

# Prototyping report

Public Square | Frome Town Council

## **What's in this Report**

This document describes the work we did with Frome Town Council (FTC) supporting the design and implementation of the Town Vote part of their People's Budget Participatory Budgeting (PB) programme in 2019.

We undertook this work as action research in order to learn about the practical challenges and opportunities around meaningful citizen participation in decision making and to develop, pilot and share innovative approaches.

It gives an overview of our design work in Frome, outlines the impact of the resulting PB process, and includes learning and reflection about delivering a meaningful PB process within a town council.

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# 1) Our Goals

## Public Square

Public Square is a two-year action research programme investigating what is needed to improve participation as a system. In its first year, Public Square is working with a small number of councils to develop and pilot innovative approaches to citizen participation in decision making. Through this process we hope to learn more about how meaningful participation can flourish.

## Frome Town Council

Based on our [discovery work](#) in Frome, the specific challenges we wanted to tackle together were supporting greater participation from a wider range of people, including those less well heard. Specifically we wanted to open up idea generation to the community and make the process transparent, so that the origins of ideas in the community and the way in which the final project was selected would be clear.

Given the history of experimentation in Frome around participatory budgeting, we wanted to retain the lessons learned from previous years in terms of lowering the barriers to participation. We also needed to ensure that all the approaches and tools prototyped were feasible within the context of FTC - that the programme could be delivered within the limited time and budget of the council officers.

## 2) What We Did: Designing the Process

We started thinking about the 2019 Town Vote together with the project team at Frome Town Council by talking through some key questions:

- What are the aims of the process?
- How can we evaluate whether it's successfully achieved these?
- Who are we going to involve in these decisions?
- How are we going to narrow ideas down?
- What kind of support will be needed? (e.g. presentations of background info to participants, or facilitation)
- Are we going to target specific groups?
- Are we planning for thick (time-intensive) or thin (light-touch) participation?

Although there are many variations in the ways participatory budgeting has been implemented around the world, there are some well-established stages, or aspects, of a PB process:

- Designing (often co-designing) the process
- Proposal generation (sometimes starting with identifying priorities)
- Refining ideas
- Shortlisting ideas
- Voting on (or otherwise selecting) successful projects
- Monitoring implementation
- Evaluating the process

These informed discussions about different ways of reaching the aims set out for this process. After spending a day with the project team in Frome, most of these discussions happened through video calls between the Public Square team and the project team in Frome.

The realities of working in a small team juggling lots of different projects (both in FTC and within Public Square) meant that there wasn't a clear-cut separation between a design stage of the process and implementation. On one hand this allowed for making the most of changing circumstances and opportunities, in particular piggybacking on a 'Have your Say' consultation. It also had disadvantages in making it harder to fully design, and communicate, a process that responded to the project aims before activities got underway.

In this section we outline some of the design considerations we worked through with the team in Frome.

## “Thin” participation - idea generation and voting

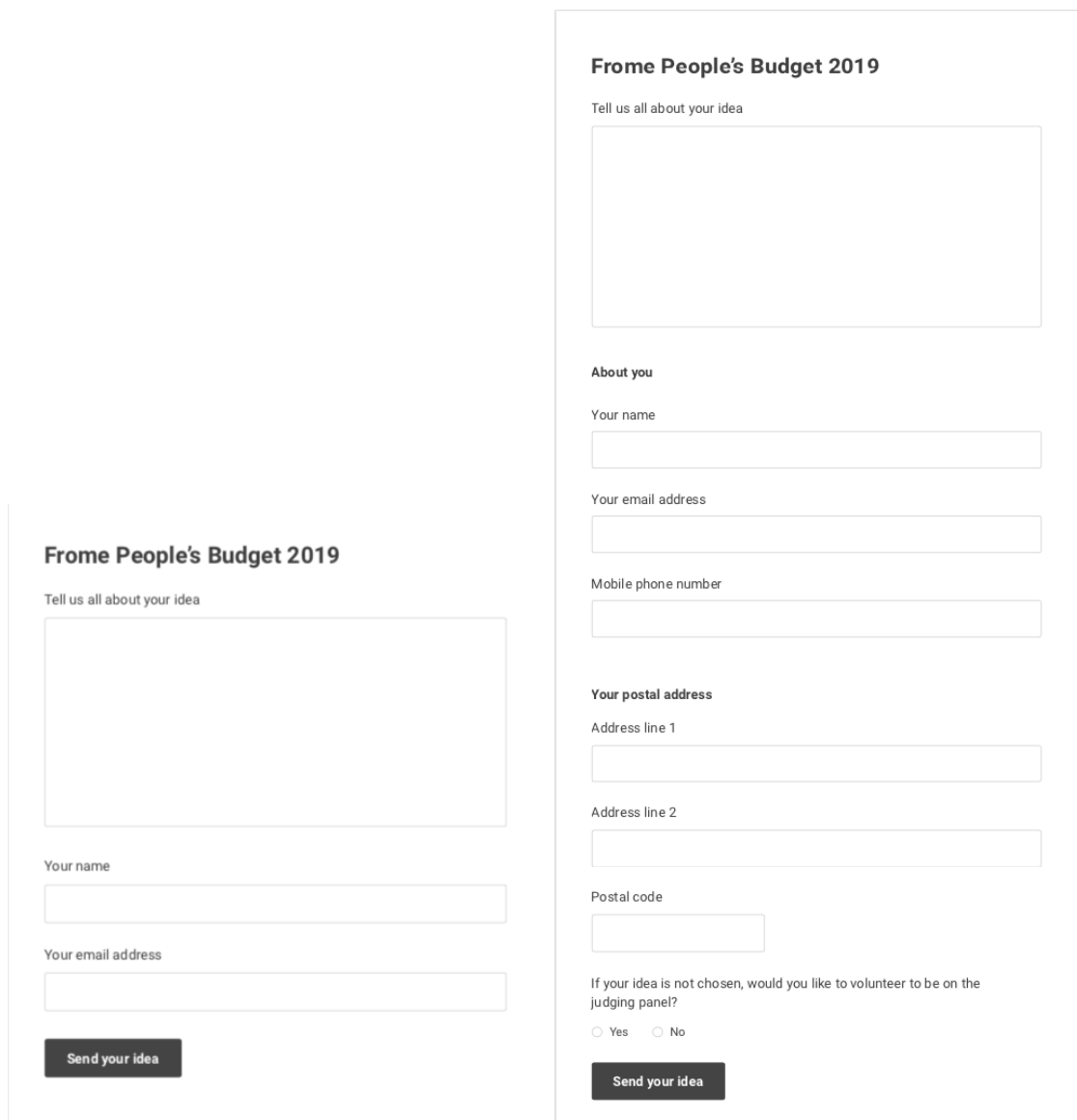
*““Thick” forms of engagement enable large numbers of people, working in small groups, to learn, decide, and act together. These practices include many different forms of dialogue, deliberation, and action planning. The participatory budgeting processes that now take place annually in many New York and Chicago city council wards are perhaps the best-known examples.”*

*“People generally take part in “thin” forms of engagement as individuals rather than in groups. Before the Internet, the most common kinds of thin engagement were civic actions like voting, signing petitions, and filling out surveys.”*

Matt Lehniger, author of Public Participation for 21st Century Democracy

One of the key aspirations for the Town Vote in 2019 was to get ideas from the community on how to spend the budget, and in particular from less heard voices. In terms of ease of participation, there’s often a trade-off between making online and offline participation easy versus gathering more information from the people who participate. In this case, the aim of hearing from a wider range of people in the community led to the Frome officers adopting ease of participation as a key design principle, even at the cost of having less information with which to evaluate the programme (for example detailed demographic information from participants). Given the existence in Frome of other processes for working with community groups, the decision was made to focus on ideas from individuals.

During the discussion of trade-offs, we used a set of simple ‘paper’ prototypes of forms to help make decisions about where to set the balance between detail and simplicity within idea generation.



The image shows two examples of idea generation forms for 'Frome People's Budget 2019'. Both forms have a title 'Frome People's Budget 2019' and a sub-header 'Tell us all about your idea' above a large text input field. The left form includes fields for 'Your name' and 'Your email address', and a 'Send your idea' button. The right form includes fields for 'Your name', 'Your email address', 'Mobile phone number', 'Your postal address' (with sub-fields for 'Address line 1', 'Address line 2', and 'Postal code'), and a question 'If your idea is not chosen, would you like to volunteer to be on the judging panel?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons, and a 'Send your idea' button.

Two examples of straightforward idea generation forms, asking for different levels of demographic information.

## “Thick” participation - working and advisory groups

With idea generation, both online and offline, being a relatively ‘thin’ participation opportunity in order to bring in ideas from as many people as possible, we discussed advisory and working groups as possible approaches to deeper involvement, both in the design and delivery of the programme.

We looked at examples of how this has been done elsewhere. For example, an advisory group specifically recruited to include different target groups has been used in the participatory budgeting process in Antwerp<sup>1</sup>. These target groups included

<sup>1</sup> <https://mysociety.github.io/playbook/case-studies/antwerp/>



older people, neighbourhood groups, young people, and ethnic minorities. Each month they were informed about how the design was developing and asked for their advice about potential barriers, including timing and location of events, and methods used for participation. They also helped tailor the communication plan towards different target audiences.

In Wuppertal<sup>2</sup>, residents participated in the process of sifting ideas, in which the council and residents took complementary roles, with the council checking the basic eligibility of ideas, and residents prioritising them based on added value for the city.

The process developed in New York<sup>3</sup> (although at a much greater scale) was an inspiration in terms of combining online and offline elements effectively in support of inclusion, and in terms of the criteria used to shortlist ideas.

We considered various different approaches at the design stage for involving people other than council officers in the programme:

- Giving an explicit remit and training to new councillors to go and solicit ideas from residents at community events
- Getting a group of residents to provide advice on outreach and barriers to specific groups, as in the Antwerp programme
- Having a group of residents do the shortlisting and selection of ideas for the final vote
- Having a group of residents work up initial ideas into fuller proposals
- Asking a wider group of residents to give feedback on previous years' budgets, and get involved in co-designing the process in more detail (as done, for example, in Leith<sup>4</sup>).

## Reaching seldom heard voices

In early discussions, we also discussed techniques for hearing from seldom heard voices. Many of the [ideas suggested based on desk research](#) from the Public Square team were things that the officers were already doing in the context of the programme - such as always having paper alternatives to online forms, and going to find people where they are, rather than convening specific events. Others, like asking questions that focused specifically on people's own neighbourhoods, hadn't been features of the programme in prior years.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://mysociety.github.io/playbook/case-studies/wuppertal/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.demsoc.org/2019/01/31/pb-in-nyc-how-online-offline-can-work-together/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://mysociety.github.io/playbook/case-studies/leith/>

## Transparency

Transparency was a key aspiration for the programme, but this adds overheads in terms of planning and capacity in order to communicate clearly around the programme steps before and as they happen.

## The process as a whole

As mentioned above, there wasn't a clear-cut line between the design of the process, and its delivery. Some aspects were still being ironed out as parts began to get underway. Ultimately we arrived at a process involving the following:

<b>Design</b>	While we discussed involving a wider range of people in the design process, ultimately this was a collaboration between the Public Square team and the project team in the council.
<b>Proposal generation and refinement</b>	<p>This started with an offline process. The council was already conducting a 'Have Your Say'<sup>5</sup> consultation to feed into the council strategy, so also asked people: "How would you spend £10,000 to improve the lives of the people of Frome?"</p> <p>These ideas were then refined by a small working group in the council (described in the section below). The working group consisted of two councillors, two officers and a young person doing an internship with the council.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>This was followed by online idea generation; including the opportunity to comment on, and express support for other ideas. The refined ideas from offline idea generation were also uploaded to the platform to allow people to comment on these.</p>
<b>Shortlisting</b>	A shortlisting event would be used to allow a small group of citizens to whittle proposals down to a list of 5 that would go through to a final vote.
<b>Voting</b>	Delivered both online and offline to choose one successful proposal.
<b>Monitoring Implementation</b>	This wasn't something we looked at together. However it was decided that to be eligible for funding, PB projects

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/have-your-say-2019/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/peoples-budget/peoples-budget-town-vote/the-working-group-for-the-peoples-budget-2019/>

	must be able to achieve tangible progress over the course of the next year.
<b>Evaluation</b>	During the process the Public Square team would help gather some data and reflections about impact of the process. These are presented later on in this report.

The design of some specific aspects of this process is described in more detail below.

## Online idea generation and refinement

In the early design conversations we had, we researched and discussed some examples of different tools that could be used to support idea generation online<sup>7</sup>. We covered lightweight, free-to-use services like social media sites, open source tools and paid for services.

As the process for the Town Vote in 2019 became clearer, we worked with the small council working group to evaluate the technology options available against that process. We narrowed down the options to two platforms.

The first was Your Priorities<sup>8</sup>, a civic technology platform, developed by the Icelandic non-profit Citizens Foundation. Your Priorities allows people to add ideas online with supporting descriptions, images, and video, and to vote positively or negatively on each idea, and add discussion points for or against it.

The second was All Our Ideas<sup>9</sup>, a wiki survey platform that offers people a choice between two ideas at a time with the opportunity to add ideas of their own, resulting in a set of ideas ranked by popularity.

Both platforms were offered in a hosted 'Software as a Service' model, so didn't impose any technical requirements on FTC, and were available for free or at a relatively low price, and both allowed for relatively simple submission and ranking of ideas. In All Our Ideas, new ideas are extremely easy to add, but there isn't support for any discussion of ideas to complement the ranking. Your Priorities allows for more description, supporting media and discussion of ideas, but is more complicated to configure and slightly more complex to use.

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<https://demsoc.sharepoint.com/:p/s/PublicSquare/EdQCTQJwRc9HksetFSGozwwBXOTpQARDskbUdkkvTOhCig?e=b8boPR>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.yrpri.org/domain/3>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.allourideas.org/>

We chose to experiment with using Your Priorities, which had previously been successfully used to generate ideas for a participatory budgeting process in Argyle and Bute<sup>10</sup>, principally on the basis of offering people a chance to put arguments in favour of, or against different ideas, and thus further refine them.

We set up an example Your Priorities community and reviewed it with Frome officers, letting them try it out to see how it would work in general. We then worked together to decide on configuration settings in detail in order to find the best fit for their process.

## Shortlisting

From early discussions we settled for running a shortlisting event with a group of local residents to decide on the proposals that would go forward to a vote. Several questions came up in connection with this:

- What size of group would be possible to convene, but also logistically manageable on the day.
- How to select a representative group that would give equal platform to less heard voices.
- Whether to try and form the group early in the process from existing community connections or to try to recruit members from the early 'Have Your Say' discussions at community events around how to improve Frome.
- How to divide up the work between all participants in the process - both working group and residents, without demanding too much time from people, or loading too much work into a short event.

We discussed some different possibilities in planning the shortlisting day:

- Whether there could potentially be a second workshop day, allowing an interval in between the two days to seek further information from the council about ideas. This would be a chance to develop the top ideas in more detail and make a final selection.
- Whether some of the new councillors would be able to attend to engage in the process.
- Whether the people involved in the working group could be involved in the evaluation of the whole approach for the next year.
- Whether to shortlist three ideas or more, considering that more makes shortlisting much easier and gives the public a more meaningful chance to express their view in the voting stage.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.yrpri.org/community/563>

Setting clear criteria for assessing ideas, and publicly communicating these, is an important part of running a process that is fair, and that will be viewed as such by residents. This is particularly important as shortlisting can be a controversial part of PB processes. Being transparent about the criteria, but also about the way of deciding (whether consensus, voting or some other mechanism) and the way of selecting participants for the group that makes the decision are all important parts of this.

A key aim of the process was to reach new parts of the community. To try and achieve this, council officers asked for volunteers for taking part in shortlisting during their initial offline outreach. From here we came up with the approach of recruiting two of these volunteers from each of the postcode areas that make up Frome, by drawing names at random. This would also help achieve a greater geographical spread across the town. They would be contacted using the details they'd provided.

We settled on having one shortlisting day, to keep this manageable for delivery and for participants. This day would be used to shortlist 5 ideas to go through to the vote. It was hoped that having a small set of choices for the final vote would make this process easier for people to take part in.

The criteria chosen for this shortlisting were inspired by those used by the PB Project<sup>11</sup> in New York City<sup>12</sup> - equity, impact and feasibility. Having a clear set of criteria shifts the framing of ideas from people's own experiences "*what would be useful to me?*" to the community - "*what would benefit the community most?*".

This would be a very different way of using these compared to the approach in New York City. There local 'budget delegate' volunteers work together over a period of weeks, carry out research into proposals, and are able to develop these further. Here we'd be asking people to think about these criteria in a much shorter space of time.

To manage this, we decided to give participants an opportunity to ask questions of councillors and council staff who would be present during the day. This would only give so much information, but it was hoped this would strike a balance between encouraging participants to think impartially about proposals while keeping this process manageable for participants and staff. This process is described in more detail in the next section.

The shortlisting event would be guided and facilitated in person by staff from Public Square. In terms of running a fair process in which people feel like they're being treated as equals, it was useful to have a 'neutral' set of facilitators, so that council

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.demsoc.org/2019/01/31/pb-in-nyc-how-online-offline-can-work-together/>

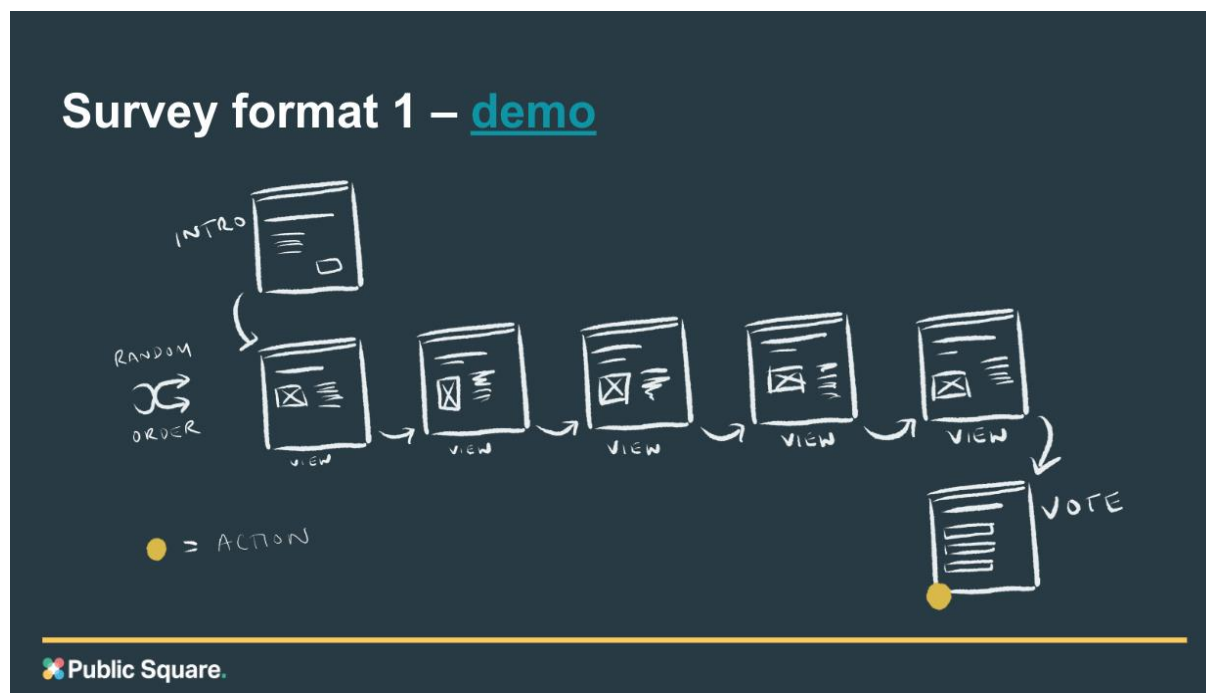
staff and councillors were not solely leading the event. The hope was that in doing this, and creating resources to support the event, FTC could support local facilitators in running the event in future years.

## Voting

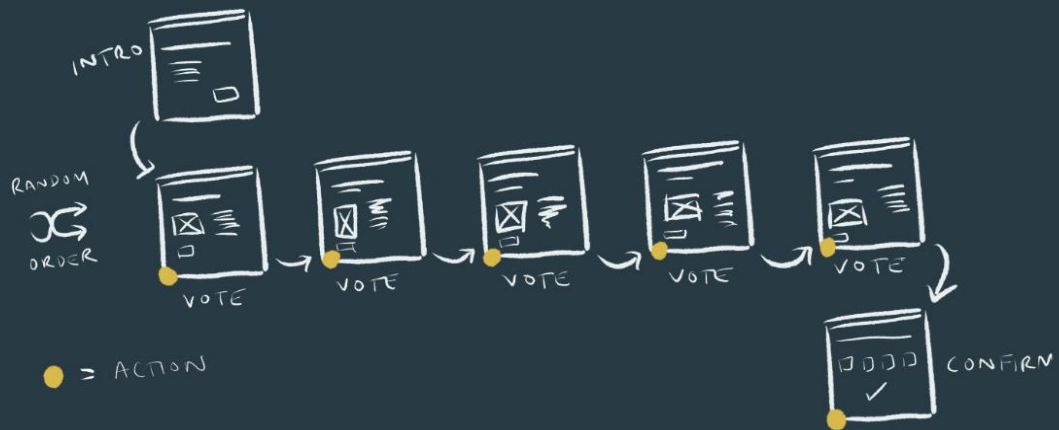
Building on the processes from previous years, officers wanted to give residents the option of online and in-person voting, but to reduce the barriers that had been introduced by the longer form used in the 2019 online Events vote. This consisted of a page for each of the 7 events, with a long description, a budget breakdown table, a 1 minute video, and optional “If you have a question about this project, let us know” text area. It had a relatively low completion rate (64%) compared with 100% completion rates for the shorter forms used in previous Town Votes.

Having used the Your Priorities tool in the idea generation phase, we discussed using it again for the final vote, but officers were in favour of using SurveyMonkey as in previous years due to concerns about people being confused as to whether you needed to log in to vote as only a postcode and age were required for the final vote.

SurveyMonkey can give a straightforward voting experience with an ‘order of preference’ widget at the end, and relatively simple analysis. The Public Square team was able to give some [technical support](#) to officers in exploring and configuring SurveyMonkey by illustrating options and giving a form set up that they could reuse.



## Survey format 2



### 3) Testing the Approach in Practice

This section describes how the PB process designed with Frome Town Council worked in practice.

#### In-person idea generation and refinement

The idea generation process started with Have Your Say<sup>13</sup>, a consultation to feed into council strategy. Although this consultation came about outside the People's Budget, officers were able to take advantage of the opportunity and timing. As part of this consultation, a set of three questions were asked of residents:

- What is your favourite thing about living in Frome and why?
- What one thing would you like to see happen in your neighbourhood?
- How would you spend £10,000 to improve the lives of the people of Frome?

Responses were gathered both by council officers going to existing events and using postcards, and using a SurveyMonkey survey to ask the same questions online

A name, email address and postcode were also collected. At the same time, people were asked whether they'd be interested in being part of a group more actively involved in the process of evaluating and selecting ideas for the final vote.

Around 260 responses to the questions were collected. The vast majority of these ideas were generated offline.

This highlighted a tension between:

- Having an ideation process that is easy for residents to take part in, but results in a large number of loose ideas that need a lot of work to review and develop.
- Asking more from the participation of residents, making it less straightforward to take part.

Officers were surprised by how unformed the initial ideas generated this way have been. They had to talk with people for a long time at events to get them to try and form ideas.

The working group then reviewed and developed these ideas in order to:

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/have-your-say-2019/>



- Remove any ideas that weren't eligible to be funded, using a set of criteria which were published online<sup>14</sup>.
- Merge together similar ideas
- Draw from people's initial ideas to create clear proposals that could be achieved by the town council within the £10,000 budget.

From this point on, ideas were not associated with the (potentially multiple) individuals who had suggested them. This 26 workable proposals that were taken forward to the next stage of the process. All the original ideas were published and grouped and sent forward to councillors to review in the wider context of FTC strategy.

## Online idea generation and commenting

The working group developed 26 workable proposals, and uploaded them onto the Your Priorities online platform (shown below). Your Priorities was open to comments, votes and new ideas for a period of a month. Over that period, 30 new ideas were added. 275 people (around 1% of the Frome population) interacted with the ideas, and 134 comments were made.

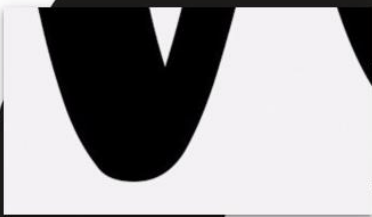
The ideas were also made public in the newspaper. And an opportunity was given for people to express opinions offline by marking them with happy or sad faces to indicate how they felt about them.

Overall, most ideas were generated in-person, where officers went out to community events to have relatively informal conversations with residents about their ideas for improving Frome and tried to bring people from that process into the shortlisting process and then the final voting process, if possible.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/peoples-budget/peoples-budget-town-vote/criteria-for-the-peoples-budget-project-ideas/>

↑ Frome Town Council ☰ ⓘ LOGIN



**The People's Budget 2019**


Submit and discuss your ideas here: To be considered to move onto the next stage all ideas must cost no more than £10,000, sit within the aims of the council, and be a deliverable project. Find out more at [www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-co-](http://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-co-)

👤 52 💬 134 ⌚ 275

💡 Closed for new ideas

POPULAR  
51
NEWS
MAP


☰ FILTER IDEAS    Search for... 🔍



**Water refill point**

A water fountain so people can refill their bottles and reduce plastic – lots of places have them now, come on Frome!


👤 122 💬 12 ↓ 12



**Safer walking and cycling**

Develop a clear plan of cycling and walking routes that are needed to enable people to travel safely without a car. This...


👤 93 💬 2 ↓ 11



**Shuttle Bus for Frome**

A shuttle bus that travels key local routes and stops on demand, helping with school run and reducing congestion.


👤 75 💬 9 ↓ 9



**Village Green**

Create a village green in the top end of the Cheese and Grain car park, nearest the library. With grass, trees and a pla...


👤 81 💬 3 ↓ 16



**Join UK gov urban tree challenge fund**

The UK gov is giving money to plant trees, so FTC should apply and spread trees around town, also enhancing the river ba...

👤 70 💬 2 ↓ 9



**Wild about Trees**

Community tree planting and hedge planting. £10k buys: ☐ Trees and hedging plants ☐ Mulch (lots of mulch) ☐ Stakes, ...

👤 66 💬 1 ↓ 14

The People's Budget 2019 on Your Priorities

## Reflections

Whatever technology is used in a decision making process needs to support that process well, so understanding the requirements of the ideal process is important. However, having a low budget also means that technology options are limited. Having some flexibility in terms of process can be a key way of handling this. For this reason, it's ideal for process refinement and technology selection to happen iteratively at the same time as there's a need to develop the process to the correct

level of detail. Being too specific can mean you're unable to find off-the-shelf solution, being too vague can mean there are too many choices and you're unsure if they fit the bill or not.

Overall Your Priorities was a good fit for Frome, giving a multimedia interface that encouraged constructive evaluation of ideas by allowing points to be made for and against, but not allowing discussion threads to be started from those points.

Enabling factors for FTC in the use of digital tools include the availability of both civic software and flexible multipurpose commodity tools in software as a service models with free to use tiers. It's not always immediately clear whether software is free to use and what features are available - this lack of clarity on the costs of participation software is a barrier to use.

## Shortlisting

Following the online idea generation stage there were 36 eligible ideas. These needed to be reduced to the 5 ideas that would go forward to the Town Vote. The goal of the shortlisting event was to make this selection by enabling a group of residents from across the town to deliberate in an informed way about the ideas before them. We also needed to capture the reasons given for these choices to ensure transparency, and wanted to create a positive experience of working constructively together for the residents and councillors who took part.

### **Who was there?**

There was a big response to the question asked in initial conversations with residents during the 'Have Your Say' consultation about whether they'd like to be further involved in the process, with 80 people agreeing in principle. From these, the council recruited two people from each of the town's postcode areas. Not everyone was able to make it to the shortlisting day. Ultimately 12 residents took part on the day, accompanied by 2 councillors, 2 council staff, and 2 facilitators from The Democratic Society. Most of the day was spent in 3 small groups.

The [facilitation plan used is available here](#). The event is described below.



Two of the groups in action during the day

We started with a quick introduction to the process so far, an icebreaker exercise on tables, and a quick discussion about conversation guidelines. The conversation guidelines we suggested are shown below, and were agreed to by the group. Ideas from the Your Priorities site that were not eligible to go forwards were displayed around the room alongside information about why they were not eligible.

## Working Together

- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak
- Don't talk over each other
- Listen to each other
- Respect each other
- It's ok to disagree

We had a lot to cover in a short day session, while trying to maintain good quality, informed discussions, and keep things enjoyable for our resident volunteers. We first split the 36 ideas randomly between 3 small groups (though in a few cases where ideas were very similar we swapped some ideas to give each group a varied selection).

Our planned approach was to start by allowing residents to review their group's ideas, thinking about their feasibility, impact and equity. Then, there would be a chance to ask councillors and staff for further advice about the ideas. This was included as we were not able to provide information about the ideas in advance, beyond what the short statement their proposers had written. A template was provided to help groups capture their reflection, any questions they had about ideas, and any new information they subsequently learnt. The part of this template looking at feasibility is shown below.

### How feasible is this?

How likely is it that the council can make this project work within the £10,000 budget.

Things to consider:

- What would £10,000 cover?
- What barriers might be faced?
- How likely is it that this can be achieved?

What questions do you still have about its feasibility?

Have you learnt anything new about these questions?  
*(For filling-in after speaking with the council team)*



Through the online platform, and at some offline stalls, the council had asked people to 'like' their favourite ideas. This information was available to participants during the workshop, but was there as a resource they could access rather than being centre stage. We were aware that gathering likes in this way is an imperfect mechanism of finding how the wider community feels about ideas and wanted to give participants space to think at more length about what the impact of ideas would be before reaching judgement.

Using any new information learnt from councillors, groups would then be asked to score their ideas, using the guidelines shared below, and asked to write a short statement of why they'd given this score.

### **Guidance for Scoring Ideas**

*You'll need to score the feasibility, impact, and equity of each idea from 1 - 4. This guidance shows what a score of 1 - 4 should look like.*

#### **Feasibility**

4. It's very likely that it can be achieved by the council within the budget.
3. It could probably be achieved, but there are some risks.
2. It's unclear whether it could be achieved. There are substantial risks or hurdles.
1. It's unlikely it would be achievable.

#### **Impact**

4. It is likely to have a substantial impact  
*(E.g. making a big difference to the lives of a large number of people)*
3. It is likely to have an important, but smaller impact  
*(E.g. affecting people in a smaller way, or only affecting a small number of people).*  
*Alternatively, this project might help achieve something substantial in time, but only with further investment.*
2. It's likely to make a difference, but only in a relatively minor way.
1. It seems unlikely that this project will have a clear impact.

#### **Equity**

4. Has an important effect on achieving social justice. For instance by making a substantial difference to people's lives who would otherwise be less likely to benefit from other public services or are most affected by disadvantage, stigma, poverty or poor services.
3. Has a more minor effect on achieving social justice. For instance by having a more minor impact on such people.

2. Makes little difference to achieving social justice. For instance, under-served groups may benefit somewhat alongside others, but in a way that is unlikely to make a difference to current inequality.
1. Mainly benefits those who are already well-served, affluent, nurtured and achieving and is unlikely to reach other parts of our community, or contribute to tackling injustice.

Finally there would be an opportunity to review how other groups had scored their ideas before collectively using these scores to agree a final five ideas to go through to the vote.

On the day we shifted our approach slightly so that instead of having councillors answering questions as a separate slot, we instead combined this with giving other groups a chance to review each other's ideas. It also reduced the onus on the council team to have all the answers to the group's questions. Groups also started to identify the strongest ideas early on, and under time pressure, ultimately just scored these strongest ideas rather than all of them, though they did record comments for all ideas.

Towards the end of the day, we asked each of the three groups to share their 3 highest scoring ideas. We placed these in score order on a board at the front of the room and asked each group to explain why they were given the score they were. This allowed us to collectively check each group were scoring in the same way and agree which ideas we collectively thought should be in the top five.

One of the groups only wanted to put forward two ideas, so this gave us an initial group of eight. One of the groups had been scoring quite a bit lower than others – when we reviewed the scores, we adjusted for this and came up with a new ordering in which two ideas emerged as clearly less favoured than the others.

Two of the shortlisted ideas were youth projects. There was concern about putting two quite similar ideas forward to the vote. This wasn't an issue we'd anticipated given the process we'd gone through. After some discussion it was decided that there shouldn't be two similar projects going forward, and a vote was taken on which should be included.

One other idea was dependent on district council approval, so it was felt a strong sixth idea was needed as a reserve in case this wasn't possible. It was also felt across the groups that one of the ideas that hadn't made it to the board was stronger than other options included, so this was added. Through this discussion we arrived



at 5 shortlisted ideas, and a 6<sup>th</sup> option if one of the other projects proved unachievable.

### **Evaluating the Shortlisting Event**

Our primary aims were to arrive at five ideas in an informed way, that gave people a positive experience of working together, and that would allow us to communicate why these decisions were reached.

As participants arrived we asked them to fill in a short questionnaire asking them:

- What they hoped the event would achieve
- What they hoped it would be like to take part in
- What motivated them to take part

This was useful for us to see in advance, and gave us a way of judging how well the event lived up to citizen's needs. The questionnaire, and results, are included in an appendix.

After the event we gave out an evaluation form. The form, and results received, are included as an appendix. Unfortunately we received very few forms back as the event was running slightly over time, and people were giving up their time on a Sunday. However, we also heard some feedback by talking with participants during and after the event, and speaking with members of the council team afterwards. Drawing on these sources, as well as our observations, it's possible to make some conclusions about how well or not the process worked.

### **What worked well**

A key aim for the PB process was that the council hear from new voices. This was a positive aspect of the event, as the council team generally didn't recognise those taking part from previous engagement. Asking participants about previous participation showed that a majority had not previously been to a council meeting or contacted their councillors.

Feedback results suggested that people felt positive about their experience of working together, saying that they felt able to share their views, that discussions were constructive even when there was disagreement, and the day was interesting. Listening to discussions it was clear that people were learning more about the council's work and some of the challenges and constraints they have to grapple with. Comments also include praise for the commitment and enthusiasm shown by participants.

Observing discussions, it seemed that evaluation criteria encouraged people to think critically about the ideas they were reviewing. Comments on the day suggested that thinking about equity in particular had enabled a different kind of discussion than would otherwise have happened. Ultimately, different ideas were chosen than those that had received most likes online and at offline stalls. For instance, water refill points were one of the most popular previously, but despite knowing this the group felt it would have little impact once they learnt about an existing council scheme to allow refills at businesses across the town.

Ultimately the process enabled residents themselves to determine a final shortlist for the vote, and to do so by thinking about the feasibility, impact and equity of proposals.

### **What worked less well**

From observing discussions it seemed that participants were sometimes quite quick to dismiss ideas. One participant raised a concern within their feedback that decisions were being swayed by who was on the table rather than factual information. Starting with assessing feasibility seemed to contribute to this, particularly when participants were primarily evaluating the ideas presented them rather than being encouraged to think creatively about different ways of achieving the same aims. There was a large number of ideas to work through, which seemed to add to this. The council team felt it was valuable to involve participants in a conversation about feasibility and understand constraints they work with – but this perhaps needed a different approach.

Groups found it quite tiring to go back through ideas – instead it might have worked better to have encouraged them to score and priorities as much as possible initially, before reviewing and seeking further information where needed. This would also have helped record more of their reasoning about each of the ideas. A member of the council team suggested using physical tick boxes rather than separate guidance sheets to act as a stronger prompt for checking that scores given matched the criteria outlined.

One group in particular found the scoring criteria difficult to use. In particular, how to weigh up the number of people affected versus how strongly some people were affected when thinking about impact. As well as, how to weigh something that benefits those with particular need or current disadvantage, against something that benefits a broader swathe of the population when thinking about equity. It was also tricky to include environmental justice within the scoring framework, though we encouraged groups to think about this within equity scores. This was an ambitious

approach to use in the short time we had. Even with these constraints it did get people thinking critically about how to evaluate these proposals. If used again it would be important to spend a little longer explaining some of these points and working these through with some examples.

One challenge of working with such a small council is the risk of staff having to play multiple roles. The facilitation on the day was led by two staff from the Public Square team, but there were also two experienced engagement officers from the council on hand to help on individual tables. There was a limit to how much information could be prepared about the ideas in advance so we decided to have a period where residents participating in the event could ask for more information from the council. While the councillors were able to provide some of this, it was acknowledged that the two staff (who are a key part of such a small council) would also need to input here. This meant they had to play a dual role, which was not ideal. The councillors also had to move between first listening to residents and then sharing their own insight. If this approach was repeated it would be important to think more about how to separate out these roles. We could have also done more to brief councillors in advance, this would be particularly important if we were working with a council with less experience in community engagement.

While we reached new voices, within their feedback participants raised concerns about the diversity of the group. We didn't record demographic information from our small group but were able to make broad observations, coupled with the information the council had already captured about these volunteers. There was a justified concern about a lack of representation from areas of the borough generally less likely to engage, a lack of young people (the youngest was in their twenties though there was otherwise a range of ages), and a lack of people with disabilities. From responses about previous democratic activity it appeared the group were also quite politically engaged (which should be kept in mind if applying this format in other contexts).

One participant told us they didn't always realise there was an expectation to make decisions in the interest of the town as a whole – suggesting we could have done more to emphasise this, such as encouraging people to think about what perspectives aren't within the room, though some table facilitators did encourage participants to consider this.

One, unsurprising, message we heard from participants was that a full day on a Sunday was a lot of time to give. Continuing to think how the commitment can be made manageable is important.

Arriving at the final set of ideas felt quite tight for time, it would have been good to allow for more time at this stage. We could also have set clearer expectations around allowing other ideas into the final shortlisting if groups felt that the initial shortlist didn't match the best ideas from across the groups. Having some flexibility is useful, but it's important that participants have clear expectations.

Lastly there were aspects of how the process would work, that we'd not clarified with the council in advance, and had to respond to during the day:

- Two similar ideas getting through prior stages and yet being seen as too similar to go through.
- The council wanted the budget to be open to projects that would need additional funding in the future rather than just stand-alone investments but we'd not fully explored how to deal with this within scoring criteria. Once this was raised we encouraged groups to factor sustainability into their feasibility scores.
- We were conscious throughout the process of the risk of involving people who had a personal interest in projects being evaluated. Ultimately one person at the event told us that they were responsible for one of the ideas being reviewed and was careful about unduly influencing discussion. In the future clearer expectations should be set about how to deal with the risks associated with this.

## **Reflections**

Having information about the shortlisting day prepared before asking people if they wanted to participate would have been an advantage, allowing officers to make a personal social contract with people earlier. However, the process that was followed - initial commitment in principle, followed by more detailed information on time, date and commitment, was successful in getting new people interacting with council.

There are a number of trade-offs when designing a process – different approaches can allow you to focus on different outcomes from the engagement.

The format used for the shortlisting workshop is adapted from a process normally used by a citizen working group over a period of several weeks. Within that process the group are encouraged to conduct their own research and develop proposals, as well as simply whittling down a list of ideas.

Applying it in the way we did was ambitious, and there are a number of ways this could be strengthened, as discussed above. Despite some shortcomings it did enable citizens to arrive at a decision in a reasonably considered way that took account of

feasibility, impact and equity. To take this further it may be worth considering different ways of fitting this into an overall process.

Idea generation was kept intentionally light-touch and thus easy to take part in, but this meant the working group had a lot to do to translate these into a final set of clearer proposals. It also meant that proposals at the shortlisting event were still at an early stage of development and that there was quite a large number to consider. An alternative approach could be to spend longer during an idea generation stage unearthing local priorities and developing more worked-up responses. Such outreach could also be targeted towards areas that are traditionally less likely to engage. This could include a shift towards empowering community members to identify local needs rather than doing as much outreach centrally.

The shortlisting event asked a lot of participants over one day. This would need to be made more manageable in the future. One alternative could be to split this – perhaps over 2-3 evenings. This could give longer to understand the task, and allow time for the council to respond to any questions the group has before asking them to reach final decisions.

## Voting



FTC social media post showing Town Vote options

The shortlisting event produced five final proposals to be decided by a wider vote. One other proposal selected by the shortlisting group was discarded as officers confirmed after the shortlisting event that it wasn't feasible for FTC to deliver.

The live voting form was embedded in a page giving an overview of the process so far, with links to more information on the working group, the projects on Your Priorities, and the shortlisting event.

### Rank the ideas

Rank the ideas in order of preference from most preferred (1) to least preferred (5). Consider things like, which idea would benefit the people of Frome the most? Which idea stands out as exciting or novel?

1. Rank the ideas in order of your preference

☰	Frome Bursary
☰	Intergenerational Project
☰	Youth Project
☰	Community Allotment
☰	Frome Voice

\* 2. What's your postcode?

\* 3. What's your age?

We need to know your postcode to ensure you're a Frome resident. We will not use this information to identify you personally, nor will we share this information with anyone. See our [privacy policy](#) for more details

7 / 7

Paper voting was also available at the Town Hall and at the Discover Frome Information Point.

Voting was open to any Frome resident over 10 years old. In the final voting stage 423 votes were cast in SurveyMonkey, with around 150 paper votes being cast - this represents around 2% of the population, less than in previous years.

There was a 100% completion rate for the form, with, on average, two minutes spent completing it. This was in contrast to the 2019 events form, where there had been significant dropout from the voting process.

SurveyMonkey embedded form for People's Budget 2019

### Age breakdown of online voting from the 2019, 2018 and 2017 votes

Age range	2017 Town Vote	2018 Town Vote	2019 Town Vote
0–12	1.10%	0.50%	2.10%
13–18	4.80%	0.80%	1.40%
19–24	3.00%	1.60%	1.00%
25–34	15.50%	7.00%	8.60%
35–44	25.90%	22.60%	24.50%
45–54	16.60%	23.00%	20.70%
55–64	14.10%	23.00%	15.90%
65–74	14.80%	16.90%	16.40%
75+	4.40%	4.70%	8.30%

In the online voting process, teenagers and young adults were under-represented, as in previous years. There was a notable increase in representation of people in the 75+ age group.

The final results were close, but the winning project was a youth project centred around parks and open spaces, with an intergenerational project around shared interests in second place, and a Frome Bursary Fund for children to access sport, music and arts opportunities, in third place.

### Reflections

Whilst the format of the form was successful, returning to the zero drop-out rate of previous years (meaning that everyone who started filling out the form completed it), overall participation in the final voting stage was lower than in previous years.

This could be due to a longer process, with multiple opportunities to participate, the fact that the ideas for the final vote were seen as less controversial than in previous years.



## Monitoring implementation

A key point that came up in our discovery in Frome was the attention that had been paid in FTC council strategy as a whole to visibly deliverable projects. This has been one of the lessons from the People's Budget too - some of the previous projects have remained in the planning stages for a long time.

Monitoring the implementation of the Town Vote decision for 2019 was not something we worked together with FTC on in the first year of Public Square, but it was a criteria that was considered in the shortlisting stage this year. The council have a link on their Town Vote webpage for signing up to email updates about the council's work and implementation of successful proposals<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/peoples-budget/peoples-budget-town-vote/>

## 4) What We've Learned

A key benefit of participatory budgeting is the ability to iterate year on year and make adjustments to how the process works. This is something that can be seen in practice in the history of the People's Budget in Frome. From the point of view of FTC officers delivering the programme, the goal of evaluation is to get a broad understanding of what worked and didn't and take that understanding forward into future budgets.

Part of the value of Public Square is to give the officers from the council some opportunity to reflect on the process. We had a call with the council team to gather feedback on the process from their perspective. We outline below some observations and reflections that came from this session.

### Process

Overall, the programme was complicated significantly by unexpected conflicting demands on officers' time. The small team of two officers were involved in delivering multiple other projects, some with greater direct impact on resident's lives.

The process itself, with more involvement from people other than the officers, took significantly more time from the council team than they had budgeted for. There were time costs associated with working up the ideas from residents into proposals and entering them into Your Priorities, and with meeting with the Public Square team regularly. However, although the council team haven't analysed the time spent in detail, officers felt that the biggest time commitment was in communication and outreach in order to encourage people to participate over a relatively long period.

The People's Budget programme doesn't have an assigned budget for delivery, just the £10,000 budget for the chosen project itself. The general marketing budget is used to support it. The Marketing and Communications Manager thought that it would be valuable for officers to present to the council that there is a cost associated with undertaking the process too. She also suggested that officers would continue to make use of events that serve multiple purposes as a way of getting the most out of the time of paid staff.

The timing of the project was something that officers would change in future - trying to run it over the summer period into autumn was difficult for both officers and residents, with conflicts with holidays. They felt that it would be better to cut the number of stages next year, and that a condensed eight-week process might be an interesting experiment.

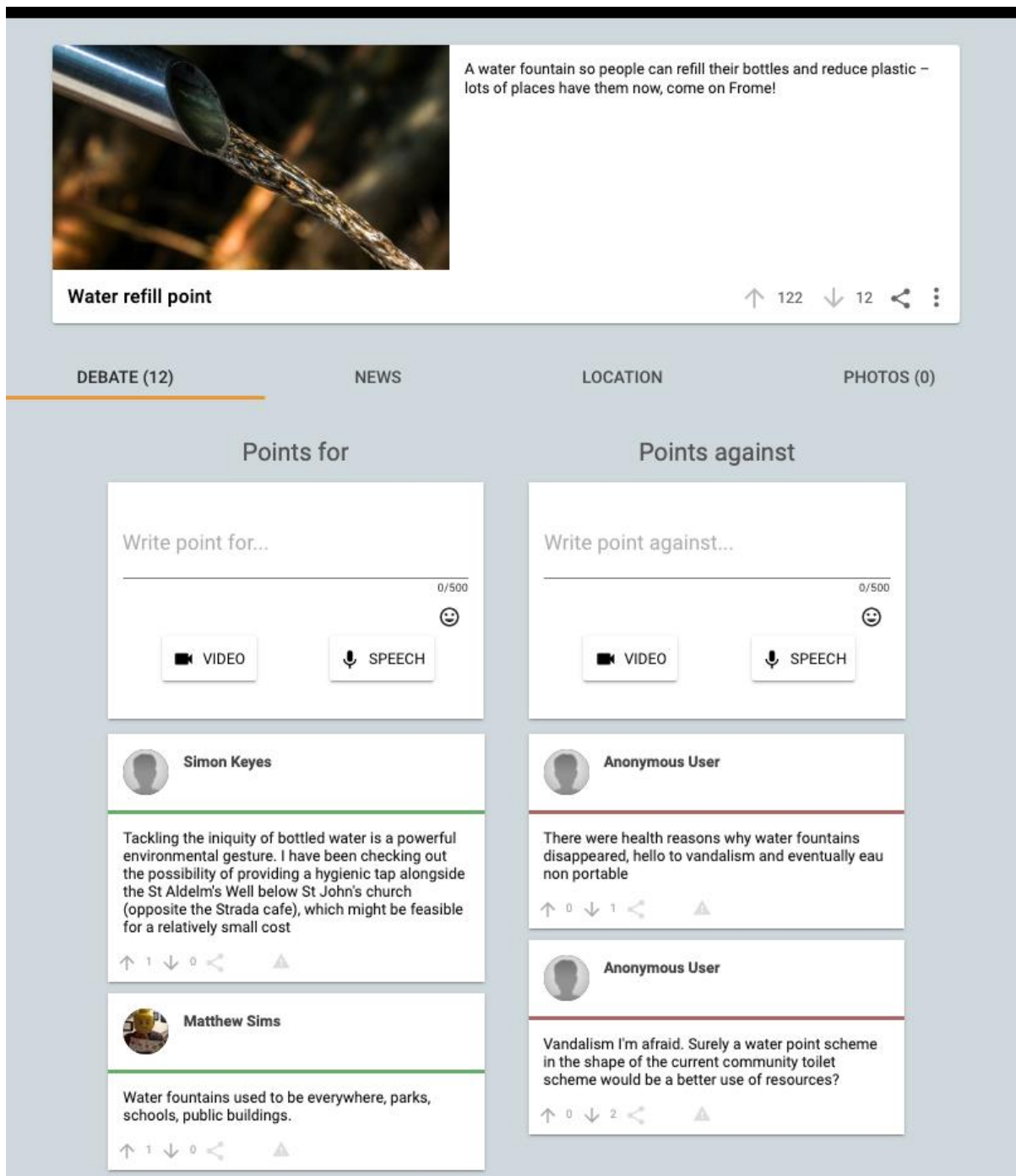
As mentioned in the description of the shortlisting event, officers felt that it would have been useful to have had a clearer plan for the shortlisting from the beginning in order to have a clear offer for people who might want to be involved. In general, they would aspire to separate out the design process more from delivery, with more structure decided at the point they started to communicate to residents.

The shortlisting event was the part of the process that officers were most concerned about in advance, but they felt that it had been an interesting and eye-opening experience to listen to residents having a really meaningful discussion about the different ideas proposed.

The ideas that came out of the shortlisting event were not the subject of a lot of discussion on social media through the voting stage, which is unusual for Frome. Officers thought this might be because all the projects shortlisted were quite similar and that a different process might have resulted in more exciting or ambitious projects. It was as a surprise that people didn't come up with lots of unexpected ideas, although they felt that some of the ideas submitted directly through Your Priorities were more interesting.

## Online elements

The use of Your Priorities to support online discussion of the Town Vote proposals was one of the aspects that officers felt was a successful prototype that they would take forward in the future. Significantly, Your Priorities offers users the opportunity to make points for or against particular proposals, but not to reply directly to points made by others. This enabled people to have their say without being shut down, and so was a good interface for building discussion. People engaged with Your Priorities in a respectful way and there was understanding around projects that weren't selected in the shortlisting process. The most popular proposal in Your Priorities (a water fountain) was ruled out quickly as ineligible. Officers had been worried about backlash around this but people seemed to understand.



The screenshot shows a public square post titled "Water refill point" with a video of water flowing from a tap. The post has 122 upvotes and 12 downvotes. Below the post are two columns: "Points for" and "Points against".

**Points for:**

- Simon Keyes:** Tackling the iniquity of bottled water is a powerful environmental gesture. I have been checking out the possibility of providing a hygienic tap alongside the St Aldelm's Well below St John's church (opposite the Strada cafe), which might be feasible for a relatively small cost. (1 upvote)
- Matthew Sims:** Water fountains used to be everywhere, parks, schools, public buildings. (1 upvote)

**Points against:**

- Anonymous User:** There were health reasons why water fountains disappeared, hello to vandalism and eventually eau non portable. (0 upvotes, 1 downvote)
- Anonymous User:** Vandalism I'm afraid. Surely a water point scheme in the shape of the current community toilet scheme would be a better use of resources? (0 upvotes, 2 downvotes)

The length and complexity of the overall process was reflected in the online tools used. Officers wondered if having Have Your Say, Your Priorities, and SurveyMonkey all in sequence contributed to voter fatigue. There was a feeling from officers that perhaps an online vote was given less consideration than paper voting when both were offered.

## Interaction between online and in-person elements

Exact parity between online and offline processes felt like a difficult thing to achieve throughout. For example, during the idea generation step when ideas were being commented and voted on in Your Priorities, FTC had produced a layout in the newspaper, inviting people to 'tick your preferences' but there was no opportunity for offline comment, or to see other comments in that format.

The interaction of the two approaches is an area that can be further developed in future. Although the discussion at the shortlisting event around the ideas from Your Priorities was significant, attention wasn't drawn to the comments that had been made on the ideas in Your Priorities, which might have added further viewpoints. Officers were interested in showing people Your Priorities using tablets or phones at public events in future to experiment with trying to bring them into the People's Budget process.

## Extending the reach

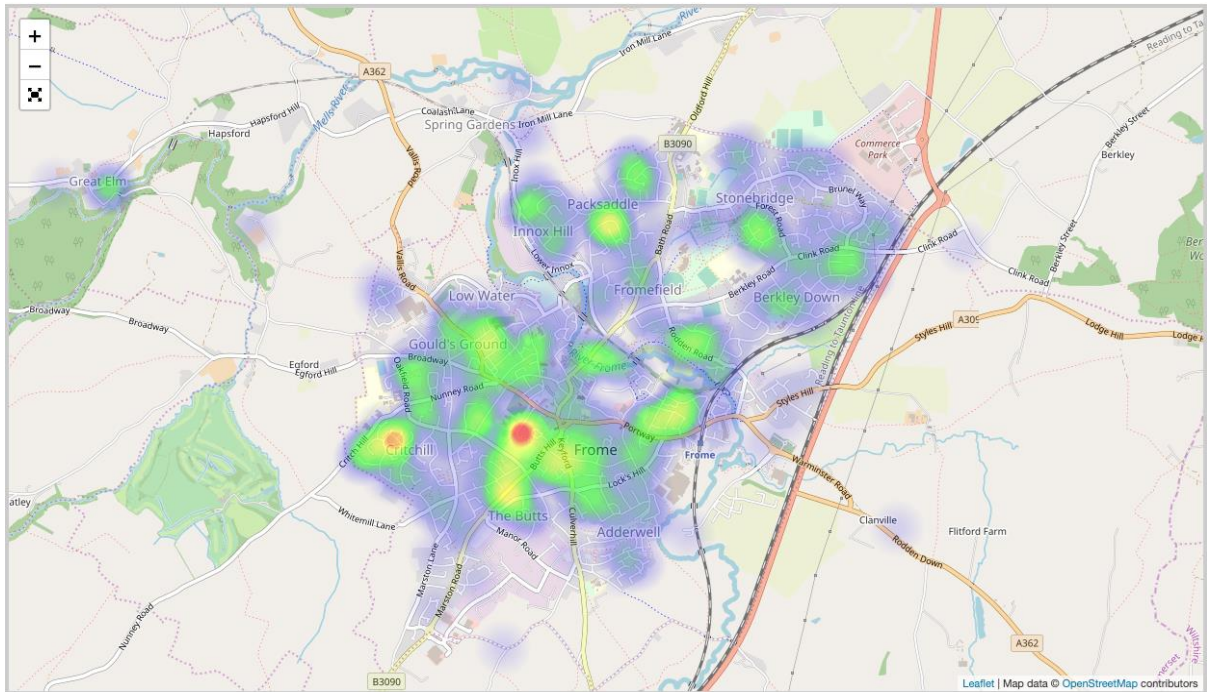
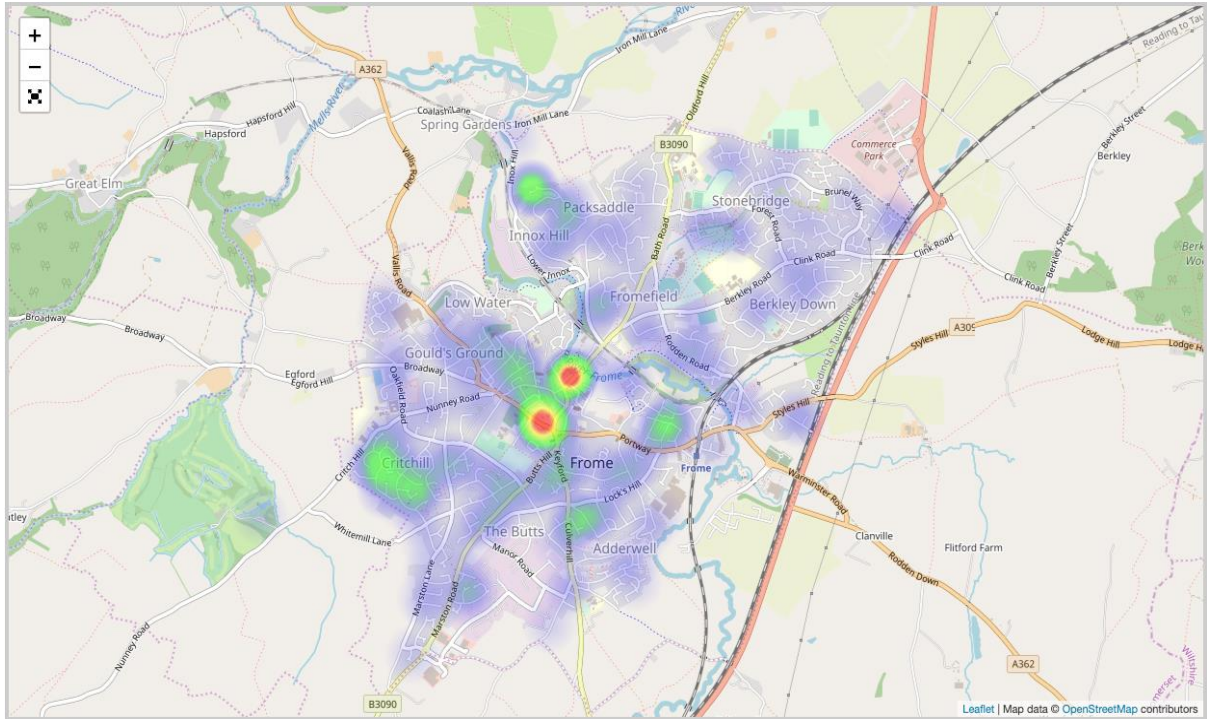
Given the limited amount of data collected during the process, it's hard to make anything other than a qualitative assessment of the extent to which the process included a representative set of people overall, although the age-based demographics collected during online voting are not significantly different from previous years. The postcode data collected during the 'Have Your Say' consultation and online voting (shown in heatmap form<sup>16</sup> below) appears to show a reasonably even distribution, with a few hotspots.

Officers thought that the initial in-person idea generation done at a number of different events and in other in-person conversations around the town did extend the reach of the programme. They spoke to people they hadn't spoken to before. The selection process for the shortlisting event also resulted in a set of people participating most of whom had not previously been in contact with the council. However there remained a concern about not reaching into those parts of the town least likely to engage. This is a key challenge for Frome and one which still needs to be met. This point came up in one of the ideas submitted, in discussions at the shortlisting event, and in feedback from that event.

Officers felt they would like to reconsider the balance struck in those initial conversations between making it really easy to participate by not asking for a lot of information, as this has meant they aren't able to follow up some of the ideas that they would like to ask questions about.

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<sup>16</sup> Created via <https://gridreferencefinder.com/postcodeBatchConverter/>



## Transparency

Transparency was a key aspiration in this year's Town Vote, and an aspect that the Public Square team worked with the FTC team to deliver. At the end of the process, given that the ideas shortlisted were not controversial in the same way that they have been in previous years, officers reflected that having [put up a lot of information about the process online](#), they've spent a lot of time on information that hasn't been viewed very much.

## Working with Public Square

The two most valuable aspects of working with Public Square from the officers' point of view were the opportunity to experiment in a supported way with technology and with a different in-person format in the shortlisting event. The main value in each aspect was in concrete, practical support - in helping them select Your Priorities and getting it up and running, in working to get the most out of SurveyMonkey and in facilitating the shortlisting event.

However, having Public Square involved has made the delivery team less fluid - collectively, we needed to decide and then coordinate timeframes amongst the three different organisations. It also made the project a larger time commitment - being a more complex process, it required more time, in particular communications time, to deliver.

## Extending this process to other councils

In terms of how the approach taken in Frome might be extended to other councils, officers noted that for town councils, the existence of both a communications and community development team, however small, is a rarity. The practical question of having enough staff time to do this kind of work is a key one - the ability to raise and use a precept is a key enabler. Additionally, they would recommend an upfront acknowledgement that this kind of work takes time and investment.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Have Your Say Questions

- What is your favourite thing about living in Frome and why?
- What one thing would you like to see happen in your neighbourhood?
- How would you spend £10,000 to improve the lives of the people of Frome?
- Would you like to be part of the working group?
- Name
- Email address
- Postcode



## Appendix 2 – Before Shortlisting Event Questionnaire

At the start of the event we asked participants to fill out the following survey.

Frome Town Vote - Before Event Questionnaire

**We want to learn more about what motivated you to take part in this event, and what we can do to improve opportunities like this. Please answer as many questions as you can.**

Please tick this box if you are a Councillor or Council staff

1. We are interested in how active you already are in your local community. Have you done any of these activities in the past?

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Reported an issue to the council (town, district, or county)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voted in local elections (town, district or county)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campaigned on a local issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended a council meeting (town, district or county)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responded to a consultation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicated with any of your councillors (town, district or county)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteered in your community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Served as a councillor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. What do you hope this event will achieve?

3. What do you hope this event will be liked to take part in?

4. What made you decide to take part in this event?

5. Was there anything that put you off taking part?

6. What do you think the main benefits are of citizens being actively involved in making decisions about their local area?

7. What do you think the main downsides or risks are?

## Appendix 3 Before Shortlisting Event Results

Results are shown by question below. We have removed blank entries.

We also gave councillors and council officers a chance to fill this in; the form asked respondents to indicate if they were a councillor or council officer rather than a public participant. Two of the forms we received were marked as such, and are not included in the results shown below. To respect the anonymity of respondents we have instead summarised key points from those below. The remaining eight responses received are recorded below.

### Have you done any of these activities in the past?

	Yes	No	Blank
Reported an issue to the council (town, district, or county)	7	3	0
Voted in local elections (town, district, or county)	9	1	0
Campaigned on a local issue	4	5	1
Attended a council meeting (town, district, or county)	4	6	0
Responded to a consultation	7	3	0
Communicated with any of your councillors (town, district, or county)	3	6	1
Volunteered in your community	6	4	0

### What do you hope this event will achieve?

Some consensus of which proposed project are viable

A positive outcome that will benefit Frome and its residents

Allowing local people to get involved with town projects

spending money wisely

Agreement of worthwhile cause for the community

Not sure

An understanding of which projects are deemed 'most suitable' for funding under the scheme

A united voice from the people of Frome for Frome

A fair choice of activities etc for the townspeople, whatever age, to vote on.

### What do you hope this event will be like to take part in?

Interesting and satisfying to make a contribution

Relaxed and enjoyable
Friendly, informative
Interesting, engaging, useful.
Not sure
Fun, enjoyable and informative!
Open, informative, informing, friendly
Rational, respectful, informed with refreshments!

<b>What made you decide to take part in this event?</b>
Curiosity and a desire to give some support to the community
An opportunity to get involved in things for my town
Recently, moved back to town, want to be involved
Taking an interest in the community
It was something to do
The opportunity to participate with other individuals from different backgrounds and interests
Contributing to our community
Been in Frome for 3 years now so have ideas of how to improve this unique town which I hope will be my forever home.

<b>Was there anything that put you off taking part?</b>
No
no
Sunday. 5+ hours.
no
Not really
I thought the day (10am to 3.30pm) rather longer than I would have wished
No
No

<b>What do you think the main benefits are of citizens being actively involved in making decisions about their local area?</b>
Engagement and a sense that community does exist
Feeling more involved. Feeling that even after elections, they still have a role to play
Gaining an outcome that benefits all
Their voices are heard (for a change)
A sense of belonging and being valued

Ownership of projects. Supportive of those running projects.

No-one feels railroaded by 'power' figures. A mix of local opinions should lead to a well rounded discussion and outcome that suits the majority.

What do you think the main downsides or risks are?

None

none

Does it represent collaboration? Who is unable to attend all day on a Sunday?

Not sure

Not enough diversity within the group to reflect all views

I don't mind anything, personally, but there wil always be some "closed-minded" citizens that don't like whatever is decided!

Some people would have biased opinions or the selection could be not a wide enough demographic. Where are the teenagers? Handicapped? OAPs? tough if you only have volunteers to choose from.

### The council team's responses

Instead of including the two responses from the council team in full, we've summarised their responses to the most relevant questions below.

They hoped it would achieve:

A truly democratic way to spend local money on local needs, groups and projects

A connection with people that don't feel connected to the town council. And fund some really worthwhile projects.

They wanted taking part to be:

Fun, inclusive, and leave feeling it was a positive experience for us and Frome.

Exciting and interesting - telling me some things I didn't know and some that reinforces my understanding

They felt the main benefits of citizens being actively involved in decisions were:

Feeling connected and empowered

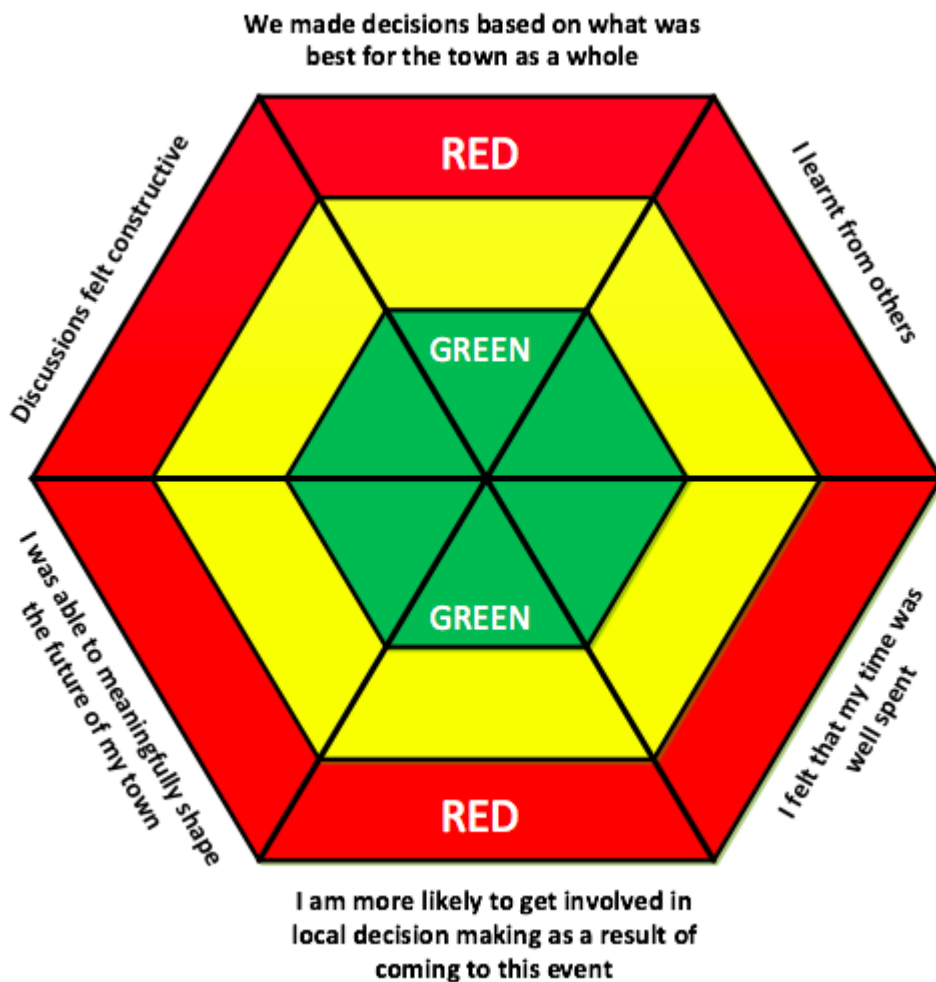
## Appendix 4) The Post Event Questionnaire

At the end of the event we gave participants an evaluation questionnaire, shown below.

Frome Town Vote – After Event Questionnaire

1. Please tick this box if you are a councillor or council staff

2. How well did this event hit the mark? Please tick or cross the green section if you agree with the matching statement, red if you disagree, and yellow if you are unsure or are somewhere in the middle.



3. How did this event compare to what you hoped it would be like? Please explain.

4. How did this event compare to any worries you had about it? Please explain.

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not sure or Prefer not to Say
I felt able to share my views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time and venue were convenient for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt comfortable speaking up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A better decisions has been made as a result of residents being involved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand what will happen next with these ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Do you think this event was a good use of your time? Please explain your answer.

7. Has this event changed your attitudes towards citizens being involved in decision-making? Please explain your answer.



8. Do you have any other comments? Including any ideas about how this event could be improved.

## Appendix 5) Post Event Questionnaire Results

The results from this questionnaire are shown below. We also gave councillors and council officers a chance to fill this in; the form asked respondents to indicate if they were a councillor or council officer rather than a public participant. Two of the forms we received were marked as such, and are not included in the results shown below. To respect the anonymity of respondents we have instead summarised key points from those below. The remaining four responses received are recorded below.

### How well did this event hit the mark?

	Green	Yellow	Red
We made decisions based on what was best for the town as a whole	3	1	
I learnt from others	3	1	
I felt that my time was well spent	4		
I am more likely to get involved in local decision-making as a result of coming to this event	3	1	
I was able to meaningfully shape the future of my town	2	2	
Discussions felt constructive	4		

### How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I felt able to share my views					4
The time and venue were convenient for me				1	3
I felt comfortable speaking up					4
A better decisions has been made as a result of residents being involved				1	3
I understand what will happen next with these ideas					4

Do you think this event was a good use of your time?
Yes, it was interesting and I've learnt more about what is being worked on by the council.
Yes very valuable to hear a broad cross section of opinion and how were discussed
Yes. Wanted to contribute to my community
Yes: brilliant

Has this event changed your attitudes towards citizens being involved in decision-making?
Kind of.. I think FTC should do more sessions like this, but would like it to be more diverse in future if possible?
Yes
No. Its a good thing. Qualified engagement is critical to quality decision making
Yes there is clear bias in the community that is becoming ever more divisive

Do you have any other comments? Including any ideas about how this event could be improved.
Perhaps FTC could invite more people along as and when more direct engagement with the less-well-reached parts of the population can be achieved?
Some 16 - 28 yo, so they can have a say.
Explanation of scoring criteria at the start would be beneficial
FTC are fab!

### The council team's responses

Instead of including the two responses from the council team in full, we've summarised key points from across the questions:

- It was unclear that it was vital for decisions to be made in the best interests of the town.
- Discussions were frank and honest and opinions were valued - even when they were opposing! A lovely day!
- It was very interesting and people were very committed and enthusiastic
- Sustainability should be added in scoring. Scoring explained to ensure all teams scoring in similar ways!
- Very valuable to hear a broad cross section of opinion and how were discussed