation, but as a response to deepening democratic challenges. Rising public disaffection with political institutions, growing polarisation, and backsliding in democratic norms have led to widespread concern about the legitimacy, inclusivity, and effectiveness of existing governance systems (Campos et al. 2024; Escobar and Bua 2025). At the same time, participatory and deliberative innovations have emerged as efforts to reimagine democracy from the ground up, offering new

ways for citizens to shape collective decisions at national, regional, and local levels (Bussu et al. 2022; Trettel 2021; Warren 2025). These approaches do not displace representative democracy but seek to complement and reinvigorate it by creating feedback loops between communities and the state, particularly in contexts where institutional trust has eroded.

Within this, it has been identified that the application of design in policy development presents opportunities for innovation which can address complex issues and integrate diverse experiences and expertise, as well as shift mindsets and practices amongst stakeholders and publics (Hillgren, Light, and Strange 2020; Kimbell et al. 2023; Salinas 2022). In this article, our focus is directed to the potential of participatory design (PD) in particular; a form of collaborative design which requires a deep commitment to democratic practices. In aiming to understand how PD can enhance approaches to enable and enhance meaningful decision-making at local levels – that is, to support democratic localism – we examine how the processes and practices of implementing legislation are informed by the underpinning political landscape, with its ingrained cultural perceptions and perspectives of *what it means to participate*. This is specifically explored in the Scottish policy context where legislation, in the form of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), now mandates participatory and deliberative processes be enacted at local levels (Escobar 2022).

The article begins by setting out the context of participatory governance, outlining developments at the nexus of design and policy and the potential for PD to strengthen democratic localism. Here, we draw alignment to the democratic vision of the late American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. Then, following on from a discussion of the Scottish policy context, we present our case study and here detail our three-phase approach. The phases included the following: a series of community-based PD workshops, evaluations, and dissemination of outcomes; semi-structured interviews with Public Service Authorities; and thematic analysis and road mapping policy recommendations and creative strategies for implementation. This work surfaces a series of challenges, gaps, and opportunities surrounding the implementation, uptake, and impact of Participation Requests – a mechanism within the Community Empowerment Act established to support participatory governance at a local level. While Participation Requests hold democratic potential, their limited and uneven implementation risks reinforcing perceptions of tokenism and undermining confidence in participatory governance. This article critically explores both the structural constraints and enabling conditions that shape the realisation of such mechanisms in practice.

Reflections on the research inform a series of proposals for consideration and provocation aimed at those working at the intersection of policy design and implementation. Through these proposals, we foreground how PD approaches and artefacts can align with existing democratic innovations to translate complex legislation and formal policy guidance into meaningful practices and outcomes. In conceptualising relational modes of governance and their material drivers, this discussion of findings coalesces in a final general proposal which positions PD as a potential programmatic enabler of an always-ongoing participatory policy making.

2. Contextualising participatory policy making and design

The global rise of participatory governance and policy making, as key mechanisms of participatory democracy, has sparked growing discourse on their impact and effectiveness. Michels and De Graaf (2010) explore how public involvement can enhance democracy by including citizens in policy processes, fostering civic virtues, enabling rational decision-making, and legitimising outcomes. Trettel (2021) underscores that subnational engagement between citizens and governments fosters more inclusive and sustained participation, though scale remains a critical challenge. Bussu et al. (2022, 138) argue that local government forums effectively address immediate community issues, highlighting opportunities for innovative approaches to participatory governance. This leads to the challenges of scale and opportunities for innovation therein.

2.1. Challenges proliferating scales and contexts, and opportunities for innovation

Richardson, Durose, and Perry (2019) conceptualise a set of three tyrannies that encompass the shortcomings of participatory governance, namely the challenges of obtaining authenticity in non-elected representation, assumptions about leadership models and their democratic capacity, and tensions pertaining to 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' debates. Framings of participation as a mode of protest by citizens on the one hand, and a badge of honour to virtue signal by governments on the other, are articulated by Holum (2023). While such actions may reappropriate the democratic intentions of participatory governance, its practice and impact are fundamentally informed by constituent relational and contextual factors. Fung (2015) adds to this critique by outlining three core challenges to citizen participation: the scalability of local interventions, the risk of tokenistic inclusion, and the potential for participatory initiatives to exacerbate inequalities, if not carefully designed.

In reflecting on the challenges and successes of scaling local interventions and institutionalising participatory governance, Bua and Escobar (2018) indicate an onus on policy workers to reflect upon underpinning design factors and contextual factors and envisage democratic innovations that at once adapt with and advance established political structures and systems. Fung (2015) aligns with this view, advocating for participatory governance structures that are both flexible and adaptive to varying scales of decision-making. Developing this, Escobar (2022) highlights the mediatory and negotiatory skills essential for democratic reformers operating within institutionalised contexts, as well as the need to address power dynamics. In parallel, Bua, Bussu, and Davies (2023) further situate democracy-driven governance as rooted in social justice principles, explicitly designed to challenge traditional functional modes of participatory governance.

Distinctions, however, in the origins, enactment, and flow of participatory governance are not static, but instead deeply context-dependent and dynamic. The extent to which participation is meaningful and its impacts are felt depends on a range of factors. Agential variables, such as political leadership and civil society engagement, and institutional variables, including local autonomy and the socio-economic context, play significant roles in shaping the outcomes of participatory processes (Bua, Bussu, and Davies 2023, 171). Fung's (2015) analysis further underscores that participatory governance

must grapple with tensions between representation and deliberation, advocating for mechanisms that build trust among citizens and between citizens and state actors. In this light, democratic innovations need to be not only participatory but also responsive to the evolving political and social landscape (Dryzek 2000; Escobar 2022). The practice and presence of democratic innovations globally raises crucial questions concerning the conditions needed to embed authentic and resilient forms of democracy amid proliferating national political uncertainties. This is where we may recognise the potential of design in the context of policy making.

2.2. Design and policy to enable public participation in local democracy

The above debates foreground the need to understand the scope, impact, and distinctiveness of design in enabling public participation in local decision-making, as well as the skills and capabilities of designers working across governmental contexts to affect positive societal change. DiSalvo (2022) argues that design's role in democratic processes goes beyond problem-solving; it actively shapes the conditions for collective participation and dialogue. This aligns with the broader notion of design for policy, a term that has gained traction globally since the late 2010s (Whicher 2020; Whicher and Swiatek 2022), including within the UK – though its usage and implications have been subject to critical reflection in more recent work (Kimbell et al. 2022, 2023; Richardson et al. 2025). Design approaches present both opportunities for methodological innovation – to address complex societal issues and integrate diverse perspectives – and the risks of decontextualisation and de-politicisation of practice, particularly when there is limited engagement with political science discourse (Kimbell et al. 2022).

Greater clarity is still called for, however. Vaz, Koria, and Prendeville (2022) highlight gaps in understanding the relationship between policy design and design for policy. They examine the extent to which design frames problems from a governance perspective and explore potential means by which connections can be made between groups and across levels. This potential is further supported by PD and the systemic design frameworks developed by Blomkamp (2018), which focus on the role of design in facilitating the deep integration of stakeholders, addressing power dynamics, and supporting co-production processes that are foundational to democratic innovation. Escobar's (2022) work on participatory governance underscores that design's role extends beyond technical problem-solving, enabling a collaborative process where marginalised communities actively shape policies and decisions that affect them. Design, in this context, can serve to mediate power relations and promote social justice, aligning with Bua, Bussu, and Davies (2023), who argue that the social justice principles embedded in democracy-driven governance can reshape power structures and amplify diverse voices.

Such a vision of design aligns with Kimbell (2023) articulation of three key relationships between design and policy making. First, they argue that design is used to shape policy agendas by framing issues and articulating problems in ways that resonate with public concerns. Second, design can act as a mediator in the policy process, facilitating collaborative engagement between stakeholders to align diverse interests and foster consensus. Third, design can support policy enactment, helping to implement solutions in ways that are responsive to local needs and contexts. Kimbell et al.'s framework is particularly relevant here, as it emphasises the need for critical reflection on how design

interacts with political and social contexts and how power dynamics are navigated throughout the policy process. This critical engagement with the political and social contexts, as Kimbell et al. (2022) suggest, is essential to avoid design's potential de-contextualisation or de-politicisation, ensuring that it remains a democratic force that promotes equitable and just governance systems. Reflecting on Dore's (2023) examinations of community participation in local decision-making through the lens of governmentality, co-design and PD can be seen as instruments to curtail and constrain deliberation, operating effectively to bolster centralised state power. While this may be so, with its 'negotiation-based dynamic' (Vaz, Koria, and Prendeville 2022, 422), design can also be seen to carry the capacity to inspire and inform both the 'technologies of governance' (Dore 2023, 14) and technologies of democracy.

In navigating this in the present article, we draw alignment with prior work on the interrelatability of the late American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey and PD's political positioning (Dixon 2020a, 2020b, 2023; Dixon, McHattie, and Broadley 2022). Here, we highlight how Dewey's proposals for stronger democracy – interlinking the ambitions of empowering citizens; promoting democratic dialogue in everyday civic contexts and large-scale problem-solving grounded in experimentation (Dewey 1927) – can be seen to conform to PD's general capabilities and agenda. This contrasts with structural understandings of democracy, which foreground parliamentary and cyclical electoral systems (i.e. one votes for representatives). The vision underlying these proposals ultimately centres communities, linking them relationally and equitably to the institutions of government via broad-ranging programmes of research-based engagement; a 'creative democracy' driven by a sustained relating and mediating the actions and intentions of citizens and communities on the one hand, and policy workers and governments on the other. Dewey saw this as an always-ongoing project that would never reach completion but, rather, would evolve alongside the emergence of specific social and political needs. It would be process-based, with citizens/communities and institutions/governments maintaining their dialogue over time, building, and responding to needs together, cooperatively. In the long term, this would support empowerment, enable the development of better, more robust institutions, and ultimately shape a stronger democracy (Dixon 2020b). While PD clearly holds the potential to support and potentially even underpin such work, the possible scope and, indeed, impact of design in such support/underpinning remains unclear. Drawing out further insight here is thus essential to defining the extent to which PD, and more generally design can help shape effective forms of local, process-based democracy.

In seeking to progress this, we have applied PD in the Scottish Policy context, here linking to an existing mechanism of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), referred to as the 'Participation Request'. This work, as we shall see, has allowed for the identification of a series of proposals outlining how the material, deliberative, and democratic tenets of PD can advance more equitable and relational modes of governance at local levels.

2.3. Participatory policy making and governance in Scotland

In Scotland, legislation supports and mandates for institutionalised processes that broadly aim to promote participatory governance at local levels and contribute to

embedding democratic decision-making nationally. Such policy intent is demonstrated by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), which aims to support community participation in planning, public service delivery, and development processes (The Scottish Government 2015, 2017). As part 3 of the Community Empowerment Act and a point of focus for the case that follows in this article, Participation Requests function as a mechanism that allow organised communities – here referred to as *Community Participation Bodies* – to actively enter into dialogue with *Public Service Authorities* about local issues and services 'on their own terms'. In doing so, a Community Participation Body requests that an *outcome improvement process* be launched with a relevant Public Service Authority in order that a specific local challenge be addressed (The Scottish Government 2017, 8).

Recognising an upsurge in ambitions to embed participatory governance in Scotland, Bennett et al. (2022, 2–3) suggest that PRs can be understood as a form of *governance-driven democratisation* (Warren 2009, 3) – a legal tool characterised by a prescriptive centralised process that can, in turn, limit inclusive participation and deliberation. With an emphasis on the needs and aspirations of residing communities, M. Jones and Woods (2013) propose that approaches to local decision-making are aligned to a place-based policy agenda. While participatory governance strategies rooted in democratic localism can be seen as advancing deliberative dialogue concerning effective policy delivery, their institutionalised status foregrounds critical questions pertaining to their capacity to uphold political rhetoric and enable governments to push state responsibility onto citizens (Buser 2013; R. E. Jones 2024; Markantoni et al. 2018). Crucially, in their examinations of Participation Requests and their efficacy, Steiner, McMillan, and Hill O'Connor (2022, 2) underline the conceptual and pragmatic challenges evoked by entangled notions of empowerment and co-production as participatory approaches to address local issues, and desirable outcomes of democratic localism in and of themselves. It is within space that the potential of PD was explored.

3. Methodology and approach

3.1. Understanding participation requests through participatory design

The research that this article draws from was conducted over the course of 3 years and was supported by the Carnegie Trust from March 2020 to March 2022, followed by research commissioned by the Scottish Government from August 2023 to February 2024. Whilst the objectives and outputs of both these projects differed, they are positioned sequentially in this article as a programme of participatory research exploring the efficacy of local decision-making opportunities afforded through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), with a focus on the role and capacity of PD approaches and artefacts to support deliberative dialogue and meaningful outcomes for both communities and the public sector.

Methodologically, these projects are informed by Participatory Action Research as a framework that can support community dialogue, action, and reflection, as well as collective expertise and learning to develop new knowledge (Howard and Somerville 2014). In seeking to harness lived experience, innate human creativity,

Figure 1. Understanding participation requests – three-phase research approach. 2024. Cara Broadley.

and the relational qualities of material artefacts as a basis for reimagining policy challenges, the methods employed are informed by PD's democratic and political commitment and its challenging of existing power structures (Broadley and Dixon 2022).

The overarching aim of the research was to investigate how Participation Requests can be made more effective for democratic localism across three programme phases comprising PD, data collection, and thematic analysis (Figure 1).

The first phase of the research examined how PD can support Community Participation Bodies and Public Service Authorities in the preparation, submission, and implementation of Participation Requests. Twelve representatives from Community Participation Bodies who had previously submitted a Participation Request responded to the call for participation. Phase 01 was characterised by a series of seven interactive workshops applying a range of PD methods, which made use of both digital and analogue strategies and artefacts. These methods were used in different ways across the workshops to elicit, synthesise, and reimagine experiences of Participation Requests. Mapping exercises enabled participants to visually deconstruct and reflect on journeys, stakeholders, and networks, helping them to explore their experiences and situate Participation Requests within broader local contexts and organisational relationships. Interactive probes, including word association activities, prompt cards, and reflective worksheets, enabled participants to surface and cluster shared insights, clarify differing interpretations of key terms such as *participation* and *outcomes*, and generate emerging themes. These tools supported critical reflection on the meanings of key concepts, helping to reveal how they were understood and experienced differently across communities and institutions. These

insights then informed a series of generative making activities, in which participants co-developed ideas through visual storytelling, sketching, and low-fidelity prototyping. Each method supported different forms of engagement from grounding perspectives and surfacing challenges to exploring new possibilities and articulating design directions. As they explored their individual and collective experiences of Participation Requests, community representatives took on the role of co-designers, collaboratively generating ideas, concepts, and artefacts towards developing a prototype Participation Request Toolbox. This aimed to support Community Participation Bodies to engage more effectively with Participation Requests, enhancing their capacity to influence and inform both the process and its outcomes. Throughout phase 01, data was gathered through transcriptions of audio recordings, written responses to creative activities (via interactive whiteboards), and visual and textual documentation of small-group co-design activities.

While a discussion of the methods applied and insights generated through the phase 01 workshops is provided in Broadley and Dixon (2022), this article focuses on the policy-level outcomes and institutional implications of PD. Here, insights are summarised in phase 03 and integrated with selected examples of the paper-based tools co-designed in phase 01, to explore how PD can support the enactment and improvement of Participation Requests.

Commissioned to contribute to the Scottish Government's 2024 review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), phase 02 of the research aimed to enhance understandings of the impact of Participation Requests at local levels across Scotland and how the associated legislation could be strengthened to more effectively empower communities. Nine semi-structured interviews with individual representatives from Public Service Authorities receiving and handling Participation Requests were undertaken. An Interview Topic Guide was created, integrating questions and prompts derived from engagement with data derived from Annual Reporting of Participation Requests; prior evaluations of Participation Requests and recommendations for improvement (McMillan, Steiner, and Hill O'Connor 2020); and explorations of the nature and extent of Participation Request promotion through Public Service Authorities' online presence carried out through secondary research. The topic guide was shared and iterated upon with The Community Empowerment Team at the Scottish Government to ensure that relevant issues concerning the promotion, reach, development, submission, handling, and outcomes of Participation Requests were included in the interview questions. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Formative thematic analyses (Braun and Clarke 2006) of the qualitative data generated throughout the workshops and interviews were undertaken iteratively throughout phases 01 and 02. In phase 03 the researcher carried out a summative stage of thematic analysis to code insights from across the workshop and interview data, to be presented in narrative format for project reporting (Figure 2). Recommendations were then extrapolated from themes where key issues were explored extensively by participants, and where ideas and proposals to strengthen current legislation and guidance to improve the user experience and impacts of Participation Requests were put forward as opportunities for improvement. Draft recommendations were shared with participants as a form of member checking,
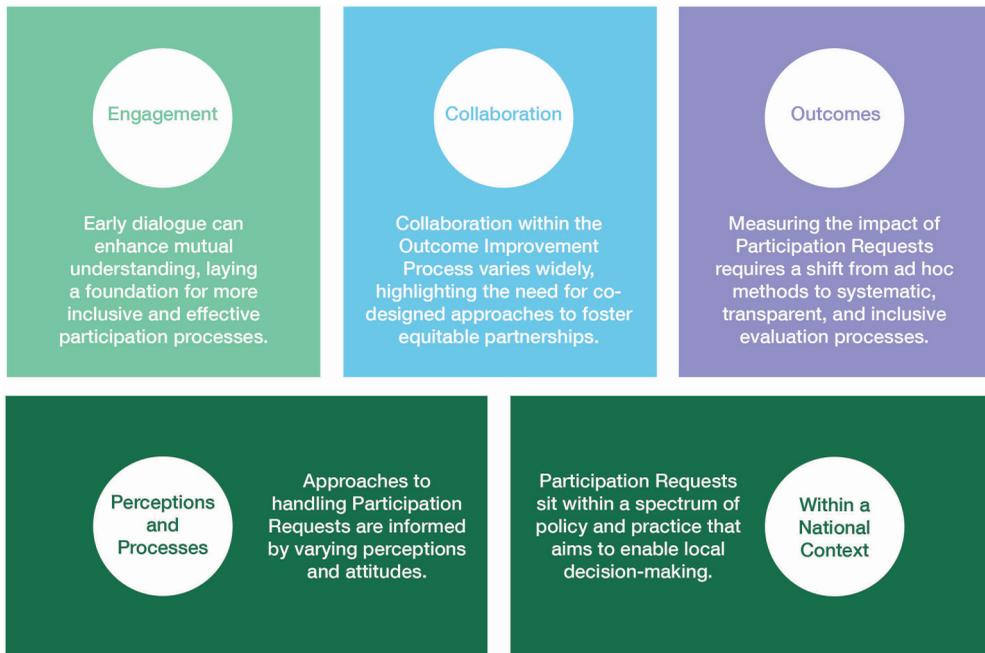
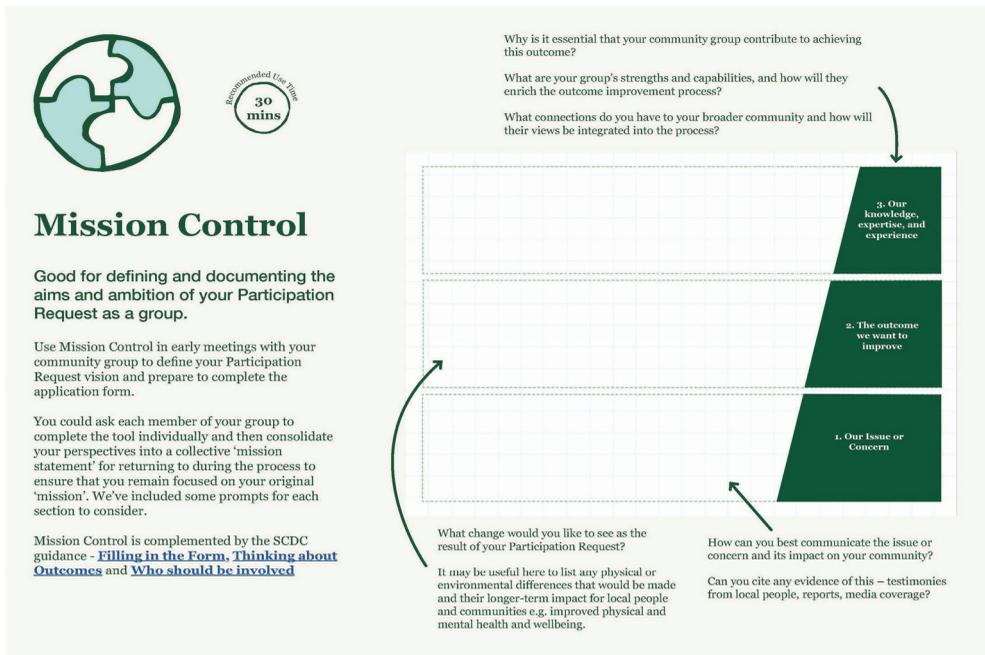**Figure 2.** Understanding participation requests qualitative analysis themes. 2023. Cara Broadley.

before being written up alongside potential strategies and mechanisms for implementation. Enfolding the thematic insights from both phases of data collection, the recommendations referenced the co-designed tools as strategies to deliver improvements and better align policy intentions and implementation at local levels.

4. Aligning the intention and implementation of participation requests: insights from participatory design workshops and interviews

This analysis strives to account for pluralistic viewpoints of participants, recognising that these can be complementary or opposing. It also highlights linkages between key thematic insights and subsequent recommendations in which there was a convergence of experiences and perspectives amongst both participant groups. In so doing, the analysis incorporates examples of key co-designed tools as both the outcome of phase 01 of the research and as a collection of tangible assets with the potential to translate recommendations into practice.

4.1. Engagement, collaboration, and outcomes

Participation Requests' legislative focus on dialogue was seen as both a strength and a limitation. While it provides communities with a platform to voice local concerns, its formal nature can curtail engagement. High-capacity groups, such as Community Councils, have primarily utilised Participation Requests, highlighting a need for stronger legislative support for less experienced and resourced groups. This corresponds with

Figure 3. Mission control tool and guidance. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.

a recommendation for the Scottish Government to provide guidance around establishing early dialogue as a first step in the Participation Request process. Such a dialogue would promote understanding of the issues to be resolved and allow for a clear and collective definition of desired outcomes. By strengthening direct links between communities and the dedicated point-of-contact and the associated services within the Public Service Authority, this will help to lay the foundations for partnership working, either within the formal bounds of the Participation Request, or to address the issues via an alternative route.

In seeking to address this issue, the *Mission Control* tool (Figure 3) provides a template and guiding prompts to support Community Participation Bodies to conceptualise the local issues to address, their relevant knowledge, expertise, and experience, and the outcome that they aim to improve. By enabling Community Participation Bodies to construct and articulate the rationale underpinning their Participation Request with clarity and confidence, this tool aims to inform their initial discussions with Public Service Authorities and considerations of routes to participation and decision-making.

Participants reported mixed experiences of the Outcome Improvement Process, with some Community Participation Bodies noting positive collaboration, while others faced challenges such as obstructive behaviour and limited transparency from Public Service Authorities. The legislation's lack of focus and detail around the design and delivery of the Outcome Improvement Process was framed as a key area to address, informing a recommendation to support Community Participation Bodies and Public Service Authorities to co-design the Outcome Improvement Process. The provision and effective signposting of updated
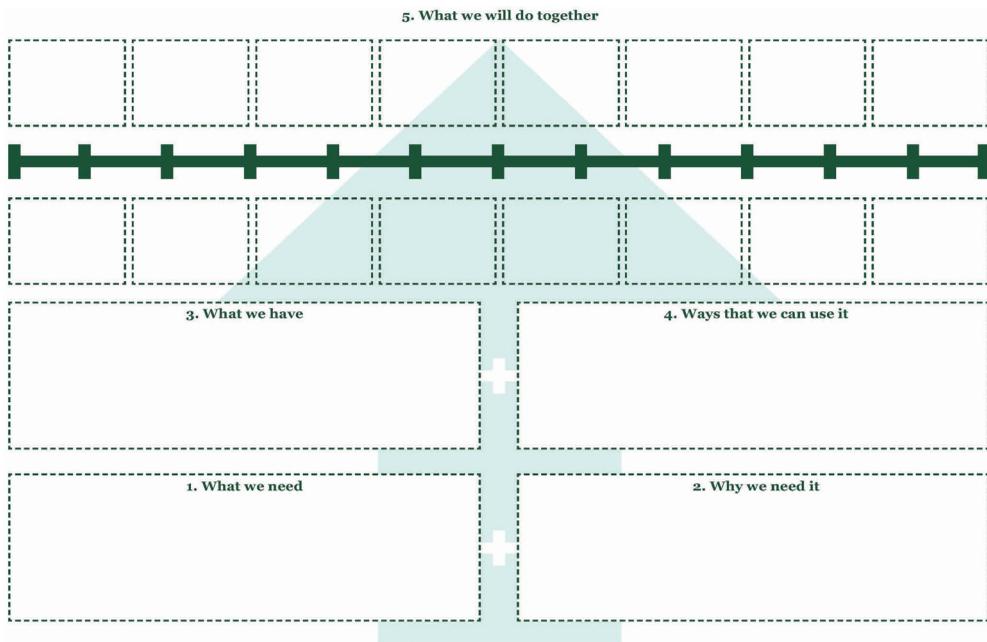
Figure 4. Cooperate to innovate tool. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.

guidance and resources will contribute to significantly addressing challenges experienced by Public Service Authorities and Community Participation Bodies including agreeing a sequence of activities, milestones, and timelines; raising awareness of assets and expertise and defining the added value of partnership working; and instigating positive dialogue to support equitable collaboration towards achieving meaningful outcomes. Responding to this, the *Cooperate to Innovate* tool (Figure 4) outlines a defined but flexible format for the Outcome Improvement Process to bring a level of parity across Participation Requests locally and nationally. This will also go some way to strengthening Community Participation Bodies' role in shaping meaningful outcomes and contribute to providing a framework for evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation within Participation Requests also present challenges. Community Participation Bodies often rely on informal tracking methods, while Public Service Authorities called for collective indicators. The lack of systematic evaluation processes hampers the effective measurement of Participation Requests' impact, highlighting the need for robust, consistent evaluation strategies across Scotland. These discussions contributed to a recommendation that the Scottish Government produce guidance and resources for monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating Participation Request outcomes and impact. The strategy should include capturing the lived experiences of those involved, tracking progress, and understanding the broader impact on communities. As developed through the co-designed tools, *Real Time Report* (Figure 5) and *Measuring Progress* (Figure 6) propose strategies including interim evaluation checkpoints, reporting templates, and ongoing outcome monitoring.
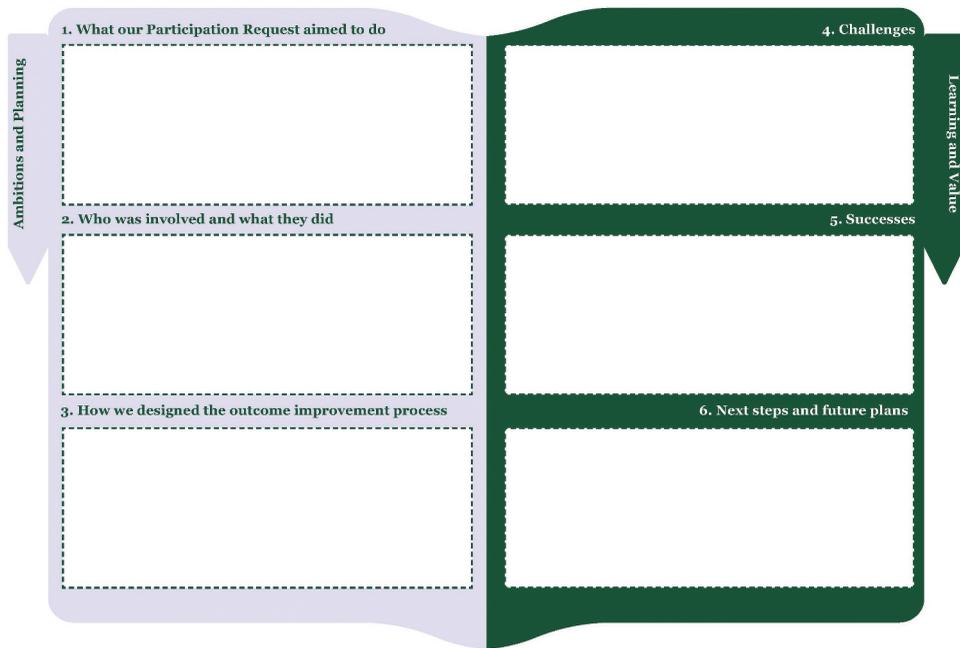
Figure 5. Real-time report tool. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.
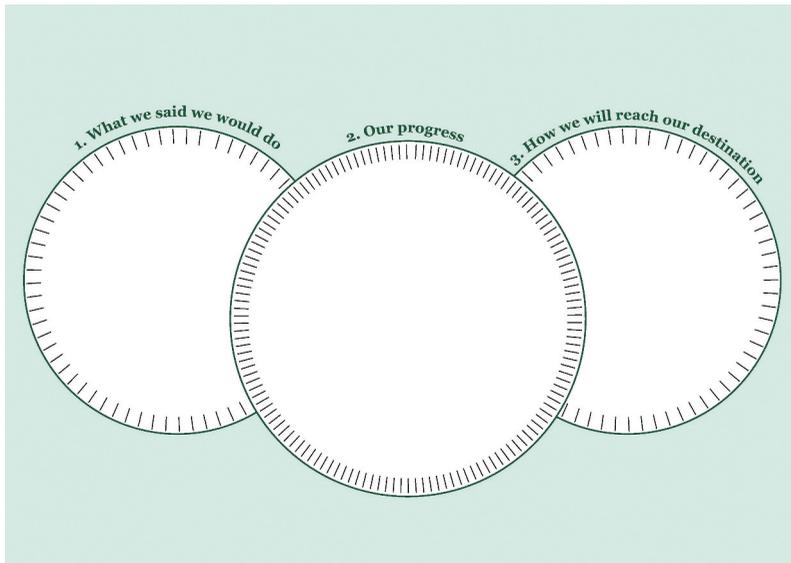

Figure 6. Measuring progress tool. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.

4.2. Perceptions and processes of participation

The capacities required to develop or support Participation Requests vary, leading to differing perceptions and processes in democratic localism. Community Participation Bodies often encounter tensions and resistance from Public Service

Authorities. While some Public Service Authority participants are driven to support communities, their influence on Participation Request decisions is limited. This aligns with Escobar's (2022) exploration of the balance between radical aspirations and pragmatic challenges in participatory governance. The conflicting perspectives within Public Service Authorities – whether seeing Participation Requests as a policy delivery tool or a process – reflect broader issues of authority and accountability.

Power dynamics were a recurring theme, with some participants linking the core aims of Participation Requests to practical challenges. Public Service Authorities often viewed a low number of submissions as a sign of successful alternative engagement or, conversely, as a failure in local empowerment. As Holum (2023, 923) notes, for participation initiatives to be used for meaningful and relational local decision-making as opposed to a form of protest, governments must attend to the *mechanisms of participation*, develop innovative approaches and 'broad, low-threshold initiatives', and communicate these more openly to diverse publics. Returning to the bespoke processes developed by Public Service Authorities to facilitate policy engagement, critical reflection on nuanced approaches to enacting legislation in defined socio-political settings – what Bua and Escobar (2018) refer to as the design factors that inform how participatory-deliberative participation is organised, and the underpinning contextual factors – has the potential to more effectively embed, promote, and legitimise Participation Requests at local levels.

Facilitating such a shift in the underpinning perceptions and process of Participation Requests requires significant commitment and resource from Scottish Government to support and enable Public Service Authorities to deliver the legislation in ways that are both aligned to their own contextual and organisational values and practices, and to the underpinning values of democratic localism and community empowerment. A recommendation that updated information sessions be developed and delivered to clarify and reiterate to them the purpose and scope of the legislation is supported by the *Participation Request Journey* tool (Figure 7). This tool functions as an interactive board game designed to simulate the stages, milestones, and consequences of Participation Requests and to promote learning and reflection of their potential amongst prospective users.

4.3. Participation Requests within a national context

The analysis underscores the need for a better understanding of Participation Requests within Scotland's policy landscape. Although part of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015), Participation Requests interact with various other community engagement methods. The outcomes of Participation Requests are significantly influenced by local contexts, including organisational practices and histories, as discussed by Bua, Bussu, and Davies (2023). Despite being legislated by the Scottish Government, the implementation of Participation Requests by Public Service Authorities is shaped by their leadership approaches and political agency. This often leads to critiques of idealism and tokenism, as the legislation is subject to varying interpretations and applications at the local level.

Participation Requests exist alongside other formal decision-making mechanisms, such as Asset-Transfer Requests and Participatory Budgeting, making it challenging to assess their unique benefits. Clarifying the distinct features and benefits of Participation
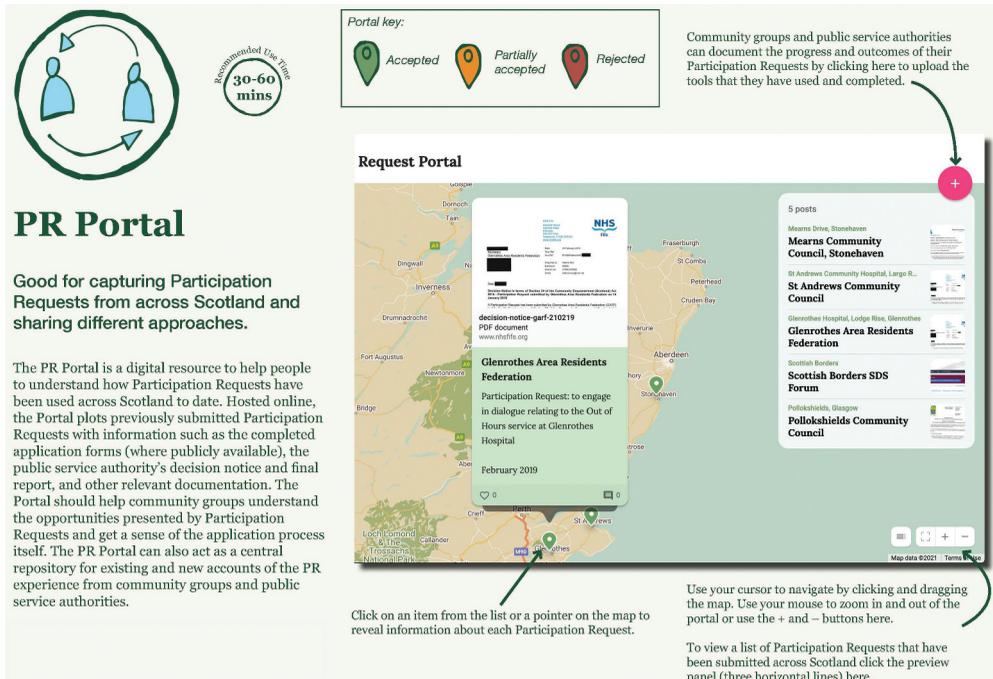
Figure 7. Participation request journey tool and guidance. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.

Requests, particularly in addressing societal inequalities, is crucial. The relationship between Participation Requests and civil society is complicated by barriers like unclear legislation and insufficient promotion. Success in Participation Requests is influenced by the alignment of community goals with proposed outcomes and the accountability of Public Service Authorities.

Local autonomy emerged as a dominant influence on how Participation Requests are approached. Some Public Service Authorities expressed scepticism about the value of Participation Requests, preferring local autonomy over national directives, while others embraced the legislation. The complex relationship between the Scottish Government and Public Service Authorities, particularly regarding the promotion and responsibility for Participation Requests, was also highlighted. Illustrative of how 'institutional constraints and dynamics of multilevel governance inevitably affect the role and impact of local political projects' (Bua, Bussu, and Davies 2023, 173), broad expectations placed on Local Authorities to handle and resolve Participation Requests independently have led to varied public perceptions of their capacities.

Discussions about community capacity and the accessibility of Participation Requests highlight issues of equality and inclusivity within the legislation. Participants emphasised the importance of centring the voices of underrepresented communities and ensuring that Participation Requests are flexible enough to be applied where most needed. Following Bua, Bussu, and Davies' framework, contexts of high deprivation and political fragmentation offer opportunities for reorienting approaches to democracy-driven governance.

Figure 8. Participation request portal tool and guidance. 2022. Cara Broadley, Sean Fegan, and social studios co-designers.

These insights lay the groundwork for reorienting Participation Requests as a flexible mechanism for enhancing community engagement and influencing local governance. Recognising the cyclical nature of Participation Requests and in consideration of the ways in which greater visibility of their role, scope, and impact within the policy landscape has the potential to encourage greater uptake and enable more effective modes of partnership working, an underpinning recommendation was made that Scottish Government co-develops with Public Service Authorities local and national strategies to enhance public promotion, awareness, and understanding of Participation Requests. As a tool to further this, the *Participation Request Portal* (Figure 8) is a digital resource to both document accounts of Participation Requests at local levels across Scotland, and a platform to enhance awareness of how they have been used and the opportunities they present.

5. Discussion: participatory design for policy impact – some proposals

The thematic findings from this case study point towards the material, deliberative, and democratic potential of PD as an approach to reimagining both policy making and local decision-making processes. Through the following proposals, we note how this relates both to enabling the mediation and negotiation of the actions and intentions of citizens and communities on the one hand, and policy workers and governments on the other. While our research is grounded in the statutory mechanism of Participation Requests, the challenges surfaced across the study point to deeper structural and cultural issues

surrounding participatory policy making more broadly. Although Participation Requests provide a legislative pathway for communities to initiate dialogue with public authorities, in practice they are often shaped by inconsistent implementation, limited awareness, and narrow interpretations of legitimacy. These constraints risk hollowing out the democratic intent of the policy – not because the mechanism itself is flawed, but because the institutional and relational conditions required for participation to flourish are not yet in place. These proposals draw from this case to explore how PD can help address such conditions, translating the ambitions of mechanisms like Participation Requests into more inclusive and embedded modes of policy making.

5.1. Participatory design to enable the deliberative creation of artefacts to support policy implementation

As a starting proposal, we posit that PD approaches can effectively harmonise with existing democratic innovations to translate complex legislation and formal policy guidance into meaningful practice and outcomes. By engaging communities through PD, parallels are evident with established democratic innovation approaches as strategies to promote critical reflection around the efficacy of legislation in practice and opportunities to reimagine modes of delivery that correspond with users' needs, capabilities, and aspirations. The outcomes of PD, such as co-designed artefacts and interventions, can ground the enactment of policy recommendations. This mirrors the outcomes of deliberative democracy, where citizen recommendations are translated into actionable proposals, reinforcing the potential of PD to enable inclusive and equitable policy dialogue and bridge gaps between policy formulation and practical implementation (Fusheini and Marnoch 2020).

Disconnects between the intent, implementation, and impact of Participation Requests were explicitly explored in the PD workshops. As previously discussed, the Participation Request Journey tool emerged from these sessions as a co-designed artefact offering a creative entry point for navigating the stages, milestones, and consequences of the legislation. While this was seen as valuable for clarifying procedural steps and supporting Community Participation Bodies, participants expressed doubts about its likely uptake by Public Service Authorities. Without institutional buy-in or shifts in organisational culture, such artefacts risk being viewed as peripheral or burdensome additions to existing workloads. These concerns pointed to broader structural and cultural barriers, including constrained capacity, ambiguous remits, and limited perceptions of participatory practice within formal roles. Yet the act of co-designing and evaluating the tool underscored PD's capacity not only to generate artefacts, but to open up dialogue and support deliberation. In this way, PD can help to translate legislative intent into situated, meaningful, and embedded practice.

5.2. PD to support democratic dialogue and redistributions of power in (local) decision-making

Following on, PD can thus be instrumental in conceptualising relational modes of governance and their material drivers, particularly through its alignment with democratic localism and the empowerment of communities and local governments.

Underpinned by methods and mindsets that are deeply rooted in values of inclusion, cooperation, deliberation, PD's resonance with the principles of relational governance is further evidenced by a recognition that approaches to enable community engagement and participation must account for both local circumstances and surrounding systemic conditions. The political nature of PD and the onus on design researchers to create spaces that promote agonistic debate (Björgvinsson, Ehn, and Hillgren 2012), productive negotiation (Pedersen 2020), and meaningful mutual learning (Robertson and Simonsen 2012) further underscores its alignment with the social justice orientation of democracy-driven governance (Bua, Bussu, and Davies 2023). Yet while designing artefacts *to invite the exchange of multiple voices in collaboration* (Andersen and Mosleh 2021) can facilitate decentralised decision-making processes, ingrained challenges concerning neoliberal urbanism can be seen to prohibit the meaningful redistribution of governing power (Dore 2023).

The relational nature of governance was shown to be fraught with asymmetries in the context of Participation Requests. In interviews, several Public Service Authority participants raised concerns that actively promoting Participation Requests and responding to a broad range of community priorities might generate unmanageable expectations. This contrasted with perspectives shared in workshops, where some Community Participation Bodies described struggling to be heard and feeling sidelined in Outcome Improvement Processes. These tensions were evident in the workshops themselves, where divergent assumptions about power, responsibility, and legitimacy surfaced during group discussions and collaborative activities. Such dynamics informed the development of co-designed tools like *Real Time Report* and *Measuring Progress*, which proposed strategies for capturing lived experience, tracking progress, and monitoring outcomes. The accompanying recommendation for Scottish Government guidance on the evaluation of Participation Requests stemmed from a shared recognition that participatory mechanisms alone do not redistribute power unless accompanied by shifts in institutional culture and capability. Incorporating PD as a material and relational strategy within a broader systemic design practice (Van der Bijl-Brouwer and Malcolm 2020; Blomkamp 2022) promotes a dynamic approach to zooming in and out on policy and legislation within a constellation of actors, actions, and impacts. This mediates issues of scale, highlighting PD's potential to influence governance across different levels.

5.3. PD approaches to elicit and re-present lived experience as a basis for policy change

The material, deliberative, and democratic potential of PD is well documented in the literature, particularly in its ability to enhance collaborative exchanges. Creative artefacts produced through PD processes serve as powerful tools for externalising and organising insights, enabling participants to navigate complex discussions with greater fluidity and flexibility. In line with Knowles et al. (2021), the PD approach promoted 'space to talk' and 'space to change', facilitating meaningful dialogue in the workshops and opportunities for transformation through the resulting co-designed tools and recommendations. Zamenopoulos and Alexiou (2018) further emphasise the role of shared material objects and processes in fostering collaborative engagement. Additionally, Steiner, McMillan, and Hill O'Connor (2022) discuss the entangled notions of empowerment and co-

production within Participation Requests, illustrating how these practices can lead to more inclusive and democratic decision-making outcomes.

These dynamics were evident across the PD workshops, where bespoke approaches to reflection, ideation, and generative co-design (Broadley and Dixon 2022) enabled participants to articulate lived experience as a legitimate basis for change. This was central to the resulting recommendations and commissioned report to the Scottish Government. The emphasis on lived experience also informed co-designed tools such as the *Participation Request Portal*, developed to publicly document Community Participation Bodies' accounts of the process and its outcomes. However, how such insights are perceived, valued, and ultimately used remains mediated by institutional norms. Discussions with Public Service Authority participants revealed that procedural expectations, limited resources, and capacity constraints often restrict the extent to which experiential evidence can influence decision-making. As highlighted previously, some PSAs interpreted low numbers of Participation Requests as either a sign of existing engagement working effectively or a failure of empowerment altogether. These tensions reflect a broader challenge, as Holum (2023) notes, that meaningful and relational participation requires governments not only to innovate the mechanisms of participation but also to resource them adequately and communicate them openly to diverse publics. Even where PD supports the expression and representation of lived experience, its translation into policy impact depends on shifts in institutional conditions and norms of legitimacy.

5.4. PD as a programmatic enabler of always-ongoing participatory policy making

Finally, the above proposals lead to a last general proposal regarding PD's potential to act as an enabler of a broader programme of citizen-institution engagement. Here, we link back to the earlier-noted alignment between work of John Dewey's democratic vision and PD's characteristics/capabilities and general agenda (Broadley and Dixon 2022; Dixon 2020b; Dixon, McHattie, and Broadley 2022). Within this alignment, it is argued that PD can support a progression of Dewey's proposals. Above, we see how PD can *empower* through the creation of artefacts and their use. By supporting inclusion, cooperation, deliberation, and, ultimately, mutual learning, these create situations that allow citizens to participate more fully in the implementation of Participation Requests. Equally, in the latter two proposals, we have also seen how, through such artefacts, PD can support democratic dialogue, affecting both the balance of power and the quality of the exchange. We contend that our case illustrates how, in drawing these characteristics together in a policy space, PD, as a process-based approach, can provide a platform for large-scale problem-solving grounded in a distributed process of citizen-institution engagement. One that would be sustained over time, with citizens and institutions building and responding to needs together, cooperatively. This would be programmatic – that is long term and targeted – in so far effort would be directed to supporting areas of policy need.

However, echoing the warnings of Kimbell et al. (2023), such democratic potential is not inherent to design itself. Without adequate resourcing, political will, or alignment with the wider institutional environment, PD can be at risk of de-politicising

participatory processes or reproducing existing power asymmetries (Dore 2023). In this light, the programmatic application of PD must be attentive not only to tools and methods, but also to the systems, capacities, and relational dynamics into which it intervenes.

In our case, we see how developing a particular infrastructure for Participation Requests equips both citizens in the form of Community Participation Bodies, and institutions in the form Public Service Authorities to come together through a materially bound form of relating and mediating. This materially bound relating and mediating allows for actions and intentions to be agreed and accounted for through inclusive and cooperative deliberation. Here, we see how the otherwise challenging process of implementing a specific legislative mechanism (i.e. the Participation Request) can be evaluated but also, in the end, reimagined. Through PD, this reimagining transforms challenge into opportunity; Participation Requests can now drive a buttressing of a democratic localism where all stakeholders can better understand one another and finding ways of working together more cooperatively. Mapped across a wider range which connects other areas of policy need and other legislative mechanisms, similar forms of evaluation and reimagining would be possible via PD. On this positioning, PD can progress a form of policy making which is just that; a process of *making* - one which is critical, strategic, and always ongoing but also more than that; one which is truly democratic.

6. Conclusion

This article has sought to advance notions of how design, specifically PD, can be mobilised as a mode of intervention in response to legislative assets and deficits in specific policy landscapes to promote democratic localism. Through our case, exploring Scotland's Community Empowerment Act's Participation Requests mechanism, the research has highlighted both the opportunities and challenges in fostering democratic localism in this context. Here, PD emerges as a potentially transformative tool, bridging gaps between citizens and institutions through its material, deliberative, and democratic tenets.

With the Participation Request, key insights reveal the importance of working to ensure early dialogue, equitable power dynamics, and robust monitoring to ensure meaningful outcomes. This article has not suggested that Participation Requests, as currently implemented, represent a fully realised model of participatory governance. Rather, it has argued that their statutory framing offers a critical foothold – a space that, if approached carefully and creatively, can support more inclusive and responsive forms of local democracy. Yet without the necessary infrastructure, political commitment, and iterative design practice, there is a risk that Participation Requests remain superficial, undermining both their own legitimacy and the broader promise of participatory and democratic innovation. Reflecting on PD's potential role, it was proposed that the approach can support the deliberative creation of artefacts for policy implementation; democratic dialogue and the redistribution of power in (local) decision-making; and the elicitation and re-presentation of lived experience as a basis for policy change.

Ultimately, the article has advocated for PD as a dynamic and iterative approach to policy making, supporting the facilitation of equitable participation alongside a reimagining governance as a relational and adaptive endeavour. This aligns with John Dewey's vision of creative democracy – as an always ongoing project that empowers communities and institutions to co-create sustainable, context-sensitive solutions for shared societal challenges. While PD itself cannot realise creative democracy, through its material, deliberative, and democratic potential, we contend that it can support a process by which realisation becomes progressively more possible.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

ORCID

Cara Broadley http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2375-4230
Brian Dixon http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3088-1940

Ethical approval

The authors confirm that ethical approval for all aspects of the research reported on in this article was obtained from Glasgow School of Art's Research Office Ethics Committee to ensure that the study meets national and international guidelines for research on humans. All participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet that detailed the nature of their participation and how their data would be used, handled, and stored, and each completed a Participant Consent Form to consent to the approach.

References

Andersen, P. V. K., and W. S. Mosleh. 2021. "Conflicts in Codesign: Engaging with Tangible Artefacts in Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration." *CoDesign* 17 (4): 473–492. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2020.1740279.
Bennett, H., O. Escobar, C. Hill O'Connor, E. Plotnikova, and A. Steiner. 2022. "Participation Requests: A Democratic Innovation to Unlock the Door of Public Services?" *Administration and Society* 54 (4): 605–628. https://doi.org/10.1177/00953997211037597.
Björgvinsson, E., P. Ehn, and P. A. Hillgren. 2012. "Agonistic Participatory Design: Working with Marginalized Social Movements." *Codesign* 8 (2–3): 127–144. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2012.672577.

Blomkamp, E. 2018. "The Promise of Co-Design for Public Policy." In *Routledge Handbook of Policy Design*, edited by M. Howlett and I. Mukherjee, 59–73. New York: Routledge.

Blomkamp, E. 2022. "Systemic Design Practice for Participatory Policymaking." *Policy Design and Practice* 5 (1): 12–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2021.1887576.

Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Broadley, C., and B. Dixon. 2022. "Participatory Design for Democratic Innovation: Participation Requests and Community Empowerment in Scotland." *Policy Design and Practice* 5 (4): 444–465. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2022.2157195.

Bua, A., S. Bussu, and J. Davies. 2023. "Democracy-Driven Governance and Governance-Driven Democratisation in Barcelona and Nantes." In *Reclaiming Participatory Governance*, edited by Adrian Bua and Sonia Bussu. London: Taylor & Francis.

Bua, A., and O. Escobar. 2018. "Participatory-Deliberative Processes and Public Policy Agendas: Lessons for Policy and Practice." *Policy Design and Practice* 1 (2): 126–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2018.1469242.

Buser, M. 2013. "Tracing the Democratic Narrative: Big Society, Localism and Civic Engagement." *Local Government Studies* 39 (1): 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2012.693077.

Bussu, S., A. Bua, R. Dean, and G. Smith. 2022. "Introduction: Embedding Participatory Governance." *Critical Policy Studies* 16 (2): 133–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2022.2053179.

Campos, I., D. Fuchs, P. Repo, W. Jager, C. Klöckner, S. Wang, D. Lamas, et al. 2024. "What Roles Can Democracy Labs Play in Co-Creating Democratic Innovations for Sustainability?" *Socio-Ecological Practice Research* 6 (4): 367–380. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42532-024-00197-7.

Dewey, J. 1927. "The Role of Philosophy in the History of Civilization." *The Philosophical Review* 36 (1): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/2179154.

DiSalvo, C. 2022. *Design as Democratic Inquiry: Putting Experimental Civics into Practice.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Dixon, B. 2020a. *Dewey and Design.* Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Dixon, B. 2020b. "From Making Things Public to the Design of Creative Democracy: Dewey's Democratic Vision and Participatory Design." *Codesign* 16 (2): 97–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2018.1555260.

Dixon, B. 2023. *Design, Philosophy and Making Things Happen.* New York: Routledge.

Dixon, B., L. S. McHattie, and C. Broadley. 2022. "The Imagination and Public Participation: A Deweyan Perspective on the Potential of Design Innovation and Participatory Design in Policy-Making." *CoDesign* 18 (1): 151–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2021.1979588.

Dore, M. 2023. "Governing Through Design: The Politics of Participation in Neoliberal Cities." *Codesign* 19 (3): 253–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2022.2129691.

Dryzek, J. S. 2000. *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Escobar, O. 2022. "Between Radical Aspirations and Pragmatic Challenges: Institutionalizing Participatory Governance in Scotland." *Critical Policy Studies* 16 (2): 146–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2021.1993290.

Escobar, O., and A. Bua. 2025. "Democratic Innovation for Change: A Participatory Corrective to Deliberative Hegemony." *Politics.* https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957251349635.

Fung, A. 2015. "Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future." *Public Administration Review* 75 (4): 513–522. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12361.

Fusheini, A., and G. Marnoch. 2020. "Dialogue as a Tool for Improving Policy Implementation: Lessons from Ghana." *Policy Design and Practice* 3 (4): 387–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2020.1796204.

Hillgren, P. A., A. Light, and M. Strange. 2020. "Future Public Policy and Its Knowledge Base: Shaping Worldviews Through Counterfactual World-Making." *Policy Design and Practice* 3 (2): 109–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2020.1748372.

Holum, M. 2023. "Citizen Participation: Linking Government Efforts, Actual Participation, and Trust in Local Politicians." *International Journal of Public Administration* 46 (13): 915–925. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2022.2048667.

Howard, Z., and M. M. Somerville. 2014. "A Comparative Study of Two Design Charrettes: Implications for Codesign and Participatory Action Research." *CoDesign* 10 (1): 46–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.881883.

Jones, M., and M. Woods. 2013. "New Localities." *Regional Studies* 47 (1): 29–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2012.709612.

Jones, R. E. 2024. "Myths and Realities of 'Left Behind' and 'Levelling Up': The 2022 Antipode RGS-IBG Lecture." *Antipode* 56 (1): 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12974.

Kimbell, L., C. Durose, R. Mazé, and L. Richardson. 2023. "Design and Policy: Current Debates and Future Directions for Research in the UK." *Policy Design and Practice* 6 (3): 328–343. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2022.2112640.

Kimbell, L., L. Richardson, R. Mazé, C. Durose. 2022. "Design for Public Policy: Embracing Uncertainty and Hybridity in Mapping Future Research." In *DRS 2022: Proceedings of the Design Research Society International Conference*, edited by D. Lockton, S. Lenzi, P. Hekkert, A. Oak, J. Sádaba, P. Lloyd, 1–15. Bilbao, Spain: Design Research Society Digital Library. https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2022.303.

Knowles, S. E., D. Allen, A. Donnelly, J. Flynn, K. Gallacher, A. Lewis, G. McCorkle, M. Mistry, P. Walkington, and J. Drinkwater. 2021. "More Than a Method: Trusting Relationships, Productive Tensions, and Two-Way Learning as Mechanisms of Authentic Co-Production." *Research Involvement and Engagement* 7 (1): 34. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40900-021-00262-5.

Markantoni, M., A. Steiner, J. E. Meador, and J. Farmer. 2018. "Do Community Empowerment and Enabling State Policies Work in Practice? Insights from a Community Development Intervention in Rural Scotland." *Geoforum* 97:142–154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.10.022.

McMillan, C., A. Steiner, and C. Hill O'Connor. 2020. "Participation Requests: Evaluation of Part 3 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015." Accessed January 24, 2022. https://www.gcu.ac.uk.

Michels, A., and L. De Graaf. 2010. "Examining Citizen Participation: Local Participatory Policy Making and Democracy." *Local Government Studies* 36 (4): 477–491. https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2010.494101.

Pedersen, S. 2020. "Staging Negotiation Spaces: A Co-Design Framework." *Design Studies* 68:58–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2020.02.002.

Richardson, L., C. Durose, L. Kimbell, and R. Mazé. 2025. "How Do Policy and Design Intersect? Three Relationships." *Policy and Politics* 54 (1): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1332/03055736Y2025D000000072.

Richardson, L., C. Durose, and B. Perry. 2019. "Three Tyrannies of Participatory Governance." *Journal of Chinese Governance* 4 (2): 123–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/23812346.2019.1595912 .

Robertson, T., and J. Simonsen, eds. 2012. "Participatory Design: An Introduction." In *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design*, 1–17. Routledge.

Salinas, L. 2022. "Designing for Local Policy: Exploring Preferable Futures in the UK." *Policy Design and Practice* 5 (4): 516–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2022.2144808.

The Scottish Government. 2015. *The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Parliament.

The Scottish Government. 2017. "Community Empowerment Act – Easy Read Guidance." Accessed January 25, 2022. https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-acteasy-readguidance/.

Steiner, A., C. McMillan, and C. Hill O'Connor. 2022. "Investigating the Contribution of Community Empowerment Policies to Successful Co-Production: Evidence from Scotland." *Public Management Review* 25 (8): 1587–1609. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2033053.

Trettel, M. 2021. "Democratic Innovations in (Subnational) Constitution-Making: The Institutionalized Case(s) of the Italian Provinces of Trento and Bolzano." *Innovation the*

European Journal of Social Science Research 34 (5): 782–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610. 2021.1997574.

Van der Bijl-Brouwer, M., and B. Malcolm. 2020. "Systemic Design Principles in Social Innovation: A Study of Expert Practices and Design Rationales." *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation* 6 (3): 386–407. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sheji.2020.06.001.

Vaz, F., M. Koria, and S. Prendeville. 2022. "'Design for Policy' from Below: Grassroots Framing and Political Negotiation." *Policy Design and Practice* 5 (4): 410–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 25741292.2022.2141487.

Warren, M. 2009. "Governance-Driven Democratization." *Critical Policy Studies* 3 (1): 3–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460170903158040.

Warren, M. 2025. "Democratic Innovation and Representative Democracy." *Perspectives on Politics* 23 (1): 7–14. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724002111.

Whicher, A. 2020. *AHRC Design Fellows Challenges of the Future: Public Policy*. Swindon: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Whicher, A., and P. Swiatek. 2022. "Evolution of Policy Labs and Use of Design for Policy in UK Government." *Policy Design and Practice* 4 (4): 252–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292. 2022.2141488.

Zamenopoulos, T., and K. Alexiou. 2018. "Co-Design as Collaborative Research." AHRC Connected Communities Programme. Accessed October 26, 2024. https://oro.open.ac.uk/ 58301/1/Co-Design_CCFoundationSeries_PUBLISHED.pdf.