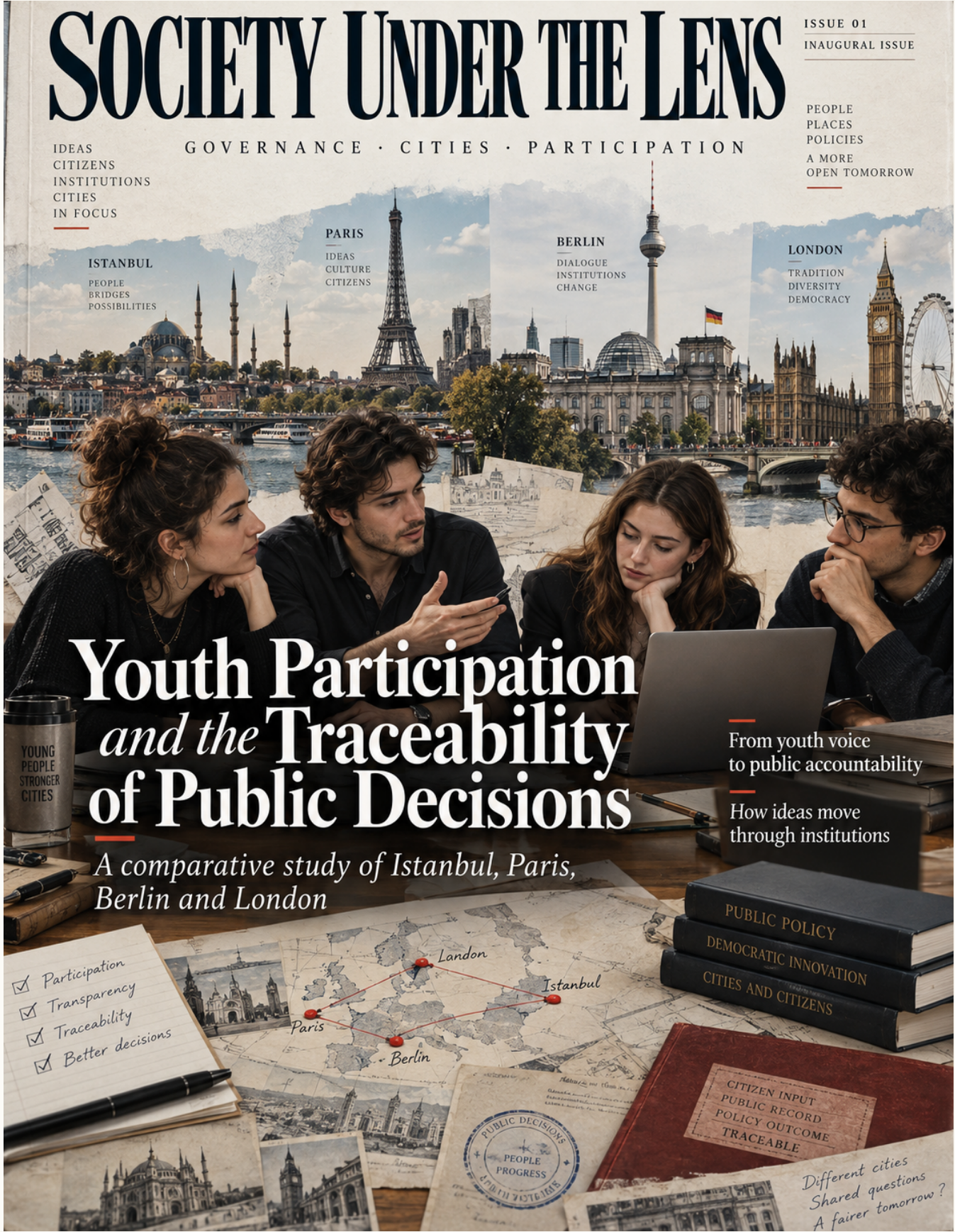


SOCIETY UNDER THE LENS  
ISSUE 01



**Youth Participation and the Traceability of Public Decisions**

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Comparative study of Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London

**Chapter 1. Introduction: the whereabouts of a public proposal**

**1.1. A democratic question hidden in an administrative sequence**

On 5 March 2026, the London Assembly called for the introduction of bleed-control kits on buses and at major transport stations. Its public account associated the motion with advocacy by the London Youth Assembly. The record is unusually revealing in one respect: it identifies a youth body in connection with a formal political act. It is less conclusive in another. A motion asking an executive and a transport authority to act is neither an order for equipment nor proof that the kits were installed. A study which counted the motion as the implementation of a youth proposal would misdescribe the very public decision it set out to investigate. Conversely, a study which ignored the named contribution because the youth body lacked a vote would overlook an observable route of influence.<sup>1</sup>

This difference between presence in a process and a demonstrable change in its outcome is the point of departure for the present inquiry. Across many cities, youth councils, assemblies, consultations and participatory planning exercises are described in the language of empowerment. Their annual reports can establish how many young people attended, what subjects they discussed and how many recommendations they produced. Those records rarely answer, on their own, what happened when a recommendation crossed from a participatory forum into the office with legal or financial authority to act. At that boundary, a proposal may be acknowledged, altered, incorporated into a policy, deferred for reasons that are never communicated, or lost between institutions. Each possibility has a different democratic meaning. The difficulty is that the archives of participation and the archives of decision-making are seldom arranged to be read together.

<sup>1</sup> London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” press release, 5 March 2026. The announcement is evidence of the motion and its public attribution; it is not a delivery record.

London provides a sharper illustration of this disjunction than a general account of youth engagement would allow. An official information disclosure in 2025 explained that the London Youth Assembly has no formal role in decisions of the London Assembly and that formal key performance indicators for its influence are not maintained. The later motion nevertheless makes a bounded form of recognition visible. These two documents are not contradictory. The first concerns an institutional entitlement and the way the authority measures it; the second records an occasion on which elected members chose to act in relation to a youth concern. Whether advocacy altered the wording or timing of the motion, and whether transport provision changed thereafter, are distinct questions requiring other records.<sup>2</sup> The tension invites a more discriminating vocabulary than the familiar opposition between effective participation and tokenism.

The research question is therefore deliberately narrow before it becomes comparative: when a young person or a youth body makes a proposal concerning urban policy, what public evidence allows an observer to follow that proposal through a responsible authority’s response, a decision and eventual delivery? A secondary question follows. Where the sequence cannot be reconstructed, is the obstacle the design of the participatory mechanism, the absence of a published response, the separation of powers among urban institutions, or an avoidable weakness in record keeping? The study asks these questions in Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London, cities chosen for the variety of their institutional arrangements and the availability of records that appear capable of testing at least part of the sequence.

The comparison does not presume a shared municipal constitution. Paris’s Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse may transmit opinions into city procedures; the London Youth Assembly works alongside an elected assembly whose power is mainly scrutiny; Berlin’s youth participation operates through state and district structures, making a specific district and project necessary for close observation; Istanbul’s Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi offers an entry point whose proposals must be traced into the legally separate acts of the metropolitan municipality. Treating all four as equivalent youth parliaments would produce an orderly table at the expense of institutional accuracy. Their differences supply the experiment: does the visibility of a youth

<sup>2</sup> London Assembly, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” disclosure, August 2025; London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” 5 March 2026.

proposal depend on a formal channel, a receptive elected member, a project-level participation procedure, or an administrative duty to answer?<sup>3</sup>

**1.2. What the study measures and why**

The main unit of analysis is an identifiable request made by young people and directed, whether immediately or by referral, towards an authority able to decide on it. The request must have a recorded author, date and sufficiently clear action. A general aspiration that the city should become fairer or safer may be politically significant, but it cannot be matched to a later decision with the same confidence as a request for an accessible playground entrance or specified transport equipment. Nor can a subsequently adopted policy be attributed to the youth body merely because both address the same subject. The evidentiary distance between similarity, acknowledgement and influence is part of the result.

The inquiry follows six linked events. First, it establishes what was proposed in the participants’ own record. Second, it identifies the institution to which the request was transmitted and whether that institution had competence. Third, it asks whether receipt or consideration was documented. Fourth, it looks for a response which gives reasons for acceptance, modification, rejection or deferral. Fifth, it compares the originating request with the text of the decision, including drafts or deliberative records where available. Sixth, it seeks evidence of implementation: a funded measure, a procurement record, a completed work or an operating service. No later event is inferred from an earlier one. Consultation establishes an invitation; a published youth opinion establishes a contribution; a motion establishes a political act; a contract or operating record establishes another kind of act altogether.

These stages permit a distinction between *uptake* and *attribution*. If a youth recommendation appears in an adopted decision, uptake may be plausible even when the record contains no admission that the recommendation caused the change. Attribution demands stronger evidence: an explicit citation, a documented amendment, a chronological chain of discussion, or a decision-maker’s explanation which can be checked against the records. Multiple actors may

<sup>3</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; London Assembly, “FOI – London Youth Assembly”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; İstanbul Kent Konseyi, institutional and youth assembly publications. The last source identifies an institutional channel, not a verified proposal-to-decision chain.

have requested the same measure. In that circumstance the honest result can be that the youth body contributed to an issue on the agenda while its independent causal weight remains unknown. A public authority may also provide a reasoned refusal. That is a failure to adopt the proposal, but it is not the same democratic event as silence.

The scheme matters because the prevalent count of meetings, participants and recommendations has an unstable relation to the thing it purports to represent. A council that issues fifty recommendations and receives no public replies may be more prolific than a forum that submits five carefully specified requests, but its output count tells little about accountability. A municipality may publish photographs of consultations yet offer no way for a participant to discover which office considered their contribution. The OECD’s guidance on citizen participation makes the institutional obligation plain: authorities should explain how input has been used, justify why recommendations are not adopted, and communicate the eventual outcome to participants.<sup>4</sup> This study translates that broad standard into a document-level test appropriate to youth participation.

The proposed contribution has two parts. The analytical product is a comparative account of the points where the public trail grows clear or disappears. The practical product is a proposal-response-decision-implementation register which an authority could attach to an existing youth participation mechanism. Each actionable request would receive an identifier, an originating document, a named receiving office, a response status with reasons, a link to the relevant decision, and later evidence of implementation or non-implementation. The register would not give a youth council a veto over elected officials. It would make the treatment of a proposal legible to its authors and to the wider public. The design, tests and institutional safeguards are developed after the city studies, so that the remedy is constrained by what the archives actually reveal rather than announced as a universal cure in advance.

**1.3. Four cities, four kinds of institutional boundary**

The City of Paris describes a youth council of one hundred members aged fifteen to thirty, selected for a two-year term, to which the mayor can refer matters for an opinion. Its members

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022), executive summary, step 8.

may present those opinions in preparatory commissions. This is a specific institutional route, neither a general power to decide nor a guarantee that every opinion receives an individually published disposition.<sup>5</sup> The comparative task is to select dated opinions, examine the subsequent municipal deliberations, and see whether a proposed measure is acknowledged, revised or implemented. A resilience recommendation, for example, could be compared with a later strategy, but common terminology would not alone prove that the youth council authored a policy choice.

London presents an assembly related to, but institutionally distinct from, the London Assembly. The 2025 disclosure describes a body with borough-based membership and regular meetings while expressly denying a formal decision role. An Assembly motion may nevertheless acknowledge its advocacy. This makes London a test of a route through scrutiny, public pressure and elected members rather than direct youth decision-making. The mayor, the Assembly and Transport for London occupy different positions in a potential implementation chain. An analysis that merges them into a single ‘city response’ would conceal the point at which a recommendation did or did not advance.<sup>6</sup>

Berlin requires an explicit change of scale. Participation in a neighbourhood redesign in Mitte can be evaluated against a district project record and a later district statement about construction. The district’s Blochplatz page documents consultation with children and young people; a later official release sets out works, accessibility features, cost and a projected completion period.<sup>7</sup> The documents can demonstrate a sequence of participation and project progression. They do not, without a finer comparison of original suggestions, design revisions and deliberations, establish that a particular child or youth suggestion produced a particular feature. Nor should a planned completion date be entered as completed delivery. The point is methodological as well as local: project records are often richer on construction than on the authorship of design changes.

<sup>5</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” institutional description, accessed 25 September 2026.

<sup>6</sup> London Assembly, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” disclosure, August 2025; London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” 5 March 2026.

<sup>7</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project page; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” press release, 28 August 2026.

In Istanbul, the Youth Assembly of the Istanbul City Council and the metropolitan municipality must be kept analytically separate. The council’s existence and publication of recommendations show an opportunity for organised youth input. They do not by themselves show a metropolitan council vote, a budget allocation or a delivered service. The Istanbul case consequently depends on securing the exact text and date of selected youth recommendations, establishing their route to a responsible unit and examining the subsequent municipal record. At this opening stage those steps are a research requirement, not a negative finding about the city. To code an inaccessible or unlocated response as ‘no response’ would turn a limit of our source access into a claim about municipal conduct.<sup>8</sup>

The variation extends beyond channels of influence. A citywide youth council, a body attached to an assembly, a district project consultation and a kent konseyi assembly do not recruit the same population, define youth identically or address decisions at the same point in their life cycle. Their outputs cannot be placed on a single league table by dividing recommendations accepted by recommendations issued. The denominator might include aspirational statements in one city and narrowly specified project requests in another; one authority might have the legal capacity to deliver a service while another can only recommend it. The comparative method therefore holds the *questions* stable while allowing the institutional pathways and units of decision to differ. A full account of case selection, coding and source hierarchy belongs to Chapter 4; the point here is to state the wager and its limits.

**1.4. Evidence, absence and the discipline of explanation**

Public evidence comes in layers. A youth body’s report is good evidence that it made a proposal, but a weaker source for what an executive later decided unless it reproduces or cites the executive act. A council agenda can prove that an item entered a formal process; an adopted resolution can prove the language of the decision; a budget entry can show an authorised financial commitment; a press release can announce intention or progress but should be checked against procurement and completion records. Interviews can explain undocumented steps and help find records, yet retrospective recollection does not acquire the status of a dated decision

<sup>8</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi, official website, “Tavsiye Kararları Raporu” and “Gençlik Meclisi Faaliyet Raporu 2023,” accessed 25 September 2026. These references identify advertised publications; the relevant recommendations remain to be examined individually.

solely because it comes from a participant. The weighting of these materials will be explicit in the empirical chapters.

The most consequential category is the unavailable link. The public record may show both a proposal and an apparently relevant programme without showing what happened between them. There are several competing explanations: the programme predates the proposal; an official considered it informally; another group made the decisive request; the proposal was adopted but the administration did not preserve or publish the attribution; or the similarity is accidental. The gap is an empirical result concerning *public traceability*. It cannot be filled by the researcher’s confidence, nor does it justify a claim that young people had no influence. When additional material is obtainable through an information request, the absence should prompt investigation; where it is not, the publication should preserve the uncertainty.

This distinction is not a pedantic demand for an impossible causal experiment. Political decisions almost always have multiple authors. A young person’s request can supply language, change the salience of an existing issue, prompt a question in committee, or alter the design of a measure already planned. The study records these pathways separately when the documentary material permits it. Its standard is proportionate to the claim: a proposal copied into a resolution can support a stronger inference than a vague similarity of themes; an authority’s written explanation can support a stronger account of consideration than an unreferenced final plan; a funded and completed project supports a different proposition from an announced intention. The aim is to improve inference, not to pretend that documentary records can isolate every cause.

One further boundary is conceptual. Young people may gain confidence, political knowledge and relationships through participation even when a recommendation is rejected. Those benefits deserve study, but they do not answer the present question about public decisions. Equally, an adopted youth proposal may come from a forum that excludes young people with caring responsibilities, insecure work, disability-related barriers, limited language access or migration-related obstacles. A finding of institutional uptake must therefore be interpreted alongside a finding about who could take part. Decision influence and democratic inclusion are related dimensions, not substitutes. Chapter 2 reconstructs the traditions of scholarship that illuminate each dimension and identifies the more precise question that remains between them.

**1.5. What a four-city comparison can and cannot establish**

The cities were selected for analytical variation, not to estimate the average quality of European youth democracy. Istanbul and Paris each have a citywide participatory body, yet their legal contexts and routes into municipal deliberation differ. London introduces an elected assembly whose public powers and relationship to an executive are unlike those of an ordinary city council. Berlin’s federal and district organisation makes a project in Mitte a more defensible empirical unit than an undifferentiated claim about ‘Berlin’. The sites therefore present different ways in which a proposal can cross from a youth forum to an institution with decision authority. The comparison tests whether the same transparency problem recurs at different institutional boundaries. It does not presume that findings from four places describe all municipalities, or that the cases can be ranked by a common population denominator.

The temporal scale also varies by policy subject. A transport safety proposal may produce a debate within months while equipment delivery depends on procurement and an operational assessment. A park redesign can pass through consultation, financing, tender and construction over several years. A youth opinion on climate resilience may appear in a strategy long before a particular intervention is funded. Forcing all four into a fixed twelve-month ‘success’ window would make slow capital projects look unsuccessful and quick symbolic motions look effective. Each proposal will instead carry dates for its identifiable stages; the analysis will distinguish elapsed time from missing dates. Where a decision comes after a recommendation, the order is necessary for influence but insufficient to prove it. Where a measure was already adopted before the recommendation, it cannot be counted as youth-induced uptake even if later promotional material pairs them.

The four languages of the source archive require comparable care. A French *avis* may be an advisory opinion with a formal route into a commission; a German *Beteiligung* can cover a range of consultations and co-design procedures; the Turkish *tavsiye kararı* is a recommendation, not automatically a municipal decision; an English ‘motion’ may express the Assembly’s position without requiring an executive to implement it. Translating each term simply as ‘decision’ would manufacture convergence. The study retains original institutional labels at their first appearance and translates their operative meaning in relation to the authority that issued them. A municipal

document can then be compared by what it *does*, rather than by how closely its title resembles another city’s document.

This source criticism extends to photographs, dashboards and organisational reports. An event image has value: it can show that a public meeting occurred and sometimes who attended. It does not demonstrate the completeness of the attendance list or the treatment of proposals after the meeting. A dashboard can provide continuously updated statuses while concealing the criteria used to classify a measure as delivered. A youth body’s annual report may understandably present its strongest accomplishments, while a municipal budget offers a more exact record of spending authority and a less exact record of authorship. The comparative chapters will read such materials against one another, not choose in advance either official reporting or participant testimony as the sole truth of the process.

At several points the evidence may be asymmetric in a way that itself matters. Paris may publish extensive youth opinions but only general acknowledgements of consultation in an adopted strategy. Berlin Mitte may show a specific consultation alongside a construction schedule but supply little correspondence explaining how participants’ suggestions altered the design. London may make the political motion and public youth advocacy visible while placing delivery in another agency’s records. Istanbul may have a detailed recommendation publication but a harder-to-reconstruct link to metropolitan proceedings. These are prospective patterns to test, not findings awarded before the search is complete. Their methodological importance is that a missing link at a different stage in each city can lead to the same experience for a participant: uncertainty about what became of their work.

The empirical chapters will therefore use a common case dossier. Each dossier will contain the original text, date, issuing body, competent receiving authority, acknowledgement or referral, reasoned response, relevant agenda, adopted decision, financial or operational evidence, and a note on rival explanations. A record can be filled only by a cited document or a clearly identified interview, and each inference will be graded separately from the existence of the document. When the chain stops, the dossier will state the last confirmed stage and the next source that would be needed to go further. This design permits a reader to disagree with the interpretation without having to guess which document supports it. It also means that a negative

result can have substance: an authority may have an impressive participatory forum but no public mechanism for answering specific requests.

The research has an ethical dimension beyond file management. A young participant’s public statement about policing, migration status, sexual harassment or access to a service may be sensitive even when a council has posted it online. The analytical need to identify a proposal does not create a need to reproduce identifying personal details. When a source attributes a collective recommendation to a youth body, the study will preserve that collective authorship. When a child appears in consultation material, only material needed for verification will be cited, and the discussion will avoid making the child a public symbol of institutional failure. A register proposed for future use would require similar limits on what is displayed and who may correct a record. Transparency can expose a process to scrutiny without exposing every participant to the same degree.

Finally, the value of the finished report should be judged against a plausible decision by someone who can act on it. A municipal youth officer ought to be able to identify which step in an existing procedure requires a response and which unit should provide it. An elected member ought to be able to tell whether a youth recommendation was considered before a vote. A young participant ought to be able to find the status of a proposal without making a personal appeal to an official. A researcher ought to be able to reproduce the coding from cited records and challenge an inference when an alternative source becomes available. These are more demanding uses than an attractive narrative of participation, and they provide a practical check on the claim that the study has produced value.

**1.6. The researcher’s position and the practical stakes**

The investigation is undertaken from the standpoint of a historian working across policy analysis, youth engagement and civil society practice. The historian’s contribution is not an assertion that a municipal file is analogous to a medieval chronicle. It is a habit of asking when a document was produced, who had reason to produce it, how its language differs from the act it reports, and what other record could challenge its account. A recommendation printed after a public meeting is a source for the recommendation. A press release issued after a vote is a source for an institution’s public description of the vote. The historian is not entitled to make either

document testify to a procurement that occurred later. Conversely, the absence of a document in a limited search is no proof that an unrecorded conversation never happened. Source criticism provides the discipline needed to resist both attractive overstatement and unwarranted scepticism.

Policy analysis brings a different demand. If the paper is to be useful to a city officer or a youth organisation, it cannot stop after showing that administrative records are imperfect. It has to identify a feasible change in procedure, the unit responsible for the change, the information that can be published, and the circumstances in which publication would compromise privacy or safety. A ledger whose maintenance depends on a new office, a large technology procurement and legal powers absent from local government would be less useful than a modest, auditable process attached to an existing submissions system. The later design will therefore distinguish a minimum record that each authority could reasonably keep from more ambitious features that require institutional reform. Whether such a register can be adopted without new law will be assessed case by case rather than announced as a general property of European municipalities.

The work also engages with the practice of programme monitoring and evaluation. Outputs and outcomes are different things. Convening one hundred young people is an output of a programme; securing a reasoned institutional response is another; changing a public decision is a different result; improving the experience of an affected population may be a later outcome. None follows automatically from the previous stage. An administrative design that reports only the first number risks mistaking activity for public effect. Yet a design that reports only the last result can erase valuable deliberation and make participation appear worthless when an official has justifiably rejected a suggestion. The study's stage-specific record keeps both the pathway and its limits visible. Its purpose is to provide a decision-maker with information capable of improving the next process, not a single headline number for publicity.

There is a further reason to begin in cities rather than with a national index. Many issues on which young people can offer situated knowledge are encountered at the scale of ordinary movement and service use: the park reached after school, the journey after a late shift, the language of a municipal form, the accessibility of a meeting venue. The relevant authority may nevertheless be a transport agency, a district office, a metropolitan council or a contractor. Young people experience the issue as part of city life; responsibility for resolving it is distributed. A comparative inquiry can show whether participatory institutions help them navigate that

distribution or add one more place where a request stops. This is the democratic problem beneath the administrative chain.

The study does not assume that a public ledger would settle every dispute about influence. Officials may supply strategically phrased reasons; records may be incomplete; public participation can be unequal before any proposal is written. The model addresses a narrower, consequential failure: the inability of contributors and observers to discover what the responsible institution did with an actionable request. A better record creates the conditions for further political argument. Its appearance should make it possible to ask whether a refusal was justified, whether a promised budget was spent, and why one kind of proposal receives a quicker reply than another. In a functioning democratic process, these are questions that remain open after the meeting ends.

The opening proposition can now be stated precisely. A youth body is evidence of an opportunity to participate. A response is evidence that an authority addressed a contribution. A changed decision, when its relation to that contribution is documented, is evidence of a stronger form of influence. Delivery of the measure is a further proposition requiring its own proof. The four-city comparison will test the visibility and quality of each step while keeping questions of recruitment and authority in view. It cannot promise that every case will culminate in a celebrated success story. It can establish why some claims of influence are credible, why others cannot yet be judged, and what an institution would need to publish to make the difference intelligible.

### 1.7. A provisional map of the investigation

The subsequent chapters follow the path of the evidence. Chapter 3 reconstructs the relevant institutions and the powers of the bodies to which young people address their requests. Chapter 4 specifies case selection, the search for primary records, translation choices and the rules for coding both documented acts and documentary gaps. Chapters 5 through 8 then examine Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London individually. They retain the detail necessary to understand each decision while using a shared dossier to prevent the comparison from drifting. Chapter 9 brings the four accounts together around the points of transfer between proposing, answering, deciding and delivering. Chapters 10 and 11 develop the register and its implementation conditions, including ownership, response periods, correction, privacy, cost and independent

review. Chapter 12 returns to the research questions and separates verified findings from institutional proposals. The conclusion will not be a shortened restatement of the introduction; its task is to say what the comparison discovered that could not responsibly be asserted here.

This arrangement reflects a deliberate asymmetry between an analytical claim and a reform proposal. A researcher can design a plausible administrative mechanism before the city dossiers are complete. The mechanism becomes persuasive only if the empirical work shows which failure it addresses and which failure it cannot. A public register may cure uncertainty about the location of a submission while leaving the distribution of political authority intact. It may disclose an adoption while leaving implementation delayed. It may document implementation while offering no evidence that the intended social effect followed. Each limitation should remain visible. A policy recommendation that claims to solve ‘youth exclusion’ in general through a tracking database would demand more of the evidence than it can give.

The archive will be read with a similar sense of proportion. Documents created for different purposes will inevitably produce uneven coverage; some councils may publish opinions in searchable form while others place scans inside broad activity reports. A targeted information request can supplement public material, but an unanswered request within the research period cannot be counted as a definitive refusal to consider the original youth proposal. Where the same source is used to establish both a claim and its alleged impact, an independent document should be sought. The study’s source table will therefore record not only the title and date of a document but the proposition for which it is used. Readers should be able to see whether a primary text proves authorship, transmission, response, decision or delivery.

The report’s practical audience includes young organisers who must decide where to invest their time. A forum that supplies access to senior officials may be worthwhile even without a statutory power to decide; a forum whose proposals vanish without an explanation asks its members to work in uncertainty. Publishing the fate of a request permits them to refine their argument, contest a refusal, approach the competent body or withdraw from a process that offers only ceremony. That choice belongs to participants. Research can make the institutional terms of the choice clearer. If this work succeeds, its value will lie as much in improving the questions young people can ask of an authority as in the reforms an authority chooses to adopt.

For policy officers, the same account can distinguish a resource problem from a responsibility problem. If a proposal is answered promptly but deferred because a capital budget is unavailable, the record should identify the next budget cycle and the office that will reconsider it. If the proposal receives no owner because it spans several departments, the obstacle lies in referral and coordination. If a measure is approved but cannot be located in procurement or service records, the question has moved from consultation to delivery. Each diagnosis implies a different response. A generic recommendation to ‘engage more youth’ would add activity to the front of the chain while leaving the blockage untouched. The institutional design developed later in the report will be judged by whether it assigns these distinct problems to people with the authority and information to address them.

That test gives the study a practical endpoint: an official should be able to locate the next action, and a participant should be able to see the reason for it. Where neither can do so, the gap is itself a finding demanding institutional attention.

## Chapter 2. Youth participation, representation and influence

### 2.1. From the invitation to the distribution of authority

Sherry Arnstein’s 1969 ladder remains influential because it insisted that participation cannot be evaluated by the mere existence of an invitation. Its rungs distinguish practices that manage or inform a population from arrangements that redistribute decision-making power. The intervention emerged from a specific argument about citizens excluded from planning and public programmes in the United States. To use it as a ready-made score for contemporary youth councils in four different legal systems would obscure that context. Its enduring question is more useful: who can alter the allocation of authority and resources once the meeting has ended?<sup>9</sup>

Applied carefully, that question changes the way a youth assembly’s activities are read. An authority may share substantial information with young participants, allow them to formulate an opinion and publish their work, yet retain discretion over whether to respond. Under one conception of participation this is a meaningful advance over exclusion: the young people have spoken publicly and their position exists as a political fact. Under a conception concerned with

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<sup>9</sup> Sherry R. Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35, no. 4 (1969): 216–24.

influence, the arrangement remains incomplete until the responsible institution explains what it did with the position. These claims need not be forced into a single rung. A channel can be inclusive in recruitment, serious in deliberation, weak in formal authority and occasionally influential through public scrutiny. An institutional analysis ought to be able to say all four things at once.

Roger Hart’s account of children’s participation sharpened a related concern with the use of young people as symbols in adult-controlled projects. His typology, prepared in the early 1990s for UNICEF, distinguishes apparent participation from arrangements in which children understand a project and participate in its decisions. It remains an important warning against reading the presence of children at a ceremony, or the publication of a quotation beneath an official photograph, as evidence of shared judgement.<sup>10</sup> Yet the leap from a typology of children’s involvement to an evaluation of a metropolitan youth council must be made consciously. Age ranges in the four cases extend into adulthood; some bodies initiate topics, others answer referrals; and the decisions under review may involve elected representatives whose democratic mandate cannot simply be displaced. The research consequently asks not only how much authority young participants possess but how their contributions are handled by authorities that retain it.

This distinction leads to a critical limit of ladder metaphors. A single vertical score implies that every improvement must move towards young people’s direct control over a decision. In representative local government, an elected authority may reasonably refuse a recommendation because it conflicts with a legal obligation, a budget constraint, another group’s interests or a better evidenced alternative. A transparent, timely and respectful refusal can still be a more accountable democratic practice than a silent adoption whose authorship is impossible to establish. This is not an argument that answerability replaces power. It is an argument that the distribution of power and the quality of reasons should be measured as distinct features of the same arrangement. The register proposed by this study addresses the second feature without disguising the first.

<sup>10</sup> Roger A. Hart, *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, Innocenti Essays no. 4 (Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1992).

2.2. Voice, audience and the right to be heard

The legal vocabulary of children’s participation helps explain why a recorded voice alone is insufficient. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerns the child’s opportunity to express views on matters affecting them and requires those views to receive due weight in accordance with age and maturity. The Committee’s General Comment No. 12 elaborates the practical conditions of being heard. Its relevance to the present study is strongest for participants under eighteen; it should not be extended uncritically to every member of a council that also includes adults.<sup>11</sup> The distinction matters because the four institutions use different age boundaries. To call every youth opinion an exercise of children’s rights would collapse a legal category into a convenient rhetorical one.

Laura Lundy’s well-known analysis identifies space, voice, audience and influence as connected requirements. The presence of the first two without the latter two is particularly relevant here. A workshop can be safe and accessible, and its participants can formulate a sophisticated recommendation, while the public record still fails to show who heard it or whether it affected any decision. Lundy’s framework was developed in relation to the rights of children and critiques reductions of Article 12 to mere ‘voice’. Its translation to councils including young adults is therefore analytical rather than a claim that the same legal duty applies unchanged to all members.<sup>12</sup>

The idea of an audience requires more precision than an attendance list can offer. An official may have listened at the workshop but lacked the authority to change the policy; a city department may receive a report after the decisive budget meeting; a council committee may discuss an opinion but not transmit its reasoning to the executive. A complete evidence trail names the responsible recipient and locates the proposal in the sequence of policy formation. The subsequent response need not be favourable to establish that an audience existed. It does need to reveal that the proposal’s substance, rather than merely the existence of a youth event, was considered.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), art. 12; Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 12: The Right of the Child to Be Heard*, CRC/C/GC/12 (2009).

<sup>12</sup> Laura Lundy, “ ‘Voice’ Is Not Enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,” *British Educational Research Journal* 33, no. 6 (2007): 927–42.

The word *influence* is more difficult. A public explanation that an authority rejected a request because a transport safety assessment found a different design preferable demonstrates consideration, while a later change to the transport system demonstrates a distinct kind of uptake. The same explanation might be contested: the authority’s reasons can be thin, misleading or based on premises participants could challenge. A serious participatory process therefore needs a route for clarification and correction. The proposed register should preserve a revised response when the decision changes and allow the originators to contest an inaccurate characterisation of their request. A status label on its own would close an administrative file, not a democratic conversation.

The Council of Europe’s European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life provides an additional bridge between youth policy and local government. Its 2003 revision addressed institutional and practical conditions for participation; the Council of Europe adopted a newer text in 2026. These instruments are normative guides to the design of institutions, rather than evidence that any particular municipality has answered a particular recommendation.<sup>13</sup> Their value for this comparison lies in establishing that participation is a continuing local governance concern, not a one-off youth event. They also remind us that housing, transport, public space, education, the environment and access to information are all legitimate subjects of youth political judgement. Confining a youth council to festivals and volunteer opportunities would predetermine its apparent influence by excluding many decisions with the greatest effect on young lives.

**2.3. Representation without an invented constituency**

A youth council’s membership is often treated as a small-scale image of a much larger population. The claim requires scrutiny. An age range of fifteen to thirty includes pupils, university students, workers, unemployed young adults and parents, whose needs may conflict. A citywide appointment process and borough nominations solve different problems of geographical reach; neither automatically includes young people who cannot attend evening meetings, travel to the city centre or work in the language of the forum. Selection by enthusiasm may generate

<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* (2003); Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)3 on the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2026).

energetic participation while concentrating access among people already practised in public speaking. Recruitment by schools can reach younger participants but miss those outside formal education. The details are neither administrative trivia nor grounds for dismissing the participants. They define the scope of any claim that a council represents ‘young people’.

The study consequently treats representation as a set of questions rather than a binary property. Who may join? Who selects? What resources make attendance possible? Which languages and formats are used? Do participants receive an agenda early enough to consult their peers? Can those outside the body submit a proposal or contest one issued in their name? Is the institution expected to speak for a whole generation, or to contribute informed perspectives without such a mandate? Paris publishes a defined membership and age range; London describes a borough-linked membership system. These facts start an inclusion analysis but cannot settle it without information about recruitment, actual participation and the population excluded by design.<sup>14</sup>

Representation acquires a further complication when an institution invites individual experience but publishes a collective recommendation. The process of aggregation matters. Several participants may agree that night travel feels unsafe but disagree about whether the response should be a more frequent service, staff presence, lighting, a reporting channel or police patrols. A final statement that ‘young people want safety’ conceals the choice among instruments; a council’s proposal for a particular instrument is itself a political decision. The study will look for procedures that reveal whether disagreement was recorded, whether a small working group drafted the opinion, and whether the wider membership could revise it. This scrutiny is compatible with taking young contributors seriously. Adult councils also disagree; it would be strange to demand unanimity of young people before counting their intervention as political.

A participatory body’s claim to represent a population can be descriptive, elective, associative or experiential. Descriptive representation concerns resemblance on characteristics judged relevant to a decision. An elected representative can point to a franchise, subject to its eligibility rules. A voluntary association can claim a mandate from its members while speaking only for that membership. A person can contribute experience without claiming to represent

<sup>14</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; London Assembly, “FOI – London Youth Assembly.”

everyone who shares it. A youth council may combine these modes: appointed members describe a diversity of backgrounds, consult peers and formulate collective opinions. The modes should not be collapsed into one large claim of universal representation. Nor should the absence of electoral authority erase the value of knowledge that formal institutions might otherwise miss.

The question becomes harder still when the authority uses a single youth body as its preferred interlocutor. Officials may gain a reliable contact and a regular schedule, making participation administratively possible. Other groups may experience the same arrangement as a gatekeeper, especially where non-members cannot see how an issue reaches the council’s agenda. A public proposal register cannot solve unequal recruitment by itself, but it can show the origin of requests and whether they came through the official youth body, an open consultation or a referral from another group. Publishing the route helps identify which forms of participation the municipality actually hears. Over time it may also reveal a concentration of responses among well-organised groups, prompting a separate inclusion review rather than allowing uptake data to stand as a complete democratic audit.

Formal representation also differs from epistemic contribution. A young person need not be a statistically representative delegate to provide relevant knowledge about a dangerous bus route, a playground that excludes disabled users, or the inability to attend a consultation scheduled during working hours. Conversely, the authenticity of such experience cannot justify treating one person’s account as the entire youth population’s preference. The empirical chapters will identify whether a recommendation arose from a body-wide deliberation, a survey, a workshop or a single testimony. The method of production shapes the kind of claim the recommendation can bear. It should not determine whether the authority owes the contributor an intelligible reply.

These distinctions become especially important where youth and migration intersect. Newly arrived young people may have strong interests in language provision, public space, schooling, housing and transport, while their legal status, work schedule or distrust of institutions may make ordinary invitations inaccessible. Gender and care responsibilities can produce a similar separation between nominal eligibility and actual access. The question is not solved by adding a demographic column to a yearly report. A body may count members from several backgrounds yet conduct its decisive meetings in a way that systematically limits some members’

opportunity to formulate proposals. The study therefore examines, where records permit, both the composition of the forum and the procedures through which views become collective recommendations.

#### 2.4. The policy cycle and the location of an effect

Participation enters policy at different moments. Young people may define a problem before an official agenda exists; revise a draft plan; select among already costed projects; offer evidence to a scrutiny committee; or help monitor a completed service. These activities should not be aggregated as though they offered the same opportunity to change a decision. The OECD distinguishes stages from problem identification and policy formulation to decision, implementation and evaluation, and advises that participatory processes be used where meaningful influence is possible.<sup>15</sup> A city that consults after a procurement specification is finalised offers a different opportunity from one that invites young people to shape the specification. Timing is part of the institutional distribution of power.

The original recommendation can also change meaning as it travels. A request for safe late-night transport may be answered through more policing, better lighting, revised service frequency or education for drivers. Each response shares a general policy area but addresses a different theory of the problem. Evaluating uptake requires a close reading of the proposed mechanism as well as its headline goal. If young people ask for accessibility features and the final plan mentions ‘inclusive public space’ without a design change, the analyst should record thematic alignment and look for further evidence. If a procurement specification later includes a particular accessible feature explicitly discussed during consultation, the claim becomes stronger, though concurrent sources of the idea remain possible. The policy cycle is thus a sequence of translations, not an on/off switch labelled adoption.

An authority may reasonably encounter constraints it cannot control. A metropolitan assembly might recommend action to a transport provider; a district office might require approval from a higher level of government; a youth council might ask for a legal change outside municipal competence. These are not grounds for treating the original request as defective. They are reasons to record the referral, the legal boundary and the next decision-maker. An

<sup>15</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, executive summary, steps 1–9.

unexplained ‘outside remit’ response hides whether the authority took the small step available to it. The public ledger proposed later in the study is designed around this problem: it preserves the identity of a request as it crosses institutions without inventing a single omnipotent municipal actor.

The final decision is often easier to find than the reasoning that produced it. Minutes may record a vote and a short title without identifying the submissions considered. Strategies may thank participants collectively but provide no disposition of particular proposals. Project websites may move directly from ‘you said’ to an image of a completed work, skipping costs, alternatives and trade-offs. These publication practices make it difficult for participants to distinguish a reasoned rejection from administrative neglect. The absence also weakens public learning: other youth groups cannot see what kind of evidence altered a decision, or why an attractive proposal failed. A transparent response record could make future participation more informed even where a proposal does not succeed.

Consider a proposal which is only partly accepted. A youth group asks that a dangerous junction be redesigned, crossing times extended and night lighting improved. The authority lengthens the crossing time but declines the redesign after a technical review, and the lighting programme belongs to a utility with its own timetable. A single ‘accepted’ status would inflate the result; ‘rejected’ would erase a real change. The original submission should be broken into actionable requests when those requests have distinct decision-makers or outcomes. The public-facing account can still preserve the collective proposal as the authors wrote it. The analytic record would give each element a disposition and retain a link to the original whole. This is a small procedural distinction with significant consequences for a later claim about what youth participation achieved.

The meaning of implementation also depends on an observable threshold. A city may approve funding but later fail to spend it; a contract may be awarded and then delayed; a renovated space may open but omit the promised accessible element. For a project, implementation should require evidence corresponding to the requested action and the specified stage, rather than the most favourable item in a press release. A proposal to create a reporting mechanism is not delivered merely because a department has written a plan to consider one. In the reverse case, a service can operate before the final public report is published, so absence of a

report does not prove absence of delivery. The study will identify the strongest available operational record and state its temporal coverage. This is why the analysis cannot end at policy adoption.

There is also an accountability question after delivery. A young participant may have proposed a measure to address a practical harm, such as a park route that cannot be used by a wheelchair user. A completed reconstruction can establish that the authority built what it promised while leaving unresolved whether the route is actually usable. The distinction between output and outcome is familiar in programme evaluation but often lost in celebratory accounts of participation. Where independent evaluations, service data or user testimony exist, the study can examine outcome; where they do not, the finding must remain at delivery. The later policy model will include a review date and a field for outcome evidence, but it will not treat that field as automatically populated by the existence of a completed project.

**2.5. Results, causality and the temptation of a success story**

The wider literature on participatory development counsels against assuming that a well-designed invitation will automatically produce public benefits. Ghazala Mansuri and Vijayendra Rao’s review emphasises that outcomes depend on local political and institutional conditions and asks, across a large body of evidence, whether participation changes inclusion, services and local public goods.<sup>16</sup> Their review cannot be transferred as a numerical estimate for four European urban cases, and its programmes differ markedly from youth councils. Its methodological lesson remains pertinent: the mechanism between a meeting and a result has to be observed. A project may succeed despite a consultation, fail for reasons unrelated to it, or be credited to participants when officials had already committed to it.

**2.5.1. A causal chain without false certainty**

The causal language of participation is frequently loose. A report may say that a policy was ‘shaped by young people’ while the available record consists of a workshop, a later strategy and no account of how the two were connected. The phrase could describe a genuine drafting change, a general exchange of ideas, or an attempt to credit a public event after the decision was

<sup>16</sup> Ghazala Mansuri and Vijayendra Rao, *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2013).

made. The appropriate response is not to ban every claim of influence. It is to specify what observation would make each claim reasonable. Did the draft circulated before the workshop lack the proposed measure? Does a subsequent draft contain wording distinctive to the submission? Did a committee minute attribute an amendment to the youth body’s advice? Was a similar demand already made by other organisations, or already adopted in a budget? These questions require a chronology and the preservation of alternative explanations.

In many cases the strongest attainable conclusion will be *contribution*, not exclusive causation. Urban policies are negotiated among departments, elected members, technical experts and residents. A young person’s account of an inaccessible pavement may make a known issue more urgent; a consultation may supply an example that gives a broader accessibility measure political traction. Neither pathway yields a neat fraction of credit. The study will therefore refrain from attributing a project to young people when the evidence shows only coexistence. At the same time, it will not set an unattainable standard under which influence must be the sole cause before it can be mentioned. A documented amendment acknowledging a youth opinion is meaningful even if officials also heard similar arguments elsewhere. The wording of the finding will reflect that shared authorship.

The sequence of documents should be evaluated for what might be called a negative trace as well as a positive one. Suppose a city publishes the full youth recommendation, minutes showing its referral to a competent committee, and a written rejection explaining the engineering and cost constraints. The original measure was not adopted; yet the case supplies unusually strong evidence of institutional consideration and democratic answerability. Suppose another city implements a similar measure and never publishes a response to its youth council. The material result is stronger, but the contribution of young people is less visible and the accountability of the consultation weaker. Neither case can be captured by a single ‘participation score’. The comparison needs at least two axes, treatment of the recommendation and material state of the proposed measure, with inclusion and source quality examined alongside them.

A related problem arises when public claims appear before the underlying records. Press statements have a legitimate communicative function and can direct a researcher to a project, but the announcement that a city ‘will install’ an item is not evidence of installation. The 2026 London motion illustrates this distinction precisely. Its passage matters: an elected body put a

safety demand on the public agenda and credited youth advocacy. A delivery claim would require a later response from the relevant executive or transport authority and an operational record of the equipment. Treating a request to act as completed action rewards communication over delivery, the very confusion the study is designed to expose. Berlin’s planned construction timetable likewise cannot be turned into a retrospective certificate of completion.<sup>17</sup>

The discipline is especially valuable where the proposal concerns the environment. A youth forum may seek more collection points, reuse services or school-based waste reduction. A municipality can respond by installing bins, launching a communications campaign, or increasing recycling tonnage. Each is a different intervention and may have a different relation to the original demand. A claim that the project reduced waste requires a baseline, a comparable measure after implementation and attention to other changes in collection practice. A claim that young people influenced the policy requires documents linking their request to the selected intervention. The same principle applies to migration services, public safety and accessible space. One must specify whether the result is a decision, an operational output, a behavioural change or a social outcome before deciding what evidence would count.

**2.5.2. The democratic significance of giving reasons**

The demand for a reasoned reply should be understood neither as a courtesy letter nor as an administrative substitute for political conflict. A reason can disclose the institutional logic through which a public claim was assessed: who had competence, what competing interests were considered, which evidence was trusted, and whether resources were available. It can also be disputed. Young participants can challenge an authority that invokes a budget constraint inconsistently, mistakes the content of their request or offers a technical answer to a political concern. Without a reason, there is little to contest except the final outcome. In this sense the response is part of participation rather than the epilogue to it.

An institution can publish a polished explanation that avoids the substantive issue. A youth council asks for a late bus service because young workers cannot travel home safely. The department replies that it appreciates young people’s commitment to safety and describes an

<sup>17</sup> London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” 5 March 2026; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026.

awareness campaign, while saying nothing about service frequency or why that request was declined. The exchange may look complete in an annual report. It is not a disposition of the original request. For the study, a reasoned response must identify the requested action, state the authority’s position on it, and explain a relevant basis for that position. A generic expression of appreciation is coded as acknowledgement, at most. The distinction guards against an administrative form of tokenism in which the language of listening replaces an account of the decision.

Time matters here as well. A reply six years after a proposal may be informative to historians but of little use to the contributors when the decisive budget and planning windows passed long before. A municipality should set response periods appropriate to the type of decision, publish an interim status when deliberation is prolonged, and update that status when circumstances change. The comparative research will measure observable intervals where submission and response dates can be established. It will not turn the absence of a date into an invented delay. Later policy recommendations can propose deadlines, but the empirical chapters must first show which institutional step actually tends to remain opaque.

Reason giving may also improve the quality of later proposals. A refusal explaining that a requested public-space feature conflicts with accessibility requirements can help a youth body redesign its suggestion. A referral naming the department with legal authority can redirect collective effort towards a venue where change is possible. A written response that identifies a pending procurement date tells contributors when an intervention is still possible. Thus the answer does more than certify that an authority listened. It can preserve the participants’ practical capacity to act. That capacity will be lost if responses appear only in internal correspondence or in annual reports too general to connect to an individual proposal.

There is a risk that a formalised register becomes a device for quickly rejecting inconvenient demands. The remedy cannot be purely technical. Public access to the original proposal, a reasoned disposition, and a traceable later decision makes the response open to scrutiny by members, journalists and civil society. A mechanism for correcting an inaccurate summary protects the authors’ words. Periodic review can reveal whether some groups receive detailed answers and others formulaic acknowledgements. These safeguards do not eliminate differences in political power, but they make one mode of unequal treatment more visible. A

ledger is useful precisely to the extent that it can reveal uncomfortable patterns rather than serve as an inventory of institutional praise.

For the purposes of this study, a *result* need not be a triumphal policy announcement. It can be a documented amendment, a budget line, a public explanation of refusal, a referral to a competent agency, a corrected design, or verified delivery. These events differ in normative value and material consequence. Recording them separately protects the analysis from two symmetrical distortions: calling every response a policy victory, and treating every proposal that was not adopted as democratically worthless. The first inflates influence; the second obscures answerability and learning. Neither helps a municipality improve its procedure.

A comparative table will therefore report evidence by stage rather than attach a single success score to a city. Its cells will distinguish ‘documented’, ‘not located in the public sources examined’, ‘not applicable because the authority lacked competence’, and ‘contradicted by a later record’. The choice of terms matters. ‘Not located’ is an account of the investigation and its bounded archive. It cannot be silently translated into ‘did not occur’. A timeline can show the interval between submission, response, decision and implementation where dates exist; it must not invent a zero for an undocumented response or count a projected completion date as an accomplished work. This discipline should make the graphs less visually simple and the findings more credible.

Table 2.1. Analytical dimensions and documentary thresholds

| Dimension | Minimum observable record                     | Claim supported                            | Claim still requiring evidence                  |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Access    | Recruitment rule or consultation invitation   | An opportunity was offered on stated terms | The wider youth population participated equally |
| Proposal  | Dated text attributable to young participants | A request was articulated                  | A decision-maker received it                    |

| Dimension         | Minimum observable record                                | Claim supported                                     | Claim still requiring evidence        |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Transmission      | Receipt, referral, agenda or attributed submission       | The request entered a competent channel             | Its substance was considered          |
| Reasoned response | Identified authority, disposition and explanation        | The authority considered and explained its position | The request changed policy            |
| Decision          | Adopted resolution, plan, amendment or authorised budget | A formal choice was made                            | Youth input caused that choice        |
| Delivery          | Procurement, completed work or operating service         | A specified measure was implemented                 | All expected social outcomes followed |

This table is an instrument for source criticism. Each row names an inference that would be unsafe if drawn from the row immediately above. The finished city chapters will fill it with specific documents and dates, not merely repeat it as an abstract framework. A second matrix will compare the quality of public response across cases, with a separate field for the limits of causal attribution. Where a source is inaccessible or ambiguous, the code will remain provisional until a stronger record is found.

2.6. Towards an answerable institution

The literature reviewed here supplies several necessary standards but does not, by itself, tell a reader whether a named proposal survived the passage from youth forum to city decision. Arnstein raises the issue of authority; Hart exposes the use of children as symbols; Lundy makes audience and influence inseparable from voice; the OECD insists on feedback and attention to the policy cycle; participatory development research asks whether institutional conditions connect inputs with results. Read together, these works suggest a problem of *answerability over time*.

Who owns a request after the event ends? What explanation is owed if the request changes shape? Where can the authors find the decision and test whether it was implemented?<sup>18</sup>

An answerable institution would not be required to agree with every youth proposal. It would be required to preserve a traceable identity for the proposal, locate the competent authority, give reasons within a known period, and update the public record when a later decision or delivery status changes. That obligation has practical limits. Sensitive personal testimony may need anonymisation; a child’s participation must not expose them to retaliation; a collective opinion should not be credited to a named individual without consent; a delayed procurement should not be displayed as completed because the political announcement was popular. These are design questions for the later policy chapters, but they follow directly from the literature’s emphasis on voice, accountability and the conditions under which participation is safe.

The inquiry is thus positioned between political theory and an administrative archive. It evaluates who can speak and who has the power to decide, while insisting that the passage between the two be open to inspection. Chapter 3 will establish the four cities’ distinct institutional histories and legal settings; Chapter 4 will state the case-selection, document-search and coding procedures before the empirical chapters test them. This ordering matters. Without the institutional setting, an apparently missing decision may belong to another authority. Without a declared method, a researcher can choose only the most flattering youth proposal in each city and call the resulting collection a comparison. The remainder of the study is designed to resist both errors.

2.7. The choice of measures and the ethics of comparison

Indicators can help a city see patterns that a collection of individual stories cannot. The proportion of submissions acknowledged within a stated period, the proportion receiving a substantive disposition, the median time between receipt and response, and the number of accepted measures with an independently documented delivery stage each describe a different aspect of a process. They are useful only when the denominator is clear and the underlying records are available for inspection. A city may have received ten concise, actionable

<sup>18</sup> Arnstein, “A Ladder”; Hart, *Children’s Participation*; Lundy, “ ‘Voice’ Is Not Enough”; OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*.

recommendations; another may publish a booklet containing fifty suggestions ranging from statutory changes to a proposed bicycle rack. Dividing ‘accepted’ by ‘submitted’ in both settings without coding the scope and competence of the requests would give a false impression of precision. The study will present counts with definitions, case lists and evidence status, then explain the institutional conditions that make a rate meaningful or misleading.

There is a temptation to treat the quality of a reply as an easily counted item. A disposition such as ‘under consideration’ is more informative than silence if accompanied by an accountable office, the question still being investigated and a date for the next update. The same phrase becomes an indefinite holding device when repeated for years without explanation. A reasoned response indicator should therefore require more than the presence of a response field. It needs to distinguish an answer relevant to the substance of the request, a generic acknowledgement, a lawful referral and a deferred decision with a review point. Coding these categories involves judgement. The method chapter will publish its rules and give borderline examples rather than hide judgement behind an apparently objective percentage.

Disaggregation is equally necessary. Which kinds of request receive a reply? A municipality may quickly adopt inexpensive cultural events while leaving proposals on housing, migration or transport to circulate without an owner. A youth body may appear influential in aggregate while its most consequential demands vanish at the point of interdepartmental referral. The empirical comparison can examine policy domain, requested expenditure, the number of authorities involved and the stage at which consultation occurred. Small numbers will limit statistical inference, and the study will not dress a handful of selected cases as a representative survey. Even so, a carefully documented pattern across cases can identify the procedural bottleneck at which a new register would do useful work.

To compare four institutions fairly is not to excuse every procedural difference as incomparable. Each institution can be asked whether it tells contributors where a request went, who considered it and what happened next. These are common functional questions even when the legal answers differ. Paris can answer through a commission record, London through an Assembly motion and an executive reply, Berlin Mitte through planning and construction documents, Istanbul through council recommendations and metropolitan decisions. The underlying documents are unlike one another, but their relationships to the youth request can be

described in a shared evidentiary language. This is the sense in which the comparison is controlled: the questions and thresholds remain stable while the source types change with the institution.

The study must also resist a different kind of unfairness: equating a greater quantity of published information with a greater quality of participation. A transparent authority may expose its disagreements and failures, while a less transparent authority presents an unbroken sequence of success claims. The former could look worse in a superficial account. The analysis will distinguish visibility from effectiveness and will avoid awarding points for a document whose content does not support a claimed outcome. Where public transparency is itself the object of evaluation, however, a missing response is relevant even if officials privately considered the request. The finding should say precisely that the public record does not make the treatment visible. The authority’s internal conduct remains a separate question.

No indicator can replace close attention to the participants’ original problem. A table may record that a youth proposal for safer travel was ‘partly adopted’, but the material significance of a changed crossing, a bleed-control kit or a revised evening service depends on where the hazard arose and who was affected. For this reason the chapters will alternate between traced proposal narratives and cross-case matrices. The narrative preserves actors, timing and institutional decisions; the matrix checks whether similar evidentiary standards have been applied to each city. A graph can display a verified timeline or distribution once those data are assembled. It should never supply missing evidence by visual suggestion. The demand for a polished figure is subordinate to the demand that every plotted value be reconstructable from a cited record.

**2.8. The literature gap this study can actually address**

The conceptual works considered in this chapter have already established that participation involves more than the act of speaking. This study does not claim to discover that insight. Its proposed novelty is the use of an attributable, time-stamped recommendation as the bridge between normative accounts of voice and administrative accounts of delivery. The research asks where the link becomes publicly observable in four unlike institutions, and what form of record could make the missing transitions answerable. A youth council’s existence is one

document; a budget is another. The intellectual work lies in constructing and testing the path between them without assuming that a resemblance of subject matter is proof of cause.

Some investigations of participation begin with outcomes and look backwards to the consultation that might have generated them. Others begin with a participatory event and list the promises officials made afterwards. Both can be valuable. The first risks selecting only successful or visible policies, leaving rejected proposals out of view. The second risks ending before any executive act occurs. Following an originating recommendation forward reduces the former selection problem and makes the latter temporal gap explicit. The design still has vulnerabilities: published recommendations may be unrepresentative of all youth input, and a study that selects cases for traceability may understate the very failures it hopes to uncover. The method chapter will therefore specify how recommendations are sampled, record exclusions and, where feasible, include cases whose public trail appears to end early.

Another contribution is the treatment of a reasoned rejection as data. Academic and institutional accounts can be drawn to success cases because visible adoption provides a gratifying story. Yet a refusal reveals a great deal about how an authority interprets its responsibilities, the budget it controls and the kind of knowledge it accepts. The quality of that refusal may matter to democratic trust even where the material decision remains unchanged. A comparative study which publishes rejected and unresolved requests alongside adopted measures can tell a more truthful story about the costs of participation for young contributors. Their time and effort do not become invisible simply because the answer was no.

The solution model follows from these limits rather than erasing them. A proposal identifier can connect records held by different offices; a requirement to name a competent owner can prevent a referral from becoming a dead end; a written disposition can disclose a refusal; a delivery field can distinguish a voted policy from an operating service. None of these elements proves that the original participants represented every young resident. None compels an elected body to adopt a proposal. Each makes a different question answerable and leaves room for further scrutiny. In that sense the planned policy product is modest in its immediate administrative form and ambitious in its democratic demand: public authorities should be able to account for the fate of a request that they invited young people to make.

## 2.9. Unresolved arguments that the cases must test

Three tensions in the literature cannot be settled before the archival comparison. The first concerns formal power and practical influence. A youth council with an advisory remit might have a reliable route to drafting changes, while a body granted a more impressive title might submit recommendations that receive no answer. Formal competence matters, especially when resources are allocated, but the empirical relationship between title and uptake must be demonstrated. The London Assembly’s acknowledgment of youth advocacy alongside its earlier statement that the Youth Assembly lacks a formal decision role makes this distinction unusually clear. Paris presents a different route through opinions and municipal commissions. Neither case can be resolved by attaching a rung from a ladder without examining the documents around an individual request.

The second tension concerns openness and unequal participation. An open call may allow any interested young resident to apply while rewarding those with time, confidence, language fluency and familiarity with institutions. A smaller invited group may include some young people rarely present in official forums while leaving others without a route into the conversation. An election provides one kind of mandate but does not guarantee that the chosen representative hears peers outside their network. The cases must therefore distinguish a transparent selection procedure from actual accessibility and a diversity claim from the internal distribution of speaking and drafting opportunities. No single recruitment model can be endorsed solely on the basis of its name.

The third tension is between accountability as an obligation to explain and accountability as the capacity to alter decisions. A public register can strengthen the former even where the latter remains weak. Some critics may regard that as a way for authorities to manage dissent with carefully written refusals. The danger is real, and the response is to make refusals contestable, preserve the original demand, publish the eventual decision, and measure patterns of deferral. Others may argue that an authority cannot be expected to answer every individual comment received in a large consultation. That objection is stronger when the input consists of thousands of unstructured remarks than when an officially convened youth body issues a limited set of actionable recommendations. The model will define its unit and capacity requirements

accordingly. The four cases should show whether a manageable obligation can be attached to existing processes without reducing participation to a form-filling exercise.

These tensions also set a standard for the conclusion. The work may find well documented responses but limited decision change; visible policy uptake with weak attribution; genuine accessibility efforts alongside slow implementation; or gaps that cannot be resolved with public sources. Such findings would complicate a story of simple success or failure. Their value depends on the researcher keeping the categories apart. A credible conclusion should name the strongest observed pathway in each city, the points at which evidence stops, and the administrative change most directly responsive to those observed limits. It should not resolve the political question of how much authority young people ought to possess by quietly substituting a favourable graph. The question remains open to democratic argument, informed by a much clearer record of how the existing institutions actually work.

The ambition of this literature chapter is therefore selective. It does not attempt an encyclopaedia of democratic theory or claim that the language of participation originated in contemporary youth policy. It identifies the concepts needed to interrogate a concrete record: power, voice, audience, inclusion, the timing of a request, the authority competent to answer, and the difference between a response and a result. Their combination makes a distinctive question possible. When officials invite young people to participate in decisions whose final authority lies elsewhere, what continuing obligation follows the request across that institutional distance? The empirical chapters will show how existing procedures answer that question in practice. The policy chapters will then specify an answer that a city can administer and the public can verify.

The unit of judgement will remain the attributable proposal. It is small enough to reconstruct through documents and consequential enough to reveal the character of an institution’s reply. The four-city inquiry will test that unit against unlike legal settings before presenting a reform in its name.

**Chapter 3. Four urban institutions and the decisions young people can reach**

**3.1. The city as an uneven field of authority**

At the beginning of the Istanbul case stands a legal sentence which seems, at first reading, to resolve the problem of youth influence. Article 76 of the Municipal Law provides that opinions

formed in a city council are placed on the agenda of the municipal council’s first meeting and considered. The City Council Regulation describes an additional sequence: views prepared in assemblies or working groups pass through the city council’s general assembly; the resulting opinions go to the relevant municipal council; after consideration, the municipality informs the city council and makes the outcome public by suitable means.<sup>19</sup> If each link produced an identifiable record, a youth proposal could be traced from its authors through a representative body to an elected decision-maker and back again. The statute and regulation describe a route; they do not establish that every youth proposal took it. The difference between those two statements is where the empirical inquiry begins.

The other cities offer routes of a different kind. Paris’s Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse issues opinions after hearing officials and can present them in preparatory commissions of the Conseil de Paris. London Youth Assembly members can submit evidence to investigations conducted by the London Assembly, whose principal task is to scrutinise the Mayor. Berlin’s law and administrative arrangements connect youth participation to district and Land youth planning, while a playground redesign in Mitte has its own record of consultation, design and planned construction.<sup>20</sup> There is no single municipal ladder on which these bodies can be placed without first asking what the next authority actually decides. A commission can prepare a vote; a scrutiny assembly can request executive action; a district planning office can redesign a public space; a city council can consider and communicate an opinion. The same youth recommendation may travel farther in one system through informal political support than in another through a formal referral. That proposition requires evidence, not an assumption that informality is either virtuous or defective.

An institutional history is therefore needed for a limited purpose. It should locate the youth body in a decision system, identify the documents likely to preserve a proposal, and distinguish the body invited to speak from the body empowered to act. An exhaustive constitutional history of four cities would overwhelm the question. A purely contemporary

<sup>19</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76, *Resmî Gazete*, 13 July 2005; Republic of Türkiye, City Council Regulation, arts. 12 and 14, *Resmî Gazete*, 8 October 2006, as amended.

<sup>20</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” updated 23 July 2026; Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025; Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family, “Jugendfördergesetz”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz.”

organisational chart, on the other hand, would conceal why the available routes have their present form. The histories below attend to the creation or legal placement of participation channels and to the administrative boundaries a researcher must cross in order to claim influence.

**3.2. Istanbul: a prescribed route and a difficult test of passage**

The Turkish city council, or *kent konseyi*, emerged from a governance tradition that joined municipal actors, professional bodies and civil society in discussing local development. Municipal Law No. 5393, enacted in 2005, gives the institution a broad remit touching sustainability, environmental concern, transparency, accountability and participation. Article 76 also places opinions formed in the council before the municipal council for consideration at its first meeting.<sup>21</sup> A reader unfamiliar with the Turkish institutional vocabulary might mistake the two councils for separate names of the same elected body. They are not. The *kent konseyi* is a participatory institution; the *belediye meclisi* is the elected municipal council. The obligation to consider a view matters precisely because it bridges these distinct bodies.

The 2006 City Council Regulation, as subsequently amended, describes the internal passage of an assembly’s position. Youth and other assemblies may formulate opinions, but an opinion formed by an assembly or working group passes through the city council’s general assembly before submission to the relevant municipal council under article 12. Article 14 describes notification to the city council and public communication after the municipal council has considered a general assembly opinion.<sup>22</sup> This is a stronger formal account of transmission than the vague assertion that officials might listen. It also raises a practical question often lost in celebration of the legal text. A recommendation printed by a youth assembly has not thereby been proven to be a city council general assembly opinion. To know whether the statutory route attached to a particular request, the researcher needs its date, the youth assembly act, evidence of general assembly approval, the municipal agenda, the record of consideration and the return communication. A missing intermediary cannot be supplied by naming the law.

<sup>21</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, arts. 17, 18 and 76, *Resmî Gazete*, 13 July 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Republic of Türkiye, City Council Regulation, arts. 12 and 14, *Resmî Gazete*, 8 October 2006, as amended; Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, *Temel Belediye Mevzuatı*, consolidated text, 2025.

The Istanbul City Council Youth Assembly has produced public material that makes this test feasible in principle. Its published volume of youth recommendations organises requests by thematic areas, while its 2023 activity report describes working group meetings, including the preparation of recommendations on education and housing in September 2023.<sup>23</sup> These materials are an important opening archive because they reveal that young people formulated substantive claims rather than merely attending ceremonial gatherings. The report’s existence does not tell us whether a named recommendation passed the general assembly, entered the metropolitan council’s first meeting, altered an adopted measure or reached implementation. The ensuing Istanbul chapter must make the transition between texts visible. Where an original PDF is not reliably accessible through a particular retrieval channel, a search snippet can identify a publication but cannot substitute for reading the recommendation as a whole. That source boundary has to be recorded before coding its content.

Istanbul’s metropolitan scale complicates the location of an answer. A proposal for safer public transport, student housing information, a neighbourhood facility or waste reduction may concern different municipal departments, affiliated operators, district municipalities or central government functions. The municipality’s strategic plan, council minutes, performance programme and annual activity reports have different evidentiary uses. A strategy can establish an adopted objective; a municipal council decision can establish an authorisation; an operator’s service record may show delivery. If the youth body recommended a measure within a district competence, failure to find it in metropolitan council minutes would be unsurprising, not proof of dismissal. The legal route therefore has to be joined to a competence map for each selected request.

There is a second, subtler difficulty. The regulation calls for communication of the municipal council’s consideration to the city council and to the public. It does not, in the text examined here, specify a standard public register in which every youth request receives a unique identifier, the exact disposition, reasons, subsequent amendments and an implementation update. An authority might satisfy the letter of a reporting duty in a broad manner that remains difficult

<sup>23</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları* (2023); İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *2023 Faaliyet Raporu* (2024). The publication notices and indexed excerpt establish the existence of the materials and the reported September workshop; individual recommendations require examination of the full text.

for a young author to search. Whether that is what occurred in Istanbul is an empirical question. The policy model developed later asks what a more precise record would add to a formally prescribed channel, without assuming that the statutory requirement is absent.

The city also offers a valuable counterweight to a simplistic European comparison. It is tempting to assign Paris a formal consultation, London an informal advocacy route, Berlin a project process and Istanbul a weak channel because some published municipal records are hard to retrieve. The law tells a different story: Istanbul has an explicit expectation of municipal consideration. The analytically interesting possibility is a gap between a legally described transmission and the public visibility of individual proposals after transmission. Demonstrating or refuting such a gap requires individual dossiers. It cannot be accomplished by ranking institutional websites according to how many files a search engine returns.

Table 3.1. Istanbul’s normative route and the record needed to test it

| Institutional step   | Authority or document                                | Question for a traced youth proposal                       |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Formulation          | Youth Assembly working group or resolution           | What action was requested, by whom and when?               |
| Internal approval    | City Council general assembly                        | Was the specific view approved for submission?             |
| Formal consideration | Metropolitan municipal council agenda and minutes    | Was it placed on the first relevant agenda and considered? |
| Return communication | Municipality’s notice to the city council and public | What answer was communicated, and did it contain reasons?  |
| Material action      | Decision, budget, operator or service record         | Did a specified measure change and become operational?     |

The table describes the required search, not completed findings for each row. The distinction is especially important in a legal case. An obligation in an enactment is evidence of a rule; a signed minute or published reply is evidence of what happened to a particular proposal. Treating the first as proof of the second would make the study impossible to falsify. Conversely,

a missing public record may identify a transparency problem even where private correspondence exists. Chapter 5 will pursue those alternatives through selected requests.

3.3. Paris: an advisory opinion at the edge of deliberation

The City of Paris dates its Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, or CPJ, to 2003. Its present description gives the body a defined role in bringing young people’s needs and proposals into city policy. One hundred members, fifty young women and fifty young men aged fifteen to thirty, serve non-renewable two-year terms; eligibility extends to people who live, study, work or have regular social activity in Paris. A call for candidates fills vacancies, with a draw used where necessary to distinguish among candidates. The mayor sends an annual mission letter indicating the subjects on which the city seeks the council’s views.<sup>24</sup> These details locate the CPJ in a sustained municipal arrangement rather than an isolated consultation event. They also qualify any claim of universal representation: eligibility is broader than residence, but work proceeds according to members’ interest and availability, and evening meetings may create barriers that a formal eligibility rule does not disclose.

The transition from opinion to elected deliberation is unusually specific. According to the City, CPJ members meet administrators and deputy mayors before issuing opinions on major projects. After an opinion is formulated, members may be invited to present it to elected officials in the preparatory commissions for a Conseil de Paris sitting; the opinion is also made available to all councillors. The city says several proposals have been taken up and adopted.<sup>25</sup> That last assertion is a useful research lead, not a substitute for the paired documents needed to establish which proposals were taken up and in what form. A CPJ opinion, a commission discussion, an amendment and an adopted resolution should be read as different records. The source that asserts uptake should be tested against the original opinion and the text of the decision rather than quoted as the study’s independent result.

The timing of the Conseil de Paris clarifies what can happen in the interval. The city’s account places thematic commissions several days before a council sitting, with draft

<sup>24</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” updated 23 July 2026, sections “Composition” and “Rôle et fonctionnement.”

<sup>25</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” section “Les avis du Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse.”

deliberations prepared and circulated in advance. Elected groups or councillors can submit amendments and wishes through the formal procedure.<sup>26</sup> A youth opinion presented at a preparatory commission may therefore arrive at a politically consequential moment. Yet the opportunity to present is not the same as a right to amend. The empirical question is whether a named recommendation can be found in the draft, commission material, amendment record, adopted deliberation or later execution report. The precise document trail depends on whether the youth council comments on a nearly final project or contributes earlier to problem definition.

The CPJ’s publication practice offers multiple possible entry points. The city’s page lists opinions on planning, sustainable development, climate and other subjects across several years. It also distinguishes *avis*—opinions on city projects—from proposals formulated in response to a mayoral referral and delivered as notes or reports.<sup>27</sup> The difference matters for case selection. An opinion on an existing plan can be compared with the draft and final version, giving the analyst a potential before-and-after contrast. A report proposing an entirely new programme may require a search across future agendas and budgets, with a longer period before one can judge uptake. If the study selects only plan opinions because they are easier to match, it risks mistaking document convenience for the range of youth influence. The method chapter will address this selection problem explicitly.

Paris also illustrates a distinction between a visible encounter and an attributable alteration. The City may identify a youth opinion as part of a consultation and attach it to a strategy. That establishes that the youth body was present in a public record of deliberation. It does not establish whether a particular measure was adopted because of the opinion, especially where organisations, residents and technical services advanced similar ideas. An original recommendation concerning resilience or a bioclimatic plan can be traced more carefully by comparing wording, timing and the formal decisions that followed. The empirical Paris chapter will avoid converting broad incorporation language into a count of implemented youth demands.

The route’s democratic promise lies partly in the ability of young members to speak before elected officials who are preparing a decision. Its weakness, if one is found, may not be the absence of an invitation but the absence of a proposal-level record after the invitation. A

<sup>26</sup> City of Paris, “Le fonctionnement du Conseil de Paris,” updated 23 September 2026, “Chronologie d’une séance.”

<sup>27</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” section “Travaux du Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse.”

young member could know that a view was read in commission yet be unable to discover why one suggestion was altered and another set aside. A disposition register would operate at this juncture: it would connect the opinion to the draft under consideration, record the authority responsible for a reply and preserve the subsequent decision. It would not convert an advisory council into the elected Conseil de Paris. The institutional distinction should remain visible in the proposed reform.

**3.4. Berlin: participation through plans, districts and projects**

Berlin’s participation landscape is not a single citywide youth parliament. The Land’s account of its youth promotion and participation law states that, from January 2022, arrangements for youth work and democratic participation were strengthened, with young people involved in youth promotion plans at district and Land levels. Plans are produced on a four-year cycle and serve as instruments for planning services. The Senate describes contributions from roughly 20,000 people aged six to twenty-six in the preparation of youth plans, combining district-level participation with an additional survey at Land level.<sup>28</sup> This large participation count shows the scale of information gathering; it cannot be divided by Paris’s one hundred council seats or London’s thirty-eight members to produce a measure of democratic effectiveness. Those numbers refer to different activities, populations and periods.

The Senate’s description is unusually helpful in showing how needs are translated into planning. District youth offices prepare reports on young people’s views; district plans then set goals and measures, while a Land report synthesises district material and further participation. The account of the process includes an approximate 15,000 participants in district activities and 5,000 in the additional survey associated with an earlier planning period.<sup>29</sup> The apparent clarity of that sequence should not obscure its inferential problem. An aggregated survey may establish that safe routes or green spaces were important to many respondents, yet it cannot identify which respondent originated a particular district design feature. A district project consultation may supply that finer-grained evidence, but then the empirical unit is the project, not the Land-wide

<sup>28</sup> Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family, “Jugendfördergesetz,” sections “Das Jugendfördergesetz” and “Wie junge Menschen an den Jugendförderplänen mitwirken,” accessed 25 September 2026.

<sup>29</sup> Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family, “Jugendfördergesetz,” section “Das Verfahren zur Beteiligung junger Menschen.” The component numbers are approximate figures reported for the earlier plan cycle.

plan. The Berlin chapter therefore combines institutional context with a tightly bounded Mitte case rather than suggesting that 20,000 survey participants jointly authored a playground.

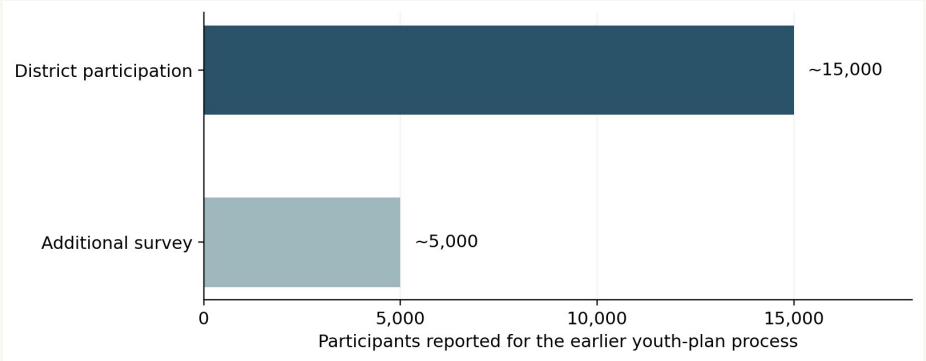
Blochplatz in the Mitte district supplies a project with several recorded stages. The district project page describes consultations with different user groups, including a children and youth participation exercise in June 2023, a later public event and presentation of preliminary designs in September 2024. The page links to documentation of the children and youth session. At the time represented by the project page, the procurement of construction works was in progress and the project period ran from 2023 to 2027.<sup>30</sup> A district press release dated 28 August 2026 then announced that work would begin in September, described an enlarged and more accessible playground, and gave a projected completion in the third quarter of 2027. It stated a cost of approximately €1.7 million, compared with the €1.463 million listed on the project page.<sup>31</sup> Those figures should not be treated as a statistical trend without establishing when each page was updated and what each estimate includes. They demonstrate a documentary change in published project information that itself requires careful dating.

The district’s mention of an accessible trampoline and sand table is evidence of an announced design feature. It is not, in isolation, evidence that the children requested those exact elements, that the district adopted them because of the consultation, or that they are already available for use. The consultation report, design drawings, procurement terms and completion record are the necessary companions to the announcement. The method can identify a narrower form of influence where a particular suggestion in the June 2023 record is recognisable in a later design and the district explains the connection. If the match is merely thematic, the finding must remain correspondingly cautious. Berlin is a test of how a participatory design process produces a material object and where attribution can be lost during that translation.

<sup>30</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project description and consultation documents, accessed 25 September 2026.

<sup>31</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” press release 202/2026, 28 August 2026; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project page. The two cost statements reflect their respective published sources.

Figure 3.1. Two documented components of Berlin youth-plan participation



Bar chart of approximately 15,000 district participants and 5,000 additional survey respondents in an earlier Berlin youth-plan participation cycle. These are participation counts, not votes or decision outcomes.

The figure visualises the Senate’s reported approximate components for the plan process described on its website. It is deliberately confined to one system. It does not compare four cities’ unlike membership numbers, and it does not interpret the large district component as greater policy influence. A participant count is an input measure; a later paragraph of a plan and a built feature require their own documentary tests.

3.5. London: influence through scrutiny and an executive elsewhere

London’s directly elected Mayor and elected Assembly were established through the Greater London Authority Act 1999. The City’s current account distinguishes the Mayor as the Authority’s executive, taking many spending and significant policy decisions, from the Assembly’s primary role of holding the Mayor to account. Assembly members scrutinise mayoral functions, examine strategies and budgets, and conduct public work through committees and plenary meetings.<sup>32</sup> The separation is foundational for a youth proposal. A demand advanced to an Assembly committee may alter a report or a motion without thereby becoming a mayoral policy or a service delivered by Transport for London. A study that speaks of ‘London’s decision’ without naming the actor will obscure the fate of the request.

<sup>32</sup> Greater London Authority, “How We Work for London”; Greater London Authority, “Decision Making,” sections “The Mayor’s Role in Decision Making” and “London Assembly Decisions.”

The London Youth Assembly, or LYA, belongs to the Assembly’s sphere. A 2025 freedom-of-information response says it had thirty-eight members at the time; boroughs conduct selection and may supply up to two members each year. Members receive travel expenses but no allowance, formal meetings occur at least four times a year, and the Assembly Secretariat provides oversight. The response also states that the LYA has no formal role in London Assembly decisions and does not operate against formal performance indicators. It can offer evidence to committee investigations and raise issues with Assembly members.<sup>33</sup> The document should be read in both directions. It rules out a claim that the youth body has a legal vote on Assembly decisions. It also identifies concrete routes through which youth evidence could enter the elected body’s work. The absence of formal KPIs does not prove an absence of effects; it helps explain why effects may not be systematically recorded.

Membership and selection have consequences for interpreting the body. The same response reports members aged eleven to nineteen, with an extension to twenty-five for disabled members, and says that the authority does not hold information about members’ school types. It withholds a full member list on personal-data grounds.<sup>34</sup> Privacy is a legitimate reason to protect identifiable young people. It does not prevent the publication of aggregate participation information where disclosure is safe, nor does it settle whether borough routes offer equally accessible opportunities. The research can ask how an issue moved through the LYA without demanding a roster of minors. A sound evidence trail attributes a collective recommendation to the body and leaves personal details outside the public dataset unless they are essential and consented to.

The March 2026 bleed-control motion demonstrates a route from advocacy into formal Assembly speech. The motion itself thanks the LYA for its advocacy, and Assembly members publicly acknowledged the youth body while calling on Transport for London and the London Ambulance Service to install publicly accessible kits at major bus stations, pilot kits on selected routes, develop training and publish a plan for wider rollout if evaluation supports it.<sup>35</sup> This is stronger documentary attribution than a strategy which merely uses similar language. It is not the

<sup>33</sup> Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025.

<sup>34</sup> Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025, membership and privacy answers.

end of the chain. A request addressed to TfL and an ambulance service creates subsequent questions about executive response, feasibility, procurement, training and actual availability. The London case study will use these later records to separate agenda influence, Assembly action and delivery.

Table 3.2. Different receiving authorities in the four cases

| City         | Youth channel                           | Immediate receiving institution                                            | Later authority or record required for a delivery claim                 |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul     | Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi            | City council general assembly, then municipal council under the regulation | Competent metropolitan or district unit; budget and operational record  |
| Paris        | Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse         | Mayor’s referral and preparatory commission of the Conseil de Paris        | Adopted deliberation, relevant directorate and implementation record    |
| Berlin Mitte | Children and youth project consultation | District youth participation office and planning authority                 | Approved design, procurement, construction and inspection               |
| London       | London Youth Assembly                   | London Assembly committee or plenary                                       | Mayor, TfL or another competent delivery body, depending on the measure |

The table is functional, not a claim that the four routes confer equivalent rights. Each row identifies a point at which the next document might be produced by someone other than the youth body. A precise evaluation follows that document outward instead of reading influence back into the event that began the process.

3.6. What the institutional comparison establishes before the case studies

The first comparison has a limited but important result. Istanbul supplies a prescribed route of municipal consideration, with an internal city council gate. Paris supplies an opinion

<sup>35</sup> London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” press release and motion, 5 March 2026.

presented near elected deliberation. Berlin supplies statutory planning participation and project-specific design records. London supplies a route into scrutiny from a youth body without formal decision power. Their apparent differences in democratic strength cannot be resolved by counting members or reading mission statements. The question is which transition creates a public record sufficient for an author to follow a recommendation.

The records also differ in the point at which an audience appears. In Istanbul, the municipal council is named in law but the fate of an individual youth proposal depends on the steps leading to submission. In Paris, elected councillors may hear the CPJ before deliberation, while the disposition of a particular suggestion must still be traced. In Berlin Mitte, planners received youth input on a concrete space and published project milestones, yet the precise influence on design requires document comparison. In London, an elected motion explicitly recognises the youth body’s advocacy, whereas the agencies capable of implementing the request are separate. These statements identify research paths. They do not announce which city is ‘best’.

This variety allows the study to test a proposition more useful than a city ranking. The weakest point in a participation system may be neither initial access nor formal adoption but the transfer between institutions. An internal approval, a commission meeting, a district planning handoff or a referral from scrutiny to delivery can make a contribution visible to insiders while leaving its authors without an explanation. A public register could attach a continuing identity to the request across that transfer. Whether the register should be established by regulation, administrative instruction or a project protocol would depend on the institutional setting. Chapter 4 defines the method by which this proposition will be tested, including the kinds of records that could disconfirm it.

**3.7. Comparing the histories without erasing their origins**

The four channels were formed for purposes that overlap without being identical. Istanbul’s city council framework addresses the place of organised local actors within municipal governance. Paris’s CPJ invites a defined cohort of young people into the city’s policy discussions and makes the production of opinions a recognisable part of its work. Berlin’s youth promotion framework concerns planning and provision of youth work alongside participation, while the Mitte project consultation concerns the design of one public space. London’s LYA

provides political learning and an avenue into scrutiny by an elected assembly.<sup>36</sup> Each origin shapes the material likely to survive. A statutory route may leave minutes of consideration; an advisory council may publish opinions; a planning process may preserve needs assessments and design drawings; an assembly inquiry may preserve testimony and a motion. These differences make a common search protocol indispensable, but they also make a single source type inadequate.

The word *history* is useful here only if it changes interpretation. The CPJ’s foundation in 2003, for example, establishes that it is not an improvised response to the 2024 climate agenda. It does not show that its current membership or referral procedure remained unchanged over two decades. The 1999 creation of the Greater London Authority explains why scrutiny and executive power sit in different places; the LYA’s particular practices are described in later records and should be dated to those records. The legal creation or reform of a Berlin participation system sets conditions for youth planning, but a district landscape project has its own procurement and funding timetable. Istanbul’s 2005 statutory article and 2006 regulation supply a normative expectation, while the youth recommendations examined here belong to a later cycle. A historical comparison must resist the easy but false inference that an older institution has more influence, or that a recent legal reform has already changed every local routine.

The institutional language of each city also gives clues about how officials conceive the young participant. Istanbul’s council model names assemblies and working groups as components of a broader urban partnership. Paris places young people in a body with a two-year term, formal referrals and the possibility of appearing before commissions. Berlin’s planning arrangements treat participants partly as sources of knowledge about needs and partly as actors in the design of services and places. London’s published account describes skills, advocacy, evidence to committee investigations and the ability to raise issues with Assembly members. None of these descriptions should be mistaken for a complete account of participants’ own political aims. Young people may use a channel for claims that exceed the role officials originally

<sup>36</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76; City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family, “Jugendfördergesetz”; Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly.”

envisaged. The empirical chapters will look for such moments without assuming that institutional wording determines the content of youth action.

Authority and visibility are especially likely to separate when a participatory channel meets a complex service. Transport is an instructive example. A citywide body may identify a problem affecting journeys; a political assembly may debate it; a mayoral team may agree in principle; an operator must then decide where equipment goes, procure it, train staff and maintain it. The public can see a motion before it can see an operational change. Conversely, a project office might alter a service quietly in response to youth feedback without a conspicuous council debate. The comparative study should be capable of detecting both pathways. It must search for the act appropriate to the requested measure rather than assume that influence is always announced in a plenary chamber.

There are corresponding differences in the moment when young people can enter. Paris’s CPJ may receive a draft on which to give an opinion. In Berlin Mitte, consultation occurred during the planning of a space before construction began. The London youth body’s evidence can enter an investigation into an issue whose later remedy belongs elsewhere. Istanbul’s youth assembly may formulate a recommendation independently of a municipal draft and then rely on the internal city council route for transmission. These are not simply procedural details; they affect the counterfactual question. A specific change between draft and final plan can sometimes be observed in a Parisian case. A Berlin design process may need successive drawings. An Istanbul proposal for a new service may need a longer search for an agenda and budget. London’s advocacy may be most visible in the Assembly’s decision to make an issue public. A fair comparison asks what could have changed at the point when participation occurred.

Table 3.3. Entry point, decision gate and likely documentary residue

| Setting  | Typical point of youth entry | Decision gate                                               | Document most likely to preserve a change               |
|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul | Working-group recommendation | City council general assembly and elected municipal council | General assembly act, council agenda, notified response |
| Paris    | Mayor’s referral on a        | Preparatory commission                                      | Youth opinion,                                          |

| Setting      | Typical point of youth entry               | Decision gate                                        | Document most likely to preserve a change                 |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
|              | draft or theme                             | and Conseil de Paris                                 | amendment, adopted deliberation                           |
| Berlin Mitte | Project consultation or youth-plan input   | District planning, financing and procurement         | Consultation report, design revision, construction record |
| London       | Youth evidence, advocacy or correspondence | Assembly scrutiny, then executive or operator action | Committee output, motion, mayoral or TfL response         |

The entries describe pathways documented in institutional sources and the records expected of them. They are not assertions that a specific proposal completed every passage. A dossier may reveal that a presumed gate was bypassed, that an informal meeting mattered more than a published committee or that an agency refused a proposal for reasons that were never communicated to the youth body. Such findings would improve the model. A methodology that cannot accommodate a surprising route has confused a map with the territory it is meant to investigate.

3.8. The archive as part of the institution

Institutions do more than make decisions; they decide what to record and what to expose to others. Paris makes a collection of CPJ opinions accessible from a single page, easing discovery of original contributions. The London information disclosure answers questions about membership and authority with unusual candour, even as it reveals the lack of a formal outcome metric. Berlin Mitte links a project description to consultation documents and a later press release. Istanbul’s council publishes a recommendations volume and activity reports; municipal decisions have to be sought through a different body of records. These observations concern publication architecture, not an index of democratic virtue. A city may have strong practices and weak indexing; another may have polished publication and limited influence. Yet discoverability affects whether participants can hold the authority to an account of its choices. An inaccessible answer offers little public accountability even if an official wrote it.

The distribution of records also affects the historian’s sense of sequence. A municipal web page is often updated without preserving a visible version history. Berlin Mitte’s project page lists one cost while a later dated release lists another. Neither should be silently corrected to match the other. The first may reflect an earlier estimate or a differently scoped calculation; the sources examined do not establish which. Recording each as a dated published statement prevents the researcher from narrating the project as if a single static website contained the whole history. The same caution applies to Paris pages updated in 2026 that refer to opinions from 2015 and to London disclosures that describe membership at a particular date. A current page is not evidence that all its present procedural details governed every earlier case.

One can therefore anticipate different forms of missingness. A youth opinion may be easy to find while the council amendment it influenced is indexed under a technical department name. An Assembly motion may be prominent while an operator’s procurement document uses a product category rather than the language of advocacy. A scanned Turkish report may be visible to a human reader but poorly indexed by search engines. A district consultation summary may collect young people’s views without retaining the names of speakers for good privacy reasons. The method must know which absence is a failure of discovery, which is a legitimate limitation of publication, and which may reveal an institution’s inability to account for its answer. This is a reason to maintain a source log rather than rely on a list of attractive citations assembled after the argument is written.

The documents available at this stage justify proceeding to empirical case selection. They show the four participation channels, receiving institutions and plausible later records. They do not yet furnish a balanced four-city dataset of accepted and rejected recommendations. The transition to Chapter 4 should be read in that light. An institutional setting tells us where to look and what a document could mean; a reproducible method tells us when we are entitled to say we have found it.

**3.9. Institutional implications for the proposed register**

The architecture of a proposal register cannot be identical in each city. Istanbul could attach a proposal identifier at the point where a youth assembly view enters the city council’s general assembly, then carry it into the municipal agenda and the municipality’s notification of

the result. If a view is not approved internally, the youth authors should still be able to see that disposition and its reason; otherwise the first gate is invisible. Paris could link a CPJ opinion to the draft on which it comments and record how the commission and final deliberation treated its actionable parts. Berlin Mitte could publish a change log between the youth consultation, preliminary design, tender and inspected work. London could connect an LYA submission to an Assembly committee or motion and identify the mayoral or operator response without implying that the Assembly itself controls delivery. These are design implications drawn from documented responsibilities, not claims that the cities have already adopted such registers.

The common minimum is modest: preserve the original wording, name a receiving body, record a dated and relevant answer, identify the formal act and update implementation when one occurs. The value of that minimum varies by setting. In a legally prescribed route it makes compliance inspectable. In an advisory commission it clarifies how an opinion affected amendments. In a physical project it connects participants’ suggestions to design changes. In a scrutiny system it follows a political request beyond the body that made it. None of these functions replaces a dispute about whose interests a decision served, and none turns documentation into shared legal authority. Their practical force lies in enabling a person outside the institution to reconstruct the sequence without relying on an official’s memory or a promotional summary.

An early design decision concerns the granularity of a record. Registering every sentence in a youth report would create a database too burdensome to maintain and too fragmented to respect the authors’ argument. Registering only the report title would make its many distinct requests impossible to follow. The solution proposed for testing is a parent record for the collective document and child records for each actionable measure capable of a separate disposition. An officer could answer a cluster together where the reasons genuinely apply to all of its parts; the public data would still make clear what those parts were. The method in the next chapter uses precisely this structure to avoid conferring success on a whole publication because one small item was adopted.

This point also bears on the character of a public decision. An elected council may accept the direction of a proposal but assign an amount too small to deliver what was asked; a project office may build a related feature at a different location; an Assembly may press an operator to

test a measure before considering universal provision. All three are potentially significant responses, but none is a simple yes. The institutional setting determines what sort of modified decision was possible, and the public record must show that modification if the young authors are to judge whether their concern was addressed. The case chapters will therefore examine the scope and mechanism of each act, not merely its title.

**Chapter 4. Research design and standards of evidence**

**4.1. A comparative inquiry built from individual requests**

The most seductive comparative study of youth councils would begin with a table: year founded, number of members, meetings held and recommendations produced. Those variables are easy to retrieve and give the appearance of symmetry. They are not a sufficient answer to whether young people affected a public decision. The present inquiry therefore uses an embedded design. The four cities are the broader institutional settings; a *proposal–decision pair* is the main observation within each setting; and each pair is reconstructed through a sequence of documentary events. The method is comparative because the same evidentiary questions are asked in each city. It is not a controlled experiment in which the city is an interchangeable unit.

The design combines within-case process tracing with cross-case functional comparison. Process tracing, in its ordinary methodological sense, asks whether observations along a proposed causal chain are consistent with a claim about how an outcome arose and whether rival accounts fit the evidence better.<sup>37</sup> Here the chain is not presumed to exist merely because its endpoints do. A youth recommendation and a later project may coexist without a transmission record or a reasoned reply; a formally acknowledged recommendation may be refused; a political motion may not lead to delivery. The study reconstructs those divergences rather than smoothing them into a story about four cities moving at different speeds along the same ladder.

The population of potential observations is larger than the selected dossiers. Every youth publication could contain multiple requests, and some requests may be recorded only in meetings or correspondence. The observable sampling frame is therefore defined as dated, publicly

<sup>37</sup> David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–30; Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

identifiable recommendations by the selected youth body or participation project within the stated period. The empirical chapters will state the period examined for each body, the locations searched and the reasons an individual request was included or excluded. The principal selection criterion is a request sufficiently specific to allow a search for an authority’s response and later action. A case will not be chosen solely because an adopted measure is already visible. At least one difficult or unresolved trail should be included in each city where the records permit it, so that a readable success story does not monopolise the comparison.

**4.2. Case boundaries, sampling and the risk of selection bias**

Istanbul’s broad recommendations volume could offer many possible subjects. Paris publishes opinions on existing drafts as well as thematic proposals. Berlin Mitte’s Blochplatz project records a bounded consultation, while London offers both evidence to investigations and specific advocacy associated with a motion. The cases differ in their initial units. The researcher must therefore select *actionable elements* rather than entire reports where a report contains several distinct requests. Each element gets a parent-document identifier and a separate observation number. If a youth opinion asks for a park entrance, seating and evening lighting, those requests may concern different offices, decision dates and delivery records. Combining them as one adopted or rejected opinion would obscure the result.

An actionable element requires four properties. The originating record must identify a youth source and a date or bounded period. The requested act must be sufficiently specified to recognise a relevant response; an aim such as ‘more inclusion’ does not qualify without an instrument. The potential receiving institution must be named or inferable from the request’s subject, with any uncertainty recorded. Finally, a reasonable search window must be set according to the decision involved. A draft-plan amendment might be observable within one council cycle; a construction project may require years. A request outside local competence can still qualify if the question is whether the city referred it to the proper authority rather than whether it delivered the requested national reform.

The design guards against three forms of selection bias. First, success selection occurs if the investigator starts from a celebrated policy and searches backwards until a youth consultation can be attached to it. Forward tracing from an originating recommendation reduces this risk.

Second, accessibility selection occurs when only searchable PDFs or well indexed English-language pages enter the dataset. The search log records sources found through official site navigation, document catalogues and the original languages, including scans that require manual inspection. Third, survival selection occurs when formal published recommendations displace quieter requests made by marginalised young people. The main dataset necessarily depends on attributable records; supplementary interviews and contextual reporting can illuminate what that rule excludes without fabricating an original document for an unrecorded request.

Table 4.1. Inclusion and exclusion rules for a proposal observation

| Test       | Include when                                                            | Exclude or separate when                                                           |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Authorship | A youth body, consultation or identifiable participant made the request | A city document merely describes young people as beneficiaries                     |
| Time       | A date or bounded period precedes the potential decision                | The request is undated and chronology cannot be reconstructed                      |
| Action     | The requested measure can be separated from a general aspiration        | Only a broad value statement is present                                            |
| Competence | A local authority can act or formally refer the matter                  | No plausible receiving institution can be identified                               |
| Trace      | A search can be conducted across relevant official records              | A later outcome was chosen first and the youth request is inferred retrospectively |

These rules make the study reproducible while leaving room to report excluded material. A broad youth manifesto may deserve discussion as a political text even if individual statements cannot be traced to an act. It should be discussed as context, not smuggled into a denominator of discrete policy requests.

4.3. The documentary chain and its levels of proof

The evidence register has two linked tables. A source table records issuer, title, original language, document date, retrieval date, stable locator, document type, relevant passage and any uncertainty about authenticity or version. A proposal table records the action, authoring body,

receiving authority, jurisdiction, policy stage, status at each step and the source IDs supporting those statuses. The two-table design matters because a document can support several propositions, while a proposition may require several documents. A youth annual report can establish that the body met and printed a request. It cannot be reused without qualification to prove that the municipality accepted the request merely because the report describes a successful collaboration.

The chain contains proposal, transmission, receipt, reasoned response, formal decision, budget or procurement where relevant, and delivery. These are analytically separate, though not every case produces a distinct document for each step. A commission minute might record receipt and substantive response at once. A planning report might both adopt a design and explain how a consultation altered it. The coding rule evaluates the information, not the number of files. Conversely, a hundred pages of generic discussion do not constitute a reasoned response to a specific request if none identifies the requested action.

Attribution has its own scale. The weakest positive observation is thematic congruence: both the youth body and the later authority discuss similar problems. Next is specific congruence in a measure not obviously common to other submissions. Stronger is a documented transmission or explicit citation, and stronger still is an amendment record or reasoned statement that the youth contribution informed a specified change. These are not numerical probabilities. They are qualitative thresholds governing how strong the prose may be. If an official says a proposal was ‘inspired by young people’, the phrase is evidence of the official’s account and should be compared with drafts and other claims. Where rival organisations advanced the same idea, the conclusion may be shared contribution rather than singular origin.

4.4. Missing evidence is a coded result, not a hidden zero

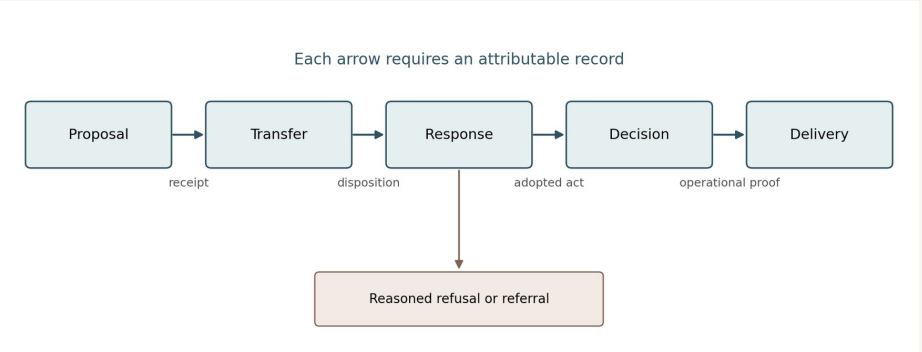
An empty cell can have several meanings. A document may never have been created; it may exist internally but not be public; it may be public under an unexpected title or in an inaccessible scan; it may have been destroyed under a retention schedule; or the researcher may have searched the wrong authority. The coding scheme distinguishes *not located after a specified search*, *not applicable*, *pending within a live decision period*, *contradicted by a later record*, and *affirmatively documented as absent* where an authority explicitly states no response or record

exists. Only the last supports a strong claim about the institution’s records, and even then it must be read in the scope of the authority’s answer. A freedom-of-information reply saying no formal KPI is kept does not show that no informal monitoring occurs.

Each negative search will have a reproducible note: official portal queried, language and terms used, date range, document type, and the reason the portal was expected to contain the act. Search engines provide discovery, not proof of absence. When a city’s own database yields no match, its coverage and indexing limits should be described. A document published after the chapter’s cut-off date can change a pending code; therefore every dossier carries a clear observation date. This approach is demanding but necessary if the paper is to make public traceability an object of analysis rather than reproduce its own research limitations as a verdict on officials.

The coding is also sensitive to institutional referral. An Istanbul youth proposal may be debated in a city council assembly before reaching the metropolitan municipal council; a London Assembly motion may ask TfL to act; a Berlin district department may seek Land funding; a Paris opinion may be circulated to all councillors without a discrete committee vote. A referral does not equal adoption. It is still a documentable transfer that can prevent a proposal from dying with the initial consultation. Each receiving institution is a separate actor in the record, and the expected next document is derived from its powers. The design will never treat the city’s logo as proof that all bodies under it share one decision file.

Figure 4.1. The evidence chain and its documentary thresholds



Directed evidence diagram showing proposal, transfer, reasoned response, formal decision and delivery, with a separate branch for rejection or referral. Every arrow requires an attributable record.

The figure is an analytical map, not a count of observed outcomes. Its arrows indicate where a researcher needs a record to justify moving from one claim to the next. Rejection with reasons and referral to another competent body are paths through the chain, not missing observations disguised as failure. The empirical figures later in the study will plot only dated or counted events whose underlying source can be inspected.

4.5. Comparison, alternative explanations and causal restraint

The strongest rival explanation in most participation studies is prior policy commitment. If a city had already budgeted a playground renewal before children asked for an accessible feature, the renewal cannot be attributed to them; a feature introduced after consultation may still be affected by their input. A second rival explanation is simultaneous advocacy by another group. London Assembly’s bleed-kit motion itself mentions community organisations with work on the issue, while expressly thanking the LYA for advocacy.<sup>38</sup> That combination makes a singular ‘youth originated the idea’ claim implausible from the motion alone; it does support a bounded claim that the elected Assembly recognised youth advocacy in bringing the issue forward. A third rival is technical convergence: professionals may independently recommend a widely accepted

<sup>38</sup> London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” 5 March 2026.

accessibility feature. These alternatives will be recorded in the dossier rather than relegated to a generic limitations paragraph.

Cross-case comparison focuses on functions: recruitment, agenda access, named recipient, required answer, deliberative record, implementation record and the ability of participants to contest an account of their proposal. These functions can be compared even when the institutions are structurally unlike. The comparison will not convert unlike measurements into a synthetic index merely to produce a striking chart. Parisian membership, London membership and Berlin’s thousands of plan respondents have different denominators. A graphic that placed them side by side as evidence of the ‘scale of democracy’ would be visually compelling and analytically invalid. The one quantitative Berlin figure above makes the distinction explicit; later graphs may plot within-case time intervals or source-coded dispositions only where a genuine comparable dataset has been constructed.

Process tracing can also produce a disconfirming observation. A youth recommendation dated after the policy measure was adopted refutes any claim that it caused the original adoption. A draft unchanged after a youth opinion may weaken the hypothesis of textual influence, although it does not rule out agenda effects elsewhere. A written authority response rejecting a request, followed by an unrelated measure with superficially similar language, rules against counting that measure as straightforward uptake without explaining the discrepancy. These tests are more informative than a catalogue of supportive quotations. They show what would make the author’s interpretation untenable.

**4.6. Translation, source criticism and research ethics**

The four archives are written chiefly in Turkish, French, German and English. Original terms will be retained where a translation could confuse authority. *Tavsiye kararı* is rendered as recommendation rather than binding decision; *avis* as advisory opinion; *Beteiligung* as participation whose actual form depends on the project; and a London Assembly *motion* as the elected body’s act of taking a public position, not as an instruction automatically binding a delivery agency. Translations of important passages will be checked against the source-language text. A quotation in English is marked as a translation where the original is not English, and the argument does not depend on an English word that the original did not use.

The sources are public institutional records, but their publicity does not abolish obligations of care. A list of youth members, especially minors, is not needed to establish whether the body submitted a recommendation. Individual testimony on migration status, violence or a disability-related barrier may be analysed without reproducing identifying details. Where source documents contain names, the public study attributes collective views to the issuing body unless an individual has chosen a public advocacy role and identification is necessary for the claim. A proposed future ledger must follow similar principles: public status and reasons can be available without publishing sensitive participant data. Transparency of administration and exposure of children are different things.

The authorial position also shapes the evidentiary burden. This study seeks to design a usable reform. That aim can tempt the researcher to overstate the dysfunction of existing institutions so that the proposed register appears necessary. The antidote is to treat a well-documented official reply as evidence in favour of the institution and to record instances where a public archive already performs part of the desired function. The OECD describes a Barcelona youth forum whose twenty-two recommendations received individual municipal responses; eighteen were accepted, two concerned work already under way, and two were rejected with reasons.<sup>39</sup> It provides a concrete precedent for response-level reporting. The four-city study must still establish whether its proposed design adds value beyond that precedent and under which local conditions.

**4.7. Tables, figures and the refusal of decorative data**

The visual programme follows the questions. Chapter 3’s institutional table maps the authority a proposal must reach; its Berlin chart depicts a single documented participation composition, with no inference about policy results. Chapter 4’s source matrix and evidence diagram make the inclusion rules and transitions inspectable. Each city chapter will include a dated proposal timeline, a record of its documentary stages, and at least one table or figure that clarifies rather than merely decorates the case. The comparative chapter will show stage-by-stage evidence across the cities while distinguishing ‘not located’ from ‘no act’. The solution chapters will contain a data schema and implementation sequence that an office could use. A graph of

<sup>39</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022), box 2.20, “Barcelona’s Youth Forum.”

rates will be drawn only if the denominator, observation period and coding decisions can be disclosed next to it.

There is a cost to that restraint. A publication with a tidy four-colour ranking might attract more immediate attention. It would also make the study vulnerable to an obvious objection: the cases do not share a single definition of membership, proposal, competence or delivery. A professional report earns its visual clarity through the quality of its categories. It should allow a reader to see when two numbers are not comparable. The charts and tables are part of the argument and must be edited with the same severity as its sentences.

**4.8. From method to the city dossiers**

The method has to survive contact with the archives. If the Istanbul report contains many proposals without clear dates for each item, the inclusion rule may need to use a bounded workshop period and state that choice. If a Paris opinion is a scan with handwritten annotations, the text must be read and checked before a phrase is coded. If Berlin’s project page changes after the observation date, the earlier and later versions should not be merged silently. If a London Assembly motion credits the youth body but an operator’s later report never mentions the motion, the political attribution and the operational outcome remain separate records. These complications do not invalidate the method. They are the reasons it is needed.

The transition to the case studies is consequently a commitment rather than a rhetorical flourish. Each chapter will open with a specified youth request; identify its route into competent authority; report what an official actually said; compare decisions and implementation records; and end by stating the strongest supported inference and the documents still needed. An attractive thematic similarity will not be called causation. An inaccessible file will not become a negative verdict. An announced future work will not be counted as completed. The comparison at the end of the four chapters will rest on these individual judgements, so that its policy recommendation can be challenged, revised and, if the evidence supports it, used.

**4.9. A codebook for response, decision and delivery**

A proposal’s status has to be recorded at a date, for a specified authority, and with a cited source. Otherwise a category such as ‘accepted’ can conceal several different events. An officer may agree with a principle, a committee may recommend a measure, a council may vote on it,

and an operator may install it. The codebook maintains separate fields for each. *Acknowledged* requires a dated indication that the receiving office had the request. *Substantively answered* requires an answer addressed to the requested action with an intelligible reason. *Adopted in full* requires a formal decision matching the action and its material scope; *adopted in part* requires identification of what changed and what did not. *Deferred* requires a specified future review or condition if it is to be distinguished from indefinite inaction. *Rejected* requires an attributable refusal. *Referred* names the next authority. The categories can coexist across stages: a request can be acknowledged, partly accepted, referred for delivery and subsequently stalled.

The coding protocol will distinguish an authority’s self-description from the analyst’s assessment. If a municipality calls a measure ‘implemented’ and a procurement file shows that the contract has been awarded but no work completed, the source table records the municipality’s claim while the delivery field remains at procurement. If a youth body calls a proposal ‘adopted’, the claim is preserved and checked against the formal act. Where a contract and an inspection record are available, the strongest operational status can be coded with a date. A future plan, even one supported by funds, remains a plan until the next step is evidenced. The protocol is intentionally more exacting than ordinary annual-report language because the study’s central object is the passage from announcement to public effect.

The response field includes a short justification-quality note. A relevant reason addresses the proposition advanced by the young authors: a transport agency explains why a proposed item can or cannot be installed at specified sites, a planning office explains why a route was altered, or a council explains why funds were assigned elsewhere. ‘We value youth participation’ is a courtesy, not a reason for declining an accessible entrance. A reason may be inaccurate or contestable while still counting as a reasoned response; the research records a substantive reply and separately evaluates its evidentiary quality. This distinction prevents the analyst from silently requiring agreement with the authority in order to count its answer. It also makes it possible to criticise a reason without misreporting silence.

Table 4.2. Disposition codes and their minimum proof

| Cod<br>e | Description                             | Minimum corroborating record                      |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| AC<br>K  | Request received by a named authority   | Dated receipt, agenda or attributed reply         |
| REA      | Relevant reasoned response              | Attributed answer addressing the specific action  |
| REF      | Referred to another competent body      | Document naming recipient and date of transfer    |
| DEF      | Decision deferred                       | Reason or condition and a stated review point     |
| ADP      | Measure adopted in full or defined part | Formal act or authorised plan with scope recorded |
| REJ      | Measure rejected                        | Attributed refusal, with reason coded separately  |
| IMP      | Specified measure delivered             | Operational, completion or service record         |
| UN<br>V  | Status unverified after declared search | Search log and unresolved source question         |

This is a multi-stage codebook, not a competition for the most favourable single label. The full proposal text stays attached to its separate actionable elements, and changes in status retain earlier entries. A reader should be able to see that a request was acknowledged in one year, accepted in modified form in the next, and still awaited delivery at the observation date. Overwriting the earlier status with ‘implemented’ would erase delay and the reasons for revision.

4.10. Dates, windows and a defensible denominator

There is no universal interval in which a public institution must implement a youth proposal. An authority should nevertheless be expected to answer within a published period, and the research can measure how long it actually took where dates exist. Each observation has a submission date or bounded period, first receipt by a competent body, response date, formal decision date and delivery date if documented. When only a month is known, the record preserves month-level precision rather than inventing a day. An interval is calculated only from dates of compatible precision; for month-level records, a range can be shown. The chart title and

footnote must explain whether it depicts calendar days, months or a projected schedule. A page update date is not the date of the decision described on that page unless the source says so.

The denominator for any uptake rate consists of actionable requests in the declared sampling frame for which the relevant decision period has elapsed. Pending proposals are displayed separately. Requests outside local competence can be included in a *referral* analysis but not treated as failures of municipal delivery. A multi-part recommendation is split only when its parts can receive distinct dispositions; otherwise the study would inflate the number of observations by fragmenting every sentence. When a request appears twice in overlapping youth publications, a stable parent identifier prevents duplicate counting. These rules are disclosed before percentages are produced. For small case sets the report will show raw counts alongside any rate, because a difference of one case could change a percentage substantially.

The selection period is not fixed by convenience after results are known. The four empirical chapters will identify the years for which original youth requests and subsequent decision material can reasonably be inspected. A city may have older material with a longer follow-up window and recent material with better electronic availability. The study can use both if the selection rationale is explicit, but it should not compare an older, fully matured project to a motion agreed in March 2026 as though they had equal time to reach implementation. An observation date of 25 September 2026 provides a common outer limit for this manuscript’s documentary claims. Later reports may be incorporated in a revised edition with a new cut-off and a logged change in each affected code.

There is an alternative to a misleading ‘acceptance rate’: a stage distribution showing how far each selected request can be publicly followed. Even that chart demands care. A request may be marked as ‘response documented’ while its decision is pending; another may have a formal decision without a separate reply. The chart should preserve such non-linear paths, perhaps through a matrix rather than a funnel that implies every proposal travels through identical successive gates. The evidence-chain figure in this chapter is a statement of analytical questions, not a claim that all institutional procedures are linear. The empirical visualisation will adapt to the observed routes while maintaining the shared definitions of what an answer or delivery record proves.

4.11. Source hierarchy and the problem of official narratives

Primary does not mean infallible. A published municipal act is authoritative evidence that a decision was formally recorded; it may contain a compressed account of consultation that is incomplete or politically selective. A youth council report is authoritative evidence of its own adopted wording; it may celebrate influence without reproducing the later decision. A press release announces an official interpretation of an event; its future-tense promises should not be coded as past delivery. Financial documents establish authorised or actual expenditure depending on their type; a line in a budget is not a completed procurement, and a paid invoice may not show whether the intended users can access the service. The source hierarchy is proposition-specific rather than a blanket ranking of organisations.

The dossier consequently pairs each consequential claim with the document best suited to test it. For authorship, the original youth report or signed opinion is preferred. For transmission, an agenda, letter, receipt or commission record is strongest. For the content of a formal decision, the adopted resolution and its amendments take priority over summaries. For implementation, procurement, inspection, service logs or independently observable operating information matter more than a celebratory announcement. Participant accounts can explain how discussions unfolded and identify otherwise hidden documents; they should be labelled as interviews, dated and compared with the record. A disagreement among sources becomes part of the finding rather than an inconvenience to be edited away.

Version control is particularly important in digital archives. A policy web page may display a current plan without the earlier draft against which a youth opinion was made. A project page may be revised after a tender changes its costs. A search result can preserve an indexed excerpt of a PDF while the document server refuses direct retrieval. The research log records which form of the source was actually examined. The author should not cite a full youth report as though it had been read when only a search excerpt was available. The report can still be used to establish the existence of the publication and a narrow statement visible in the excerpt, while the exact recommendation remains outside the coded corpus until inspected. This restraint is essential to the Istanbul case and will be applied elsewhere when an official file is a scan or an inaccessible attachment.

4.12. Reliability, disagreement and an audit trail

The coding rules can be checked by another researcher. For every observation, the dataset will retain the original-language request, a concise English rendering, document identifiers, page or section locators, the code assigned at each stage and the reasoning for the most demanding inference. A second reader should be able to recode a sample without relying on the author’s recollection of a website. Where a distinction is contestable—whether a reply addresses the substance, whether a later measure matches the original proposal, whether a funding line covers the same project—the dossier records the competing interpretation. Agreement on obvious cases is not enough; the borderline decisions determine whether a comparative conclusion is trustworthy.

A sensitivity check can show whether a finding survives stricter attribution rules. Under a narrow rule, only explicit official attribution or documented textual amendments count as youth influence. Under a broader rule, a chronologically plausible, highly specific match with transmission evidence may count as probable contribution. Results under both rules will be reported where the dataset supports them. If the overall interpretation changes entirely when the narrow rule is applied, the conclusion should say so rather than choose the rule that produces the more impressive story. No numerical causal probability will be invented from these categories. Their value is to make the threshold of a verbal claim inspectable.

Information requests and correspondence can supplement the public archive. They will be framed around named documents and dates: a copy of the response to a specific opinion, minutes of a commission considering it, a referral record, or confirmation of a completed installation. A broad demand to ‘prove that young people influenced policy’ would invite a general promotional answer and create little verifiable evidence. When an authority declines or cannot locate a document, the reply can establish what that office holds or does not hold under the scope of the request. It cannot automatically establish the conduct of all related authorities. The exact wording of the request and response will be preserved so that a negative result is not extended beyond its proper reach.

4.13. Testing the proposed remedy against the evidence

The policy model is a hypothesis about an administrative failure, not the guaranteed result of the comparison. If the empirical cases show that replies are already detailed and accessible but young people cannot contest the agenda before drafts are finalised, a ledger alone would have limited value. If the major failure occurs after adoption, an implementation tracker and named delivery owner become more important than an initial acknowledgement field. If excluded young people never enter the body, the first reform must address recruitment and access. The final chapters will map each observed failure to the element of the proposed model that could reasonably change it, leaving other failures to separate recommendations. This prevents a preferred technical tool from dictating the research finding.

An evaluable pilot would start with one policy area and a bounded number of proposals, assign administrative ownership, publish a baseline of current response practice and measure changes over a full decision cycle. Its indicators could include the share of eligible requests given an owner, the time to a relevant disposition, the share whose later decision is linked, and the accuracy of delivery statuses under an independent document check. Qualitative interviews would ask young authors whether the explanation helped them understand and contest the decision. The pilot would also monitor whether staff reclassify difficult requests as ‘outside scope’ or leave them indefinitely pending. The evaluation design cannot be fully specified before the empirical diagnosis, but its potential failure modes can already be named.

The comparative study’s own limitations should be treated as design information. Four urban institutions cannot represent every political system; a selected set of proposals cannot establish the average causal impact of youth participation; a public-document approach will miss some informal negotiation; and a common observation cut-off leaves recent cases unfinished. These constraints do not nullify the work. They specify the kinds of result it can produce: a carefully evidenced account of particular institutional pathways, a comparative explanation of where traceability fails or succeeds, and a policy mechanism fitted to those observed transitions. A professional conclusion will return to each limitation when stating what the cases do and do not establish.

4.14. A worked example of cautious inference

The London bleed-kit record can be used to demonstrate the coding rules before the full empirical chapter. The 2025 disclosure establishes the LYA’s institutional route to Assembly members and committees, not the origin of this particular proposal. The March 2026 motion expressly thanks the LYA for its advocacy and contains concrete requests to TfL and the ambulance service. The strongest conclusion from that document alone is that elected Assembly members recognised youth advocacy and agreed a formal call for specified action. It does not establish that the LYA alone invented the measure, because the motion names other community actors; it does not establish that TfL agreed; and it does not establish that equipment was installed. A response from TfL, pilot authorisation, procurement and evidence of use would each advance the chain. The codebook permits the Assembly act to be recognised without granting it an outcome that belongs to a later authority.<sup>40</sup>

Blochplatz offers a different demonstration. The project page proves that a children and youth consultation was held and that its documentation was linked to a redesign process. A dated district release proves that construction was announced, that accessible features were described and that completion was expected in 2027. Even if an original youth session contains a request for accessible play, a careful analyst would examine the intermediate design and competing requirements before assigning causal credit for a specific trampoline or sand table. At the September 2026 cut-off, construction commencement may be reported if independently recorded, but a future completion date cannot be coded as a finished public space. The site page and press release give different cost estimates, and the difference must be recorded without inventing the reason for it.<sup>41</sup>

In Istanbul, the test begins even earlier. A published recommendation volume can establish that the Youth Assembly formulated requests; law specifies a route through the city council general assembly to municipal consideration. The record of a particular general assembly vote and the relevant metropolitan council agenda are needed to bridge those propositions. If they

<sup>40</sup> Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” 28 August 2025; London Assembly, “Assembly Calls for the Rollout of Bus Bleed Kits across London,” 5 March 2026.

<sup>41</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026.

cannot be located, the youth recommendation has not been shown to fail: its public route remains unverified. Paris can produce a similar boundary at a later stage: an *avis* presented in a preparatory commission establishes access to the deliberative process, while the adopted decision and a reasoned account of which suggestions changed it are separately required. The examples demonstrate why one comparative codebook must follow different documents in each city.

**4.15. What would count as a useful negative result**

It is possible for the empirical research to find very few cases of securely attributed youth influence. Such a result would not justify the sweeping sentence that young people never change public decisions. It would support a narrower diagnosis if the search has been thorough: existing public records seldom connect their proposals to decisions with evidence strong enough for independent verification. The study could then describe which transition failed most often—internal transmission, response, formal adoption or delivery—and propose a remedy proportionate to that failure. If, by contrast, the documents yield detailed responses and verified changes in all four cities, the ledger’s rationale would shift from remedying opacity to consolidating already useful practices. The proposal is answerable to the research rather than insulated from it.

A negative result can also expose an error in the original selection of cases. If a body has no published individual recommendations, comparing it to a city that archives every opinion may require a different unit, such as a specific committee submission. The adjustment must be logged and explained before outcomes are coded. If a request concerns a national rather than local decision, its local referral can be studied but its national adoption should not be credited to the city. If an official document uses the phrase ‘youth consultation’ for a broad public meeting without showing that young people made the selected suggestion, the case fails the authorship test. These exclusions are not an embarrassment to be hidden in a footnote. They show the limits of what a four-city comparison can responsibly claim.

The practical test of this method is whether another reader could take one selected recommendation and recover the same sequence from the cited records. Agreement on the broad issue is insufficient; the reader should find the same originating wording, the same receiving authority, the same dated answer, and the same boundary between an authorised action and an

implemented one. Where the record is ambiguous, the dossier should show the ambiguity rather than force agreement. That is the threshold at which a long comparative manuscript becomes a research instrument others can inspect and improve.

The first two chapters established why youth voice must be connected to an audience and a decision. This chapter specifies the documents needed to make that connection credible. Its tests are deliberately severe because the final policy model will be built on the observed failures of existing practice. A weak inference at this stage would produce a confidently written remedy for a problem that might have been created by the researcher’s own search.

**Chapters 5 and 6. Istanbul and Paris case studies**

This instalment follows two proposals through the institutions that could have answered them. The Istanbul Youth Assembly’s August 2023 request to expand accommodation for people unable to meet their housing needs provides a particularly demanding test: the city continued to provide services to unhoused people, yet the available publications do not establish that the request caused, amended, or even reached a particular municipal decision. In Paris, a January 2024 youth recommendation concerning civil society’s place in the governance and monitoring of the resilience strategy left a longer documentary trail. A named deputy mayor reported back in September; the strategy was adopted in November; the recommendation appeared as an annex to a subsequent official publication. These records establish a meaningful institutional response and a formally preserved proposal. Whether the final governance arrangements implemented the specific recommendation requires a more exacting comparison than the mere presence of the annex. The difference between the dossiers is itself a finding about the visibility of youth influence.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları* (Istanbul, 2023), Recommendation 50; City of Paris, Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024* (Paris, 2025), 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne, une stratégie pour faire face aux défis de demain,” updated 18 August 2025.

Chapter 5. Istanbul: a housing recommendation at the boundary of the municipal record

5.1. A request with a date, an author and an addressee

The selected observation is Recommendation 50 in *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, dated 5 August 2023 and attributed to the Social Awareness and Rights Working Group of the Istanbul City Council Youth Assembly. Its title calls for expansion of the scope of Darülaceze or “Volunteer Homes” for people who cannot satisfy their housing needs. The introductory presentation attributes the need to rising inflation and the resulting difficulty of obtaining accommodation; it asks the relevant municipal units to evaluate the proposed measures. A recommendation so framed is neither an anonymous suggestion nor a retrospective statement that the city should care about homelessness. It is a dated institutional request, with an identifiable youth author, a specified public problem, a proposed type of facility and an intended administrative recipient.<sup>43</sup>

The text also complicates the empirical task. “People unable to satisfy their housing needs” is a wider class than people sleeping rough. It might include those facing imminent eviction, temporary accommodation insecurity, and households whose rent has become unaffordable; a Darülaceze or a volunteer house may, in turn, denote different service models. The proposal’s significance cannot be measured by finding any later municipal service labelled “homelessness.” The necessary comparison concerns the population to be served, the form and duration of accommodation, the location and staffing of premises, and the administrative decision through which the service would be established or enlarged. The case thus tests the study’s insistence that a proposal be broken into propositions capable of being checked separately.

The indexed publication preserves more than a title. Its reported clauses ask for a geographic and statistical assessment of need with district authorities, civil society and academic expertise; collaborative identification of appropriate sites; and a minimum area of five square metres per resident to be determined with expert input. These are not interchangeable demands. A needs assessment could be accepted without opening a facility. A site could be found without

<sup>43</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50, 5 August 2023, indexed official text. The described author, title, date and introductory request follow the accessible indexed extract of the official publication.

meeting the proposed space threshold. An existing facility could expand without adopting the recommended joint design process. A useful public response would say which elements were accepted, revised, rejected, assigned elsewhere, or already in progress. Nothing in the available excerpt establishes that such an itemized response was given.<sup>44</sup>

The original recommendation is available as an indexed official Youth Assembly publication, but the full PDF could not be reliably inspected through the retrieval route used for this instalment. The analysis therefore anchors the case in its indexed recommendation text and does not pretend to have transcribed every clause of the volume. The status of the underlying file is a material source limitation: any eventual audit of wording, signatures, circulation and appendices should begin with a stable copy of the entire publication. This restraint matters particularly where a single word, such as “expand,” determines whether a pre-existing service can be called an implementation. A document may exist on the web and still be difficult to audit as a record of administrative passage.

Table 5.1. Recommendation 50 divided into testable claims

| Element in the youth recommendation                     | Observable decision that would answer it               | Record needed before an implementation claim        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Map housing need by area with outside expertise         | Commission a study or assign a named unit and deadline | Commission, scope, method and published results     |
| Identify suitable sites with districts and other actors | Approve site criteria and a shortlist                  | Dated minutes, property review or site decision     |
| Expand the scope or number of accommodation facilities  | Authorize places, premises or operating agreements     | Budget, facility order, contract and opening record |
| Apply an expert-informed area standard                  | Adopt a standard for capacity or facility design       | Specification, inspection or licensing record       |
| Explain how the youth submission was treated            | Give an itemized disposition of the recommendation     | Dated municipal reply linked to Recommendation 50   |

<sup>44</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50, indexed extract. Clause-level details should be checked against a stable complete copy before quotation or quantitative coding.

The rows are investigative tests, not findings that the five decisions occurred. The distinction prevents the attractive but false conclusion that one service announcement answers a complex proposal. It also shows why a reply is more than courtesy: it fixes the object whose later execution can be checked. Without a unit of decision, apparent implementation becomes a story constructed after the fact.

5.2. The route prescribed by law and the route shown by documents

Article 76 of Municipal Law No. 5393 gives the city council a participatory role and requires that opinions formed in the city council be placed on the agenda of the municipal council for consideration. The City Council Regulation describes its bodies and the route through the city council’s own general assembly. These instruments explain why the youth assembly’s document is a plausible entrance to municipal decision making. They do not prove that Recommendation 50 passed each stage. The distinction between a legal duty and a recorded act is indispensable. A rule can tell us who should receive a view; only minutes, agenda entries, correspondence or decisions can show when a particular view was received and what happened next.<sup>45</sup>

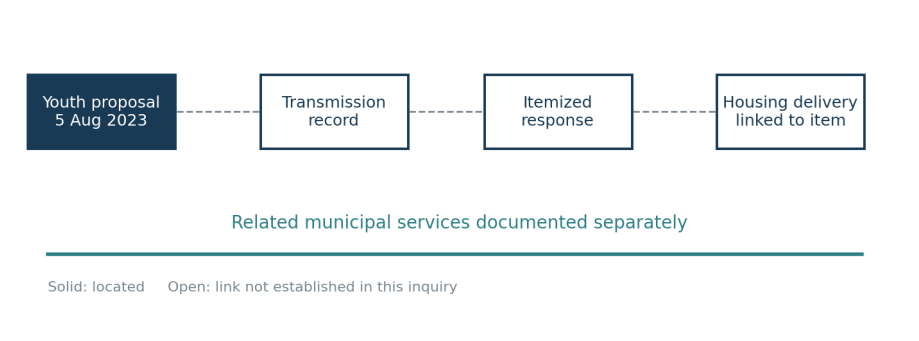
The first gate is internal to the participatory institution. A thematic working group prepares a recommendation. To connect it to the city council’s statutory route, a researcher needs the general assembly decision, its date and its list of adopted opinions. The second gate concerns transmission to the metropolitan municipality: a cover letter, electronic document registration number or another official acknowledgment would identify the recipient and date. The third is the municipal council agenda and its committees. The fourth is the administrative service that can study, finance and deliver a facility. Neither the thematic recommendation’s publication nor a legal obligation is a substitute for these records. A reliable conclusion should specify at which gate the trail presently stops.

This is more than a procedural nicety. A claim that “the city ignored the young people” would require an adequately bounded search for receipt, discussion and reply, and perhaps an information request to the relevant institution. A claim that “the city adopted the proposal” would require a decision identifying the recommendation or its substantive elements. For this dossier the publicly accessible materials examined establish the youth proposal and the continued existence

<sup>45</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76, *Resmî Gazete*, 13 July 2005; Republic of Türkiye, City Council Regulation, arts. 12 and 14, *Resmî Gazete*, 8 October 2006, as amended.

of relevant municipal services; they do not establish the intervening chain. The appropriate finding is a gap in publicly demonstrable traceability, not a finding of administrative inaction or bad faith. Both an undocumented internal response and an actual absence of response remain possible.

Figure 5.1. What is documented and what remains to be linked in Istanbul



*The recommendation is documented, while the institutional transmission and specific decision links require records; related services are documented on a separate line*

*Source and coding note:* Recommendation 50 in the Youth Assembly’s 2023 publication; Municipal Law No. 5393, article 76; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality service publications of 2018–25. A solid node denotes a document located for the proposition shown. An open node denotes a missing link in this inquiry, not proof that an event did not take place. The separate service line prevents a later programme from being read backward as evidence of adoption.<sup>46</sup>

5.3. What the municipality was already doing

Istanbul’s municipal system did not begin to attend to people without shelter after August 2023. The city’s own account of services describes temporary winter accommodation coordinated by its Darülaceze branch, including food, hygiene, health, clothing and social support. That service description predates the selected recommendation. A related official account describes accommodation in municipal facilities or contracted hotels during cold periods. The existence of these practices matters in two directions. It makes an unqualified claim of “new provision

<sup>46</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*; Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “Hizmetlerimiz,” Health Services Directorate, service description; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi,” 25 March 2024.

following the youth proposal” untenable; it also makes the youth request intelligible as a demand to enlarge or alter a known system, perhaps by extending its reach beyond winter and beyond the people already eligible.<sup>47</sup>

The mobile bath offers a particularly instructive false positive. The municipality announced the project on 25 March 2024 and described a service to begin in April, providing hygiene to unhoused people through the year. Its own account states that the idea had first been worked on by the Darülaceze branch as “Temizlen Giyin Çık” and had subsequently also been requested through the participatory budgeting programme, Bütçem İstanbul. By November 2024, an official service report counted 2,752 users. These records demonstrate a service and an output, with a chronology and an alternative participatory pathway explicitly supplied by the municipality. They do not identify Recommendation 50 as its source. A shower vehicle is also not the proposed expansion of accommodation premises. Counting its users as beneficiaries of the youth assembly’s housing proposal would conflate a related population, a different intervention and an unproven causal channel.<sup>48</sup>

The comparison is analytically productive precisely because the service is real. If the study simply marked every related action “not implemented,” it would miss public activity and understate the work of other participatory programmes. If it marked every related action “implemented,” it would erase the distinction between the city council youth assembly and participatory budgeting. The correct record has two entries: a youth recommendation with no documented disposition in the material inspected, and a later municipal hygiene service for unhoused residents whose published provenance points elsewhere. Their coexistence raises a practical question for the institution: can it say, with documents, which part of the youth request was examined against services already in train, and why a different measure was chosen?

<sup>47</sup> Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Health Services Directorate, “Hizmetlerimiz,” “Evsizlere Geçici Konaklama Hizmeti,” published before the selected 2023 recommendation; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İstanbul’da Kar Alarmı,” winter-service account, 2025.

<sup>48</sup> Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi,” 25 March 2024; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Health Services Directorate, “İBB’den Evsizlere Yaz Kış Destek,” service report, 2025.

Table 5.2. Nearby Istanbul services and the attribution test

| Municipal record                                    | What it establishes                                                                                                       | What it does not establish about Recommendation 50                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Earlier Darülaceze winter accommodation description | Temporary shelter and support existed before August 2023                                                                  | That a youth request created the service                                          |
| March 2024 mobile bath announcement                 | A new year-round hygiene intervention was planned; the city’s account names departmental and participatory-budget origins | That new accommodation premises were approved because of Recommendation 50        |
| April–November 2024 mobile bath output              | The municipality reports 2,752 users of that service                                                                      | Housing outcomes or attributable youth influence                                  |
| Later winter accommodation notices                  | Continuing provision through municipal facilities and contracted hotels                                                   | An itemized response to the youth proposal’s site, capacity and standards clauses |

A numerical output can be genuine and still be irrelevant to the causal question. The figure of 2,752 is a reported count of service users over a specified period, not a count of housing units, permanent placements or people served by Recommendation 50. The table treats temporal sequence as a necessary but weak condition for attribution. The stronger tests are proposal identity, a documented decision and an implementation record for the same intervention.

5.4. How a service resemblance becomes an institutional myth

The temptation to overread a resemblance grows when a proposal uses the vocabulary of a department that is already active. “Darülaceze” names both an institutional service environment and an element in the youth assembly’s title. Later Darülaceze announcements therefore appear, at first glance, to corroborate the youth proposal. Yet precisely this overlap should sharpen the inquiry. A decision maker might have replied that existing facilities met the need, that a proposed volunteer-house model lay outside the department’s remit, or that the area standard could not be applied to emergency provision. Each is a conceivable answer; none should be attributed to the

municipality without a record. Even a substantively good decision cannot be evaluated as a response to youth participation if its reasoning is invisible to those who made the submission.

Nor can a superficial textual match prove that a policy was copied. Major municipal services usually have multiple origins: staff observation, budget cycles, elected commitments, contractual opportunities and other public submissions. The mobile bath publication names two of those origins. A study that attributes it to the youth council merely because it followed a recommendation would deprive the named participatory-budget participants of their own demonstrable role. Conversely, a city could have considered the youth proposal while designing a related programme without saying so publicly. The appropriate causal classification is therefore “unresolved,” with a stated rival explanation and the exact record that could resolve it. Process tracing is most useful where it disciplines an attractive story rather than decorating one.<sup>49</sup>

The content of Recommendation 50 also invites a legal and administrative classification that the public excerpt does not provide. A facility for the temporarily unhoused, an institution for dependent older residents, a volunteer-run house and an emergency hotel placement entail different safeguarding, staffing, duration, registration and financing arrangements. The proposal’s language may be intentionally capacious: the working group sought a response to housing deprivation rather than a narrow procurement specification. That breadth is politically legitimate but makes an official reply more necessary. A receiving department should identify which population and legal instrument it can address, and refer the remainder to the competent authority with reasons. An unanswered or unclassified proposal asks citizens to infer competence from later publicity, an impossible burden.

5.5. Mapping the decision points without inventing a decision

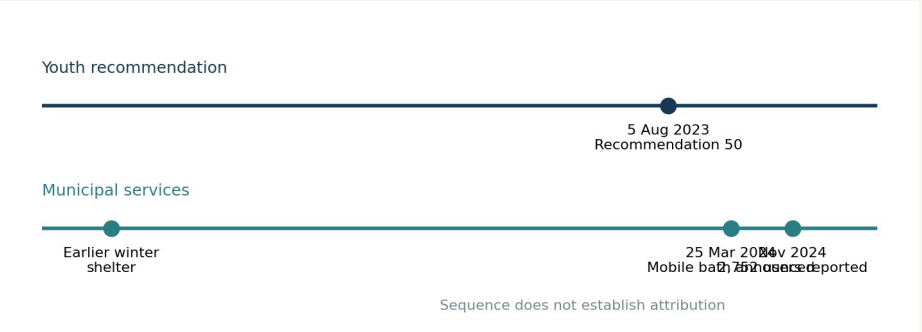
A focused follow-up would seek six classes of record. First, the final Youth Assembly recommendation and any covering resolution. Second, the City Council general assembly agenda and decision that transmitted it. Third, the municipality’s incoming-registration entry and council agenda referral. Fourth, departmental assessment from the Darülaceze branch and any social services, property or planning units concerned. Fifth, budget and site records if expansion was approved. Sixth, the public response returned to the Youth Assembly, with a follow-up after a

<sup>49</sup> David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–30; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi,” 25 March 2024.

defined delivery interval. This sequence is not an assertion that such records exist; it is a reproducible route by which another researcher, official or participant can test the present finding.

The apparent simplicity of a status label obscures important distinctions. “Received” requires a receipt and does not imply evaluation. “Considered” requires evidence of examination, not necessarily acceptance. “Accepted in principle” is not a funded programme. “Funded” need not mean a building has opened. “Existing measure” requires an account of how the existing service addresses the requested population and design; the mere use of the same noun is insufficient. “Outside competence” should name the authority to which the question was passed and say whether it was actually referred. A category such as “not found in public sources” describes the research record, not the municipality’s internal state. The ledger proposed later in the study must preserve those differences if it is to repair the failure observed here.

Figure 5.2. Service dates do not complete the recommendation chain



A dated timeline shows the 2023 recommendation, a 2024 hygiene announcement and output, and pre-existing winter shelter; arrows of causal attribution are deliberately absent

Source and coding note: The 5 August 2023 recommendation date comes from the Youth Assembly volume; the mobile bath was announced 25 March 2024 and first operated 1 April 2024 according to municipal sources; the count refers to November 2024. Pre-existing winter accommodation is shown as an antecedent service. Spacing is chronological at the year level; the graphic is not a chart of beneficiary trends.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi”; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere Yaz Kış Destek.”

The graphic expresses an unusually valuable negative discipline. A timeline can establish that a response was possible because a service began later. It cannot establish that the recommendation was its cause. Temporal diagrams often smuggle causation through arrows. Here the youth proposal and the independently described municipal service appear on separate tracks because their connecting administrative document has not been located. The absence of that line is a representation of present evidence, not an assertion about undocumented communication.

5.6. The reply that would have made this case auditable

A model response need not have accepted the entire recommendation. It could have said: the municipality already supplies winter shelter and hygiene; it will commission a map of year-round demand by district; an identified department will review the possible volunteer-house model by a given date; a proposed five-square-metre threshold will be considered against the applicable facility standards; sites depend on property and budget decisions; and a progress report will return to the Youth Assembly six months later. Each assertion would have a named responsible unit and a linked record. Alternatively, the municipality could have rejected an expansion while explaining a fiscal, legal or service-design reason. In both versions, the youth assembly would have an intelligible answer that could be examined after the decision.

This formulation is an analytic counterfactual, not a fabricated Istanbul reply. Its function is to reveal the missing information needed to evaluate influence. The public would learn whether the proposal changed an estimate of need, a site shortlist, an eligibility rule, a budget or nothing. Officials would avoid having unrelated announcements misrepresented as answers. The youth authors could correct the municipality’s interpretation if “volunteer house” meant a form of accommodation unlike the one the receiving unit assumed. The administration could also identify an existing project without erasing the proposal: the disposition might read “already in design before 5 August 2023, with the following modifications after this submission,” provided the latter were documented.

Table 5.3. A prospective disposition entry for the Istanbul case

| Field                              | Presently supported entry                              | Evidence that would change the entry                                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Proposal identity                  | Youth Assembly Recommendation 50, 5 August 2023        | Signed final text or corrected official metadata                         |
| Requested action                   | Expanded accommodation, with needs and site assessment | Full text and administrative interpretation                              |
| Named municipal response           | Not established in the records examined                | Dated reply naming unit and reasons                                      |
| Municipal decision on the proposal | Not established                                        | Agenda, committee minute, order or budget decision linked to the request |
| Related provision                  | Existing shelter and later hygiene service documented  | Documents showing a specific causal or substantive link                  |
| Delivery of requested expansion    | Not established                                        | New or enlarged places, site and service records tied to the decision    |
| Follow-up obligation               | Proposed by this study                                 | Published owner, deadline and periodic update                            |

The entry refuses two convenient zeroes. There is no basis to code “rejected,” since a rejection has not been located. There is no basis to code “implemented,” since the available evidence does not connect a qualifying accommodation decision and delivery to the youth request. “Not established” is an informative result when paired with a precise route for further verification. It identifies a potentially remediable deficiency in public explanation.

5.7. A controlled test of alternative explanations

The strongest objection to the cautious classification is that municipal decision making often proceeds through working conversations rather than a single letter bearing the recommendation number. A youth representative might have discussed housing with a

departmental officer; staff might have incorporated an idea into their needs assessment without referring to its author; a budget line might combine several programmes. These are serious possibilities. The study should not define influence so narrowly that it exists only where officials supply an ideal paper trail. It should distinguish influence that can be demonstrated from influence that is plausible but presently unverified. A structured interview with participants and officials could help reconstruct such a path, but retrospective recollection would need to be compared with contemporaneous agendas, drafts and spending records. Memory is especially vulnerable where several initiatives share the same name and purpose.

One alternative is continuation: the apparent response is a service already operating before the proposal. The winter accommodation record demonstrates that at least some municipal action on shelter antedated August 2023. Continuation could still be relevant if the young authors asked the city to change capacity, seasons or eligibility, and records show that one of those changes followed their intervention. The baseline cannot simply be “shelter existed.” It must include dates, capacity, geography, admission criteria and length of stay before the proposal. A post-2023 increase measured against that baseline would establish change, but still not attribution. A reasoned municipal assessment or draft history would be needed to connect the change to Recommendation 50.

A second alternative is convergent demand. The mobile bath publication expressly credits an internal departmental idea and a proposal in the city’s participatory-budgeting channel. Even if its goals overlap with the youth assembly’s concerns, these are separately identified sources. Convergence is common in cities where hardship is widely visible. It is neither embarrassing for the Youth Assembly nor proof that its members were ignored. Multiple actors can correctly identify the same problem. A public ledger could record multiple provenance entries for an action and describe their distinct contributions; an exclusive “winner” label would misrepresent a collective policy process. The point of attribution is accountability and fair credit, not ownership of an idea in the abstract.

A third possibility is displacement. Officials might accept the diagnosis of housing insecurity yet choose a mobile hygiene service because premises, funding or safeguards make accommodation expansion difficult. This would be a substantive response only if the choice were explained as an answer to the accommodation proposal, with reasons why the alternative better

addresses the identified group or why the original action could not proceed. The sources examined do not make that argument. Analysts should not write it on the city’s behalf. A public explanation could also reveal a disagreement: the youth assembly may have sought protection for people outside the emergency-shelter category, while the municipality addressed only those already without a roof. Such a disagreement is a valuable democratic result when made explicit, because the participants can contest the classification of need rather than merely count later services.

Finally, a publication may be incomplete even if the administration acted correctly. A document might have been circulated internally, a reply might have gone directly to Youth Assembly officers, or an agenda could be located under a different title. The inquiry has examined an official recommendation, governing law and related municipal publications; it has not obtained the full registry of incoming correspondence or every committee file. This bounded search supports a finding of public non-traceability at the level of this case. It does not support a universal claim that no reply exists. The proposed next verification step is therefore an item-specific request for the disposition and supporting references, with a response window and a record of searches undertaken. A city that can produce the file would improve both the research result and the public account.

Table 5.4. Rival accounts and the evidence that would separate them

| Account                                          | Present reason to consider it                                           | Discriminating evidence                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Continuation of an earlier service               | Winter provision predates the proposal                                  | Before-and-after eligibility and capacity records        |
| Convergent demands from another channel          | Mobile bath account names departmental work and participatory budgeting | Origin documents and decision chronology                 |
| Substitution after considering the youth request | Hygiene and housing serve partly overlapping groups                     | Reasoned reply naming Recommendation 50                  |
| Youth proposal altered a later housing decision  | The requested expansion could occur after August 2023                   | Draft history, budget and decision citing the submission |

| Account                                 | Present reason to consider it                              | Discriminating evidence                             |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Relevant reply exists but is not public | Individual correspondence may not appear in a service page | City council and municipal correspondence registers |

The rival explanations are not ranked by plausibility on the present material. The table makes the case falsifiable: each account has a specified record that could raise or lower confidence in it. It also stops the chapter from treating a missing public link as an unchanging fact. The state of the evidence can improve, and the analytical code should change with it.

**5.8. The service standard and the politics of classification**

The proposed minimum of five square metres per resident appears to give the recommendation a technical edge. On closer inspection it raises questions that the receiving authority should answer. Does “per resident” describe sleeping floor area, total habitable area, or a minimum for all rooms in a temporary institution? Would it apply to emergency overnight beds, transitional housing and long-term residential care alike? The excerpt says experts would determine the standard, so the number should not be represented as an enacted building rule. Its democratic significance is that young participants tried to attach a measurable quality condition to an expansion request. Counting beds without specifying conditions of occupancy can conceal a deterioration in dignity or safety. A reasoned reply could accept the concern while proposing a different expert standard and explaining why.

The same need for precision applies to place. A city-wide total of new places might leave the greatest need untouched if sites are distant from social networks, transport, employment or relevant services. The youth group’s proposed collaboration with district administrations, civil-society organisations and academics suggests a geographic method rather than a single large facility chosen for convenience. To test this aspect, a later project would need a needs map, selection criteria and a comparison of rejected and selected sites. The city could reasonably weigh land availability, neighbourhood effects and cost, but a generic press release announcing a facility would not disclose whether that deliberation occurred. The recommendation’s contribution lies partly in forcing the administration to state its method.

Such method questions connect housing to democracy more tightly than a broad declaration about the right to participate. A city may open a service and still fail to explain whose evidence defined the target group, which districts were prioritized or what conditions residents will experience. Conversely, a transparent rejection may make more of the underlying disagreement visible than a symbolic endorsement. The ledger proposed in this study should include an “operational definition” field for each accepted proposal, documenting how the authority translated citizens’ terms into programme criteria. Without that field, an official can honestly say it expanded “support” while the youth authors reasonably reply that their request for accommodation was never answered. Making the translation public protects both sides from a dispute manufactured by ambiguity.

**5.7. What this case contributes to the comparison**

Istanbul supplies a distinctive test because the legal framework already describes a route from city council deliberation to municipal council consideration. The missing item is not an abstract theory of participation but the visible passage of a particular recommendation through that route. The dossier locates the documentary gap between publication of the youth text and a named municipal disposition. It also demonstrates the analytic damage caused by collapsing similar public services into a single implementation story. Pre-existing shelter and the mobile bath are valuable public actions; their documented existence cannot settle the recommendation’s fate.

A later discovery could revise this result. If a general assembly resolution, municipal agenda and reasoned reply show that Recommendation 50 was accepted in part, the ledger should be updated accordingly. If the municipality explains that it reviewed the recommendation and chose a different service, the result would be a traceable refusal or substitution, not a failure of participation by definition. If it can document additional housing places attributable in part to the proposal, the implementation claim could be tested against capacity and service records. The chapter’s present conclusion is therefore narrower and stronger than a verdict on the city’s motives: the public record examined does not permit an interested citizen to connect this specific youth recommendation to a reasoned decision and delivery outcome. That is the institutional problem for which the later design chapter proposes a remedy.

Chapter 6. Paris: a reply to young advisers and the unresolved question of delivery

6.1. A recommendation inside a strategy already being written

The Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, or CPJ, is a standing Parisian youth body whose members are asked to formulate proposals after meeting elected officials, administrative staff and civil-society representatives. Its work on the revised resilience strategy provides a more populated chain of documents than the Istanbul housing case. The mayor’s referral, meetings with the deputy mayor responsible for resilience on 4 July and 5 December 2023, working-group discussion, and recommendations dated January 2024 are reported in the CPJ’s published activity record. The revised strategy subsequently passed through the Council of Paris in November 2024. The question is not whether young people were present in the consultation: the official documents demonstrate that they were. It is which of their specific propositions survived the movement from advice into a decision and an operational arrangement.<sup>51</sup>

The CPJ recommendations were broad, ranging from practical risk education and accessible training to food reserves, communication and urban adaptation. This chapter selects a proposition with a direct democratic effect: placing representatives of civil society in the decision-making and monitoring bodies connected with the resilience strategy, with the possibility that the CPJ itself take a place in the committee monitoring the strategy’s actions. It is suitable for close tracing because it concerns who will participate in subsequent decisions. Adopting it would alter the governance of implementation, not merely the language of a policy preface. Its test requires the composition and authority of the actual governance bodies, their appointment decisions, and minutes showing participation.<sup>52</sup>

This selection also guards against reading the entire strategy as one indivisible response. The CPJ advocated free and accessible training, multilingual provision, events and other proposals that might have different outcomes. A city may take up one idea, adapt another and decline a third. A report that simply says the CPJ “influenced the resilience strategy” conceals those variations. Conversely, demanding an exact copy of every phrase would miss genuine

<sup>51</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” current institutional description; Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6, 80–83; City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne.”  
<sup>52</sup> Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6, 81–82.

translation into administrative language. The inquiry follows the functional content of one proposal: whether civil-society and youth representation gained a defined role in both governance and follow-up.

Table 6.1. The Paris observation and its evidentiary thresholds

| Stage                    | Public record located                                                            | Claim justified by that record                                                     |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Referral and preparation | CPJ activity report and January 2024 recommendation annex                        | The youth body was formally engaged and prepared advice                            |
| Specific recommendation  | Annex requests civil-society representation and a possible CPJ seat in follow-up | A testable governance change was proposed                                          |
| Political reply          | CPJ report describes deputy mayor’s 26 September 2024 feedback                   | A named official reported back on proposals and elements integrated into the draft |
| Formal strategy          | Council of Paris adopted the revised strategy in November 2024                   | A city-wide strategy passed the elected decision gate                              |
| Proposal preserved       | CPJ text appears in an annex to the published strategy                           | The advice remained publicly identifiable                                          |
| Operational delivery     | Membership and minutes of governance bodies require separate checking            | Annexation alone cannot prove the specific seats operated                          |

The table distinguishes four forms of recognition that can be mistakenly collapsed: listening to the body, replying to it, incorporating some words or measures into a strategy, and enabling the requested participants to exercise a role. Their cumulative structure makes Paris a useful contrast to Istanbul without automatically scoring one city as democratically superior. The available Paris records are richer for the chosen proposition; whether governance worked as intended remains an empirical question.

6.2. The youth text is a proposition about future authority

The January text calls civil-society representation in bodies concerned with decisions on the resilience strategy and in bodies following its deployment a first condition of shared governance. It then says the CPJ, having participated in the strategy’s prospective work, might have a place on the committee monitoring actions. These sentences have different force. The first asks for representation in governance and monitoring, whereas the second offers the CPJ as one possible participant. Treating them both as a guaranteed statutory seat would overstate the source. The activity report’s archive preserves an argument for institutional presence, not a signed appointment.<sup>53</sup>

The recommendation arose while Paris was revising a strategy first adopted in 2017. The city describes the refounding as a long collaboration involving workshops, an online consultation and other forms of participation. An official account says 470 Paris residents contributed 2,325 observations or ideas through a consultation open from late November to late January 2024. Those numbers describe a different channel from the CPJ, and their denominator and unit are not the same: 470 persons and 2,325 submissions must not be presented as 2,795 participants. The CPJ recommendation should be situated among overlapping inputs, which creates a serious attribution problem. A final provision resembling its advice might also have emerged from workshops, staff work or other partners. The documentary chain must identify who said what, when, and what the city said it took into the draft.<sup>54</sup>

The youth proposal is distinctive because it addresses that very attribution problem. If a monitoring body includes civil-society members and preserves minutes, the later implementation of a 50-action strategy becomes more contestable by those outside the administration. A seat without access to agendas and information may be symbolic; a committee without defined authority may be a publicity forum; a monitoring report without responses to dissent may convert participation into endorsement. The CPJ’s concern should therefore be translated into observable design features: selection of representatives, mandate, access to draft data, notice of meetings, publication of minutes, capacity to place an item on the agenda and a city reply when

<sup>53</sup> Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6, 81.

<sup>54</sup> City of Paris, “Pour répondre aux nouvelles crises, la stratégie de résilience de Paris évolue,” updated 29 October 2024, section on online consultation.

recommendations are declined. This is the substantive democratic content of a sentence that could otherwise be praised and forgotten.

6.3. The September response and what it establishes

The CPJ’s activity report records a 26 September 2024 encounter at which Pénélope Komitès, the deputy mayor associated with the resilience portfolio, gave feedback on the youth proposals and indicated elements incorporated into the draft that would be presented to the Council of Paris in November. In the extracted report, the description specifically mentions civil society in governance bodies connected to the strategy. This is a stronger trace than an undifferentiated statement that young people were “consulted.” It identifies a political respondent, a dated occasion, a projected decision text and a subject of claimed incorporation. The text was written in the CPJ’s own official activity record, however, and is best treated as evidence of the reported exchange and claimed change, to be tested against the adopted strategy and governance records.<sup>55</sup>

The City of Paris also published an interview with a CPJ member who said the council presented wishes on resilience to the deputy mayor and received feedback on what she had taken into account and would bring to the Council of Paris. This testimony corroborates the existence of a feedback event while remaining less precise than an item-by-item municipal reply. It neither identifies every accepted clause nor establishes implementation. A political account may sincerely describe a productive conversation while leaving no stable public register of reasons. The activity report and interview thus improve the classification from “unknown response” to “response reported”; they do not license the stronger classification “all recommendations adopted.”<sup>56</sup>

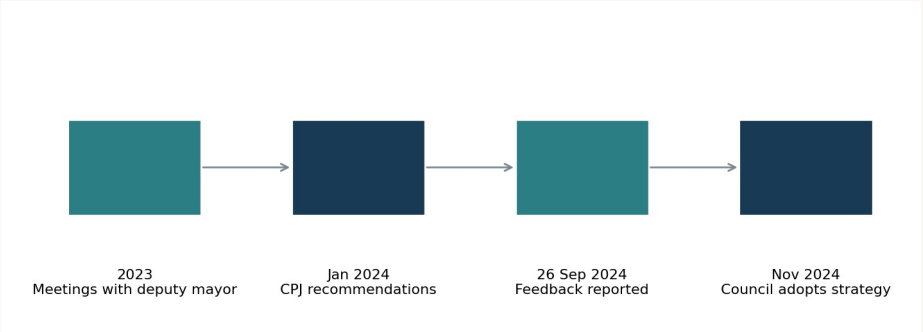
It is worth dwelling on the date. The feedback was given before the elected council’s November decision, at a point when it could still inform the draft. A reply given only after adoption might explain a settled choice, but it would not offer the same opportunity to correct the city’s understanding before the vote. In Paris the available sequence suggests a real window for

<sup>55</sup> Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28. Optical extraction of the report drops some characters; the date, named respondent and reference to governance are corroborated in the surrounding published account.

<sup>56</sup> City of Paris, “Trois questions à Solène Luber, membre du Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse,” 2024.

influence. Whether the governance recommendation changed the final text in that window requires textual comparison of the January advice, the pre-feedback draft, the post-feedback proposal and the adopted strategy. The activity report’s retrospective formulation supplies a lead, not the full redline. This is precisely where the proposed cross-city ledger would have the most value: an item number and an explanation of the change at the moment of amendment.

Figure 6.1. The dated Paris documentary sequence



Four dated Paris milestones show meetings in 2023, recommendations in January 2024, feedback in September 2024, and council adoption in November 2024

Source and coding note: CPJ activity report 2024, annex 6 and narrative of the September meeting; City of Paris account of the Council of Paris’s November 2024 adoption. The line shows documented sequence, not independent proof that any particular clause was implemented.<sup>57</sup>

6.4. Adoption is a decision gate, not an answer to every clause

The City of Paris states that the renewed resilience strategy was adopted by the Council of Paris in November 2024. Its public presentation describes four main orientations and 50 actions. A December press account reports unanimous adoption and a later charter signed by 70 organisations. These are significant decisions and activities, but none by itself identifies the CPJ’s civil-society representation proposal as a binding change in a governance body. A signatory to a broad charter is not necessarily a representative with a vote or right to scrutinize implementation. A strategy’s annex is not necessarily an operative article. The 50 actions are not 50 youth

<sup>57</sup> Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne.”

recommendations. Reading these categories together without checking their legal and organisational effect would produce exactly the spurious outcome measure that this study was designed to avoid.<sup>58</sup>

The published 2025 strategy includes the CPJ recommendations as an annex. That editorial decision matters. A citizen can compare the youth body’s original language with the adopted policy and later question the city about departures. The annex also guards against the common problem of a participatory body disappearing from the story once a policy is announced. At the same time, annexation can serve several functions: acknowledgement, background, evidentiary context, or incorporation. It is not automatically normative adoption. The relevant question is whether the body of the strategy or subsequent administrative acts assign the requested representatives a role in decision or monitoring, and whether those bodies convene and disclose their work. A researcher needs to cite the operative passage and the appointment or meeting record, not the annex alone.<sup>59</sup>

The official account of the strategy as a collaborative effort may well reflect many genuine contributions. It also makes individual attribution more difficult. With 200 or more partners described in a December communication, several parallel public processes and extensive internal preparation, an idea can recur without having a single origin. The CPJ report is unusually helpful because it says the deputy mayor identified elements added to the draft. Yet the general proposition “civil society in governance” may have multiple antecedents. An attribution claim should therefore distinguish a youth contribution to a shared design from an exclusive origin story. The standard of proof need not be an impossible assertion that nobody else conceived the idea; it should be an explicit official mapping of the youth submission to the adopted provision, or a documented amendment sequence that makes the contribution credible.

6.5. The governance question in the strategy’s life after adoption

The CPJ did not ask merely to be heard once. Its recommendation proposed a place for citizens in the governance and follow-up of the new strategy. Delivery therefore has a

<sup>58</sup> City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne”; City of Paris, “70 organismes signent la charte d’engagement pour la résilience de Paris,” 12 December 2024.

<sup>59</sup> City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*, published 2025, annex “Recommandations du Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6.

longitudinal character. A committee might be promised in a strategy but appointed months later; it might meet once without access to implementation information; it might hold meetings while the administration makes substantive revisions elsewhere. Assessing delivery requires looking beyond the November vote at terms of reference, membership, agendas, minutes and the handling of recommendations arising during implementation. A stronger outcome would show that young and civil-society participants could track actions, raise discrepancies and receive a reasoned answer when their assessment differs from the city’s.

A governance change can also be partial. Suppose the city invites civil-society representatives to a consultative meeting but gives them no role in the body that reviews progress: that would answer the outreach portion and leave the monitoring portion unmet. Suppose it establishes an open monitoring committee but includes no CPJ member: this might partly satisfy the broad civil-society condition while leaving the specific youth presence proposed as a possibility. Suppose it names a CPJ seat but never convenes the body: the formal decision would have been made without operational effect. These are analytical possibilities, not assertions about what Paris did. Their purpose is to stop “included” from functioning as a single vague verdict.

Table 6.2. How the Paris governance proposal could be delivered

| Possible documentary finding                                                       | Classification for this study        | Remaining question                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Annex reproduces the youth text, with no operative governance provision identified | Published and acknowledged           | What was decided on representation?            |
| Strategy establishes a body with civil-society members                             | Adopted in design, subject to terms  | Who appoints them and what can they do?        |
| CPJ or another youth representative is formally appointed                          | Youth presence authorized            | Did the person receive information and attend? |
| Minutes show participation, proposals and official replies                         | Operational participation documented | Did this alter an action or its delivery?      |

| Possible documentary finding                             | Classification for this study    | Remaining question                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Monitoring reports link youth interventions to revisions | Substantive influence documented | Were changes sustained and independently checked? |

This is a measurement ladder rather than a claim that Paris reached its final rung. It also suggests why the question cannot be answered with a single photograph from a launch event. Governance means recurring opportunities to inspect and alter decisions. A strategy that puts young people in its acknowledgements but gives them no route into monitoring would have preserved their words without preserving their agency. A city that gives them a functioning seat and publishes how their objections were resolved would create a much more durable form of influence.

6.6. The answer that is visible and the answer still owed

For the selected observation, Paris supplies four verified links: the January recommendation, a reported September political reply, November adoption of the strategy, and later publication of the youth text as an annex. The city’s own activity record says civil-society involvement in the governance bodies was among the elements discussed as added. The evidence supports the conclusion that young advisers reached a named decision maker and received feedback before formal adoption, and that their substantive concern remained visible in the record. The material assembled here does not establish, with a named appointment and minutes, that the CPJ or other representatives exercised the requested role during implementation. That last step is a live empirical test, not an invitation to replace missing evidence with suspicion.

The record also suggests a way to make the city’s positive account more robust. For each CPJ recommendation the city could publish an appendix with the proposal’s exact text, a responsible directorate, a disposition and the corresponding article or action in the strategy. If a proposition changes between draft and final, the appendix would state why and identify the Council decision. Once an appointment is made, the same entry would point to membership and meeting records; if an action is delayed, it would give a date and reason. This would convert a retrospective sentence about “elements integrated” into an auditable account of which element,

where, on whose decision and with what consequence. It would also credit other sources of the same idea without denying the youth body’s participation.

6.7. A textual test for the claimed addition

The activity report’s statement that civil society was added to governance provides a rare opportunity for a within-case test. The proposition has three temporal versions: the January youth request, the draft before the deputy mayor’s September feedback, and the text placed before the Council of Paris in November. A fourth document, the adopted strategy, fixes the decision. If the pre-feedback draft already contains an equivalent provision, the youth request may have reinforced or specified a pre-existing commitment rather than originated it. If the language appears only after the CPJ’s intervention, the case for contribution strengthens, though another parallel process could still explain it. If the final strategy merely reproduces the recommendation in an annex, the activity report’s claim of incorporation would need qualification. The inquiry assembled here has not secured a complete dated redline across those versions, and therefore leaves the precise textual change open.

This test may appear exacting, but it is feasible for a government that controls its drafting records. An amendment table can identify version, clause, source of suggestion, official reason and disposition in a few columns. It need not disclose private personal information or every informal conversation. The legislature’s decision remains the final legal and political act, while the table makes the route to that act intelligible. The same practice would protect administrators against exaggerated claims that one consultation generated an entire strategy. For the CPJ, it would identify precisely the passage its members were told had entered the project on 26 September. The archive would then allow observers to examine whether the passage survived the November vote.

A textual match alone is also an imperfect measure. “Involve civil society” could be inserted in a high-level paragraph while the committee’s composition remains entirely administrative. The functional comparison asks whether the adopted text changes selection, membership, access to information and opportunities for follow-up. If the text says that partners will be “mobilized,” it may describe outreach rather than a place in a decision body. If it says that a representative committee will monitor delivery but gives no appointment rule, it authorizes a

later decision that must itself be traced. The necessary coding unit is therefore not a shared phrase but an enforceable or at least administratively specified role. This is why the figure in the preceding section treats operational records as a later evidentiary threshold rather than an automatic consequence of adoption.

The possibility of several contributors should be recorded rather than resolved by fiat. The city says more than 200 partners contributed to the renewed strategy, and its online consultation generated thousands of observations. Some participants may have advanced similar ideas about governance. An honest amendment table could list “CPJ and district workshop participants” as sources, then indicate which formulation came from which channel. Democratic credit need not be exclusive. What matters is whether the authority can explain how it reconciled inputs, especially where they conflicted. A youth body might ask for a seat, a professional association for technical oversight, and a district forum for geographic balance. An adopted committee could reasonably combine these, but citizens deserve to know why one design was selected.

Table 6.3. The missing amendment comparison for the Paris case

| Version to compare                 | Question for the civil-society governance clause      | Possible conclusion                             |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Draft before September feedback    | Was equivalent representation already written in?     | Origin or reinforcement can be assessed         |
| Record of 26 September exchange    | Which exact CPJ clause did the deputy mayor identify? | Political response can be tied to a proposition |
| Draft sent to the Council of Paris | What changed after the exchange?                      | Textual incorporation can be measured           |
| Adopted November strategy          | Did the governance clause survive the vote?           | Formal design can be classified                 |
| Appointments and later minutes     | Did representatives actually participate?             | Operational delivery can be verified            |

The table is deliberately a research instrument rather than a disguised results table. No cell asserts that a missing draft has been examined. Its practical use is to turn a warm account of

consultation into a documentary request that a city can answer. Each row maps to a public decision stage and makes the next inference conditional on evidence.

**6.8. Resilience as an especially demanding domain of democratic oversight**

A resilience strategy promises preparedness for crises whose timing and form are uncertain. It therefore contains many actions that may remain latent until a flood, heat emergency, supply interruption or other shock occurs. Conventional implementation counts can mislead: an action may be listed as “launched” because a workshop was held, while residents still lack the means to use a service during an emergency. The CPJ’s concern with training access and civil-society monitoring reflects that distinction. A young participant in the strategy’s follow-up could ask whether the training was free, multilingual and physically accessible, whether the public knew where to find it, and whether the intended neighbourhoods were reached. The same participant needs a route to challenge an official completion label when the service’s actual reach is uncertain.

The Paris recommendations link that oversight to concrete access conditions. They propose training without charge, accessibility for people with mobility and hearing impairments, and availability in several languages; they also suggest reaching children through facilities managed by the city. These are not merely a wish that everyone be included. They are criteria that can be counted, inspected and corrected. A programme might conduct ten training events yet remain inaccessible to residents who cannot attend during working hours or who cannot use the language offered. An implementation record should therefore report eligibility, locations, formats, languages, attendance and feedback, with appropriate protection for individual participants. It should show the relationship of these outputs to the CPJ’s particular proposal rather than grouping all educational actions under “resilience.”<sup>60</sup>

The governance proposal gives those service criteria a home after the strategy is adopted. A committee with civil-society and youth participation could ask why an action’s reported output differs from residents’ experience, examine geographically disaggregated reach and recommend a change. To perform that role it would need timely documentation before meetings and a written response to proposals after meetings. A purely ceremonial presence at the launch would not meet

<sup>60</sup> Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6, 80–81.

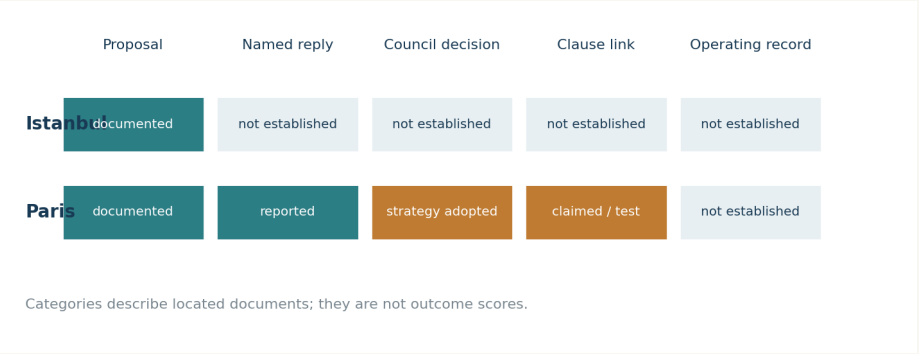
the recommendation’s purpose. The chapter does not claim that Paris’s actual body is ceremonial or effective; it identifies the records needed to make that distinction. Public institutions often report participation by counting events and contributors. The CPJ case asks whether contributors can continue to interrogate the meaning of completion.

This matters for how a full-bursary democracy project should present its originality. The policy problem is not lack of another exhortation to include young people. The specific failure is a broken or incomplete chain between what they propose and what an institution can be shown to have done. Paris already has evidence of access and feedback; its highest-value improvement would be a publicly inspectable amendment and delivery trail. The case makes a design recommendation narrow enough to test: every CPJ proposal submitted to a city strategy should receive an identifier, an itemized disposition before the council vote, a link to the adopted provision or a reasoned refusal, and a monitoring entry updated after implementation begins. Success is observable when a third party can reconstruct the path without asking the youth authors to recall a private meeting.

**6.7. Against easy rankings: what the two dossiers actually permit**

The Istanbul and Paris observations differ in topic, policy form and archive. Istanbul’s proposal seeks a housing-related service and has an evident legal route from city council opinion to municipal consideration; the inspected documents leave that passage unproven. Paris’s proposal seeks a governance role within an already developing strategy; its activity report records feedback from a named deputy mayor before the strategy’s adoption, and the proposal appears in a published annex. The latter is a denser trace of response. It does not follow that Paris delivered the requested role, or that Istanbul delivered no housing support. The municipal services and the fate of the youth submission are different variables.

Figure 6.2. The two dossiers measured against the same evidence chain



An evidence matrix compares documented proposal, reported reply, formal decision, attributable adoption and observed implementation for Istanbul and Paris

Source and coding note: Istanbul Youth Assembly recommendation and municipal service descriptions; Paris CPJ 2024 activity report, November 2024 adoption notice and published strategy annex. “Not established” indicates a missing documentary link in this inquiry. Paris’s general strategy adoption is shown separately from proof that the chosen governance clause was operational.<sup>61</sup>

The comparison is valuable because it makes an asymmetry visible without turning it into a league table. In one case, the principal public problem is finding an itemized institutional answer to a concrete youth request. In the other, a response and a decision are visible, but the operating effect of a governance recommendation needs additional records. Both are failures of complete public traceability as measured by the same standard, though they occur at different stages and imply different remedies. Istanbul would benefit first from a linked transmission and reply register. Paris would benefit from an amendment and implementation register that joins its already visible feedback to appointments, committee activity and changes in action delivery.

6.8. Interim finding and the path to the Berlin and London cases

The two chapters demonstrate why a democracy study can generate an original finding without claiming omniscience about internal files. Istanbul shows how a published youth

<sup>61</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*; Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024*; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*; City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne.”

recommendation can coexist with related municipal services while its particular decision pathway remains publicly difficult to reconstruct. Paris shows a richer sequence in which young advisers were invited, wrote, heard back and saw their advice preserved near a formally adopted strategy, yet where the crucial question of an operating seat in governance requires further proof. The contrast locates the points at which influence becomes visible, ambiguous or invisible. It also gives the proposed remedy concrete content: a proposal identifier, a receiving official, a reasoned response, a cited decision, and a later implementation record for the same proposition.

The chapters that follow will test whether the evidence standards travel across different institutional arrangements in Berlin and London. They should not assume that every young person’s proposal enters through a city council or becomes a city-wide strategy. They should, however, demand the same elementary honesty about who answered, what was decided and what was done. Those questions are answerable only when institutions preserve the links. Producing those links is itself a practical democratic reform: it makes disagreement reviewable, credits the participants whose work shaped a policy and exposes the point at which a promise ceased to move.

Chapters 7 and 8 Berlin and London case studies

The two cases in this instalment begin with young people’s descriptions of a public problem but pass through different kinds of authority. In Berlin-Mitte, children and young women described the Blochplatz as a place where access, safety, play and the right to remain had become unequally distributed. A district youth office translated their observations into recommendations for a redesign, and the district later announced a funded scheme and the beginning of construction. The operative question is which recommendations survived that translation, including those concerning young women’s safety and adolescents’ space. In London, youth advocates sought bleed-control equipment on buses and at major bus stations. The elected London Assembly unanimously adopted a motion, but Transport for London and the Mayor answered that the requested deployment would not proceed under current medical advice. This is a rare case in which influence on a legislative motion and refusal by the delivery authority are

both documented. The comparison shows why the identity of the decision maker matters more than the apparent success of a public vote.<sup>62</sup>

Chapter 7 Berlin A public square designed through children and young people’s evidence

7.1 The site and the population addressed

Blochplatz lies in Wedding, between Badstraße, Böttgerstraße and Hochstraße, near Gesundbrunnen station. The district’s 2023 participation report described it as roughly 7,000 square metres of grass, playground, table tennis, paths, benches and vegetation. It was both a scarce open area in a dense neighbourhood and a place whose existing layout made certain users uncomfortable. The report identified uneven accessibility at its entrances, particularly steps on the Hochstraße side. The square’s enclosure by planting buffered traffic but also limited visibility. These are conditions in which a design decision allocates social access: a place may exist on a map while particular children, disabled users or young women effectively avoid it.<sup>63</sup>

The case is a district project rather than an exercise of a single city-wide youth parliament. The Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte organized participation; the Straßen- und Grünflächenamt was responsible for the public-space scheme. This division is consequential. A youth office can recruit participants and formulate advice, yet a streets and green-space department, a design practice, procurement process and funding source determine what is built. The public test is not whether the participation office produced a thoughtful report. It is whether the report’s propositions can be followed into drawings, a funded design and the completed square.

The Youth Office set the intended age group at up to 21 years. Its methods combined an on-site action, a QR-code survey, input from nearby youth-serving organizations and staff observation. A second planned on-site action on 30 June 2023 was cancelled because of weather and could not be repeated before the timetable advanced. On 7 June, twelve children, approximately three to eight years old, attended the on-site activity; two eighteen-year-old

<sup>62</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation der Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung Umgestaltung Blochplatz 2023* (Berlin, 2023); London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” motion, 5 March 2026; Mayor of London, response to motion 3.6, 27 April 2026; TfL Commissioner, response to the Assembly Chair, 13 May 2026.

<sup>63</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 2–4; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project page, accessed 25 September 2026.

women were also interviewed. Twenty-five people opened the online survey but only ten participated, just one of whom was aged sixteen to twenty. The authors therefore declined to treat the survey as valid evidence of youth views and presented it separately in an appendix. Such source criticism by the institution itself deserves notice. The numbers describe a small, purposive local exercise, not the distribution of preferences among every young resident of Mitte.<sup>64</sup>

A further source of views came from MÄDEA, Gangway Wedding and Jugendmigrationsdienst/Café VIA. Some of these observations concerned the wider neighbourhood rather than Blochplatz alone. The Youth Office said their proximity made partial application to the square plausible; it did not claim that every neighbourhood statement was a direct site request. That distinction should remain visible. The analysis below assigns greater weight to reports from young people who described their actual use of the square, while separately recording organizational submissions and the Youth Office’s professional translation of both. A policy that says it adopted “the children’s recommendations” may in fact have adopted an officer’s synthesis of several sources.

Table 7.1 Evidence populations in the 2023 Blochplatz report

| Source                 | Documented scale or route                                                      | What it can support                             | Main limit                                             |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| On-site action, 7 June | Twelve children aged about three to eight                                      | Specific experiences and wishes of participants | Small group; older youth scarcely represented directly |
| Interviews at the site | Two women aged eighteen                                                        | Reasons for avoiding the square in the evening  | Cannot establish prevalence among all young women      |
| Online survey          | Twenty-five views, ten active responses, one respondent aged sixteen to twenty | A record of additional views                    | Report authors did not treat it as usable youth sample |
| Neighbourhood          | Reports relayed by                                                             | Context, adolescent                             | Some observations                                      |

<sup>64</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 4–7.

| Source                 | Documented scale or route                          | What it can support                  | Main limit                                                      |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| youth organizations    | three institutions                                 | needs and wider neighbourhood wishes | are not specific to Blochplatz                                  |
| Youth Office synthesis | Site observation and interpretation of submissions | Actionable design recommendations    | Officer proposals must not be presented as verbatim youth votes |

The table protects the case against a common numerical error. Thirteen mentions of sport and play in an on-site wish exercise are not thirteen residents, nor are they evidence that a majority of local children prefer a particular facility. They are coded utterances within a small facilitated session. The report recorded five mentions of football, four of balancing and two of an additional slide; the analytic unit changes from person to mention. Its value is to identify demands that can be checked against later design, not to supply a city-wide opinion poll.<sup>65</sup>

7.2 Two accounts of safety that a plan must reconcile

The two young women said they did not use Blochplatz after 18:00 because they experienced it as male-dominated and associated the evening space with dealing and drug use. They asked for more seating and light. Children described the corner by the table-tennis table, near Badstraße and Hochstraße, as unsafe. The Youth Office connected that corner’s high vegetation and lack of visibility to its recommendation to trim planting, open the square towards Badstraße and consider better lighting, including street lights if direct lighting on the site was not planned. This creates a traceable sequence from observed use to an institutional design proposition.<sup>66</sup>

The safety problem resists an easy architectural answer. Clearing every hedge may improve sight lines while also making adolescents feel exposed to adult surveillance. Gangway Wedding reported that some young people spent little time at Blochplatz precisely because it was

<sup>65</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 5–7 and appendix, 11–18. Mentions in the wish exercise are not independent respondents.

<sup>66</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 5–6, 8–9.

visible to families passing along Badstraße; they needed places where they could meet without being watched from every direction. The Youth Office therefore recommended both improved visibility at an identified unsafe corner and places of retreat for adolescents. A single vague label such as “safe and open” would conceal the tension. The district needed to specify which part of the square would become more visible, who would be able to remain elsewhere, and whether lighting and seating would support evening use without displacing existing users.<sup>67</sup>

The participation report did not regard safety as permission to remove all people considered undesirable. The online appendix includes a respondent’s objection to simply displacing unhoused people and drinkers through a fashionable redesign. Since the report excluded the survey as a valid youth sample, that remark should not be attributed to the participating children. It is nevertheless a documented competing view in the public record, relevant to the distributional effects of redesign. The study should ask whether a response to young women’s fear also relied on defensive architecture or social exclusion, and whose evidence was allowed to resolve the conflict. No inspection of the completed site is yet possible at the 2026 observation date.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 7.1 Sources and proposed design changes at Blochplatz

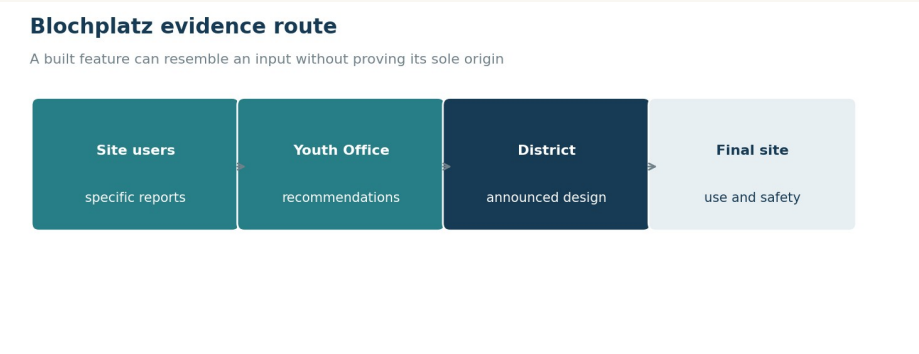


Diagram linking site reports to Youth Office recommendations and the district design, with unresolved links marked separately

<sup>67</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 7–10.

<sup>68</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, appendix, 12. The respondent was part of the online survey excluded by the authors from the youth sample.

Source and coding note: Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation der Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung Umgestaltung Blochplatz 2023*, pages 5–10; Bezirksamt Mitte project page and press release of 28 August 2026. The diagram distinguishes a recommendation from a documented feature of the announced plan; it does not claim construction was complete.<sup>69</sup>

7.3 From expressions of need to an officer’s recommendations

The Youth Office’s final recommendations gave the project an unusually testable agenda. It proposed trimming bushes at Badstraße for sight lines; improved lighting if the square itself would not be lit; accessible entrances and redesigned paths; seating distributed across the square, including sociable arrangements; a public toilet; more varied planting; a more central or additional table-tennis table; further sports options; distributed bins; and retreats for adolescents. It also warned that a calisthenics facility would be inappropriate in a space already experienced as male-dominated. None of these items can be reduced to the general instruction to “make the park nicer.” Each identifies a function, location or affected group that a design drawing can answer.<sup>70</sup>

These are the Youth Office’s recommendations derived from consultation, not a referendum in which the twelve children selected an entire plan. The difference has implications for credit and accountability. If the district accepts an accessible sand table, it may answer both professional inclusion standards and children’s experience without being a direct quotation from a child. If it rejects a toilet, it should say whether the reason was maintenance, location, cost or an alternative nearby facility. If it proposes a second table-tennis table along a promenade rather than moving the existing table, the decision may be a partial rather than literal response. A transparent project would publish a short response matrix before procurement, linking each recommendation to the design drawing and giving reasons for departures.

The record’s internal tensions call for a deliberative answer rather than a checklist. More lighting might make the square safer for women but affect neighbours or ecological goals; a toilet could address children’s complaints and also require operating funds; a high-visibility entrance could make another part of the square unsuitable for adolescents seeking privacy. These are legitimate design trade-offs. A reasoned explanation is not a concession that participants must

<sup>69</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 5–10; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” press release 202/2026, 28 August 2026.

<sup>70</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 8–10.

always win. It enables them to see the constraint, propose a different arrangement and judge whether their concern was accurately understood.

Table 7.2 Selected recommendations compared with the August 2026 announcement

| 2023 Youth Office proposition              | 2026 district announcement                                                                 | Current classification                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| More accessible play and routes            | Enlarged, more accessible playground; accessible trampoline and sand table                 | Design response visible; exact entrance and path treatment needs plans and inspection                       |
| More and varied seating                    | Promenade benches, long communal table and stepped seating announced                       | Substantial design resemblance; distribution and adolescent retreat need checking                           |
| Table tennis retained or expanded          | Two tables announced along Badstraße                                                       | A concrete feature matches an element of the request; location differs from the suggested central placement |
| More sports opportunities                  | Boules and balance equipment announced; no basketball, volleyball or badminton court named | Partial response to activity, not proof of the suggested courts                                             |
| Better lighting and specific unsafe corner | Announcement gives no itemized answer                                                      | Unresolved in this account; inspect drawings and lighting plan                                              |
| Public toilet                              | Not named in announcement                                                                  | No implementation conclusion from silence in a press release                                                |
| Dedicated adolescent retreat               | Not identified as such                                                                     | Needs design comparison and follow-up with older youth                                                      |

The announced design also includes a barrier-free trampoline and sand table, a balancing route, a broad promenade, a boules area, two chess tables and a long table for communal meals.

These features cannot all be credited to the June 2023 participants. The district also held an adult consultation and presented preliminary designs in September 2024. The stronger claim is that several functions identified by the youth study reappear in the funded design; only a recorded response matrix or design history would allow item-by-item attribution across the different consultation channels.<sup>71</sup>

7.4 The chronology and its changing budget figures

The district project page describes participation in June 2023, further civic consultation and a September 2024 preliminary design presentation. It gives the project period as 2023–27, its current status as construction procurement, and total costs of €1.463 million. The later press release of 28 August 2026 describes a roughly 7,300-square-metre site, work beginning in the second week of September, a target completion in the third quarter of 2027 and approximately €1.7 million in costs under the Social Cohesion construction fund. The 2023 Youth Office report had cited an earlier total construction volume of €1.235 million with about €750,000 then available for construction. These three amounts are not a measured cost overrun by themselves: they appear in different documents at different project stages and may cover different scopes. A professional account reports their provenance and seeks the revised approved cost plan before comparing like with like.<sup>72</sup>

A September 2026 neighbourhood update says the works began. That gives the study a stronger implementation observation than a mere aspiration in a planning document. It does not establish that the completed site contains all announced elements or that the two young women would now use it after dark. The project remains under construction at this study’s cut-off. Construction commencement, practical completion and experienced use are distinct outcomes. The ledger should date each separately. For a proposal about safety, a post-occupancy audit with young women at relevant hours may ultimately be more informative than a photograph of a new bench.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” section “Beteiligungen.”

<sup>72</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*, 4; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project data; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026. The documents’ differing budgets and areas reflect different publication dates and possibly scopes; no like-for-like reconciliation was located.

Figure 7.2 Blochplatz project and evidence chronology



Timeline showing June 2023 youth engagement, September 2024 draft presentation, August 2026 announced design, September 2026 construction and planned 2027 completion

Source and coding note: Mitte Youth Office 2023 report; district project page; Bezirksamt Mitte press release 202/2026; BadPankStraße project update, 7 September 2026. The final marker is a stated target, not a recorded completion.<sup>74</sup>

7.5 A proposed inspection that can change the finding

The most important unanswered item is not whether something was built, but whether the design answered the distinct needs on which youth participation was justified. The district has a planning document and a youth consultation report on its project page. A reproducible audit would place the 2023 recommendations alongside the approved site plan and mark each element’s location, design description and decision date. The completed site would then be inspected for entrance gradients, routes, toilets, lighting, seating distribution, table-tennis placement, play access and a usable adolescent retreat. Finally, separate walk-throughs with young women, younger children and teenagers would ask whether the changes affect their ability to remain in the square. The different groups should not be merged into an undifferentiated “youth verdict.”

<sup>73</sup> BadPankStraße Mitte, “Die Umgestaltung am Blochplatz beginnt!,” 7 September 2026; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026.

<sup>74</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes”; BadPankStraße Mitte, “Die Umgestaltung am Blochplatz beginnt!”

There is a methodological reason to return at night. The original safety evidence included avoidance after 18:00. An afternoon site tour following a ribbon-cutting would fail to test the stated problem. A lighting measurement and an observation of use in darker months could verify physical conditions, but the users’ perceived safety would require carefully conducted interviews. Those interviews should avoid asking participants to certify that the district has “succeeded”; they should elicit routes taken, places avoided and why. Nor should a reduction in unhoused people on the square be counted as a youth safety outcome without examining displacement and the wider public’s rights. The consultation’s conflicting testimonies warrant a careful distributional assessment.

The case offers a practical measure of partial influence. There is documentary continuity from young people’s concerns about play, seating and access to an officer’s report and later plans containing related features. There is no published itemized response in the material examined that identifies precisely which youth proposal caused which design revision. The construction start confirms that a scheme is being delivered, while the 2027 completion target means the effects cannot yet be assessed. Berlin thus reaches farther down the implementation chain than the Istanbul and Paris observations in earlier chapters, but its strongest democratic claim still depends on provenance and use, not merely expenditure.

**7.6 A proposal-level audit of the approved plan**

The most useful next document for the Blochplatz case is a plan annotated against the 2023 report. Such an audit would begin with the boundary of each request. “More places to sit” is a functional proposition; benches along Badstraße, a six-metre communal table and stepped seating can plausibly answer parts of it. Yet the young women asked for places where they felt able to remain after dark, and the youth workers described adolescents’ need for relative privacy. A plan can contain many seats and still place them only in the most exposed portion of the square. The audit should therefore map location, orientation, sight lines and accessibility rather than merely count pieces of furniture.

The table-tennis recommendation illustrates partial translation. Children named the activity, and the Youth Office suggested moving the existing table centrally or adding another. The district announced two tables along Badstraße. The number answers a capacity concern, but

the location may not answer the suggested relocation or the report’s criticism of the corner near the old table. A design response could explain whether the new placement improves visibility, avoids noise near homes, leaves room for other play or reflects an adult consultation. Without that explanation, a researcher can record a functional overlap but should not infer that the final positioning satisfied the young participants’ reasons.

Accessible play also deserves an audit beyond the announcement. The district described a more accessible playground, a wheelchair-accessible trampoline and sand table. These are visible design commitments. The Youth Office’s report, however, identified barriers at several entrances and called for accessible routes across the square. The question is whether a child or adult using a wheelchair can reach the new equipment from each relevant approach, move between play and seating, and use the whole space without a circuitous detour. A single accessible device behind an inaccessible path would be a misleading indicator. The approved site plan and an as-built route inspection could resolve this question more reliably than a press photograph of the trampoline.

The toilet request creates a different kind of record. A public toilet entails operating, cleaning, safety and maintenance decisions after construction. Its absence from the press release cannot prove that the district rejected it, but a later site visit alone will not explain the reason either. If a toilet is not provided, the authority could say whether the barrier was budget, site layout, available nearby facilities or an operating-cost commitment, and whether it considered access for children and people with disabilities. A design consultation that solicits a problem and never gives a reason for declining a costly element leaves participants guessing whether their testimony was believed. This is precisely where a disposition register would clarify a genuine trade-off without requiring acceptance.

Lighting and landscape treatment should be compared together. The 2023 report suggested cutting vegetation near Badstraße to open sight lines and, if the square itself would not be illuminated, considering street lighting that reached the relevant area. A tree and hedge plan might show improved visibility while a lighting plan reveals whether the evening problem was addressed. The district also intends to retain lawns and add trees; ecological and microclimatic goals may constrain extensive clearance. The Youth Office acknowledged that opening the edge would increase traffic noise. The trade-off is therefore already present in the primary source. A

useful official response would explain the selected balance rather than pretend there was only one unqualified request for a brighter, emptier place.

Finally, the audit must include an observation after construction. The site may deliver every specified item and still not feel welcoming to older girls, young people with disabilities or teenagers. Conversely, some unrequested design change might improve use substantially. This is why the study distinguishes attributable incorporation from lived outcome. The first can be tested by comparing dated drawings and reasons; the second by observing the completed space at times relevant to the original testimony and asking participants about their routes and choices. A public square is not “implemented” as a youth intervention merely when the contractor leaves. It is tested when the people whose exclusions justified the redesign can use it.

**7.7 Representation and the costs of an incomplete consultation**

The cancelled second on-site session is not a minor logistical detail. The first action reached chiefly younger children, whereas the report’s sharper account of evening exclusion came from two older young women. The programme also solicited organizations working with adolescents who were less likely to be present on a square they did not find comfortable. If participation is recruited only among people already using the site, those excluded by its existing design are systematically less visible. The organizational route partly countered that problem, but it introduced a different uncertainty: intermediaries selected and summarized what young people said. The report was candid about both limitations; the design decision should show how it compensated for them.

One way would have been to present a later draft in separate sessions with younger children, teenage girls and boys, disabled young people and those who used neighbouring facilities. The September 2024 presentation of preliminary designs was a second opportunity to test the first synthesis, but the project page’s description alone does not tell us whether each of these groups returned or how objections altered the plan. A large open meeting can be formally inclusive while practically dominated by adults confident in public argument. The study does not infer that this happened at Blochplatz. It specifies the attendance and response records needed to know whether the initial imbalance was corrected.

The issue is particularly sharp for the two young women. Their testimony describes a time-specific restriction on access, not merely a preference for more lamps. If the final design offers seating but no useful illumination after 18:00, it may have adopted the easiest visible component of their request while leaving the cause of avoidance unresolved. Conversely, a lighting scheme might improve sight lines but still fail if the women experience harassment or find the route home unsafe. Their statements should be recorded as a problem definition and linked to a combination of design, maintenance and, if appropriate, social services. A post-occupancy question can ask whether they or comparable users would now enter and remain, without treating their absence on a single observation day as a statistically reliable verdict.

The youngest children’s evidence had a different structure. They named football, balancing and a slide; they also spoke about broken glass, nettles and toilet access. A design that installs a balancing element but leaves broken glass on grass would respond to play equipment and fail at maintenance. The contract for construction and the ongoing maintenance budget are different administrative objects. A participation register that ends with the capital project would miss whether the square remains usable. The analytical remedy is to assign a service owner and inspection interval to recurring conditions, rather than forcing every youth concern into an architectural drawing.

Young people affiliated with nearby organizations raised a third issue: a wish for places to meet without constant observation. This can conflict with a generalized demand for surveillance and visibility. The report itself recognized the tension by naming both sight lines and retreats. An itemized district answer could distinguish the unsafe Badstraße corner, where hedges obstructed a view, from a designed adolescent seating area where partial enclosure may be appropriate. The two objectives need not be mutually exclusive across a 7,300-square-metre space. Whether the adopted scheme achieves that distinction is an empirical question for the drawings and later use. Without such differentiation, “safe for everyone” risks being an aspiration that resolves no concrete disagreement.

The district’s published material provides a stronger basis for evaluating influence than an isolated consultation photograph. There is a report with dates and methods, a page documenting subsequent participation, a funded design and a construction announcement. Its main archival weakness lies in the absence, in the material assembled here, of a direct response to each of the

report’s major recommendations. A concise response matrix could have been issued at the September 2024 draft stage and updated after procurement. The cost would be small relative to a seven-figure project. The benefit would extend to the district itself: it could show which choices were driven by youth evidence, which by adult consultation or accessibility requirements, and which changed because of maintenance and budget constraints.

Table 7.3a The participation deficit and a proportionate remedy

| Evidence problem                                        | Consequence for inference                       | Practical correction                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| On-site sample concentrated among very young children   | Cannot infer teenage preferences from the event | Separate adolescent draft review                    |
| Two young women described evening avoidance             | Strong qualitative lead, unknown prevalence     | Evening walk-through and targeted interviews        |
| Online survey had one respondent aged sixteen to twenty | Survey cannot estimate youth opinion            | Do not aggregate it as a representative youth count |
| Organization input covered a wider neighbourhood        | Some suggestions may not refer to the square    | Record source and site relevance for each item      |
| Final build still under way                             | No completed-use outcome yet                    | Post-completion inspection and user follow-up       |

This table separates five limitations that are sometimes reduced to the single phrase “small sample.” Their effects differ. A small number of specific accounts can identify a dangerous corner or a barrier at an entrance; it cannot estimate city-wide prevalence. The outcome of this case will be stronger if the district tests the specific problem after construction than if it tries to repair the original sample with a retrospective percentage.

7.8 Decision record for the Berlin observation

The immediate receiving authority was the district streets and green-space office. The Youth Office gave it a structured report, and the district publicly states that feedback informed planning. This is a credible institutional hand-off at the project level, supported by a publication that names both offices. Yet the phrase “all results flow into further planning” is an account of

intention, not a disposition of the toilet, lighting or adolescent retreat. Those items remain individually auditable. A common temptation would be to treat the existence of two new table-tennis tables as proof that every child concern was considered. The opposite temptation would be to claim failure because a basketball court is absent from the press release. Both are too coarse. The right unit is the particular proposition, its consideration, the reason for the chosen design and the observed condition after construction.

Table 7.3 Provisional Blochplatz ledger

| Field             | Entry supported at September 2026                              | Further record needed                                    |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Proposal source   | June 2023 child and youth participation; Youth Office report   | None for the report’s existence                          |
| Receiving office  | District streets and green-space office named on project page  | Dated internal receipt or design instruction             |
| Reasoned response | General statement that feedback informed planning              | Itemized response to safety, toilet, seating and retreat |
| Decision          | Funded redesign and construction procurement publicly recorded | Approved drawings and variation history                  |
| Delivery          | Construction announced and reported as beginning               | Completion and as-built inspection                       |
| Experience        | Original users’ concerns documented                            | Post-occupancy assessment by age, gender and access need |

This ledger gives the district credit for records it has published without asking them to prove more than they can. The original participation report is itself an unusually candid source: it says a session was cancelled and identifies the online survey’s inadequacy for representing youth. That candour should be extended to the response and delivery stages. It would let the district explain why some suggestions were combined, why others were not feasible, and how the completed square changed the problem young people actually described.

Chapter 8 London The motion that passed and the policy that did not

8.1 The youth body’s institutional reach

The London Youth Assembly brings together borough youth representatives and works alongside members of the London Assembly. It can raise priorities, provide evidence to scrutiny investigations and advocate for a motion. A 2025 freedom-of-information response from City Hall says expressly that it has no formal role in London Assembly decisions. It also records that the body does not operate against formal performance targets, with a minimum expectation of four formal meetings a year. These details matter to the present case because a motion by the elected Assembly may visibly recognize the youth body’s advocacy without conferring an executive power on either body to direct Transport for London. A chain of influence can end in a formal vote and still encounter another decision maker.<sup>75</sup>

For the 2025–26 term, the Youth Assembly’s chair later described the bleed-kit motion as the first motion put forward by the young members to pass the London Assembly, and emphasized that it passed unanimously. The official motion itself expressly thanks the Youth Assembly for its strong advocacy. This is substantially better evidence of youth authorship than an analyst’s inference from topical similarity. It also fixes the scope of the success: the elected Assembly adopted a request to TfL. The Mayor and TfL retained the ability to answer that request on operational and clinical grounds. Calling the motion an implemented youth policy would therefore misdescribe both the authority of the Assembly and the content of the later answer.<sup>76</sup>

8.2 The youth request and the four-part motion

The motion moved by Elly Baker and seconded by Andrew Boff on 5 March 2026 asked TfL to work with the London Ambulance Service on four linked measures. It sought publicly accessible bleed-control kits at all major bus stations, signposted and unlocked; a pilot on selected bus routes in areas with higher levels of serious violence; a training and awareness offer for drivers and frontline staff; and a published plan and timeline for broader rollout if evaluation

<sup>75</sup> Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025; London Assembly, “The London Youth Assembly,” institutional page.

<sup>76</sup> Hugo Maxwell, “The London Youth Assembly – Final Report from 2025/26 Term,” published by London Assembly, 2026; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” motion, 5 March 2026.

of the pilot supplied an evidence base. The official record says it passed unanimously after debate. The proposition is unusual because it has an explicit staged design: initial availability, a targeted experiment, training and a conditional decision about wider rollout. Each part can receive a different answer.<sup>77</sup>

The motion’s rationale concerned catastrophic bleeding, youth bus use and exposure to serious violence. The case is not a study of whether a tourniquet should be used by an untrained bystander, nor can this research independently adjudicate clinical standards. It examines whether the responsible institutions responded to youth advocacy with reasons and whether the safety problem was carried forward when the preferred instrument was rejected. A well-designed response may decline a proposed tool while pursuing a medically supported alternative. Democratic influence should not be defined as an obligation to accept the instrument chosen by participants. It should include the ability to have the diagnosis and proposed intervention answered in public, with an intelligible route for revisiting the decision if evidence changes.

Table 8.1 The motion separated into decisions

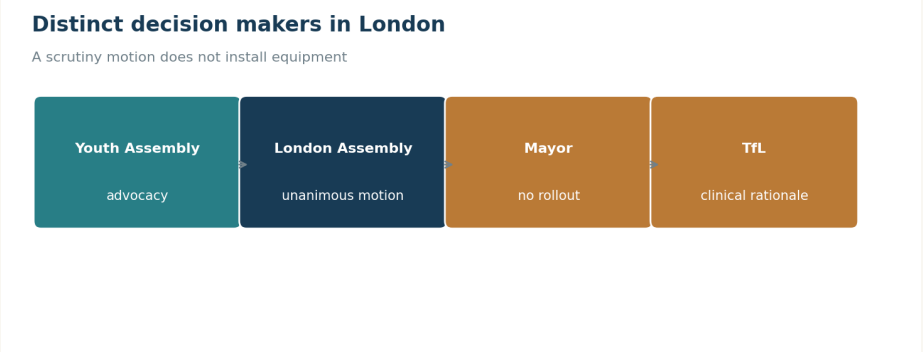
| Requested measure, 5 March 2026  | Decision-maker or partner                       | Evidence needed for delivery                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Kits at all major bus stations   | TfL with clinical and emergency-service advice  | Station inventory, installation and accessibility record |
| Selected-route pilot             | TfL and bus operators, with evaluation partners | Route selection, protocol, start date and evaluation     |
| Driver and frontline training    | TfL, operators and appropriate trainers         | Training specification, uptake and competency record     |
| Conditional broader rollout plan | TfL following pilot evaluation                  | Published criteria, decision and dated timeline          |

A claim that “bleed kits were rejected” should therefore specify whether it means the universal station provision, a bus pilot or both. A claim that “the youth proposal was implemented” would have to identify which of these measures happened, not cite the unanimous

<sup>77</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” motion, 5 March 2026.

vote. The itemized structure is especially important because the response offered a different pathway for public first aid and staff competence.

Figure 8.1 London authority and response chain



*Youth Assembly advocacy leads to a unanimous London Assembly motion, followed by separate TfL and mayoral responses declining the requested rollout*

*Source and coding note:* London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” motion, 5 March 2026; TfL Commissioner, reply to the Assembly Chair, 13 May 2026; Mayor of London, reply, 27 April 2026. A motion is a documented scrutiny decision, while equipment policy lies with TfL under the relevant governance arrangements.<sup>78</sup>

8.3 The executive replies are substantive and adverse

On 27 April 2026 the Mayor wrote to Andrew Boff that TfL was not then planning to introduce bleed kits across the network. He cited NHS medical advice favouring standard first-aid kits for most bleeding injuries, concern that tourniquets require training and may cause harm if misused, and advice to apply direct pressure and call 999. He said the position would remain under review if NHS guidance changed and noted that staffed bus stations already had first-aid kits. This is a named, dated answer to a motion. It is also a refusal of the particular equipment rollout sought by the youth advocates, notwithstanding the Mayor’s recognition of the issue.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits”; Mayor of London, letter MGLA190326-6420 to Andrew Boff, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner, letter to Andrew Boff, 13 May 2026.

<sup>79</sup> Mayor of London, letter MGLA190326-6420, 27 April 2026.

The TfL Commissioner’s 13 May 2026 letter provides a more detailed account of that judgment. It says that the London-wide Bystander Bleed Control position developed with health and other partners recommended training in bleeding control rather than emphasis on specialist kits. TfL worried both about injury from incorrect application and about users delaying direct pressure or an emergency call while searching for a kit. The Commissioner reported recent filming with St John Ambulance to help staff identify and respond to catastrophic bleeding, and said training could be assessed if medical guidance changed. He also said bus stations did not have a distinctive local risk of these injuries sufficient to justify installing kits instead of a broader public-health approach. These are contestable empirical and policy reasons, but they are reasons: a researcher can identify what evidence would change the decision.<sup>80</sup>

The reply does not, by itself, prove that the proposed staff training programme was delivered. Filming a video and reviewing induction or refresher material are preparatory actions, unless records show distribution, completion and competence. Nor does the rejection of specialist kits mean TfL provided no first-aid response. It says it had first-aid kits at staffed stations and trained staff. The fact of the matter is that the youth advocates asked for a different combination of public access, route pilots and training, while TfL and the Mayor selected existing first-aid provision and training-oriented advice. The study can code the requested rollout as declined at this decision stage and the stated alternative as a policy response, without claiming that every operational component of the alternative has been measured.

Table 8.2 London disposition by element

| Youth-backed request                 | Mayor and TfL answer                                     | Research classification at cut-off                             |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public kits at major bus stations    | No current network rollout; existing standard kits cited | Declined under current medical advice                          |
| Pilot of kits on selected bus routes | No pilot commitment in the replies examined              | Not adopted; a distinct pilot decision is not evidenced        |
| Training and awareness               | TfL stresses training and reports video production       | Alternative activity reported; reach and competence unverified |

<sup>80</sup> Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner, letter to Andrew Boff concerning motion 3.6, 13 May 2026, reproduced on London Assembly motion page. The PDF is image-based; the published page image was inspected.

| Youth-backed request                  | Mayor and TfL answer                                | Research classification at cut-off               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Evaluation and wider rollout timeline | Position to be reviewed if medical guidance changes | Conditional review, not a dated rollout plan     |
| Youth recognition in decision         | Motion thanks LYA and passes unanimously            | Documented influence on scrutiny agenda and vote |

The table shows why a binary success indicator is unhelpful. Young people achieved formal recognition and a unanimous motion; the operational request was not accepted by the institution that would deliver it. The executive response is more accountable than silence because it exposes the reason for refusal, but accountability does not make the original proposal an implemented measure. A mature democratic assessment has room for both statements.

8.4 A clinical disagreement as a democratic test

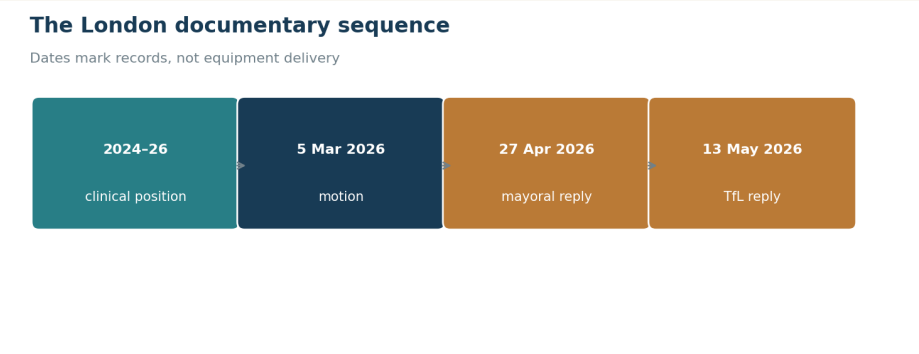
The safety concern does not disappear because an authority rejects one intervention. A bystander may face a severe injury at a bus stop; whether a specialist kit, readily accessible first-aid material, direct-pressure training or a different combination is most useful depends on evidence and implementation conditions. TfL’s letter describes the guidance on which it relied. An independent evaluation would ask for that position statement, the evidence on equipment use and misuse, the location and accessibility of current first-aid kits, dispatch times, staff availability, public awareness and any distributional pattern in incidents. This research has not assembled an epidemiological dataset sufficient to overrule the clinical position. Its narrower contribution is to specify a follow-up that treats the young people’s observed problem seriously after refusing their preferred solution.

The wording of the motion itself anticipated evaluation: it asked for a selected-route pilot before any broader rollout. The response’s reliance on general guidance should be compared with the risk and safeguards of a limited pilot, not merely with universal unsupervised distribution. A pilot could be deemed unsafe, unnecessary or infeasible, but a reasoned disposition would state which conclusion applies and to which design. If the clinical guidance is against even a supervised pilot, the authority could explain the threshold. If the concern is unlocked public access but not placement with trained staff, it could make that distinction. The published letters

provide a substantial general rationale; a clause-by-clause reply would make the decision easier for the Youth Assembly to scrutinize.

Before March 2026, mayoral question answers had already addressed bleed kits on the transport network and described a developing London-wide medical position. The youth proposal therefore did not introduce the topic into City Hall from nothing. It did make a specific policy request salient in an elected Assembly motion and secured an explicit response from the executive. This is a form of influence even in rejection. Attribution must remain properly scoped: the Youth Assembly helped shape the Assembly’s intervention, while the prior clinical discussion and other campaigners formed part of the policy environment. Claiming exclusive origin would erase that history; denying any effect because TfL refused the rollout would erase the documented motion.<sup>81</sup>

Figure 8.2 London dated sequence and decisions



Timeline from earlier medical position, to March 2026 unanimous motion, April mayoral response, and May TfL refusal, with distinct motion and delivery tracks

Source and coding note: London City Hall, mayoral question answers in 2024 and February 2026; London Assembly motion, 5 March 2026; Mayor’s letter, 27 April 2026; TfL Commissioner’s letter, 13 May 2026. Arrows follow documentary response, not evidence of kit installation.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Mayor of London, answers to “Bleed kits in stations,” July 2024; “Bleed Kits in Stations,” November 2024; “Bleed kit suitability (2),” February 2026; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” March 2026.

<sup>82</sup> Mayor of London, mayoral question answers cited in note 20; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits”; Mayor of London, letter, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, letter, 13 May 2026.

8.5 The four elements of a clinical and democratic response

A reasoned refusal should state the evidence, the scope of the proposed intervention, the trade-off and the condition for reconsideration. The Mayor and TfL identified the evidence category: a London-wide position and NHS advice favouring direct pressure and training. They identified a concern about misuse of specialist devices and the risk of delaying immediate action. The scope was less finely divided. The Assembly motion distinguished major bus stations, a selected-route pilot, training and a conditional wider rollout. The executive answer addressed the overall equipment approach while placing more emphasis on the existing first-aid and training alternative. A proposal-level reply would say explicitly whether the reasoning rules out a narrowly supervised pilot as well as universal public access.

The distinction is not a demand that transport officials experiment on an unsafe premise. A pilot design may require specific training, storage, access protocols and an independent clinical evaluation; experts may conclude that even a small trial imposes risks disproportionate to the expected benefit. The young proponents could then see which premise of their intervention was rejected. The response might also identify a design variant that is acceptable, such as more staff training and an improved public guide to existing first-aid resources. The present record supplies the outlines of that alternative but not a measure of its uptake. Separating each clause protects the authority from an unfair claim that it did nothing while protecting the youth advocates from a broad “no” that never addresses their proposed safeguards.

The clinical sources also have a chronology. Mayor’s question answers in 2024 and early 2026 had already discussed bleed kits and the London-wide position before the youth-backed motion. Consequently, the Assembly motion should be interpreted as an effort to challenge or revisit a known policy environment, not as the first identification of the issue. Its effect can be observed at the political gate: the elected Assembly formally requested action and the executive issued specific responses. Its effect on the clinical consensus is not shown. A process-tracing account that ignores the earlier position would overstate novelty; one that ignores the later motion would understate the young members’ capacity to assemble public support around a contested measure.

The safety problem itself could be evaluated separately from specialist-kit adoption. A transport network can report whether staffed bus stations have accessible standard kits, whether

the public can find staff quickly, whether a bus driver knows the emergency procedure and whether training materials reach the workforce. The youth council could help test the comprehensibility of instructions without having to adjudicate medical efficacy. If those measures improve after the debate, attribution would still require records showing the motion or responses caused the changes rather than an unrelated training cycle. An alternative outcome should not be counted as youth-driven simply because it occurred later; the same causal discipline applied to Istanbul’s mobile bath applies here.

A reconsideration pathway should be explicit. “If NHS advice changes” identifies a condition, but not who monitors the advice or how a member of the public can ask for review. A register could link the version of guidance relied on, a next scheduled check or a trigger following publication of new evidence, and the officer responsible for updating the position. Such an entry would not pre-commit TfL to a rollout. It would prevent a conditional promise from becoming practically untestable. In a policy area where an emergency can make political rhetoric intense, a clear account of what could change the decision is a safeguard for the authority and the youth proponents alike.

8.6 The meaning of a refusal in a youth participation system

The TfL and mayoral letters are unusually important evidence because they supply an answer that disappoints the proponents. Many assessments of youth engagement select cases where a visible benefit can be celebrated; the resulting examples make participation look more consensual than governing actually is. London permits an analysis of an adverse disposition. An elected scrutiny body acted on a youth-backed issue, and the executive responded that its preferred equipment intervention was inconsistent with the medical position then in force. This is not the same as ignoring the youth body. Nor is it the full realization of its proposal. The presence of a reasoned refusal allows the young advocates to ask whether the cited medical advice was applied correctly, whether the relevant conditions have changed and whether a narrower design would address the stated risk.

A response can be transparent without being beyond criticism. The Mayor’s letter refers to standard kits and potential harm from specialist equipment; the Commissioner’s expands on the concern that people could waste time searching for a kit. The arguments should be assessed

against the specific proposal. Major bus stations may have staff, signage and predictable access; bus vehicles on selected routes present a different environment, with driver training and operator procedures. If both are rejected for the same reasons, an itemized letter could say why. Likewise, the motion’s request for a pilot and evaluation is not identical to immediate city-wide installation. TfL may still have a sound reason not to run the pilot, but it should identify that reason in relation to the pilot’s safeguards, scale and endpoints. This is an analytic critique of the level of granularity, not an assertion that the medical advice is mistaken.

The youth body should also be able to interrogate the alternative. The Commissioner reported video production with St John Ambulance, and the Mayor cited existing first-aid kits at staffed bus stations. Which staff would receive the material, in which languages and formats, and by what date? Would drivers and station staff know how to direct the public to equipment? Would the advice be reviewed after an incident or on a scheduled date? These questions do not assume specialist kits are clinically advisable. They examine whether the stated alternative addresses the emergency the young people raised. A refusal accompanied by a measurable alternative is a more complete democratic answer than a refusal accompanied only by thanks.

This distinction changes how a scholarship-oriented policy paper can claim value. A simple recommendation to “listen to youth” would have little to add to a case in which the Assembly listened and unanimously voted. The problem sits downstream, in a fragmented response structure where the body recognizing youth advocacy cannot itself deliver the transport measure. The proposed ledger must therefore carry the youth attribution across institutional boundaries and classify both the declined instrument and the promised alternative. It should notify the Youth Assembly when the status changes and invite a written challenge if it finds the explanation incomplete. An institution need not delegate clinical authority to young advocates in order to give them an enduring right to reasoned engagement.

A counterfactual clarifies what the motion achieved. Without the Youth Assembly’s intervention, elected members could still have asked questions about bleed kits, as earlier mayoral exchanges show. The official motion’s express credit and the chair’s account establish that the young members made an identifiable contribution to this particular Assembly decision. They do not prove that TfL’s medical position changed; indeed, the later letters indicate continuity in the decision against specialist rollout. The observed effect is therefore agenda

amplification and a formal scrutiny request, followed by a public executive answer. An evaluation that records only final equipment counts would score this as zero, thereby erasing the institutional accountability generated by the youth advocacy. An evaluation that counts unanimous motions as policy delivery would commit the opposite error.

The possibility of future revision is real but limited by the wording of the replies. “Keep under review if NHS advice changes” is a conditional statement, not a timetable, an appointed reviewer or an agreed evaluation protocol. It should be coded as a stated condition for reconsideration. A standing register could add the date of the health position statement, a check date, an owner and a field for new evidence. The youth participants could then submit relevant studies or examples through a defined route, while TfL would retain responsibility for a final clinical and operational decision. Such a process turns an indefinite promise to review into a public and limited procedural commitment.

Table 8.2a The status of the London outcome under competing measures

| Proposed measure of success                  | Observed result                                | Why this measure alone misleads                             |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Youth issue reaches elected debate           | Yes, explicitly credited                       | Does not show operator adoption                             |
| Motion passes                                | Yes, unanimously                               | A scrutiny motion does not bind TfL to install kits         |
| Executive gives reasons                      | Yes, in two dated letters                      | A reply can still leave clauses or alternatives unevaluated |
| Specialist kits deployed through this motion | No such delivery established; rollout declined | Equipment count cannot capture deliberative influence       |
| Underlying emergency response improves       | Not measured here                              | Requires training, access and outcome evidence              |

There is no need to collapse the rows into a single index. They represent distinct causal steps and different public values. The fourth row answers the immediate policy request; the first three show how young people entered the decision system; the fifth concerns safety, which was

the reason the proposal existed at all. A serious evaluation presents all five and says where evidence stops.

8.7 What a usable follow-up would measure

An adequate follow-up to the youth advocates should contain more than an assurance that the subject remains important. It could publish a short decision register with the four motion clauses, the responsible official, TfL’s disposition, the clinical material relied on, the date at which guidance will next be reviewed and the alternative action’s owner. For training, it could report which bus staff received what material and whether emergency procedures changed. For public first-aid access, it could state what “all staffed bus stations” means, how many stations and routes remain without a staffed point during relevant hours, and how a member of the public locates a kit. For a decision not to pilot specialist kits, it could identify whether the blocker is clinical risk, procurement, location, evidence or all of these. None of these suggestions requires TfL to adopt a clinically unsound intervention. They make the reasons and consequences reviewable.

A planned evaluation would also need to avoid a single success indicator such as the number of installed boxes. Public-health outcomes could include time to emergency call, quality of direct pressure, staff confidence and an appropriate measure of avoidable harm; the choice of metrics should be made with emergency clinicians and users. Youth participants could help identify whether current instructions are comprehensible and whether help points can be found in an emergency. That would retain their knowledge of the transport environment without substituting a youth vote for medical expertise. Where recommendations conflict, a democratic institution owes an explanation of how it balanced evidence and whose lives are affected, rather than pretending that inclusion entails acquiescence.

The case also exposes a structural asymmetry in the London route. The Youth Assembly’s principal institutional partner is the scrutiny body, which can amplify its voice, ask questions and pass a motion. The delivery decision lies with TfL and, politically, with the Mayor. A register confined to the elected Assembly would close the file at the point of unanimous agreement and miss the later refusal. A register kept only by TfL would begin at the executive response and understate the youth origin and elected vote. The useful record must cross the institutional

boundary. It would preserve the same proposal identifier as it moves from young advocates to Assembly members, from motion to mayoral correspondence and from TfL policy to any subsequent review.

8.8 Source criticism and the outcome at September 2026

The youth chair’s final report celebrates the motion as a first and as an instance of cooperation. That statement is accurate as a description of the Assembly vote, but its publication is not an implementation record. The motion’s own webpage now links to both the Mayor’s and the Commissioner’s replies, so a researcher should read all three documents together. A news story that mentions only the unanimous motion presents a different outcome from the official chain. Similarly, a secondary account that says TfL “rejected bleed kits” could omit the medical rationale and training alternative. Neither truncation adequately explains what happened to the youth request.<sup>83</sup>

The official evidence supports a precise conclusion at the study’s cut-off. The Youth Assembly’s advocacy was expressly acknowledged in a motion adopted unanimously by the London Assembly. The Mayor and TfL subsequently gave dated, reasoned replies declining the requested network deployment under current advice and describing an alternative emphasis on first aid and training. There is no basis in these documents to claim that specialist kits were installed pursuant to the motion, that a route pilot began, or that staff training outcomes were demonstrated. A refusal is a substantive decision, not a missing-data category; the training alternative remains a separate proposition requiring evidence of delivery. The result is a strong example of visible youth influence on a scrutiny decision and a visible limit at the executive gate.

Table 8.3 London decision ledger

| Gate             | Responsible actor     | Located record                           | Outcome that may be asserted               |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Youth advocacy   | London Youth Assembly | Official motion and chair’s final report | Youth authorship and advocacy acknowledged |
| Elected Assembly | London                | Unanimous motion, 5                      | Formal request adopted                     |

<sup>83</sup> Hugo Maxwell, “Final Report from 2025/26 Term”; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” including linked responses.

| Gate                    | Responsible actor        | Located record                                   | Outcome that may be asserted                           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | Assembly                 | March 2026                                       |                                                        |
| Political executive     | Mayor                    | Letter of 27 April 2026                          | No planned network rollout under current advice        |
| Transport operator      | TfL Commissioner         | Letter of 13 May 2026                            | Equipment proposal declined; training rationale stated |
| Operational alternative | TfL and partners         | Reported video production and existing first aid | Delivery extent and effect require separate records    |
| Reconsideration         | TfL with health partners | Conditional statement about changed guidance     | No fixed reassessment date established                 |

The register makes the exact value of a negative decision apparent. Youth participation did not produce the equipment measure sought, but it compelled a public chain of reasons and exposed the criterion for reconsideration. A democracy summit paper could use this case to argue for cross-institutional response duties, especially where a youth council feeds a body with scrutiny rather than executive authority. The obligation is to carry the question to the body that can decide, record the answer and return it to the young authors in terms they can challenge with evidence.

8.9 Reading Berlin and London together

Both observations have a dated youth input and a later public decision, yet their apparent direction differs. Berlin’s district is building a site in which several youth-identified functions appear. Its missing link is an itemized account of the design choices and, until 2027 and after, evidence about use. London provides an explicit youth credit, a unanimous Assembly vote and detailed executive responses, but the specific intervention was declined. A ranking that puts the Berlin scheme above the London refusal as “successful participation” would assume that building automatically answered the young people and that justified rejection cannot be democratic. A

ranking that puts London above Berlin because its correspondence is clearer would ignore the district’s movement into construction. The comparison instead separates quality of explanation, adoption, delivery and experienced outcome.

Figure 8.3 The different stopping points in the Berlin and London evidence chains



Two-lane evidence diagram shows Berlin progressing to construction with item attribution incomplete, and London progressing to a reasoned executive refusal after a unanimous motion

Source and coding note: Mitte Youth Office 2023 report and district 2026 publications; London Assembly motion and executive replies of April–May 2026. “Construction” is not coded as completed or effective; “refusal” applies to the specialist-kit rollout rather than the underlying safety concern.<sup>84</sup>

The common institutional problem is the loss of a single proposal’s identity as it crosses professional and political boundaries. In Berlin, children’s words become a Youth Office synthesis, then a landscape design, then a construction contract and finally a square whose use will differ by group. In London, youth advocacy becomes an Assembly motion, then correspondence with the Mayor and TfL, then an alternative first-aid policy that requires its own evaluation. The proposed ledger can follow both without imposing identical procedures. It needs stable identifiers for the substantive elements, a record of who transformed them, reasons for acceptance or rejection, and a later observation proportionate to the decision. In one case that

<sup>84</sup> Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation*; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes”; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits”; Mayor of London, letter, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, letter, 13 May 2026.

observation is a site and its users; in the other it is training, access and the decision to revisit medical advice.

These cases also refine the meaning of accountability. A council can act responsibly by refusing an unsafe proposal, provided it gives reasons open to challenge and a route to revise them if evidence changes. A district can act responsibly by compromising among conflicting demands, provided it identifies the trade-offs and checks whether those most affected can use the finished space. Youth influence should be demonstrated through specific decisions and consequences, not inferred from the amount of favourable language devoted to young people. Chapters 9 and 10 can now compare the four dossiers and design an implementable response system around their different failures of visibility.

**Chapters 9 and 10 Comparative findings and the proposal disposition register**

The four dossiers have reached different points in the public decision chain. Istanbul supplies a dated housing recommendation and related municipal services, but the reviewed records do not link that recommendation to a particular municipal reply or decision. Paris supplies a dated youth recommendation on civil society’s role in resilience governance, a reported political reply before the city adopted a revised strategy, and subsequent publication of the youth text; the operating role of the proposed representatives requires further evidence. Berlin preserves unusually specific accounts of young people’s experience of Blochplatz, a professional synthesis, an announced design and the start of construction, yet lacks a public item-by-item explanation of how conflicting youth requests changed that design. London credits youth advocacy in a unanimously approved Assembly motion and then publishes reasoned mayoral and transport-operator refusals of the requested equipment rollout. These are four different institutional outcomes. The common finding is that a proposal’s identity is often easiest to preserve at the beginning and hardest to follow when another body becomes responsible for the next decision.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları* (2023), Recommendation 50; Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse, *Rapport d’activité 2024* (2025), 28 and annex 6; Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte, *Dokumentation der Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung Umgestaltung Blochplatz 2023*; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 5 March 2026, with mayoral and TfL responses.

**Chapter 9 Where a youth proposal becomes a public decision**

**9.1 Comparing stages rather than ceremonial prominence**

A comparison of four cities is useful only if its units remain stable. The observable unit in this study is a proposition carried by a youth actor to a public authority, not a municipal reputation, the number of consultation events, or a photograph of young people beside an elected official. The same question is asked of each proposition: who formulated it, which authority received it, who answered, what decision followed, and what material or organizational result can be documented? The answer may be acceptance, adaptation, rejection, referral, an existing measure, or an unresolved record. These categories are not moral grades. A clinically justified refusal, explained in a public letter, can be more democratically accountable than an enthusiastic endorsement whose delivery is never checked.<sup>86</sup>

The Istanbul observation is Recommendation 50 of the City Council Youth Assembly, dated 5 August 2023, concerning expansion of accommodation for people unable to meet their housing needs. The Paris observation is the CPJ’s January 2024 proposal to include civil society, potentially the CPJ, in governance and monitoring of the revised resilience strategy. Berlin’s observation comprises the Mitte Youth Office’s actionable recommendations derived from children and young people’s Blochplatz participation in June 2023. London’s is the Youth Assembly-backed request for bleed-control equipment, a trial and training that appeared in an elected Assembly motion of 5 March 2026. Each proposition is specific enough to have received a reasoned disposition. None is assumed to be representative of every youth issue in its city.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022), “Using citizen input and providing feedback”; David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–30.

<sup>87</sup> City Council Youth Assembly, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6; Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*, 2023; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 2026.

Table 9.1 Four selected propositions and their immediate recipients

| City and observation         | Youth source                                                 | Immediate decision gate                                                          | Later delivery authority or site                                 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul, housing facilities | Youth Assembly working group within City Council             | City Council route to municipal consideration, if passed through required bodies | Metropolitan municipal services, property and budget units       |
| Paris, resilience governance | Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse                              | Deputy mayor and draft strategy before Council of Paris vote                     | Strategy governance and monitoring bodies                        |
| Berlin, Blochplatz design    | Children and young people, synthesized by Mitte Youth Office | District streets and green-space office and landscape planning                   | Construction and subsequent management of the square             |
| London, bleed-control kits   | London Youth Assembly advocacy                               | Elected London Assembly motion                                                   | Mayor and Transport for London, with health advice and operators |

The different authorities are not a nuisance variable to be eliminated. They explain why an identical status word would mislead. A Paris strategy vote is the relevant formal decision gate for a governance clause. An Istanbul municipal council agenda would be a crucial trace if Recommendation 50 entered the statutory city-council route. A Berlin procurement and site plan can operationalize a design without an elected council voting on every bench. A London Assembly motion has political and scrutiny force but does not itself order TfL to install equipment. The comparative method therefore follows functional transitions—receipt, answer, decision and delivery—while retaining the legal identity of the bodies at each transition.

9.2 The comparative record at the 2026 cut-off

The matrix below is an audit of located documents, not a four-city performance index. “Established” means that the cited public record supports the specified event for the selected proposition. “Reported” identifies a participant institution’s account of an exchange that has not been reduced here to a clause-by-clause independent decision record. “Not established” means the examined material did not demonstrate the link, not that the event certainly never occurred. “Declined” is a documented negative decision and must not be combined with missing data. “In progress” identifies a delivery process whose final use and effect cannot yet be assessed. These codes preserve more information than a binary adopted/not-adopted column.<sup>88</sup>

Table 9.2 Proposal response decision and delivery matrix

| Documentary threshold        | Istanbul                                                            | Paris                                      | Berlin                                                                | London                                                          |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Identifiable youth input     | Recommendation 50 documented                                        | January 2024 CPJ recommendation documented | June 2023 youth evidence and Youth Office synthesis documented        | Youth advocacy explicitly credited in motion and chair’s report |
| Named recipient and response | Intended municipal recipients; specific disposition not established | Deputy mayor’s September feedback reported | District office names participation; itemized reasons not established | Assembly motion and dated Mayor and TfL letters                 |
| Formal decision              | Proposal-linked municipal decision                                  | Strategy adopted in November 2024;         | Funded site design and                                                | Assembly motion passed                                          |

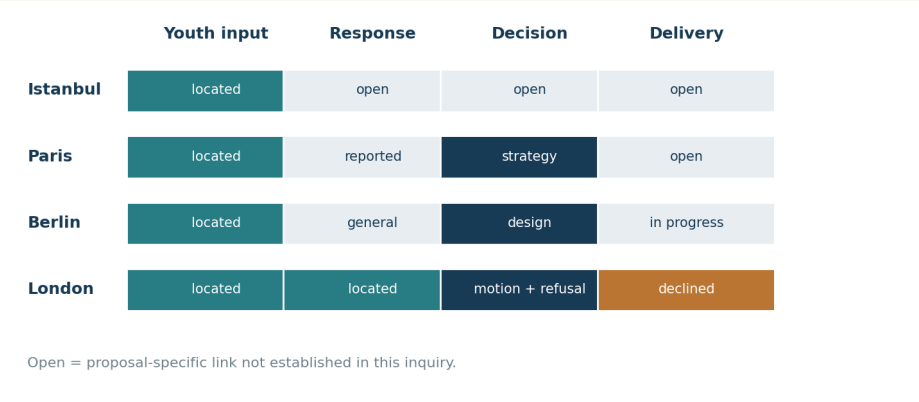
<sup>88</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021), section on pathways to impact. The report concerns representative deliberative processes; the present study adapts its distinction without treating all four youth arrangements as deliberative assemblies.

| Documentary threshold          | Istanbul                                                         | Paris                                                             | Berlin                                                         | London                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                | not established                                                  | exact clause incorporation requires comparison                    | construction decision documented                               | unanimously; TfL refused rollout                                                      |
| Delivery of chosen proposition | Accommodation expansion attributable to proposal not established | Governance seat and operation not established here                | Construction begun; completed design and use pending           | Requested equipment rollout declined; alternative training outputs not fully measured |
| Main causal limit              | Later related services have other possible origins               | Annex and general strategy adoption do not prove operational seat | Similarity of design to wishes does not identify a sole source | Motion's success cannot be equated with operator adoption                             |

The matrix should be read horizontally before it is read vertically. Istanbul’s related municipal winter shelter and later mobile hygiene service do not fill the missing proposal-specific decision cell. Paris’s official annex protects the recommendation’s text but does not fill the later operating-membership cell. Berlin’s works start establishes a real intervention without proving which elements came from the youngest children, two young women, professional Youth Office synthesis or later adult consultation. London, unlike the other cases, has a clear negative executive disposition: missing equipment is consistent with the published refusal, not evidence that the researcher failed to find a hidden programme. Each difference instructs the design of a remedy.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi,” 25 March 2024; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience* (2025), CPJ annex; Bezirksamt Mitte von

Figure 9.1 Four dossiers against the evidence chain



Four rows show documented youth inputs and divergent response, decision and delivery states for Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London

*Source and coding note:* The figure transcribes Table 9.2, drawing on the case documents cited there. An open symbol means that a proposal-specific link is not established in this inquiry; it does not mean that a public institution did nothing. London’s negative executive answer is shown as a documented decision, and Berlin’s construction is shown as an activity still under way.<sup>90</sup>

9.3 What can and cannot be inferred from four cases

The cases were selected to make institutional pathways visible across different municipal arrangements. They do not form a probability sample of all youth recommendations in any of the four cities. Nor is the observation window identical: Istanbul’s recommendation is from 2023, Paris’s from 2024, Berlin’s redesign remains scheduled for completion in 2027, and London’s motion received replies in 2026. Counts derived from this matrix are counts of selected observations and record types. The statement that one of four had a documented refusal describes this selection; it does not estimate a rejection rate. An average response time

Berlin, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026; Mayor of London, letter, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner, letter, 13 May 2026.

<sup>90</sup> Sources in notes 1 and 5; classification rules in Chapter 4 of this study.

computed from the few dated exchanges would be even less defensible, since a missing receipt date and a response to a different kind of authority would make the denominator incoherent.

Selection introduces several possible biases. The project favours public records rich enough to support process tracing, which may overrepresent organized youth bodies and visible capital projects. It also chooses a London case with an explicit refusal, precisely because most celebratory accounts stop at a vote. Berlin is a local design project whose physical features are observable, whereas Paris is a city-wide strategy and Istanbul a service proposal across a large metropolitan system. These differences are analytically useful but prevent a claim that one municipal participation architecture generally outperforms another. The strongest result is a typology of where evidence breaks, with prospective tests capable of revising each case.<sup>91</sup>

A counterexample would be especially valuable. If a fully documented Istanbul agenda and reply were located, the present classification would move from “not established” to the content of that reply. If the Paris governance body published membership, agendas and minutes showing a CPJ seat, the delivery cell would change. A 2027 post-occupancy evaluation in Berlin might reveal that an apparently adopted seating design did not solve evening avoidance. A later medical review might lead TfL to change its position. The study’s register is built to allow these revisions; a closed label attached permanently at publication would contradict its own empirical premise.

9.4 The decisive transfers

The first transfer is from a young person’s experience to an institutional proposition. Berlin shows its complexity most clearly. Twelve children at an on-site session, two eighteen-year-old women and nearby organizations contributed observations of different kinds; the Youth Office interpreted them as design recommendations. Its report makes the transformation unusually visible and even records why its online survey could not represent youth views. Yet a professional synthesis can also erase dissent if every source is condensed into a single list. The later design should link to the report’s evidence classes and identify which groups’ concerns a

<sup>91</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, 2021, on process, experience and pathways to impact; the case selection and inference restrictions are specified in Chapter 4 of this study.

feature is meant to answer. A football wish and an evening-safety claim should not be aggregated as interchangeable youth votes.<sup>92</sup>

The second transfer is from a youth institution to the official with competence to act. In Istanbul, publication of Recommendation 50 establishes the youth text, while the examined sources do not supply the general assembly resolution, municipal agenda or itemized disposition needed to complete that journey. Paris’s CPJ had an identified political recipient and a dated feedback encounter; the official activity report says civil-society governance was among the elements discussed as added to the draft. London makes the boundary conspicuous: its Youth Assembly reached elected members, who adopted a motion and credited the youth body, but the motion then had to travel to the Mayor and TfL. A transfer should carry not just the subject but the exact sub-propositions and an answer obligation. Without it, the next institution may respond to the general concern while leaving the actual request unclassified.<sup>93</sup>

The third transfer is from agreement in principle to a formal decision. Paris adopted a strategy, but a reproduced recommendation in an annex has a different force from an operative governance provision. Berlin announced an approved design, yet a press release is an incomplete item-by-item response. London’s Assembly unanimously passed a motion that the implementing body later declined. The comparative finding is not that formal decisions have no value. It is that their meaning depends on competence and scope. A council’s vote can be decisive for a municipal ordinance, preliminary for a strategy’s appointments, or advisory in relation to a transport operator. The record should name the instrument and its legal or operational effect rather than treat all votes as a common “adoption” code.<sup>94</sup>

The final transfer is from a decision to a condition experienced by the intended users. The Berlin square is being rebuilt, but the claim that women feel safer after 18:00 or that adolescents have places to meet awaits completion and observation. Paris’s governance recommendation seeks continued involvement during implementation; its success would be

<sup>92</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*, 5–10.  
<sup>93</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28; Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 2026.  
<sup>94</sup> City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne,” updated 18 August 2025; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 5 March 2026.

evidenced by actual appointments and committee work, not only by a plan. Istanbul’s proposed accommodation expansion requires capacity and service records for the intended population. London has a documented refusal of specialist kits, while the alternative emphasis on standard first aid and training would need its own reach and competency measures. An implementation claim should name the delivered object, date, place and user group.<sup>95</sup>

Table 9.3 Where each city’s strongest open question lies

| Transfer requiring attention                      | City in which it is especially visible | Document that could substantially resolve it                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Youth recommendation to competent municipal forum | Istanbul                               | General assembly resolution, municipal receipt and council agenda                           |
| Reported draft change to operating governance     | Paris                                  | Dated draft comparison, adopted clause, appointment and minutes                             |
| Multiple youth inputs to final site design        | Berlin                                 | Itemized design response and approved plan linked to 2023 report                            |
| Elected scrutiny motion to executive policy       | London                                 | Already answered negatively; periodic medical review and alternative-delivery record remain |

The table does not assign each city one permanent problem. Berlin also needs a later user assessment; Paris could learn from London’s explicit executive reply; Istanbul might have internal records not yet published. The mapping identifies the most consequential unresolved inference for the selected observation. A single city’s progress through one transfer should not mask a failure at the next.

9.5 The paradox of the well-documented refusal

London is the dossier in which the delivery authority gave the clearest negative answer. On 27 April the Mayor cited NHS advice and the risks of untrained tourniquet use; on 13 May the TfL Commissioner explained a preference for training in bleeding control rather than the

<sup>95</sup> Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes”; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, annex 6; İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, Recommendation 50; Andy Lord, letter, 13 May 2026.

requested network deployment. This might look like a low rank in an implementation scoreboard. In a democratic accountability analysis, the letters are also valuable: they state a reason, identify the body that can revise the position and give youth advocates a question to pursue. The reply is not beyond challenge. The motion’s proposed trial, public station provision and training merit separate treatment. But the institution has left a contestable record rather than an empty space.<sup>96</sup>

A decision system should therefore never reward acceptance irrespective of quality or punish every refusal as non-participation. Otherwise it will invite ceremonial adoption, vague promises and avoidance of difficult questions. The relevant procedural measure is whether an authority considered the proposition at the right stage, correctly stated what the youth body sought, disclosed the decisive evidence and gave an accountable answer. The substantive measure, kept separate, is what changed for the target population. The two can diverge. A reasoned refusal may satisfy procedural accountability while leaving the advocates’ safety concern unresolved; a fortuitous policy improvement may benefit young people while the administration fails to acknowledge or learn from their contribution.

The Paris and London cases reveal a further difference. Paris’s reply was given before the Council vote, at a moment when it could still alter draft text. London’s executive refusal came after an elected Assembly had made its request, although earlier medical work had shaped TfL’s position. A timely reply before the decision can permit dialogue over the formulation; a later reply can be thorough yet close off the immediate proposal. A register should record when a response was made in relation to the decision gate, not merely whether a letter exists. This timing question matters in Berlin too: feedback on a preliminary drawing is more consequential before procurement than after the contractor begins work.

9.6 Attribution under multiple causes

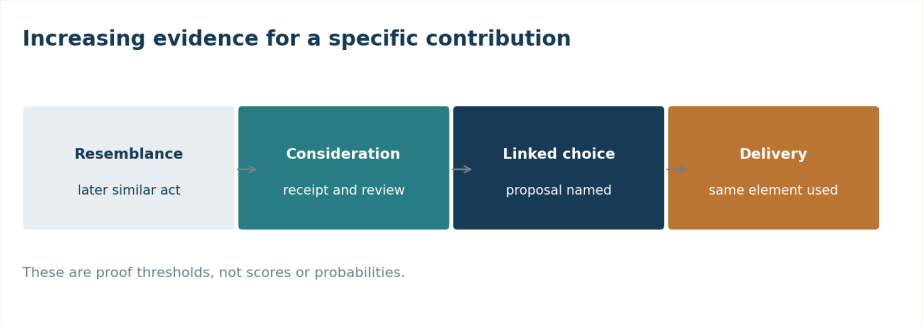
None of the four cases justifies a romantic picture in which one youth sentence becomes one municipal action without mediation. Istanbul already had winter provision, and the city’s mobile bath announcement named departmental work and participatory budgeting as origins.

<sup>96</sup> Mayor of London, letter MGLA190326-6420, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner, letter to Andrew Boff, 13 May 2026.

Paris’s resilience strategy involved numerous partners and parallel consultations. Berlin’s final design followed youth and broader civic engagement as well as landscape professionals’ judgment. London had earlier mayoral questions and a pre-existing clinical position before the Youth Assembly’s motion. A traceable register need not allocate exclusive ownership of an idea. It must record the youth contribution and the decisions that followed without deleting rival sources.<sup>97</sup>

One way to preserve causal modesty is to distinguish four strengths of a link. At the weakest level, a later action resembles a youth proposal and occurs after it. A stronger link exists when an official records receipt and consideration. Stronger still is a decision that identifies the proposal or a draft revision explicitly attributed to it. The strongest claim of delivered influence adds an implementation record for the same element, with an account of other contributors and plausible alternatives. These are evidentiary descriptions, not numerical weights to be averaged. A case can have explicit youth credit for the scrutiny motion, as in London, and an explicit refusal of delivery. It can have a matching physical feature, as in Berlin, without proof that the youths alone caused it.

Figure 9.2 The difference between resemblance and attributable delivery



A four-stage evidence ladder distinguishes temporal resemblance, acknowledged consideration, linked decision and observed delivery

<sup>97</sup> Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi”; City of Paris, “Pour répondre aux nouvelles crises, la stratégie de résilience de Paris évolue,” 29 October 2024; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz,” project page; Mayor of London, “Bleed kit suitability (2),” February 2026.

*Source and coding note:* The levels are a proposed analytic rule based on the four dossiers and process-tracing logic. They are not observed frequencies or an empirical scale measuring the worth of a participant’s contribution.<sup>98</sup>

9.7 A finding about administrative memory

The dossiers reveal a surprisingly mundane source of democratic loss: administrative memory is organized around departments and decisions, while participation is organized around people, meetings and recommendations. A public service page in Istanbul describes a programme; it does not say how a numbered youth recommendation was treated. A Paris strategy can preserve an entire youth annex yet leave readers searching for the particular operative clause. A Berlin project page contains the participation report and the funded design, but an explicit crosswalk between them is not evident in the records examined. London comes closest to a cross-institutional chain because the motion page links the Mayor’s and Commissioner’s responses; even there, the alternatives require subsequent delivery records. The problem is not simply that cities fail to publish information. They publish different objects without a common identifier connecting them.<sup>99</sup>

This finding has a practical consequence. Another consultation website, youth council or annual report cannot by itself repair a missing bridge between proposal and decision. A modest register could. It would attach an identifier to the proposition, name the responsible receiving authority, keep the original wording or a controlled summary, log the disposition with reasons, link the formal decision, and later record delivery. It would be maintained at the points where institutions already record agendas, letters, designs and budgets. This is the hypothesis for Chapter 10. The next chapter tests its administrative feasibility and failure modes rather than declaring a database a cure for weak representation.

<sup>98</sup> Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” 823–30; the proposed attribution distinctions in Chapter 4 of this study.

<sup>99</sup> The institutional publications in notes 1, 5 and 13. The claim concerns the links visible in the selected public records, not an exhaustive audit of internal correspondence.

9.8 The institutional costs of a missing link

A missing link is often described as a problem of transparency, but the term can be too broad to guide an officer’s next action. The four dossiers permit a more precise account of institutional cost. In Istanbul, a reader can see that a youth working group asked for expanded accommodation, and can see that the municipality provides various services to unhoused people. Without a public reference connecting the recommendation to a specific assessment, later scrutiny has to begin from the beginning: retrieve the youth text, determine its competent recipient, identify every similar programme and exclude alternative origins. The cost is borne by participants, researchers and officials called upon to answer a question that a contemporaneous disposition could have resolved cheaply.

Paris incurs a different cost. Its CPJ report recorded political feedback and preserved the youth text in an annex to the strategy. Those are meaningful acts of institutional memory. Yet a question about the specific governance proposal now requires locating dated draft versions, the adopted operative clause and appointment records. A short amendment table at the time of the September feedback would have made the substantive difference visible while the officials involved still remembered the drafting history. The longer that link is postponed, the more likely an institution will describe influence with a general retrospective sentence. Such sentences may be sincere, but they are hard for outsiders to test and for youth contributors to challenge.

Berlin’s cost appears at the site. Once a square is rebuilt, a resident can observe a bench or a table-tennis table but cannot know why it was placed there or which conflict the design resolved. A response matrix created before the construction contract would help explain why a toilet was not visible in the announcement, how the unsafe corner was treated, and whether a retreat for adolescents was reconciled with better sight lines. It would also preserve the designers’ reasons when the project team changes. Without that record, later post-occupancy criticism may be dismissed as hindsight, while genuine design compromises receive no credit because nobody can reconstruct them.

London shows the comparative benefit of retaining the link. Its motion page connects the elected decision to later replies. As a result, the study can state that the young people’s

request advanced to a vote and then met an explicit executive refusal. The documentary chain makes the refusal arguable. The Youth Assembly can challenge the treatment of a limited pilot or ask for evidence that the alternative training has reached staff. The cost of the remaining gap is more limited but still real: the letters state a conditional willingness to review clinical advice without fixing a review date, and the reported training activity lacks a public delivery measure. The next addition to the chain would not be another motion; it would be a dated operational follow-up.

These costs are not identical to public distrust, which the present research has not measured. It would be speculative to say that a missing reply caused a particular young person to disengage or that a complete register would automatically improve confidence. The demonstrated cost is epistemic and administrative: the documents cannot answer a question that participants and decision makers ought to be able to ask, and each subsequent inquiry must reconstruct the trail. The register’s promise is to lower that cost. Whether it also affects trust, retention or policy quality requires a separate pilot evaluation.

9.9 Rival explanations for the apparent cross-city pattern

The matrix might tempt a reader to infer that more formal participation routes yield more accountable outcomes. The evidence does not support that simple relationship. Istanbul has a statutory route for city-council opinions, yet the selected item’s passage is not established in the public documents examined. London gives its Youth Assembly no formal decision role, yet a youth-backed motion and executive answers are visible. Berlin’s local project practice generated an exceptionally detailed consultation report and a physical scheme without a proposition-specific response table. Paris’s established advisory body obtained a feedback meeting, but the precise downstream governance effect remains open. Formal entitlement, political access, public documentation and policy delivery vary separately.

A second explanation would locate the difference in the type of issue rather than the institution. A public square has plans and physical construction milestones; a governance clause may produce less visible committee routines; housing expansion crosses service and property budgets; a medical-safety proposal triggers a formal risk-based reply. The medium of the policy shapes the evidence available. The register must therefore accept different decision instruments

and delivery proofs. It cannot demand the same completion photograph for a committee appointment or treat the absence of a capital project as a failure of youth influence. The case-study design does not hold issue type constant, so it cannot isolate a pure “city effect.”

A third explanation concerns the age and status of contributors. Younger children in Berlin entered through a professional intermediary; Paris’s CPJ members had a formal advisory relation to political office; London’s members worked with a scrutiny assembly; Istanbul’s youth working group authored a numbered recommendation. Their opportunities to frame and defend a proposal differed before the receiving authority ever responded. A register begins at an actionable submission and therefore cannot cure unequal entry. It can, however, reveal whether some channels routinely produce itemized answers while others receive acknowledgements without reasons. That comparison would require a larger set of entries within each city, consistent denominators and an account of which participants were absent.

Finally, the varying strength of the public trail could be a research-access effect. The Istanbul PDF was accessible through an indexed official excerpt but not reliably through the same retrieval route as the Paris and Berlin documents; internal records may exist behind municipal correspondence systems. Paris’s report has character-extraction defects in places, yet its dated feedback account is legible. The TfL response was an image-based PDF requiring visual inspection. A technically inaccessible record is not proof that an institution withheld a response, and an easy-to-search record is not proof of greater democratic influence. The study’s epistemic claim remains deliberately bounded by the sources inspected. The design proposal, however, responds to that very practical difficulty: a stable public identifier and accessible supporting files would make evaluation less dependent on chance indexing and file format.

Table 9.4 Alternative accounts of variation across four cases

| Explanation                           | Why it is plausible                                    | Evidence needed to discriminate it                                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Formal route determines traceability  | Rules specify who should consider opinions             | Multiple proposals per route, with actual agenda and response records |
| Issue type determines visible records | Construction and clinical decisions generate different | Comparable policy types across cities or within-city variation        |

| Explanation                                      | Why it is plausible                                        | Evidence needed to discriminate it                              |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  | documents                                                  |                                                                 |
| Participant access determines influence          | Youth bodies differ in proximity to officials              | Meeting access, drafting records and inclusion of absent groups |
| Publication and retrieval shape the apparent gap | Records may exist but be poorly linked or machine-readable | Full correspondence inventories and accessible archives         |

The table is a caution against transforming four deliberately varied observations into a causal league table. It also outlines the next empirical programme if the initial study is extended. A register trial could supply a much larger, prospectively defined dataset in which issue, channel and receiving authority are recorded at submission. That would support more reliable comparisons than these four cases alone.

9.10 The comparative conclusion that can survive criticism

The claim this comparison can defend is deliberately more exact than “youth participation works” or “youth participation is tokenistic.” In Istanbul, a proposal’s public afterlife is hard to establish despite a prescribed institutional route and visible work on a related social problem. In Paris, young advisers reached a political respondent before a strategic vote and preserved their text in the adopted publication, while an operating governance role still needs proof. In Berlin, the youth report and construction process permit partial substantive comparison, with sample limits and unresolved design responses plainly recorded. In London, the youth contribution to a unanimous scrutiny motion is unusually explicit, and the executive’s refusal is equally explicit. These findings can coexist. They show that the passage of an idea through an institution is not a single event and cannot be inferred from the positive or negative tone of a final announcement.

A sceptic might say that the research demands bureaucratic documentation that small youth bodies cannot realistically generate. The proposed obligation falls principally on authorities already writing agendas, project reports, strategies and replies. It asks them to connect their own records at the moment the decision is made. It does not ask a child on

Blochplatz to produce a formally worded submission, a young advocate in London to master TfL filing systems, or a youth council in Istanbul to chase every departmental project. The burden should follow decision-making power. Young participants can verify that their concern has been accurately stated, but officials should identify the competent recipient and publish what they did.

Another objection is that a public answer might become a substitute for genuine power. A city could reply impeccably to every recommendation while allowing young people no say over the question asked, the evidence considered or the available budget. This study accepts the objection. The register is a limited remedy to an identified failure of traceability, not a complete theory of democratic equality. Its value would diminish if it became a ceiling on participation, excusing exclusion from agenda setting or design. The same entry that documents a rejection can furnish material for a stronger political claim, but only if youth bodies retain the time, support and freedom to challenge the reply. A good record enlarges the terrain of contestation; it does not settle the contest.

The cases also suggest that no fixed rate of “acceptance” should become a target. If officials are assessed by the proportion of youth proposals adopted, they may favour easy proposals, discourage difficult ones or relabel partial gestures as implementation. If assessed only by response speed, they may issue formulaic refusals before adequate examination. A better evaluation reviews the quality of a sample of reasons, the survival of proposal identity across authorities, the accuracy of delivery claims and the experience of authors asked whether they could locate and understand the answer. These measures still require judgment. The register makes the raw material available for that judgment; it cannot automate it.

The next chapter translates this conclusion into a modest administrative product. The design is therefore answerable to the cases. It must handle Istanbul’s unproven referral without inventing a rejection, Paris’s reported incorporation without presuming an operating seat, Berlin’s partial design resemblance without exclusive attribution, and London’s positive motion plus negative executive decision in a single chain. If it cannot represent any one of these ordinary complexities, the register will fail precisely where democratic accountability is most needed.

Chapter 10 A proposal disposition register for youth participation

10.1 The minimum public promise

The proposed register is a public record of what an authority did with an actionable youth recommendation. Its unit is a proposition, rather than an entire meeting or a whole report. A report may contain ten requests; the register may group those that genuinely share a decision, but it should not issue one generic “noted” response for the whole document when separate departments control different elements. Each entry has an original or author-verified formulation, the date and channel of submission, the competent office, a response that states a reason, a link to the decision instrument and a later delivery update. The institution can accept, amend, decline or refer a proposition; none of those choices is predetermined by publication. The public promise is to make the choice, its grounds and subsequent action intelligible.<sup>100</sup>

The model draws on an existing principle rather than claiming to invent feedback as a democratic norm. The OECD’s citizen-participation guidelines call for a public commitment to respond to recommendations and explain why inputs are not used; their design checklist asks who will respond and how the response will be communicated. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has said children should receive clear feedback on how their participation influenced outcomes. The contribution of this study is narrower and operational: it specifies a record that persists across the youth body, elected forum and delivery agency, calibrated by four cases in which the break occurs at different points. The register is not a substitute for inclusion at the beginning or power during a decision, but it makes both claims more testable.<sup>101</sup>

Table 10.1 Minimum public fields and their function

| Field                    | Public content                                    | Why it is necessary                               |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Proposal ID and sub-item | Stable identifier for each actionable proposition | Carries identity across departments and revisions |

<sup>100</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, 2022, steps on defining expected results and providing feedback.

<sup>101</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, steps 8 and checklist; United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12, “The right of the child to be heard,” CRC/C/GC/12, 20 July 2009, para. 134, under “Accountable.”

| Field                           | Public content                                                            | Why it is necessary                                      |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Origin and date                 | Youth body or consultation process, with safe attribution                 | Credits input and fixes sequence                         |
| Author-verified request         | Concise text and link to original where safe                              | Prevents officials answering an altered question         |
| Receiving authority             | Named office and responsible role                                         | Identifies who owes a reply                              |
| Competence and referral         | Direct remit, shared remit or documented transfer                         | Prevents “outside remit” from closing an unanswered file |
| Disposition and reason          | Accepted, amended, declined, existing, referred or pending, with evidence | Makes the choice contestable                             |
| Decision link and date          | Minute, strategy clause, design drawing, order or letter                  | Distinguishes consideration from formal choice           |
| Delivery owner and milestone    | Unit, target and later dated status                                       | Separates promise from action                            |
| Evidence and correction history | Supporting records and versioned corrections                              | Allows independent audit without silent rewriting        |

The table defines a minimum semantic record, not a prescription to procure software. A municipality could publish it as a spreadsheet and linked documents; a youth council could maintain a mirror of the entries it submitted. The difficult part is assigning an owner who updates a record when responsibility changes. A polished portal with no such owner would produce a more attractive version of the same opacity. The minimum public record also differs from the internal case file: contact details of minors, sensitive testimony and draft deliberations may be withheld or summarized under applicable law while the authority’s disposition remains public.

10.2 Distinguishing status from evidence

A conventional tracker often uses a single status column: submitted, in progress, completed. For youth participation this is inadequate. A proposal can be received but not

routed; accepted in principle but unfunded; incorporated into a strategy but not placed in a working committee; rejected for a documented reason; or already under development independently. The register should hold two separate variables. *Decision status* says what the responsible authority chose. *Evidence status* says what public record supports the assertion and what remains to be verified. A third, *delivery status*, says whether a chosen action exists in practice. This prevents “adopted” from becoming a word that hides the absence of an implementation record.

The Istanbul example illustrates the necessity. The youth recommendation exists, but its municipal disposition is not established in the documents examined. Marking it “declined” would invent a decision, while “completed” because a mobile bath operates would falsely join two programmes. Its evidence status is “proposal text verified in accessible official excerpt; transmission and response link not established”; its decision and delivery fields remain unresolved. If the municipality supplies a previously unpublished reply, the entry changes with a dated correction and the original observation remains visible. The record should never silently replace the earlier classification with a more favourable one.<sup>102</sup>

Paris requires different fields. The CPJ’s governance recommendation is documented; a named deputy mayor’s feedback was reported on 26 September 2024, and the revised resilience strategy was adopted in November. The source says civil society in governance was among the additions discussed. The register would record that as a reported political reply and ask for a link to the draft change and operative final clause. A later appointment and meeting record would establish delivery. Reprinting the youth text in an annex belongs in an “acknowledged/publication” field, not the “operational seat filled” field.<sup>103</sup>

For Berlin the decision status can say “design approved and construction started,” but each design sub-item should be traceable to a drawing and, where relevant, a reason for adaptation. The youth office’s concern about evening lighting cannot be marked delivered merely because benches and table tennis were announced. For London the register can record two decisions without contradiction: the elected Assembly adopted the motion unanimously;

<sup>102</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, Recommendation 50; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi.”

<sup>103</sup> CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*, CPJ annex.

TfL and the Mayor declined the equipment rollout under current clinical advice. A training-oriented alternative is a separate action, with a named owner and later evidence of dissemination and staff competence. The same proposal ID should connect all these records, including the negative one.<sup>104</sup>

Table 10.2 Three dimensions of a register entry

| Dimension | Permissible example                                                | Prohibited shortcut                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Decision  | “TfL declined specialist kit rollout on 13 May 2026, with reasons” | “London rejected youth participation”      |
| Evidence  | “Mayor’s and Commissioner’s letters available”                     | “No kits found, therefore no response”     |
| Delivery  | “Berlin construction under way; completion targeted for 2027”      | “Youth safety improved because work began” |

The distinctions permit less flattering but more reliable reporting. A refusal may score well on reason-giving and poorly on acceptance; a funded action may score well on decision and lack later evidence of user benefit. The register is useful when such combinations can be seen rather than forced into a single success percentage.

Figure 10.1 An entry’s three independent dimensions



*Decision, evidence and delivery are displayed as separate axes for the same youth proposition*

<sup>104</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes”; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits”; Mayor of London, letter, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, letter, 13 May 2026.

*Source and coding note:* This is a proposed administrative schema derived from the four case analyses. Positions in the diagram are conceptual; they are not scores assigned to the cities.<sup>105</sup>

**10.3 The workflow from submission to follow-up**

At intake, the participating body should receive a receipt and a stable ID. A trained clerk or participation officer checks that the proposed wording accurately captures the authoring body’s request, splits clearly separable actions, records the relevant decision calendar and identifies the recipient. The clerk is not empowered to rewrite a politically inconvenient request as a narrower technical query. A short author-verification period lets the youth body correct the summary. A proposal that contains sensitive personal testimony may be represented by a public issue statement and a restricted annex; the private material should not be published merely because it motivated the request.

At triage, the receiving office identifies competence. It may retain responsibility, name a co-responsible unit or refer the proposition to another public body. A referral is not “completed” until the recipient acknowledges it and the originator knows who will answer. In London, the scrutiny Assembly would link its motion to the Mayor and TfL responses; a static file ending at the unanimous vote would fail. In Istanbul, a youth-assembly recommendation would retain its identifier through the City Council general assembly and municipal council if it passed those stages. In Berlin, the youth office and planning department would share an identifier on the report and approved drawing. The register should tolerate different constitutional arrangements while demanding the same visible hand-off.<sup>106</sup>

Before the decision is final, the authority enters an itemized disposition. An acceptance should identify the provision, responsible unit and resource or later approval required. An amendment should state what changed and why. A refusal should cite legal, fiscal, empirical or competing-policy reasons sufficiently specifically to be argued with; “not feasible” alone explains little. “Already in progress” should give the origin and start date of the pre-existing action and specify whether the youth submission altered it. A pending answer should have an owner and next update. These are proposed service standards; Chapter 11 will assess how

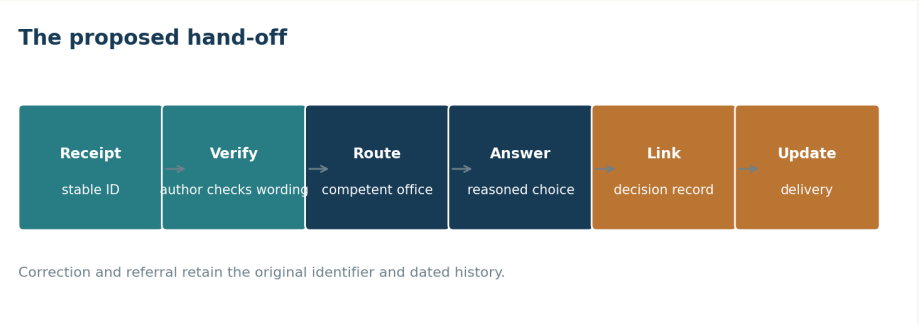
<sup>105</sup> Proposed coding based on the four case documents cited in notes 1, 5 and 20.

<sup>106</sup> Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” with linked responses.

response periods and institutional safeguards should be adapted locally. The register cannot decree a binding deadline where local law gives none.

Once a decision occurs, the case receives a link to the actual instrument: agenda item, council resolution, strategy clause, approved design, signed executive letter or contract. A publicity article may help the public understand an action but should not replace the underlying decision where it is available. The same entry then moves into delivery monitoring. Its milestone should be proportionate to the proposition. Opening an accommodation facility is different from financing one. Appointing a monitoring committee is different from convening it. Beginning construction is different from providing a usable square. Producing a training video is different from showing that bus staff have received and can use the advice. A closed entry should say what was observed and what was not.

Figure 10.2 The proposed administrative hand-off



A six-stage flow shows receipt, author verification, competence triage, reasoned disposition, formal decision and delivery update

*Source and coding note:* The workflow is the study’s proposed design, not a description of a process adopted by any of the four cities. The return arrow after a correction and the cross-authority referral preserve the proposal’s identifier and version history.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Proposed model informed by OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, steps 2, 8 and 10, and the four case records.

10.4 How a real entry would read

A sample entry based on the London case shows how the model avoids an invented success. It would list the Youth Assembly as the source, the four components of the 5 March motion as distinct sub-items, and the unanimous Assembly vote as the first formal decision. It would link the Mayor’s letter of 27 April and the TfL Commissioner’s letter of 13 May. The status for equipment deployment would be “declined under current medical advice,” with the rationale summarized fairly and a link to the full letters. The training sub-item would note the Commissioner’s reported filming of guidance and require a subsequent record of staff dissemination. The review condition would be recorded as “if NHS advice changes,” while the absence of a fixed review date would be visible. This is a public record capable of recognizing youth influence and institutional disagreement simultaneously.<sup>108</sup>

A Berlin entry would look different. It would name the 2023 Youth Office report as a source that distinguishes direct child statements, interviews with young women and relayed organizational observations. A sub-item on the unsafe Badstraße corner would point to a lighting and visibility drawing or a reason why the proposed intervention was altered. The construction decision and target completion in 2027 would be linked. The status of perceived safety would remain “not assessed” until the completed site was tested at relevant hours with appropriate users. Another sub-item on table tennis might be marked “included in design, construction pending,” because the district announced two tables. A public toilet would remain unclassified from the press release alone rather than be marked rejected. The distinction is crucial: silence in a brief announcement is not a formal negative decision.<sup>109</sup>

A Paris entry would pair the January governance proposal with the September political feedback and November strategy vote. It would ask which adopted provision, if any, established civil-society representation and whether the CPJ obtained a seat on a monitoring body. Meeting minutes and appointments would subsequently determine the delivery status. An Istanbul entry would initially make the missing transmission records explicit and seek the municipal disposition, while carefully listing related shelter and hygiene services under a separate

<sup>108</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits”; Mayor of London, letter, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, letter, 13 May 2026.

<sup>109</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*, 5–10; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” 28 August 2026.

“context and rival origins” field. If a council reply showed that existing services were considered sufficient, that reason could be reported even if the youth authors disagreed. The aim is not to manufacture a favourable outcome but to preserve a shared object of disagreement.<sup>110</sup>

Table 10.3 Worked example for London’s equipment sub-item

|                           |                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Register field            | Example entry grounded in located records                                                                     |
| ID                        | LYA-2026-BC-01, proposed illustration, not an official identifier                                             |
| Original request          | Publicly accessible specialist kits at major bus stations                                                     |
| Origin                    | LYA advocacy credited in London Assembly motion, 5 March 2026                                                 |
| First decision            | Assembly motion agreed unanimously                                                                            |
| Responsible delivery body | TfL, with Mayor’s political response and health partners’ guidance                                            |
| Disposition               | No network rollout planned under current NHS advice                                                           |
| Reasons recorded          | Risk of misuse and distraction from direct pressure and emergency call, as explained in April and May letters |
| Delivery status           | Specialist-kit rollout not planned; existing standard first aid described separately                          |
| Review trigger            | Change in NHS advice stated; no fixed date in the cited letters                                               |
| Evidence links            | Motion and two signed responses; later training record still required                                         |

The invented ID is plainly identified as a design example. No reader should mistake it for an official reference number or a claim that City Hall maintains this register. A sample drawn from a genuine adverse decision is preferable to a fictional success story because it tests whether the proposed categories remain useful when the authority says no.

10.5 Public access and the protection of young participants

The register’s transparency attaches to the public authority’s actions, not to the exposure of minors or vulnerable participants. The Blochplatz report contains accounts of girls’

<sup>110</sup> CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*; İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, Recommendation 50.

fear and neighbourhood vulnerability; Istanbul’s housing issue could involve people with insecure accommodation; London’s case concerns severe injuries and violence. A public record can name a collective youth body and a municipal decision without publishing individual children’s contact information, migration status, experiences of violence or identifiable testimony. The data architecture should distinguish an open decision layer from a restricted case file, define a lawful basis for any personal data, minimize it, set retention periods and control access. Different laws govern the four jurisdictions: the EU GDPR in Paris and Berlin, UK data-protection law in London and Türkiye’s Personal Data Protection Law in Istanbul. Their specific requirements must be assessed locally before deployment.<sup>111</sup>

The design should not use “consent” as a casual universal solution. A public authority acting in its official capacity may rely on a different legal basis, and children may face pressures that complicate supposedly voluntary disclosure. The OECD and children’s-rights standards support clear feedback without requiring a searchable database of identifiable youth. A youth author should be able to choose attribution to the body, to an organization or, where appropriate, to a named public advocate who has intentionally taken that role. A record may describe an issue in general terms and keep precise locations or circumstances restricted if publication could expose participants to retaliation or stigmatization. What must stay visible is the authority’s answer to the substance.

Table 10.4 Public and restricted information by design

| Information                                                  | Default treatment | Reason                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Proposal subject, institution and dated disposition          | Public            | Enables scrutiny of what the authority did         |
| Collective source, with consented organizational attribution | Public where safe | Credits participation without exposing individuals |
| Minor’s name, address and contact information                | Restricted        | Not needed for public decision audit               |

<sup>111</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679, arts. 5, 6 and 9; United Kingdom, UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, as amended; Republic of Türkiye, Personal Data Protection Law No. 6698, art. 4; Information Commissioner’s Office, “Children and the UK GDPR,” updated 15 May 2026. This is a design constraint, not jurisdiction-specific legal advice.

| Information                                               | Default treatment                              | Reason                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Sensitive account of violence, health or migration status | Restricted or carefully anonymized             | Publication can cause harm and is rarely necessary |
| Decision instrument and reason, with lawful redactions    | Public                                         | Makes acceptance or refusal contestable            |
| Internal draft containing third-party data                | Restricted, with public summary of disposition | Protects rights while retaining accountability     |

The split is not a license to conceal the whole answer. An authority that refuses to publish a reason because a case file contains personal details can usually provide a carefully drafted public summary and the decision instrument with lawful redactions. Conversely, a well-meaning transparency campaign could make a child easier to identify by combining age, school and a precise incident location. Chapter 11 will address access roles, review of redactions and correction requests in detail. At this stage the essential design choice is that the public never needs personal vulnerability as the price of learning what government decided.

10.6 Correction and disagreement are part of the record

A participation register can fail even with every field populated if an institution alone controls the description of what young people meant. A city might translate a request for year-round housing into “hygiene support,” or a youth demand for a secure place to meet into “more surveillance,” then truthfully report that it answered its own paraphrase. The original body should therefore see the public summary before publication and be able to attach a short correction where it disputes the interpretation. The authority can retain its decision and explain why it disagrees. The record would preserve both versions with dates rather than silently edit away the conflict.

This is especially important when a professional intermediary interprets young people’s views. The Berlin Youth Office made careful recommendations after small on-site sessions and organizational submissions. Its synthesis was necessary to make the observations actionable, but it is not identical to a child’s words. A version history could show the field-note source category, the office’s interpretation and the design team’s response without publishing sensitive

details. In Paris, the CPJ should be able to identify whether a final governance clause truly captured its call for a place in decisions and monitoring. In London, the Youth Assembly might accept the clinical rationale but dispute whether TfL answered the proposed supervised pilot. A correction mechanism keeps disagreement inside the public decision process instead of turning it into an informal complaint after the file closes.

Figure 10.3 A versioned disagreement record



A youth-authored request, official summary, author correction and reasoned final disposition remain visible as dated versions

Source and coding note: Proposed register feature, derived from source-translation difficulties in the four cases; the diagram does not imply any city currently operates such a versioned record.<sup>112</sup>

10.7 A specification that an office could actually use

The minimum record can be implemented as a relational structure or a carefully controlled spreadsheet. One table contains the parent submission: source institution, date, document reference and safe public summary. A second contains each actionable proposition and its versioned wording. A third contains events: referral, acknowledgement, reply, formal decision, implementation update and correction. An event has a date, responsible role, evidence reference and status, while the proposal ID remains unchanged. The public view is generated from fields approved for release. This structure matters because one submission can contain

<sup>112</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” with replies; OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*.

several actions, and a single action can pass through several authorities. A flat row that overwrites “pending” with “completed” will erase the history the study is trying to preserve.

The entry should be immutable in a limited but meaningful sense. An error may be corrected, a date may be clarified and a decision may be reversed; none requires preserving a demonstrably false public claim as current. Yet the previous version and reason for correction should remain available to auditors unless legal restrictions require redaction. The public record can show “superseded on this date” while restricted logs retain sensitive change details. This is the difference between correction and silent rewriting. A youth body that sees its demand misdescribed can request a change without having to prove that the official acted maliciously. The authority can record that it considered the objection and maintained its interpretation, explaining why.

The register should also carry uncertainty explicitly. A field marked “no public decision located” is different from “decision maker declined.” A field marked “construction announced” is different from “work inspected.” The person entering data must identify the evidentiary basis before selecting a status. A supporting document can be an official minute, signed reply, approved plan or report; a newspaper article may corroborate but should not automatically substitute for a decision instrument. These distinctions are simple enough for administrative practice if built into a short validation checklist. They are expensive to reconstruct years later if left to narrative prose alone.

Two linked identifiers are needed when authorities use incompatible filing systems. The register’s proposal ID remains stable; each receiving office adds its own local document or case reference. An Istanbul recommendation could thus retain its youth-assembly number and acquire city-council and municipal-council references without claiming that they are the same legal act. London’s youth-led motion could retain a motion number while the Mayor’s letter and TfL correspondence use different references. Berlin’s consultation report could link to a design drawing and procurement file. The join between IDs is the administrative reform. It gives the public a path without requiring any institution to abandon its existing records system.

The person who writes a reasoned answer matters as much as the field. A participation officer can manage intake and remind departments, but the official with substantive authority should own the disposition. A youth office should not be asked to explain why a streets

department excluded a toilet from a final plan; a scrutiny secretariat should not invent TfL’s clinical rationale; a City Council administrator should not decide whether a housing facility can be funded. The register should record the accountable office and, where possible, the official role, while allowing a central coordinator to ensure that an unanswered referral does not disappear. This distinction reduces the risk that the system produces polite but empty acknowledgements.

Table 10.5 A compact logical data model

| Record         | Key relationship                                  | Essential fields                                        | Public test                                      |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Submission     | One source document can contain many propositions | Source, date, safe attribution, original document       | Can the author recognize the submission?         |
| Proposition    | Stable unit of requested action                   | ID, author-verified wording, scope, affected population | Is the request answered at the right level?      |
| Referral       | Many authorities may receive one proposition      | Sender, recipient, dates, receipt confirmation          | Did another authority truly take responsibility? |
| Disposition    | One reasoned answer per authority and proposition | Choice, reasons, competence, evidence                   | Could a reader contest the reason?               |
| Decision       | Links proposition to an operative act             | Instrument, date, clause or drawing                     | What exactly changed?                            |
| Delivery event | Multiple updates over time                        | Owner, milestone, observation, evidence                 | Did the promised action occur?                   |
| Correction     | Keeps earlier versions and challenge              | Author request, official resolution, dates              | Was disagreement preserved?                      |

The model can be audited with ordinary questions. Choose any proposition ID and see whether its authoring text and final disposition are both recoverable. Choose a refusal and see

whether reasons and the competent official are named. Choose an accepted capital project and see whether the record goes beyond the approval to completion and use. These tests are more discriminating than the number of entries in a portal. A city could publish hundreds of submissions and still have no verifiable pathway to decisions.

**10.8 A stress test using all four cases**

Imagine a registrar entering Istanbul’s housing recommendation as a single item labelled “homelessness services.” The system would appear to work: a dated youth recommendation and a later mobile bath would occupy the same row, and the status could be set to “implemented.” The error would be substantive. The accommodation request included needs mapping, sites and a space standard; the mobile bath was a hygiene intervention whose official account named departmental work and participatory budgeting. A valid register should reject that match unless an accountable office identifies a decision linking the youth request to the programme. Its interface should prompt the registrar to distinguish “related policy context” from “decision on this proposition.” If that safeguard fails, the new administrative tool would legitimate a misleading attribution with the authority of an official database.

Imagine next that Paris imports the entire CPJ resilience report as one attachment and marks it “included” because the strategy prints it as an annex. The governance proposition would vanish among recommendations about training, food security and public communication. A valid entry should separate the request for civil-society seats from the other recommendations, reference the September feedback, identify the adopted governance provision if any and retain a delivery event for appointments and meetings. The annex would prove public preservation of the text, which is valuable, but not the exercise of a seat. This stress test shows why proposition-level records are necessary even when the source document is already publicly accessible.

For Berlin, a register could err in the opposite direction by demanding a verbatim match between a child’s utterance and a technical drawing. The children did not provide a professional site specification; the Youth Office’s synthesis necessarily translated their words. A functioning register should preserve the original evidence category, the intermediary interpretation and the design response. It can classify a balance trail as an answer to a wish to balance while leaving

the report’s concern with glass, toilets and evening safety as distinct issues. It can also record that a project feature has several sources. The decisive test is whether young users can understand the design choice and whether the completed site addresses their problem, not whether a professional copied a child’s sentence into a procurement schedule.

London tests whether the register tolerates disagreement across competent authorities. A simplistic interface might mark the motion “adopted” and close the case, or mark TfL’s answer “rejected” and erase the unanimously adopted Assembly decision. Both distort the sequence. The model holds a proposal with multiple linked decisions: the scrutiny motion, the Mayor’s political response and the operator’s equipment decision. Training is a separate branch requiring evidence of delivery. If guidance changes later, a new event updates the same proposition rather than presenting a fresh policy with no memory of the youths’ earlier intervention. A system that cannot represent this chain should not be rolled out as a solution to cross-institutional traceability.

These four adversarial examples function as acceptance tests for the design. An implementation team can construct sample entries from the published documents, give them to two independent coders and compare the resulting statuses and supporting links. Disagreement over “accepted,” “in progress” or “related service” should prompt revision of the codebook before the system is used to evaluate officials. A register that produces inconsistent classifications from the same source material will not become reliable because its charts look polished. The goal is an auditable decision trail, not visual certainty.

**10.9 What the register can reasonably change**

The model addresses an observable administrative weakness: publicly disconnected stages. It could make a missing response more visible, prevent a later programme from being retrospectively assigned to an unrelated youth proposal, distinguish a formal vote from delivery and show when a refusal was reasoned. It might also improve internal coordination by giving the next office a clear obligation to acknowledge a referral. These are hypotheses with measurable tests. A pilot should compare the share of eligible propositions receiving an itemized response, the time from receipt to reply, the proportion linked to a formal decision, the proportion with a later delivery update and the frequency of corrected summaries. The

denominator must be every eligible proposition received during the pilot period, including inconvenient refusals and transfers. Publication alone is not an outcome measure.<sup>113</sup>

The register cannot make a participation process representative if only an unusually confident subset of young people enters it. It cannot decide clinical questions in London, provide land for a housing facility in Istanbul, supply a funded Paris committee or resolve conflicting preferences on a Berlin square. Nor can it prove a causal contribution merely by placing two documents side by side. It creates the conditions for independent challenge and better internal learning. If officials produce boilerplate reasons or close entries at a publicity milestone, the model would reproduce the problem in a more orderly format. Chapter 11 therefore has to specify ownership, workload, quality review and a pilot that can fail by explicit criteria. Chapter 12 will judge the whole study against the original research questions and the remaining evidentiary gaps.

The practical product of Chapters 9 and 10 is a proposal-disposition register with field definitions, evidence thresholds, a cross-authority hand-off, privacy separation, correction rights and a worked adverse decision. It is deliberately small enough to be trialled using existing records, while strong enough to expose the difference between being heard, being answered, changing a decision and changing a lived condition. That distinction is the study’s central empirical finding and the design constraint that should govern any further institutional reform.

**Chapters 11 and 12 Implementation conditions and conclusions**

The study’s proposed register must be judged against the four cases that motivated it. It should preserve a youth recommendation when it passes through several offices, distinguish a decision from the delivery of that decision, and allow an authority to refuse a proposal for stated reasons without erasing the young people’s contribution. It should also protect children and other vulnerable participants from unnecessary exposure. Chapter 11 specifies a limited pilot, the administrative roles required to run it, the conditions under which it should be judged unsuccessful, and the different adaptation needed in Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London. Chapter 12 returns to the research questions. Its conclusion is bounded: the documented cases show a

<sup>113</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, sections on pathways to impact; OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, step 10. The suggested pilot indicators are the author’s proposal.

recurrent difficulty of public traceability at different institutional points; they do not prove that all youth participation is ineffective or that a register alone would redistribute political power.<sup>114</sup>

**Chapter 11 Implementation ownership safeguards and a pilot that can fail**

**11.1 A limited pilot before institutional claims**

A register should begin as a test attached to one bounded stream of proposals in each participating authority. A pilot could cover, for example, all new formal recommendations issued by a youth body during a defined twelve-month intake period, plus the subsequent decision and delivery updates that fall within a second observation window. The exact duration is a proposed design choice, not an existing rule in any of the four cities. Every eligible submission in the chosen stream must enter, including suggestions that are politically inconvenient, outside the receiving office’s competence or ultimately declined. If officials hand-pick only prominent successes, the register will become an archive of examples rather than an instrument of accountability.<sup>115</sup>

The pilot must define its denominator before the first submission. The parent unit is a formal youth submission; the analytic unit is each actionable proposition within it. A document with one broad recommendation and five distinct operational requests should not be counted as six independent youth participants or as a single completed outcome. The registrar should document the splitting rule: separate an item when a different authority can decide it, when it can be accepted or rejected independently, or when delivery requires a materially different record. An author-verified list of sub-items should be published near the original text, with sensitive testimony appropriately redacted. This protects the youth body’s meaning from both artificial fragmentation and convenient aggregation.

The first evaluation would compare an explicitly defined pre-pilot baseline with the pilot’s own cohort. The baseline could include the last comparable twelve-month set of recommendations, but only if the original archive is sufficiently complete to identify the

<sup>114</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022); the four official city dossiers analysed in Chapters 5–8 of this study.

<sup>115</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, steps 2, 8 and 9; OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021), section on evaluation design. The duration proposed here is the author’s pilot specification.

denominator. A missing historical register cannot be repaired by assuming that every visible success was the total population. Where the baseline cannot be reconstructed, the pilot should report a prospective rate and avoid a false before-and-after improvement claim. This is a small but decisive form of research discipline: the new process cannot demonstrate that it improved transparency simply because it now creates the evidence that the old process lacked.

The OECD distinguishes evaluation of process design, participant experience and pathways to impact in its guidance on representative deliberative processes. These four urban youth arrangements are not all deliberative mini-publics, so its framework is an analytic aid rather than a classification of the cases. A register pilot should similarly ask three separate questions. Did it capture and route submissions accurately? Could young authors find, understand and challenge the responses? Did the recorded decisions lead to documented changes or reasoned refusals, with later outcomes observed where feasible? A higher publication rate answers the first question only. The pilot should not claim improved lived conditions because its dashboard has fewer empty cells.<sup>116</sup>

Table 11.1 Pilot population and observation windows

| Element            | Proposed rule                                                           | Consequence for analysis                            |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Eligible stream    | All formal youth recommendations received through one named channel     | Prevents selection of only agreeable examples       |
| Intake period      | Twelve consecutive months, adjusted only before launch                  | Fixes a prospective denominator                     |
| Sub-item rule      | Separate actions with distinct decision or delivery routes              | Makes partial acceptance visible                    |
| Decision follow-up | Record every disposition as it occurs, including referrals and refusals | Permits response audit without requiring acceptance |

<sup>116</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, executive summary and chapter 2. Its criteria are adapted, not mechanically applied to these distinct youth institutions.

| Element               | Proposed rule                                                   | Consequence for analysis                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Delivery follow-up    | Continue for a defined period after intake closes               | Prevents late submissions being mislabelled failures |
| Historical comparison | Use only if earlier cohort and denominator can be reconstructed | Avoids spurious improvement estimates                |

The table is a design specification. It should not be read as a claim that any city has committed to a one-year pilot. The follow-up period would be negotiated against the nature of the proposals: construction, strategy governance and emergency-service training mature at different speeds. A common intake period can coexist with different delivery horizons, provided that the status and censoring date for each item are visible.

11.2 An owner for every transfer

Three roles should be distinguished. The youth-body liaison manages the submission and confirms that the summary reflects what its authors sought. A central participation registrar issues IDs, checks required fields, tracks referrals and maintains the public record. The substantive receiving authority supplies the reasoned answer, decision reference and delivery update. A registrar who lacks the power to decide must not be made the nominal author of a refusal. Conversely, a department that can decide must not satisfy its obligation by returning a courteous acknowledgment to the registrar without telling young people what it chose.<sup>117</sup>

The accountable owner may change at successive gates. In Istanbul, the City Council’s internal route and the metropolitan municipality’s consideration should carry separate receipts. The city-council office cannot promise a housing site, but it can show whether it placed an adopted opinion before the municipal council and whether the latter returned a decision. Paris’s youth office may support the CPJ, while the strategy directorate and political office own the response to a governance recommendation. In Berlin, the Kinder- und Jugendbüro Mitte can document participation, but the streets and green-space office owns a design response and later site delivery. In London, the Assembly Secretariat can preserve the youth source and motion,

<sup>117</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, checklist on who responds and communicates results.

while the Mayor and TfL must answer the requests within their respective responsibilities. A single “city response” field would erase these distinct obligations.<sup>118</sup>

A transfer is complete only when the next authority acknowledges responsibility for a named proposition. If an office says a request belongs elsewhere, the entry should name the recipient, date of referral and date of acknowledgment. It should then remain open at the first institution as “referred, awaiting response,” not disappear from its report. Where several authorities share competence, each may provide a separate disposition under the same proposal ID. This may sound more complicated than a spreadsheet of youth ideas, but the complexity already exists in the decision process. The register reveals it in a form that can be managed and contested.

Figure 11.1 Responsibility across a transfer



*A proposal retains one identity while a youth liaison, registrar and receiving authority perform distinct roles; a referred item remains visible*

*Source and coding note:* Proposed administrative design derived from the four case pathways. The diagram is not an account of an existing cross-city office or a claim that a new legal power has been conferred.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76, and City Council Regulation, arts. 12 and 14; City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” response MGLA290725-1137, 28 August 2025.

<sup>119</sup> The institutional documents in note 5; proposed role allocation by the author.

### 11.3 Response periods and the risk of artificial deadlines

A response timetable is necessary, but its stages should not be confused. A receipt can be issued quickly because it confirms only that an institution obtained a submission. A competence check may take longer if a request crosses several agencies. A substantive answer should be timed to the relevant decision gate: it has little democratic value if it arrives only after a strategy is voted through or a design contract is fixed. A delivery update may reasonably occur months or years later. The pilot could adopt illustrative service commitments—receipt within five working days, competence assignment within twenty, an initial reasoned position before the next material decision or within sixty days if no decision date is imminent, and a later update at a stated milestone. These numbers are proposals to test administratively, not claims about current statutory deadlines in Istanbul, Paris, Berlin or London.

No single clock fits every issue. A medical-safety recommendation might require clinical consultation; a playground drawing has a procurement date; a governance clause may have to be addressed before a council vote; a new housing facility depends on property and budget reviews. The response standard should allow a documented extension with a named official and a new date. “Still considering” without a reason or next event should not count as a substantive answer. Nor should a rapid rejection be rewarded merely because it met the clock. A quality review should examine whether the reason addressed the author-verified proposition and whether the official considered material evidence available at the time.

A city’s internal law and administrative capacity must be checked before adopting any timetable. The Istanbul City Council route has specific legal stages; Paris’s preparatory commission and strategy calendar shape when an opinion can matter; Berlin’s district project process creates design and procurement gates; London has separate Assembly and executive correspondence systems. The model proposes a public service standard at each stage, not a universal legal deadline. A pilot should publish its commitments in advance and report exceptions honestly. Otherwise response times become another performance theatre: cases are split or closed prematurely to make the dashboard look efficient.

11.4 A quality review that does not reward agreeable answers

A good reasoned response should pass five tests. It should identify the proposition accurately; name the competent authority; state the choice and its legal, financial, empirical or policy grounds; link a decision record; and state what happens next. The tests apply to acceptance and refusal alike. London’s mayoral and TfL letters provide a plausible negative example: they identify clinical advice and a reason not to deploy specialist kits. Their limitation for a proposal-level register is that the motion’s station rollout, selected-route pilot, training and conditional expansion would benefit from more clearly separated dispositions. Istanbul’s missing proposal-specific municipal answer cannot pass the first test on the public material examined. Berlin’s general promise to use feedback does not tell the child participants how the toilet or unsafe corner was decided.<sup>120</sup>

The reviewer should be institutionally close enough to obtain the records yet independent enough to challenge formulaic language. A small pilot might use one quality reviewer from the participation team and a second reviewer nominated through the youth body for a sample of anonymized entries. They should code the same cases independently before resolving disagreements. A correction rate is not necessarily evidence of failure: it may show that young authors used a meaningful right to dispute misinterpretation. Conversely, a zero-correction rate in a process that never informs authors of summaries says little about quality. The evaluation should inspect how corrections were handled, not merely count them.

Table 11.2 Response audit rubric

| Test       | Sufficient evidence                                | Common failure                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Accuracy   | Author-verified request or documented disagreement | Authority answers an easier paraphrase          |
| Competence | Named office and acknowledged referrals            | “Outside remit” closes file without destination |
| Reason     | Decision-specific explanation with                 | “Noted” or “not feasible” without               |

<sup>120</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” motion and linked executive responses, March–May 2026; Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation der Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung Umgestaltung Blochplatz 2023*; Istanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, Recommendation 50.

| Test          | Sufficient evidence                           | Common failure                                     |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|               | evidence or constraint                        | grounds                                            |
| Decision link | Dated instrument and operative location       | Press release substitutes for unavailable decision |
| Follow-up     | Owner, milestone and evidence of later action | Acceptance treated as completion                   |

This rubric should be applied to a sample of accepted, declined, amended and pending cases. If the reviewers inspect only accepted cases, they cannot detect a pattern in which uncomfortable issues receive formulaic rejection. If they inspect only complaints, they cannot tell whether the system works for ordinary proposals. The pilot should publish the sampling rule and anonymized findings, including unresolved disagreements between reviewers.

11.5 Indicators with denominators and limits

The core indicator for response coverage is the number of eligible propositions receiving an itemized, reasoned disposition divided by all eligible propositions whose response date has fallen due. A second indicator measures the share with a verifiable formal decision link. A third records delivery-update coverage among propositions that reached a delivery milestone by the observation date. The numerator should never include a generic annual-report acknowledgement as a reasoned response; the denominator should not exclude rejected, referred or politically awkward requests. Pending cases should be reported by age and reason, not quietly removed. These definitions can be checked with two independent coders and corrected when a proposition was wrongly split or classified.<sup>121</sup>

The measures are descriptive indicators of the register, not estimates of policy impact. A 100 percent response-coverage figure could coexist with poor access to meetings, biased recruitment or unpersuasive reasons. A high acceptance rate could indicate that young people control the agenda, or that only trivial proposals are admitted. A low acceptance rate could reflect persistent resistance, or a credible youth body willing to press difficult questions. The evaluation should therefore pair administrative counts with file audits, author interviews and selected

<sup>121</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, step 9; OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, chapter 2. Indicator definitions here are proposed by the author.

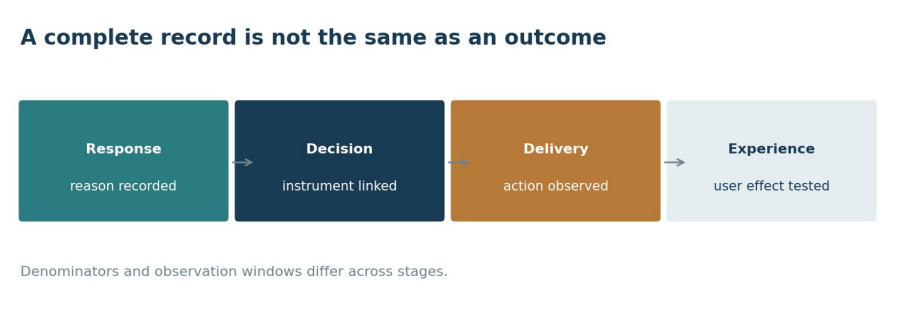
follow-up studies. It should also examine whether the pilot changed the distribution of response quality by age, geography, disability or other relevant factors, while avoiding publication of small identifying cells. A general average may conceal unequal treatment.

Table 11.3 Proposed pilot measures and their interpretation

| Measure                    | Numerator and denominator                                                                   | What it cannot show alone                                         |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reasoned-response coverage | Due propositions with itemized reasons / all due eligible propositions                      | Whether reasons are persuasive or proposals were fairly recruited |
| Decision linkage           | Propositions with verifiable decision reference / all propositions reaching a decision gate | Whether the decision improved conditions                          |
| Timeliness                 | Distribution of days to receipt, routing and answer among eligible items                    | Quality of a fast answer                                          |
| Delivery-update coverage   | Due milestones with dated evidence / all milestones due by cut-off                          | Long-term lived outcome                                           |
| Author correction          | Resolved and unresolved requests, with dates / all author correction requests               | Whether silent authors agreed with the summary                    |
| Differential access        | Rates by broad, safely reportable participant groups                                        | Causality without stronger design and context                     |

For each measure, the pilot must publish its cohort cut-off and missingness rules. If a 2027 Berlin site completion occurs after the report date, it is censored at that date rather than counted as failed delivery. If a London reply is a refusal, the equipment installation measure is not a pending implementation task; the reasoned-decision measure is complete and the alternative training measure forms a new branch. This handling of time is essential to prevent a useful empirical tool from becoming a misleading scorecard.

Figure 11.2 The difference between administrative coverage and impact



A diagram separates a completed response record, a linked public decision and a demonstrated change in users’ conditions

Source and coding note: Proposed evaluation logic adapted from OECD guidance distinguishing process and pathways to impact. The graphic contains no invented outcome percentages.<sup>122</sup>

11.6 Costs and administrative feasibility

A credible pilot needs time for intake, author verification, routing, substantive drafting, privacy review and later updating. The paper cannot attach a universal euro or pound price to these tasks without local salary rates, proposal volume and records-system costs. It can specify a workload model. Let N be the number of actionable propositions in the pilot, t the average registrar time for intake and verification, r the average receiving-office time for a reasoned answer, and u the expected number of update events at average handling time v. Total direct staff hours are approximately  $N(t + r + uv)$ , plus fixed setup, accessibility, translation, legal review and quality-audit hours. The formula does not claim that each case is equally difficult. Its function is to make a city estimate volume and capacity before promising an unfunded deadline.

A practical test should take a small sample of old records and have the prospective offices time the work of reconstructing them. The reconstruction may be expensive because the original links were not kept; prospectively entered IDs and dispositions may be cheaper. That saving should be measured rather than asserted. If an office receives hundreds of informal comments, it

<sup>122</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, process and pathways-to-impact framework.

should define the pilot stream clearly instead of promising a full register without staff. An existing case-management or agenda system may export the necessary fields; procuring a new platform should be justified only if current tools cannot preserve version history, controlled access and public links. The ability to download records in a durable format matters for independent audit and eventual institutional migration.

A cost-benefit claim would be premature. The study has demonstrated the analytical labour required to reconstruct four cases and the cases’ different missing links. It has not measured a municipality’s marginal staffing cost or the monetary value of public trust. A pilot can produce the relevant estimates: minutes per case by stage, number of cross-authority referrals, corrections and privacy reviews, and time required for an independent reader to reconstruct a sampled decision before and after the register. Those are modest and observable outputs. They may reveal that the model is too burdensome for certain channels; that result should trigger simplification or narrower scope, not an unreported withdrawal of difficult proposals.

11.7 Privacy and safeguarding in operation

The open register should expose decisions, not children. Its restricted working file may contain a contact route to the collective author, consent and safeguarding notes, sensitive testimony and original submissions requiring redaction. The open layer should normally identify a youth body rather than a minor participant, use the least detailed location necessary to understand the decision, and avoid publishing a combination of age, school and incident that permits re-identification. EU GDPR principles of purpose limitation, minimization and storage limitation matter in Paris and Berlin; the UK regime and Information Commissioner’s Office guidance require child-specific consideration in London; Türkiye’s Personal Data Protection Law similarly requires information to be relevant, limited and proportionate to its purpose. An actual deployment needs local legal assessment of lawful basis, retention and access controls.<sup>123</sup>

Safeguarding cannot be reduced to redaction after publication. A young woman describing harassment in a public square may not want a detailed account placed online before a

<sup>123</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679, art. 5; United Kingdom, UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, as amended; Republic of Türkiye, Personal Data Protection Law No. 6698, art. 4; Information Commissioner’s Office, “Children and the UK GDPR,” updated 15 May 2026.

design response exists. A child reporting fear or a person describing insecure housing could face social harm if quoted with identifying context. The registrar should offer a private channel, explain what will be public before collecting testimony and permit an author to challenge an unsafe summary. Where a claim about public action requires reference to sensitive evidence, a safely aggregated description can state the concern while the restricted file records the basis. The administrative decision and its reason should still be made public to the extent lawful. A refusal to publish personal testimony must not become a reason to conceal the authority’s own choice.

The two-layer design should have access logs and a retention schedule. An audit of the public register may be possible without anyone outside the receiving office seeing the underlying sensitive submission. Authorized reviewers can examine a redacted evidentiary file where accuracy is disputed. A breach response and correction mechanism are needed from the first day of a pilot; bolting them onto a widely shared spreadsheet after a problem occurs is too late. The pilot should publish a privacy notice in language young participants can understand, with an accessible way to ask for correction or restricted treatment. This is a condition of participation, not a technical appendix to it.

Table 11.4 Risk and control in a pilot

| Failure mode                           | Practical control                                           | Audit question                                      |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Sensitive testimony becomes searchable | Public/restricted separation and review before release      | Can a child be identified through combined details? |
| Original demand is rewritten           | Author verification and immutable version history           | Can the source and correction be recovered?         |
| Referral disappears                    | Acknowledgement from new owner and pending status at origin | Who now owes the reply?                             |
| Boilerplate refusal meets deadline     | Sampled reason-quality review                               | Did the response address the actual proposition?    |
| Acceptance is counted as delivery      | Separate decision and delivery fields                       | What action was observed, when and by whom?         |

| Failure mode                 | Practical control                                | Audit question                         |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Pilot showcases only success | Fixed eligibility rule and published denominator | Which proposals were excluded and why? |

The table is a set of testable risks, not a claim that any city has committed each failure. Some safeguards can be built into existing practices, and the costs will differ. The point is to define failure at the design stage, before the institution has an incentive to interpret every result as success.

11.8 Adapting the pilot to the four institutional settings

Istanbul’s pilot could begin with a cohort of recommendations formally approved through the City Council’s general assembly, while separately preserving youth-assembly proposals awaiting that approval. This would avoid treating publication of a working-group recommendation as proof that it entered the statutory municipal route. The City Council would issue the internal identifier and record its own decision; the municipality would acknowledge receipt, link the council agenda and return its disposition. An entry for Recommendation 50 would not retroactively be marked implemented by a related hygiene service. The pilot would discover whether the central barrier is transmission, municipal response, public publication or a combination. Local legal review should determine the exact duty and format of return communication under the Municipal Law and City Council Regulation.<sup>124</sup>

Paris could use the CPJ’s existing referral and opinion process, selecting formal recommendations sent to a named political or administrative recipient. The CPJ already publishes work and can present opinions in preparatory commissions. The marginal change would be an item-level amendment table before a Council vote, followed by an implementation update for a strategy measure or governance appointment. The resilience case offers a retrospective test: an evaluator could compare the January recommendation, September feedback, November adopted strategy and subsequent committee records. The pilot should not assume that an annex equals

<sup>124</sup> Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76; City Council Regulation, arts. 12 and 14; İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50.

operative adoption. Its added value lies in showing where the claimed contribution appears in the final decision and what happened afterwards.<sup>125</sup>

Berlin-Mitte could attach the register to site-specific participation reports already published with planning material. A single project may contain many young people’s observations, and the youth office has an important synthesizing role. The first pilot should distinguish a direct child statement, a professional recommendation and a landscape-design choice, while keeping personal information out of the public layer. The Blochplatz report would be paired with the approved design and a later post-occupancy review at relevant hours. Berlin’s existing participation guidelines and project platforms may accommodate much of the publication without a new portal. The crucial addition is the explicit reasoned crosswalk for the recommendation, particularly when safety, visibility and adolescent retreat conflict.<sup>126</sup>

London’s pilot would bridge the London Youth Assembly, elected Assembly and executive addressees. The March bleed-control motion already has an unusually good public starting point: it credits the youth body and links the Mayor’s and TfL’s replies. A stable youth-source ID and separate sub-item statuses would complete the record, with later follow-up on staff training and any review of medical advice. The pilot should not claim that an Assembly motion binds an operator to implement it. Nor should it end when the operator says no. It should preserve the reason for refusal, the underlying safety issue and the stated condition under which the decision may be reconsidered.<sup>127</sup>

Table 11.5 A different first pilot in each city

| City     | Existing record to build upon               | First missing link to test              | Appropriate later observation             |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul | Youth recommendation and city-council route | General assembly, municipal receipt and | Facility or service capacity for intended |

<sup>125</sup> City of Paris, “Conseil Parisien de la Jeunesse”; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience* (2025), CPJ annex.  
<sup>126</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*, 2023; Bezirksamt Mitte von Berlin, “Umgestaltung Blochplatz”; Berlin, *Guidelines for the Participation of Citizens in Urban Spatial Development*, English summary; Berlin-Mitte, “Leitlinien für Bürgerbeteiligung.”  
<sup>127</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 5 March 2026; Mayor of London, response, 27 April 2026; TfL Commissioner, response, 13 May 2026.

| City   | Existing record to build upon                               | First missing link to test                      | Appropriate later observation                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|        |                                                             | itemized answer                                 | group                                             |
| Paris  | CPJ recommendation, feedback account and strategy           | Amendment-to-clause crosswalk                   | Appointments, minutes and monitoring actions      |
| Berlin | Youth Office report and district project page               | Design response to distinct youth concerns      | Completed site and differentiated user experience |
| London | Youth-credited Assembly motion and linked executive replies | Sub-item response and alternative-action update | Training, access and reconsideration record       |

A common schema should not impose a common policy instrument. Each pilot must name its competent authority and choose a delivery measure appropriate to the proposition. The useful comparison after piloting would be the completeness and quality of the trace, with contextual interpretation, rather than a raw ranking of how many youth demands each city accepts.

### 11.9 Independent review and a right to contest

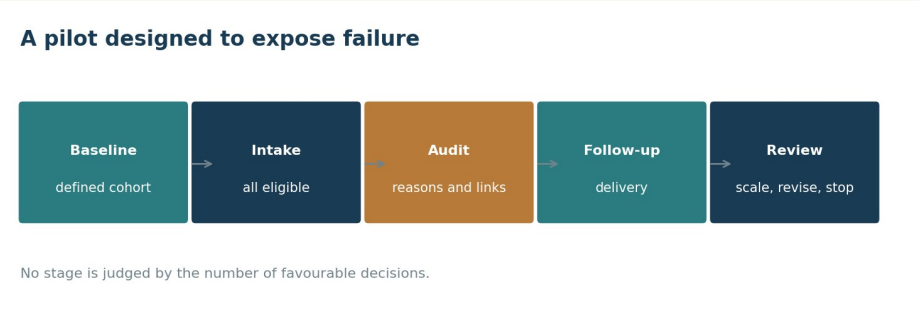
A pilot evaluated only by the office that entered its statuses can reward good intentions without testing accuracy. An external reviewer with access to appropriately redacted files should draw a sample of accepted, refused, amended, transferred and overdue entries. The reviewer would compare the author-verified request, official reasons, decision instrument and claimed delivery. The youth body should be able to attach a concise dissent when it thinks its proposal has been mischaracterized or an outcome overstated. The authority should answer the correction with reasons and preserve the version history. This does not give participants a veto over lawful public decisions; it makes the interpretation of their input reviewable.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup> OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, chapter 1 on independent evaluation, with qualifications for smaller processes; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12, CRC/C/GC/12, 20 July 2009, para. 134.

Review should ask whether the register improved the practical ability to reconstruct a case. A blinded reader can be given a sampled proposal and asked to identify its recipient, answer, decision and delivery evidence using ordinary public records, then using the pilot entry. The time and errors in each exercise provide a direct measure of information accessibility. A separate author interview can ask whether participants were informed at useful times and whether they could challenge an inaccurate summary. These instruments test the register’s specific theory of change. They do not prove that the city became more democratic in every respect, and the evaluation should say so.

A decision to scale should depend on both administrative and participant evidence. If nearly every eligible proposal receives an ID but fewer receive itemized reasons, the pilot has solved filing and not accountability. If reasons are detailed but authors report that they arrive after decisions are irreversible, the service standard must move earlier. If public records are rich but vulnerable young people stop submitting because privacy assurances are weak, the pilot has failed on a central condition. If a small staff cannot keep delivery updates current, the scope or ownership must change. These failure criteria should be published before launch so that institutional pride cannot redefine an adverse result as a success after the fact.

Figure 11.3 Pilot decision gates



*Pilot passes through baseline, intake, response audit, delivery review and independent judgment, with revision or stop possible after each gate*

*Source and coding note:* Proposed evaluation design. The arrows indicate decision points, not an enacted timetable in the four jurisdictions.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Proposed pilot design and failure gates, with OECD evaluation principles cited in notes 2, 3 and 15.

11.10 A pre-registration protocol for the pilot

The pilot should publish its definitions before the first case is coded. A short protocol would name the eligible youth channel, list the types of document that count as a formal submission, specify when a report is divided into propositions, define the evidence required for each status and fix the evaluation date. It would also state how errors will be corrected and whether historical cases are included. Without this protocol, the registrar can adjust the denominator after seeing the results. A politically difficult proposal might be reclassified as an informal comment; an accepted request might be divided into several successes; a delayed delivery milestone might be moved beyond the reporting date. None of these choices requires intentional deception. They can arise from the pressure to tell a clear success story with administrative data that were not designed to support it.

Pre-registration need not become a technical burden on young participants. It is an obligation on the authority and evaluator. The youth body should see the protocol and identify obvious exclusions before launch. A submission from a school class or youth organization outside the formal council may be important, but the pilot must either include a defined route for it or explain why it lies outside the bounded cohort. An “all youth voice” claim based only on formal council recommendations would be misleading. The public report should describe the precise eligible population, the number of submissions screened out and the reason for each category of exclusion. The scope can widen after a pilot, but the expansion should be a new cohort, not a retroactive recoding of the earlier one.

The observation of delivery requires its own pre-registered threshold. For a proposed Paris monitoring seat, publication of an appointment and evidence of at least one functioning meeting may be reasonable first-stage measures, while influence on a strategy action would require a later record. For a Berlin site change, the approved drawing and completed construction are distinct; a perception of safety requires user evidence at the relevant hour. For London, a training video produced by TfL is not staff competence, and a written refusal of specialist kits is not an overdue installation. For Istanbul, an announced shelter capacity is not the same as places operating for the population described in the youth recommendation. The protocol should therefore have domain-specific delivery definitions attached to each proposition at intake or after a documented technical scoping stage.

An independent reviewer would then test whether the same rules were applied to adverse and favourable cases. They could draw a random sample of entries stratified by disposition, examine source documents and compare the recorded status with the protocol. A second coder could evaluate ambiguous items without seeing the first coder’s answer; disagreements would be discussed and reported rather than suppressed. The method would not make the administrative evidence infallible. It would prevent the most common source of false certainty: categories that quietly change when a case becomes politically inconvenient.

11.11 A realistic consent and access pathway

Young participants should receive information about the register before submitting a recommendation. They should know which parts of their contribution will be public, which office will receive it, whether the participation body or individual contributors will be named, and how to request correction. This is especially important when a workshop captures an experience that a child shared in a relatively private setting. The fact that a facilitator recorded it for planning does not mean it should become a searchable quotation attached to the child’s school or street. At Blochplatz, the public report already presents young women’s perceptions in a manner that can be analysed without identifying them. A future pilot should retain that separation by default rather than inviting unnecessary individual disclosure.

An open record may display a collective source, an issue and a decision without exposing every underlying contributor. A restricted file can hold the original consent documentation, contact information and more detailed testimony where necessary for internal accuracy and safeguarding. Access should be role-based: the registrar needs the minimum information to route and publish a safe summary; the receiving department needs the material relevant to its decision; an auditor may receive a redacted case; the public sees the authority’s reason and operative record. Access logs help detect inappropriate browsing of sensitive submissions. A retention schedule should state when contact details are deleted or archived under applicable local rules, rather than preserving them indefinitely because the policy issue remains open.

The right to correction must cover two different errors. A factual error, such as an incorrect date or proposal number, should be corrected promptly with a visible note. An interpretive disagreement may remain unresolved: the municipality and youth body can honestly

differ about whether a hygiene service answered a housing proposal or whether a proposed committee seat was meaningful. The register should publish a concise youth-body response alongside the official disposition, using a neutral format and a reasonable length limit, while retaining the authority’s duty to make the decision. The public then sees the dispute as part of the case rather than having to infer it from separate campaigns.

The model should also include an appeal route for unsafe publication. A young person or responsible facilitator should be able to flag a combination of details that makes someone identifiable, and the authority should temporarily restrict the challenged element while reviewing it. A public log may state that a redaction was made for privacy without revealing the underlying information. This emergency route should not be used to remove politically embarrassing reasons or decisions. A small oversight arrangement with data-protection and youth participation expertise could review contested redactions. Such governance is particularly important when the very participants the tool is designed to serve are minors.

**11.12 The institutional condition for success**

The register will work only if the administration treats a youth proposal as a public question requiring an answer from someone who can decide. A database cannot create that obligation by itself. A registrar needs access to agendas and departmental case references; the receiving office needs a role with responsibility for reasons; the political leadership must accept publication of refusals and delays; youth bodies need the capacity to check the record without exposing individuals. This is an organizational commitment, not primarily a software project. A city that funds the interface and leaves staff without time to answer would make the loss of accountability more visible without remedying it.

The proposed pilot has a modest ambition. It does not redistribute the Mayor’s power to the London Youth Assembly, transform a Paris advisory opinion into a binding instruction, make Berlin’s conflicting design needs disappear or guarantee that Istanbul finds land and money for new accommodation. It asks the responsible institution to preserve the chain from proposal to its own decision and subsequent action. That is a smaller change than a promise of co-government, but a meaningful one. It enables a citizen, young or old, to establish whether the institution considered a request, on what grounds it chose a course and whether the course was carried out.

**Chapter 12 Conclusions What the four cases establish and what should change**

**12.1 Return to the research problem**

The study began with a simple question that participation reports seldom answer precisely: after young people formulate a public recommendation, where does it go? The answer cannot be supplied by the number of meetings, the existence of a youth council or a general claim that young people are the future of democracy. It requires an identifiable proposal, a receiving authority, a reasoned response, a decision instrument and evidence of what happened after the decision. Across Istanbul, Paris, Berlin and London, the study followed one substantive issue in each setting as far as the available public records permitted. It neither assumed that every missing public link meant administrative indifference nor treated every related policy announcement as youth-driven implementation.<sup>130</sup>

The central finding is an asymmetry of visibility. Institutions are often able to show that young people spoke. They are less consistent in showing what a particular office did with a particular proposition, especially after responsibility moved between a participatory body, an elected forum and a service agency. The four cases do not all exhibit the same missing link. That variation is the reason the comparison has value. A universal accusation of tokenism would flatten a documented Paris feedback meeting, Berlin construction and London’s explicit executive refusal into the same verdict. A universal celebration of participation would mistake the existence of those records for proof of youth influence on the final lived outcome.

The proposed product, a disposition register, addresses the common documentary failure while accepting that substantive decisions can differ. It preserves the original request and its sub-items, logs who received them, requires reasons, links the actual decision and follows delivery. It gives young authors a means to correct an inaccurate summary and protects personal testimony in a restricted file. Its success is testable: an independent reader should be able to reconstruct a selected case without inferring causation from chronology or begging several offices to identify the file. That is a practical democratic gain, although it is not a guarantee that the authority will adopt the young people’s preferred policy.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Istanbul Youth Assembly, Recommendation 50; CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*; Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*; London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” with linked replies.

12.2 Istanbul Who answered the housing proposal

Recommendation 50, dated 5 August 2023, asked the relevant municipal units to consider expanding Darülaceze or volunteer-home accommodation for people unable to meet housing needs. Its indexed official text identifies the Youth Assembly working group, the problem and several operational components, including mapping need, identifying sites and a proposed area standard. The sources examined for this study do not establish a named municipal answer, a linked council decision or an accommodation expansion attributable to that recommendation. The city’s pre-existing winter shelter and a later mobile bath are real services, but their presence is insufficient to prove acceptance of a different accommodation request. The mobile bath announcement itself describes departmental origins and a participatory-budgeting route. The correct finding is that the selected recommendation’s public decision trail remains unverified in the material inspected.<sup>132</sup>

This conclusion has a defined route to revision. A City Council general assembly resolution, municipal receipt, council agenda and reasoned department reply could show precisely what was considered. A service record could then test an accepted housing measure against the proposed population, geographic need and facility standard. If those records exist, they should change the code; if they do not, the result becomes a clearer instance of an unreturned public request. The study cannot settle that alternative from related service publicity alone. The value of the Istanbul case lies in demonstrating the difference between a formal legal pathway, a published youth recommendation and the actual documentary passage of that item through the pathway.

12.3 Paris What changed in the resilience strategy

The CPJ’s January 2024 recommendations included placing civil-society representatives in governance and monitoring connected with Paris’s revised resilience strategy, with a possible role for the youth council in follow-up. Its activity report records a 26 September conversation at which a named deputy mayor described elements incorporated into the draft before the Council

<sup>131</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, step 8; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12, para. 134; the study’s proposal-disposition model in Chapter 10.

<sup>132</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, *İstanbul’da Gençliğin Tavsiye Kararları*, Recommendation 50, indexed official extract; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “İBB’den Evsizlere ‘Mobil Banyo’ Projesi,” 25 March 2024; Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, “Hizmetlerimiz,” earlier winter provision.

of Paris vote. The strategy was adopted in November 2024, and the youth recommendations appeared as an annex in a subsequent official publication. These records justify a stronger claim than mere consultation: the youth body had a political recipient, a timed feedback encounter and a preserved contribution to the published strategy. The report also says civil-society governance was among the matters added to the draft.<sup>133</sup>

The narrower operational question remains. Which adopted clause established the proposed representation, who was appointed, what information did the body receive, did it meet, and did it change an action’s implementation? A recommendation printed in an annex does not by itself appoint a member to a monitoring committee. The Paris finding is thus a documented political response and formal strategy decision with an incompletely established delivery link for the selected governance proposition. The most valuable administrative improvement would be an amendment table issued before the vote and a later membership-and-minutes record. It would tell the CPJ exactly which portion of its advice became an operative commitment and whether that commitment was exercised.

12.4 Berlin What the district built from young people’s evidence

Berlin-Mitte’s 2023 Blochplatz participation report is unusually candid about its own evidentiary limits. Twelve younger children attended the on-site session; two eighteen-year-old women described avoiding the square in the evening; an online survey attracted only one respondent from the sixteen-to-twenty age group and was not treated as usable youth evidence. Nearby organizations supplied further contextual accounts. The Youth Office translated these materials into recommendations on sight lines, lighting, accessible entries, seating, toilets, sport and adolescent retreats. The district’s 2026 design announcement contains several features consonant with those concerns, including more accessible play, multiple seating arrangements and two table-tennis tables. Construction was reported as beginning in September 2026, with completion targeted for 2027.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, “La résilience parisienne, une stratégie pour faire face aux défis de demain,” updated 18 August 2025; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*, CPJ annex.

<sup>134</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*, 5–10; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes,” press release 202/2026, 28 August 2026; BadPankStraße Mitte, “Die Umgestaltung am Blochplatz beginnt!,” 7 September 2026.

The presence of matching functions supports a limited conclusion: youth evidence appears in a decision environment that has produced a funded, physically developing project. It does not establish that each feature originated exclusively with young participants, because broader consultations and professional design also shaped the scheme. The announcement does not give itemized reasons concerning all major youth requests, particularly lighting, toilet access and adolescent retreat. Nor can construction start prove that young women now feel safe after 18:00, since the space is unfinished. The case’s next evidence should be an approved-plan crosswalk and a post-occupancy assessment differentiated by age, gender and accessibility need. The physical scheme deserves recognition without an invented user outcome.

12.5 London What the unanimous motion achieved

The London Assembly’s 5 March 2026 motion expressly thanked the London Youth Assembly for its advocacy of bleed-control kits on transport. Elected members unanimously called for public kits at major bus stations, a selected-route pilot, staff training and a conditional broader rollout plan. The Youth Assembly chair later described it as the first youth-proposed motion to pass the Assembly. The youth contribution to that elected decision is therefore documented. It is a substantive achievement within a scrutiny institution whose own public explanation says the youth body has no formal role in Assembly decisions.<sup>135</sup>

The Mayor’s reply of 27 April and TfL Commissioner’s reply of 13 May declined a network rollout under the then-current medical guidance, citing risks of specialist equipment misuse and a preference for direct pressure, emergency calls, existing first-aid kits and training. Their letters are a reasoned negative disposition of the operational request, not proof that the motion was ignored. The training alternative requires its own implementation evidence, and the proposed limited pilot could have received more differentiated treatment. The case shows that youth influence on an elected body’s agenda can coexist with an executive refusal. It also shows the democratic value of a refusal that identifies the evidence and condition under which an authority might reconsider, even if the young advocates find its reasoning inadequate.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” 5 March 2026; Hugo Maxwell, “The London Youth Assembly – Final Report from 2025/26 Term,” published by London Assembly; Greater London Authority, “FOI – London Youth Assembly,” 28 August 2025.

<sup>136</sup> Mayor of London, letter MGLA190326-6420 to Andrew Boff, 27 April 2026; Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner, letter to Andrew Boff, 13 May 2026, published with the motion.

Table 12.1 Direct answers to the four case questions

| City     | Who answered or acted?                                                            | What decision is established?                                                   | What implementation is established?                              | Main unresolved link                        |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul | No proposal-specific municipal respondent established in inspected record         | No linked decision established                                                  | Related services exist, without attribution to Recommendation 50 | Transmission and reasoned disposition       |
| Paris    | Named deputy mayor reported back to CPJ                                           | Revised strategy adopted; precise governance clause requires further comparison | Youth advice preserved in annex; operational seat not shown here | Appointment and monitoring activity         |
| Berlin   | District Youth Office synthesized; streets and green-space office advanced scheme | Funded design and construction decision                                         | Works begun, completion due in 2027                              | Itemized design reasons and experienced use |
| London   | Assembly, Mayor and TfL each left records                                         | Unanimous motion followed by reasoned executive refusal                         | Specialist-kit rollout not planned; training reach unverified    | Delivery of alternative and later review    |

These are case-specific answers, not verdicts on four cities’ entire democratic cultures. The Istanbul and Paris cells deliberately distinguish “not established” from “rejected” and “not yet observed” from “failed.” Berlin’s construction is an implementation event for a design, not an outcome measure for gendered safety. London’s refusal is a decision with evidence, not an absence of participation. The matrix is the compressed empirical product of the study; the preceding chapters contain the source criticism that gives its short entries meaning.

Figure 12.1 Where influence becomes visible or uncertain



Four-city evidence diagram showing the distinct breaks at transmission, governance delivery, design attribution and executive refusal

Source and coding note: Table 12.1 and the official case documents cited in the four city chapters. The chart represents types of documentary link; it is not a comparison of acceptance rates.<sup>137</sup>

12.6 The original contribution

The study offers a way to examine youth participation that does not ask only whether young people were present or whether their proposal was accepted. It identifies a sequence of institutional transfers and an evidentiary rule for each. A proposal is not proved received by its publication; a reply is not proved reasoned by thanks; a vote is not proof of executive delivery; a physical project is not proof of improved access for the group that described a problem. These distinctions sound modest, but they overturn several easy conclusions in the cases. Istanbul’s mobile bath cannot be counted as an accommodation recommendation’s implementation. Paris’s annex cannot be equated with a functioning youth seat. Berlin’s announced benches cannot settle young women’s after-dark safety. London’s unanimous motion cannot be equated with TfL deployment. Each correction changes what public officials and youth advocates can reasonably claim.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Sources in notes 19–23; the evidence coding rules in Chapter 4.  
<sup>138</sup> The case records in notes 19–23. These are corrections to causal inferences, not claims that the underlying services or strategies lack value.

The contribution is also constructive. A disposition register translates the four observed discontinuities into an administrative tool with a stable proposal identity, a competent answerer, reasons, decision links, delivery updates and correction history. It is intentionally compatible with different institutional forms. The same schema can represent an Istanbul legal referral, a Paris strategy amendment, a Berlin design response and a London refusal across scrutiny and executive bodies. It does not require all cities to enact a new youth parliament or transfer final policy power to an advisory group. It requires a modest but demanding discipline of public explanation from the actors who already possess that power.

There is a deeper democratic implication. Reason-giving lets young participants contest the classification of their problem. A housing recommendation can be answered with an explanation of eligibility and capacity rather than an unrelated service announcement. A girl who avoids a public square can see whether an authority treated her concern as lighting, maintenance, policing or social exclusion. A young person advocating emergency equipment can examine the clinical reason for refusal and ask what training reaches the bus network instead. The public record does not settle disagreement; it makes the actual disagreement available for political and empirical scrutiny. That is why a refusal may be a better documented democratic encounter than an adoption claim whose object and delivery have vanished.

12.7 Limitations that alter the strength of the claims

Four purposively selected observations cannot yield a city-wide adoption rate or identify the average causal effect of youth councils on policy. The policy domains differ, as do legal powers, observation periods and document access. The Istanbul recommendation was available in an indexed official extract rather than a stable full copy through the retrieval route used for this instalment, so clause-level coding requires final verification against the complete volume. The Paris activity report’s extracted text has some character loss, and its account of the deputy mayor’s feedback is a participant institution’s record rather than a signed clause-by-clause municipal reply. Berlin’s design is not completed at the study’s cut-off. London’s executive letters are strong evidence of a refusal, but this study has not independently evaluated the clinical

evidence concerning specialist equipment. These limitations shape the classifications rather than being relegated to a ritual final paragraph.<sup>139</sup>

Nor does the research measure trust, political efficacy or the long-term effect of participation on the young people involved. It protects confidentiality and does not attempt to interview minor participants on sensitive experiences without an appropriate protocol. The register might improve the accessibility of public answers while leaving unequal recruitment and agenda-setting power untouched. Its pilot therefore has to measure more than publication volume and remain open to an adverse conclusion. If young authors cannot correct summaries, if reasons are boilerplate or if implementation entries stop at announcements, the product would have failed its purpose.

The empirical dossier is also revisable. New municipal correspondence could demonstrate an Istanbul response. A Paris committee roster and minutes could establish the proposed governance role. Berlin’s 2027 completion and subsequent user research could overturn an inference from the 2026 design. A change in London-wide medical guidance or TfL policy could alter the later status of the youth-backed request. A study that claims to track decisions should be willing to update its own decisions about the evidence. The register’s version history is therefore an epistemic requirement, not simply a software feature.

12.8 Policy implications for the four authorities

Istanbul’s practical next step is to publish a recommendation-specific chain through the City Council and municipality, beginning with whether Recommendation 50 was adopted by the City Council general assembly, transmitted and placed on a municipal agenda. The receiving authority should say which housing components it considered and why existing or proposed services did or did not answer them. A note that homelessness services exist would not address the suggested needs map, facilities, site process and space criterion. The response could reasonably be negative or partial; the immediate improvement is an identifiable decision.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Source-access and case limits documented in Chapters 4–8; Mitte district 2026 project schedule; TfL letter, 13 May 2026.  
<sup>140</sup> İstanbul Kent Konseyi Gençlik Meclisi, Recommendation 50; Republic of Türkiye, Municipal Law No. 5393, art. 76.

Paris can extend its already visible feedback practice by recording the precise relation between a CPJ recommendation and a draft or adopted strategy clause. For the resilience case, the city could publish the governance provisions, appointments and minutes needed to establish whether civil society or the CPJ joined decision and monitoring bodies. A pre-vote amendment table would allow youth members to see whether the administration translated their request accurately before political choice was final. A later operating record would prevent an annex from being mistaken for delivery.<sup>141</sup>

Berlin-Mitte can produce a public design response that links the Youth Office’s major recommendations to approved drawings and reasons, then return to the finished square with younger children, adolescents, disabled users and young women at relevant times. A toilet or lighting decision merits a specific explanation even if the answer is no. The district should not be required to claim that every bench was solely the product of youth participation; the more useful account is how the competing sources and constraints shaped the design. A post-occupancy review would finally test whether the investment answered the unequal access that made participation necessary.<sup>142</sup>

London should retain the strong public chain from Youth Assembly advocacy to motion and executive letters, and add a branch for the four sub-items of the motion. TfL could state separately why it rejected universal station equipment, a selected-route pilot and any training components it will or will not implement. It could also publish a review date for the clinical position and measurable information about dissemination of its first-aid guidance. The Mayor need not promise deployment contrary to medical advice; the young advocates are entitled to a public answer that maps their specific request to the evidence and alternative chosen.<sup>143</sup>

Table 12.2 Actionable next records by city

| Authority                              | First record to publish or connect                        | Later proof that would matter                   |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Istanbul City Council and municipality | Recommendation 50 transmission, agenda and itemized reply | Eligible accommodation capacity and service use |
| Paris strategy                         | Draft-to-final governance                                 | Committee appointments,                         |

<sup>141</sup> CPJ, *Rapport d’activité 2024*, 28 and annex 6; City of Paris, *Nouvelle stratégie de résilience*.  
<sup>142</sup> Mitte Youth Office, *Dokumentation*; Bezirksamt Mitte, “Umgestaltung des Blochplatzes.”  
<sup>143</sup> London Assembly, “Bleed control kits,” and linked responses, March–May 2026.

| Authority                              | First record to publish or connect                       | Later proof that would matter                              |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| directorate and CPJ                    | crosswalk                                                | agendas and minutes                                        |
| Berlin-Mitte project and youth offices | Response to youth report alongside approved plan         | As-built features and differentiated site-use assessment   |
| London Assembly, Mayor and TfL         | One linked youth-origin entry with sub-item dispositions | Training reach, first-aid access and dated clinical review |

These are requests for records, not instructions that authorities must adopt the underlying youth proposals. The study’s institutional reform concerns the duty to make choices inspectable and to correct false closure. Whether a city should construct a particular facility, install an emergency kit or choose a specific park design remains a substantive question governed by evidence, competence and democratic judgment.

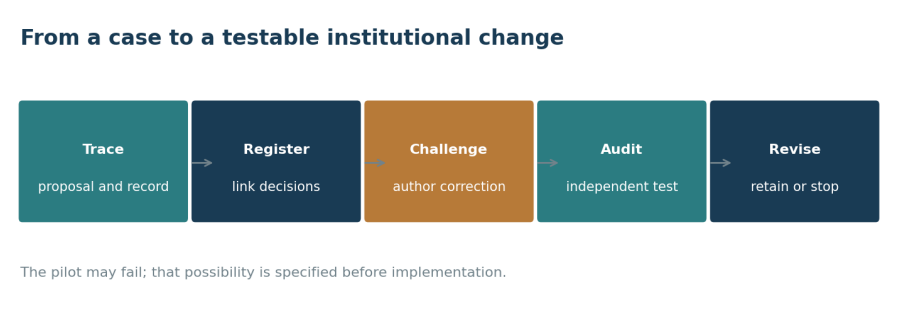
12.9 A realistic route from research to use

A youth body or city office could use the four dossiers as a workshop test. Participants would be given the original recommendation, available reply and later decision, then asked to fill the fields from Chapter 10 independently. Disagreements about status would reveal where the codebook is vague. The London case should test whether the system can record both unanimous elected support and executive rejection. The Berlin case should test whether an officer’s synthesis can be linked to site design without claiming every feature as a direct child vote. The Paris case should test whether an annex is kept distinct from an operating seat. The Istanbul case should test whether the system can state “not established” without inventing either neglect or success. This exercise can be done before any platform is commissioned.

A pilot should then cover a prospective, complete cohort and publish the denominator, response timeliness, itemized reasons, decision links, corrections and delivery updates. Its independent review should examine rejected and delayed cases as well as accepted ones. A decision to scale should depend on whether the system makes actual decisions easier to reconstruct and challenge, not on the aesthetic quality of its dashboard. If it fails, the register

should be revised or abandoned in its present form. That possibility is necessary to take the policy proposal as seriously as the youth proposals it is meant to protect.

Figure 12.2 The research to institutional learning cycle



Case evidence leads to a tested register, author challenge, independent audit and revision of the process

Source and coding note: Proposed policy pathway based on this study’s four dossiers and OECD guidance on evaluation and feedback. It is not a report of a completed pilot.<sup>144</sup>

12.10 How the claim could be disproved

The proposed explanation should be vulnerable to evidence. It would be weakened if a systematic sample of youth propositions in the four cities already carried public, itemized responses and decision links, while the present cases were unusual archival failures. It would be weakened if an independent pilot found that a register did not reduce the time or error involved in reconstructing decisions, even when staff maintained its fields properly. It would be weakened if youth authors consistently reported that the record answered their question but did not improve their ability to contest or understand a decision. None of these possible results would make the original cases false; they would narrow the generality and practical value of the proposed remedy.

A stronger test would compare the register pilot with another plausible reform. Perhaps direct youth representation on a committee, an obligation to present dissenting views before a vote, or a funded liaison officer without a public database would better address the chief barrier.

<sup>144</sup> OECD, *OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes*, steps 8–10; OECD, *Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes*, chapters 1–2.

The cases suggest different possibilities. Paris might need an operating seat more than a second public report. Berlin might benefit most from bringing adolescent girls back to review a draft at the right time. Istanbul may first need faithful use of an existing legal transmission route. London may need an agreed forum in which youth members can question TfL’s interpretation of clinical guidance. The register can support these reforms by documenting what follows, but it should not claim priority over them without evidence of relative effect.

The study’s testable theory is narrower: a stable proposal identifier, author-verified wording, reasoned disposition and linked delivery record will make it easier for an ordinary reader to reconstruct a case and for contributors to challenge an inaccurate account. A pilot can measure reconstruction time, classification errors, corrected summaries and participants’ ability to locate the answer. It can also record administrative cost. A finding that these outcomes improve would support the informational mechanism; it would not, by itself, prove an increase in trust or better policy. Those effects require their own research designs and time horizons. The concluding claim remains proportional to what the primary documents and proposed pilot can actually test.

**12.11 Why a negative decision belongs in democratic memory**

The London case is the strongest safeguard against a misleading institutional product. If the register’s designers present youth influence only as the number of demands accepted, they will make the unanimous motion look like success and the TfL refusal like failure, then perhaps close the file without describing either. Yet the two decisions belong together. Young advocates persuaded an elected body to press a specific safety proposal; the operator answered with clinical reasons and an alternative account of first aid. Public debate can now test those reasons and their application to a limited pilot. The disagreement is a record of democratic action, not an embarrassment to be deleted from a participation annual report.

The same principle applies to a possible future Istanbul reply. A municipality might explain that the proposed facility model cannot meet safeguarding standards or that another service reaches the identified group more effectively. A youth body could disagree, point to unmet need and demand revised evidence. That exchange would be more informative than a broad statement that the city cares about young people or housing. Paris could reject a CPJ seat

on one committee yet offer a defined role in another, stating the trade-off. Berlin could decline a proposed sport facility to preserve open grass while addressing adolescents’ need for social space through a different design. These hypothetical decisions are not empirical findings. They show why the register’s value does not depend on acceptance: it makes the substantive choice visible enough to be judged.

A negative decision should also have an afterlife. Evidence changes; budgets are revised; a completed public space may not work as intended. A refusal should carry a stated trigger for reconsideration or a reason why the matter is closed, while a successful action should carry an evaluation milestone. TfL’s letters say the position may be reviewed if NHS guidance changes, but the published chain lacks a fixed review event. A register could make that condition legible without pretending that review is already scheduled. In this respect democratic memory is an obligation to distinguish an open contingency from a definite commitment.

**12.12 Final conclusion**

The question that set this inquiry in motion was deceptively simple: when young people place a proposal before an institution, what becomes of it? Attendance figures, photographs of consultation and the number of recommendations printed in a report cannot answer it. Nor can a later municipal project be treated as proof of influence merely because it concerns the same broad subject. Between an initial demand and an eventual decision lie acts of interpretation, transmission, prioritisation and sometimes refusal. Each act may change the proposal, move responsibility to another office or break the documentary chain altogether. By following one consequential proposition in each of four cities, the study has located the points at which those changes can be observed and the points at which the public record ceases to sustain an answer.

The four findings are necessarily different. In Istanbul, a Youth Assembly recommendation concerning accommodation and associated facilities can be identified, but the available dossier does not establish the full chain from the City Council’s consideration through municipal receipt to an itemised decision on its components. The existence of a mobile bathing service addresses a related need; it does not, without a matching decision record, demonstrate that the accommodation proposal was adopted or implemented. In Paris, the youth council’s resilience work and the city’s feedback create a stronger record of exchange, and the adopted strategy

provides an identifiable policy destination. Yet the documentary step from a recommendation about governance to an operating role in a decision or monitoring body remains to be shown through appointments, terms of reference and minutes. Berlin-Mitte presents a different pattern: young people’s accounts of Blochplatz were gathered, interpreted by the Youth Office and carried into a funded design process whose works had begun by the study’s cut-off. That is evidence of an institutional response and material progression. It does not establish that every feature derived from a particular participant’s request, that every competing concern received a reasoned answer or that the completed square will be safer for the young women whose experience formed part of the case. In London, the Youth Assembly’s proposal reached an elected scrutiny forum, obtained unanimous support there and drew explicit responses from the Mayor and the transport operator. The operator declined the proposed deployment of specialist equipment on clinical grounds. The refusal is an observable disposition, while the delivery and reach of the alternative training response and the conditions for a future review remain matters for further inspection.

These differences matter more than a ranking of cities would. The Istanbul record raises a question about transfer and the identity of the competent answerer. Paris shows why recognition in a strategy must be distinguished from an operating governance arrangement. Berlin shows how a proposal can influence a physical project through professional synthesis without yielding a simple one-to-one account of authorship or subsequent benefit. London shows that young people may secure a definite, reasoned answer and still lose the substantive policy argument. A single measure of “success” based on adoption would erase these distinctions; a measure based on consultation volume would fail even earlier. The cross-city result is therefore a map of institutional passages and evidentiary breaks, not a claim that the four cities occupy fixed positions on a democratic scale.

The study’s principal analytical contribution is to make those passages inspectable. It treats proposal, receipt, interpretation, reasoned disposition, formal decision, delivery and experienced outcome as separate observations. The distinction changes what can be asserted. A municipal programme in the same policy field is not automatically a response to a youth recommendation; a strategy annex is not an occupied seat; a construction contract is not a measured improvement in access; an assembly motion is not the executive’s consent. Conversely,

a refusal accompanied by an accountable explanation is not equivalent to silence. The case matrices and the underlying documentary tests make these judgements contestable: an official, participant or later researcher can produce a transmission letter, amendment history, approved drawing, attendance record or delivery report and alter a classification. That capacity for correction is part of the finding. A study of accountability should itself state which missing document would change its conclusion.

The practical product developed from this comparison is a proposal disposition register. Its unit is the particular proposition rather than the consultation event. A stable identifier follows the wording verified by its authors, records each transfer and competent recipient, and connects the authority’s reasons to the decision and its subsequent delivery status. The design allows a proposal to be split into components, partially accepted, rejected, referred or held pending evidence; it also records corrections and the date of any promised review. Istanbul could use it to connect a City Council recommendation to the municipality’s itemised response. Paris could connect youth advice to a clause in the adopted strategy and then to the body’s actual composition and meetings. Berlin could disclose how a youth report informed the approved plan without claiming exclusive authorship of shared design choices. London could preserve, under one origin record, the distinction between elected support, the executive’s refusal and any measurable alternative. None of these uses requires officials to accept a proposal merely because young people made it. Each requires them to show which proposition they understood and how the power to decide was exercised.

That requirement addresses a concrete problem rather than offering an abstract celebration of participation. When a recommendation loses its identity between youth forum and receiving office, the young authors cannot tell whether it was considered, altered beyond recognition, rejected for a reason or displaced by an unrelated initiative. Officials can honestly believe that they responded while answering a different question; advocates can honestly believe that a visible project proves their influence without access to the decision trail. An itemised, revisable record narrows this space for mistaken closure. It gives a participant grounds to say, “that is not the proposal we made,” and an institution the opportunity to defend a different choice in public. Reason-giving does not remove political disagreement. It locates the disagreement at the decision that actually occurred.

The proposed reform remains conditional in two respects. First, a register cannot repair a participation process that excludes less connected young people, compresses dissent into an official summary or invites testimony on sensitive experiences without appropriate safeguards. The right to verify a summary and challenge its disposition must be usable by the original contributors, including minors through safe procedures. Second, the register’s own usefulness has not yet been demonstrated by a completed pilot. The prospective test set out in Chapter 11 would take an entire defined cohort of proposals, disclose its denominator and assess whether readers can reconstruct decisions more accurately and with less effort; it would also examine the quality of reasons, correction requests, delivery updates, staff cost and the experience of participants whose proposals were refused. A higher count of published entries alone would establish nothing about democratic influence. If the pilot merely standardises vague acknowledgements, or if it proves more burdensome than another reform with comparable benefits, its design should change.

The evidence also sets limits on the larger political claim. Four purposively selected cases cannot establish how often youth proposals are adopted in any of the cities, what would have happened without participation or whether this form of record increases trust over time. The research has not interviewed every young contributor, independently assessed TfL’s clinical judgement or measured post-occupancy use of Blochplatz. Documents not available within the present dossier could revise several findings. These are material constraints on interpretation, particularly where a missing response is tempting to read as institutional indifference. The appropriate conclusion for an unverified link is that it remains unverified. The study offers a way to make that uncertainty precise and to reduce it in future decisions; it does not turn absence from the retrieved record into proof that an event never occurred.

For institutions, the immediate next step is correspondingly specific. The authorities involved in the Istanbul recommendation should disclose the transmission, agenda treatment and component-by-component reply. Paris should connect the resilience recommendation to the final governance text and to records showing whether the proposed role operates. Berlin-Mitte should publish a response against the youth report and, after completion, examine use of the square across ages, genders and times rather than equating the finished design with the end of the question. The London bodies should retain the linked motion and letters, separate the outcomes

of the motion’s constituent requests, document the reach of alternative first-aid provision and state the trigger or date for revisiting the clinical position. These records would permit a sharper judgement than the present evidence allows. They would also give the people whose participation was solicited a place from which to challenge that judgement.

The argument finally returns to the democratic character of an answer. Young people need no guarantee that an elected official, planner or clinical authority will agree with them; such a guarantee would confuse participation with decision-making power. They do have a claim to know whether their proposal arrived, whether its meaning survived institutional translation, which reasons governed the choice and what happened after the choice was announced. A negative decision that can be identified, disputed and reconsidered is more accountable than an apparent victory whose implementation cannot be traced. If the mechanisms proposed here work, they will not end the contest over housing provision, public space, resilience governance or passenger safety. They will make the institutional conduct of that contest visible enough for evidence, disagreement and subsequent correction to have a place. That is the attainable contribution of this research and the standard against which its own proposed solution must be judged.