



involve

# Inclusive Partnerships and Decision-Making

Stephanie Draper  
Director of Innovation and Practice and Interim CEO

Jan 2026

# involve

Our vision is of a vibrant democracy where **everyone can shape a society that works for us all.**

## **Our mission**

is to lead the UK in making participation and deliberation an everyday part of democracy, to help meet the challenges of the 21st century.

## **We focus on**

public engagement in decision-making – the activities undertaken by an organisation to create opportunities for the public to participate in informing and influencing decisions, policies and/or service delivery.



# What We Will Cover

The Pride in Place Partnership Challenge

Inclusive Decision-Making to Deliver Pride in Place

Public Engagement in Pride in Place

Barriers to Participation

Methods of Participation

Principles of Inclusive Engagement

Where's the Tension?



## Pride in Place Brings Together:

- Residents leading decision-making through Neighbourhood Boards
- Local Authorities acting as accountable bodies for up to £20 million over 10 years
- VCS organizations supporting community engagement and delivery
- Local MPs and independent chairs working alongside boards
- Ward councillors representing local voices





---

1. How do you strengthen local decision-making while ensuring accountability for public money?

\_\_\_\_\_

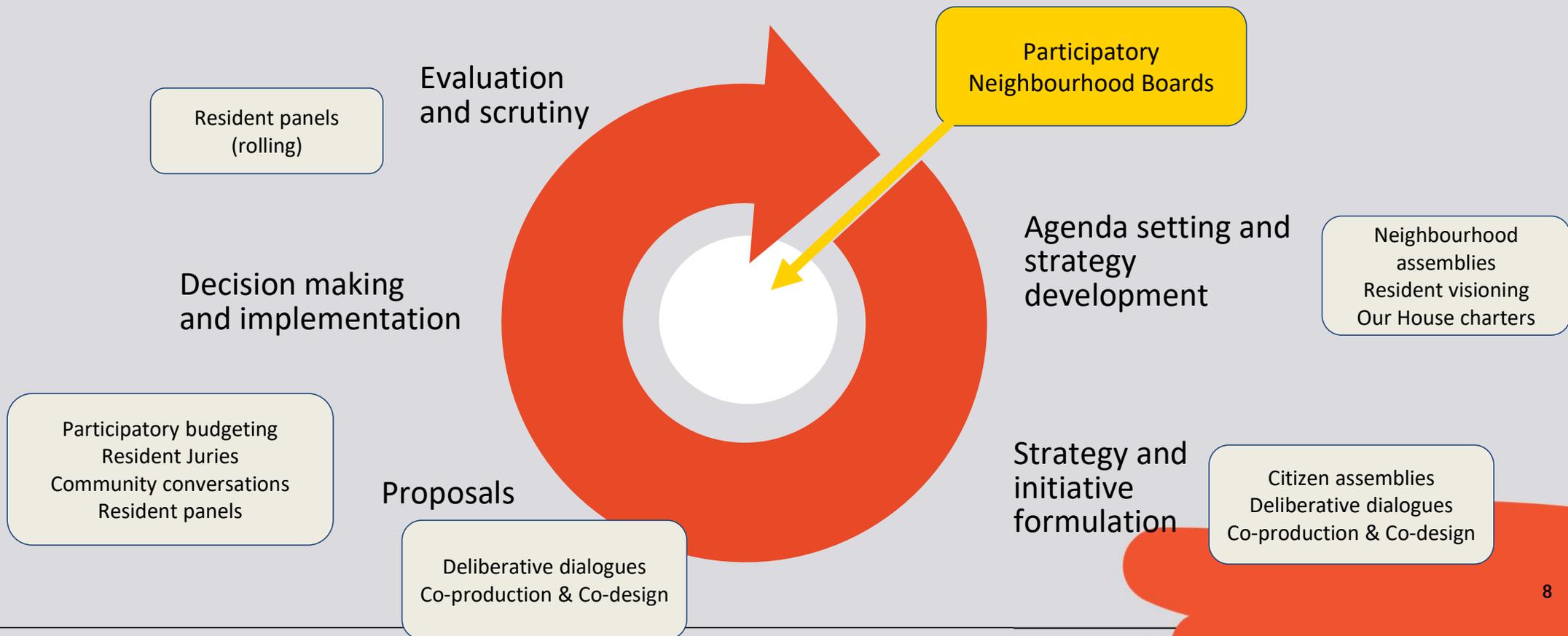
2. How can residents in Pride in Place areas be meaningfully involved in shaping priorities?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Public Engagement in Pride in Place



# Public Engagement in Pride in Place



# Inclusive Decision-Making Delivers Pride in Place Objectives

- Build stronger communities with belonging, cohesion and resilience
- Create thriving places with vibrant high streets, amenities and quality infrastructure
- Empower local people so everyone can shape their community's future

# What We Mean by Inclusive Decision-Making

**Pride in Place focuses on neighbourhoods with** high levels of deprivation, weaker social infrastructure and a history of being underserved by previous regeneration programmes

## Key features:

- Hyper-local focus (neighbourhoods of roughly 10,000 people)
- Long-term funding enabling sustained engagement
- Requirement to demonstrate meaningful community engagement in Pride in Place Plans

# Inclusive Decision-Making Based on Public Engagement

Engagement is a process that allows people\* to play a role in shaping projects, decisions and services.

It creates a **two-way dialogue** that benefits both the public/actors and those commissioning the engagement.

...and it can take place in many, many different ways.

\* people as residents, citizens, service users, key actors or representatives of groups

# What it is:

- Residents and local actors shaping priorities for their neighbourhood
- Intentional outreach beyond those who usually participate
- Dialogue and deliberation that informs plans, not just validates them
- Gives local people decision making power
- Long-term: 10-year vision with phased investment
- Flexible: iterative engagement with scope to propose others based on local needs



# What it is not:

- The same small group speaking for everyone
- Shallow engagement that is consultative but not influential
- Local authorities setting priorities by default
- Copy-and-paste solutions from other places
- Tokenistic, not linked to decisions
- Seen as add on and not properly resourced
- Isolated, one off, with no feedback
- Disconnected from other local engagement



# In pairs/threes

- What's your experience of engaging the public in decision making?
- What questions do you have?

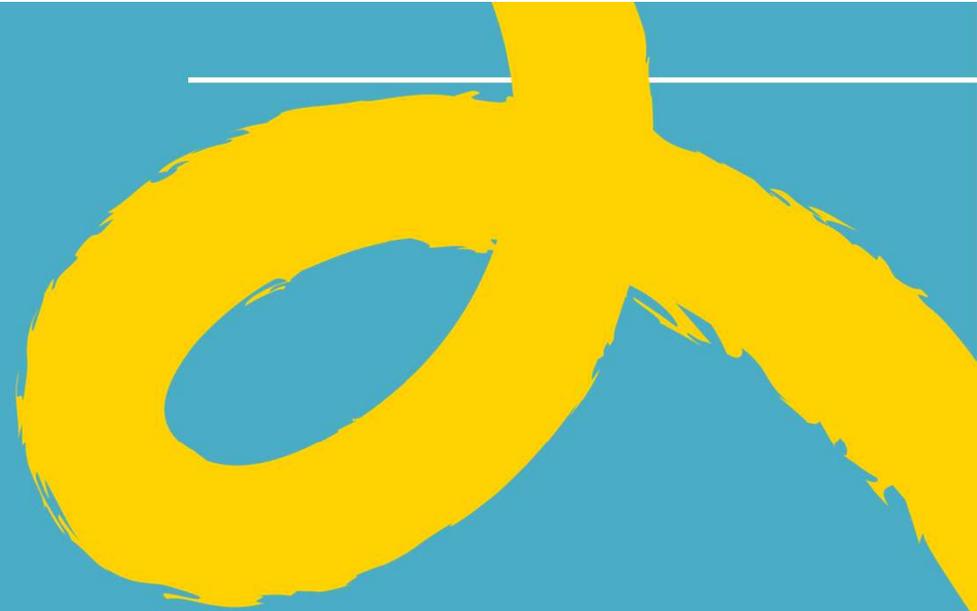


Agree a question to ask



# Barriers to Participation

- Physical
- Methodological
- Attitudinal
- Financial and resource issues
- Timing
- Consultation/ participation fatigue
- Volunteer fatigue



# How Could Participation Work for Pride in Place?



# The Inclusive Neighbourhood Board - Crucial Local Infrastructure

- A diverse selection of residents, alongside other actors, selected using a citizen lottery
- Designed to be run in a way that ensures that everyone can contribute equally
- Group selection is on the basis of demographic and/or attitudinal characteristics, so that it reflects the **diversity** of the population
- Clear purpose, decision making status and accountability to residents
- Instigate different forms of engagement appropriate to the area and the decisions
- Resident members are **paid** for their time
- **Collective** decision making, facilitation and ability to deal with conflict (with capacity built over time)
- Connected to other initiatives and engagements
- **Transparent** process and outputs
- Properly resourced

# Methods of Engagement



## Citizens' jury / assembly

Agenda setting & strategy

Tough trade-offs / legitimacy

## Neighbourhood deliberation

Local priorities & sequencing

Low trust / fatigue

## Deliberation +Experts

Complex evidence and recommendations

Co-produce products & services

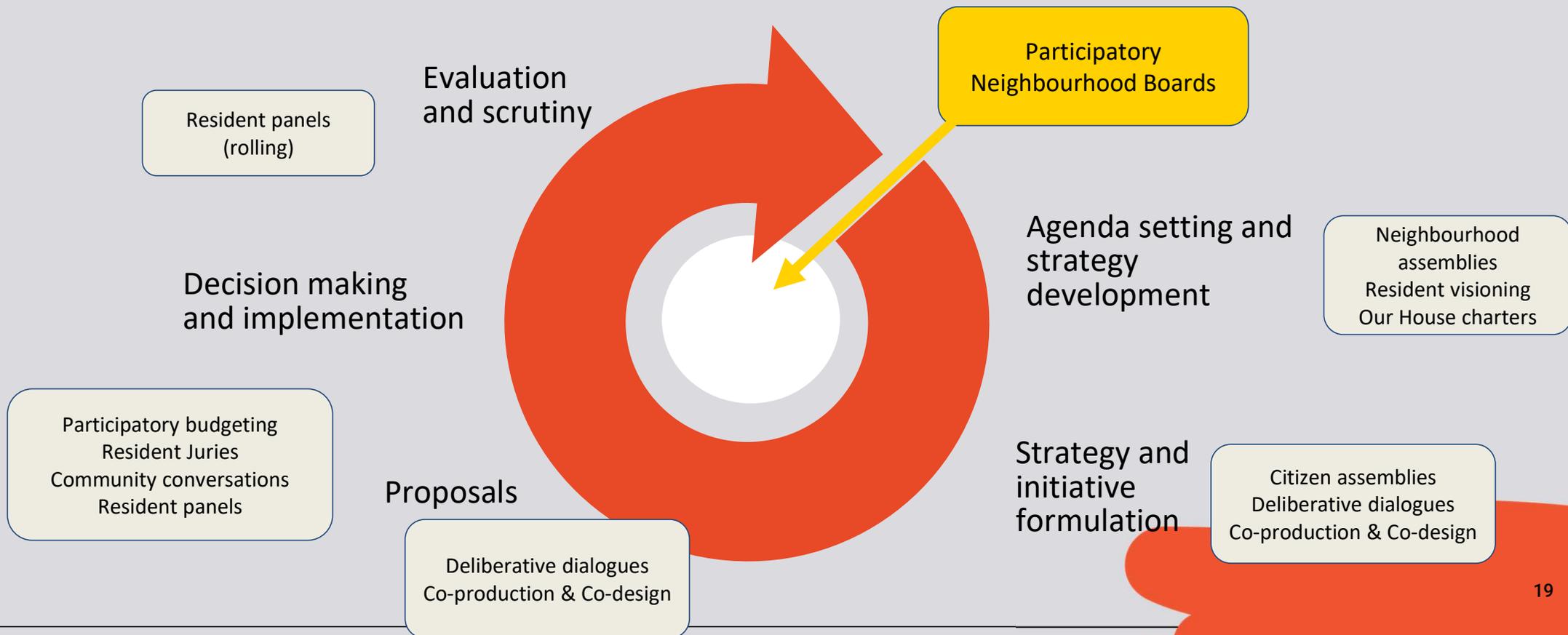
## Standing panels

Accountability & scrutiny

## Targeted co-design

Speed & delivery/ special interest or need

# Public Engagement in Pride in Place



# Deliberative Mini Publics - Examples

## Aberdeenshire Participatory budgeting

How can Hackney Council make sure that residents, especially those who are most affected, are protected from very hot weather as our climate changes?

→ Read more

## Waltham Forest Citizens' Assembly on Neighbourhood Policing

What should the future of neighbourhood policing look like?

*Delivered with the local police.*

→ Read more [here](#)

## WMCA Greener Together Citizens' Panel

Various topics:  
Air quality in the region,  
Retrofitting of homes,  
Climate resilience and adaptation, Transport.

→ Read more [here](#)

# Deliberative Mini Publics - Examples

## Hackney Citizens' Climate Jury

How can Hackney Council make sure that residents, especially those who are most affected, are protected from very hot weather as our climate changes?

→ Read more [here](#)

## Waltham Forest Citizens' Assembly on Neighbourhood Policing

What should the future of neighbourhood policing look like?

*Delivered with the local police.*

→ Read more [here](#)

## WMCA Greener Together Citizens' Panel

Various topics:  
Air quality in the region,  
Retrofitting of homes,  
Climate resilience and adaptation, Transport.

→ Read more [here](#)

# Deliberative Mini Publics - Examples

## Blackpool Community Conversation

20 residents engaged with their communities to shape the Council's strategy on climate change.

→ Read more [here](#)

## Wakefield Citizen Visioning

Residents and young people asked what they wanted for Wakefield and how action on climate and nature could support that.

→ Read more [here](#)

## Gwynyddni Community assembly

Communities deciding on priorities to generate/ allocate funds for action on climate

Read more [here](#)



# In pairs/threes

- What are the barriers and opportunities for doing this in your area?
- What do you need to make it work (beyond £)?

(Capture on post-its notes)



**Share one barrier or concern**  
**Share one opportunity**  
**Share one need**



# Principles of Inclusive Engagement

- **Transparency and accountability:** engagement doesn't have predetermined conclusions or outcomes
- **Proactively plan for accessibility and inclusion:** design the entire engagement plan with the aims of maximising accessibility and inclusion for all
- **Intersectional engagement:** communities should be viewed as internally diverse
- **Build trust, respect and reciprocal relationships with communities**
- **Tailor engagement plans to the local context:** work with key stakeholders (including participants) to shape engagement plans to suit the specific topic, objectives, location, resources, and needs of an area
- **Commit to continual learning cycles:** there is no perfect model so you need continual feedback, learning, and development
- **Apply a power lens to the entire engagement process:** challenge existing norms and structures to work towards greater diversity and equity in systems and leadership
- **Work with diverse groups of speakers and team:** consider who is present in the room, the roles they have, and their skills and experiences
- **Embed a power lens in process design:** all issues disproportionately impact marginalised communities, from housing and health and social care, to climate change and taxation

# 3 key questions

**Who**

do you want  
to engage

**On  
what**

decision do  
you want  
them to feed  
into

**Why**

do you want  
to engage  
them



# Have a question?

## e-mail

[stephanie@involve.org.uk](mailto:stephanie@involve.org.uk)

[yasamin@involve.org.uk](mailto:yasamin@involve.org.uk)

## website

[www.involve.org.uk](http://www.involve.org.uk)

## social media

 [involveuk](#)

 [involve\\_2](#)

 [involveFDN](#)