Med vennlig hilsen, Kommunen

Exploring how municipalities involve citizens.

by
Alfred Benjamin Clatworthy Holmen
Introduction

This report describes the 4 months of my project with Svelvik Kommune and their methods of involving citizens in their processes.

This first section describes the intial weeks that were focused on researching both the human aspects as well as the systems and contexts they exist within. This section will therefore try to highlight the main points of that research and attempt to structure and analyse the data gathered.

Enjoy!

– Alfred Benjamin Clatworthy Holmen
Core findings

The core process of the whole gjestebud system is the pre-process where they find out what the purpose of the process is.

People in Svelvik are hesitant to participate because it can be hard to see the value of submitting feedback to the municipality. Gjestebud aims to fix this.

Synthesising and applying citizen feedback on a particular issue is fuzzy and is mostly based on experience.
The project

This project is about "Gjestebud", and in more general terms about how local democracy can be facilitated. Gjestebud is a method for involving citizens in municipal processes. The reason it exists is partly due to the fact that involving citizens in processes is mandatory by law, but also partly due to Svelvik Kommune innovating, and finding a method that fits their process well. The basic concept of gjestebud is that the municipality finds an area where they would like to involve its citizens, send out a short brief for the topic or issue to people it thinks have important feedback to give, and get them to invite their friends to discuss the issue. It can be summarized like this:

"Gjestebud is about citizens inviting friends to their home and discussing issues from the municipality."

The task of this project is to look into this process, and look at how it is screwed together with the aim of designing some intervention or concept connected to this process. Since this is a design project, design methods and design thinking will be used as the main tools for investigating the system.
My process

Understand the process of gjestebud
Understanding the people involved
Understand the context
Understand systemic factors
The first step was to get an overview of the process as the process leader understood it. As explained earlier, the process is fairly straightforward (give people topic, get feedback on topic), but as always is with these types of processes, it’s a lot more complex than we think. To uncover these hidden factors, an informal mapping session was conducted with the project owner Anne Synnøve Horten from Svelvik Kommune.

What we see here is the process visualized. The municipality needs to involve their citizens in the process, in this example, a process for reviewing new plans for the physical environment (roads, beaches etc.). They define what they want feedback on (is this a good plan/what is missing etc), then they define who they want feedback from (people who live near roads/beaches/forests etc.).
They then contact these persons and ask if they would like to get their friends together and give feedback on this topic (plan). If yes, the host organizes it however they want, writes the minutes, and then sends that in to the municipality. This then gets summarized by the municipality and applied to the plan.
Analysis: Process

Firstly that the start-up phase of the project is extremely crucial in determining how the process is done. Defining the scope, success criteria, who, what, where etc. are questions that need to be answered in this stage, the quality of this stage is crucial. What do really want to accomplish here?
Secondly, the interaction and communication between a lot of the actors of the process is fuzzy and non-standardized. How we talk to people, what we say, how we design e-mails, invitations etc. are questions that are not answered the same each time the process is done.
The third thing is that the feedback loop is unclear and fuzzy. What mechanisms exist to keep people in the loop of the process? How do they follow their feedback to the municipality? Does this loop even exist?

On a broader level it’s about what makes people comes back, what makes people feel valuable here? How can we facilitate follow-up?
Main takeaways

1. How do we start up?

2. How do we communicate?

3. How do we loop back?
People

So now that we have some idea of what goes on, who are these people experiencing this? How do they experience this, and other processes? How do people feel about the municipality? What is it like to live in Svelvik? All these questions are interesting in our inquiry into the process and its broader implications and contexts.

This phase consisted of three main elements:

1. **Informal interviews with people around Svelvik, everyone from the mayor to random people in the street.**

2. **Two days of immersion, what is it like to walk around Svelvik, who do you meet and what do you see?**

3. **Metabud, a gjestebud about gjestebud, what is it like to participate and plan?**

The following section is a summary of all these different methods of investigating, their results and their analysis.
A story

I met Brit at the old café she used to run in the centre of Svelvik. It was a rainy Monday, election day, and my first day in Svelvik. She sat on the table next to me and was chatting loudly with the lady running the café who stood by the counter about 5 meters away. The subject of the conversation was everything from local town gossip (that I didn't understand) to election results and expectations for the future. At one point she announced that Svelvik was such a hidden gem and that she didn't understand why people didn't want to come and live here.

I took my chance, “I'm here for the first time today” I said. A giant smile met me and from there we were off. She told me of how Svelvik was the most northern southern town, a hidden gem of happy people living in this idyllic landscape of fjords, mountains and forests. As we delved deeper in to the subject I wanted to talk about (municipality stuff) she said that Svelvik had not long ago been in trouble both financially and politically. People were getting involved, hearings were full of people due to the cost-saving proposal to close a school. People were angry, and people were engaged in local politics like she had never seen before.

Even though the school did in the end get closed, the municipality seems to be on the way up. She was very positive and said that she thought proposing stuff to the municipality was fun and that people in general really care about local political stuff here. Her experience though was that very often her suggestions did not do much, nothing really happened. That made her apprehensive sometimes. She was also adamant that a lot of other places in Norway mirror Svelvik. Idyllic places with budget issues and strong feelings of local community.
Main findings

She wishes people would move to Svelvik
A lot of people care about Svelvik
Thinks that participation is fun
Apprehensive because she wants to feel valued
Svelvik is a good example of citizens owning and engaging in politics.

From this story we can also draw out an interesting framework for looking at peoples feelings towards participating. Brit feels that even though she is very willing to participate, she feels the opportunity to do valuable participation is low. So from here we have two variables, willingness to participate and perceived opportunity (her actual/real spectrum of opportunities to participate is irrelevant as they don’t exist within her realm of currently perceived opportunities).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness</th>
<th>Perceived Opportunity</th>
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<td>Brit</td>
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People I met

From this we can extrapolate things we already know, her perceived opportunity for valuable engagement is low because she feels she is throwing feedback in to a black hole sometimes. But on the other hand she likes to participate, so in terms of our project is she is interesting as Gjestebud in itself does not accommodate this person. Rather, it accommodates the opposite person, the person who has the opportunity to participate, but is not willing. The municipality can engage with Brit by giving her an opportunity, while the person who isn’t willing, would not take the opportunity, even though that persons feedback might be very valuable.

But does this person exists?

**By applying our framework to all the different people I met during my time in Svelvik we can see some very interesting results.**

Guri

Guri sees the opportunities and is willing to participate in them, she has been to several hearings and is active in the local newspaper.

"I think Svelvik is very open, and I think they are good at involving us"

"I wrote in the local paper about it, and got good feedback"


### Lise

Lise is a business owner, with kids in school, so therefore she got heavily involved in the school issue. There she experienced that people with the loudest voices get heard, which put her off.

"I got heavily involved in the budget problem"

"Those who shout get heard, I don't shout, it's about who you know too"

### Elin

Elin is also a business owner, she is very clear on where the municipality has power and where it doesn't. She also feels like she doesn't have anything to say when I asked her what could be improved.

"The barrier is low, but I don't have anything to say"

"I feel the municipality cares a lot, and tries very hard"
Aksel

Aksel works at the local kiosk, he is young and not very engaged in municipal stuff, his girlfriend lives out of town so the his biggest issue is the bus running on time.

"I never talk to the municipality, I don't have those kind of problems"

"Never been interested in the municipality"
Firstly, it’s easy to spot the outlier. Aksel stands out as having very little willingness to participate, why is this? Is it interest based? Is it simply not fun enough to participate? Or maybe participation doesn’t lend itself to everyone?

What can be certain is that Aksel is the person that Gjestebud wants to target, a person that is affected by a plan, but is not aware nor willing to give their opinion by contacting the municipality. So the municipality has to find him. How they do that is another issue.

The nightmare scenario for the municipality is to miss people like Aksel, and ten years down the road he suddenly becomes outspoken of something that could have been prevented 10 yeard prior.

Secondly, it’s quite clear that people see the opportunities, but their willingness to participate in these is different. I would argue that a main critique of this framework is that the two are inherently linked, if you want to do something you find opportuntities, if you find a lot of opportunuties you might be more willing to participate. While this might be true, I still find it facinating that people are so willing to admit that they have a lot of opportunities, but that they don’t have anything to say or that they don’t see the value.
I think the reason for this is twofold:

1. There exists some social pressure to say something ”smart” in large crowds. Anyone who has attended any big class or gathering has felt this fear.

2. They underplay their role and value and are not aware of how valuable it might be to the municipality.
Summary

In addition to the interviews, the metabud and observations gave some key findings. They can be summarized like this:

*How can we more easily follow the process?*
*How can we more easily interact with the process?*
*Fear of the «black hole process»*
*Don’t want to feel like «sand in the machine»*
So to conclude we have to look at these two aspects together. We know now that the municipality wants to interface with specific people that don’t normally communicate with the municipality. We know that people see the opportunity, and have some degree of willingness, but struggle sometimes to see the value of their own contribution.

So here we can look at the systemic level of interaction between those aspects.

If we apply the HTO framework from human factors to look into how the complexity is distributed between HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY, ORGANISATION, we can get a good idea of the structure of the process and where it is grounded.

As mentioned at the start of this report, we already have discovered 3 areas where possible intervention can be applied (start-up, communication, feedback). Applying our HTO framework to these areas we see that these main processes are mainly human and organisational based.
If we visualize our framework over the three main processes we can see that over time in the process the complexity is moved from being grounded in people to being grounded in several people’s interaction (organisation).

In the start-up phase, defining purpose, success, target group, method etc. is fuzzy. My research points towards it being inherent in the internal process of the people working there, especially Anne Synnøve. She is the driver for this phase, and without her it falls apart. And without defining this stage properly, the rest of the process lives an ill-defined and unclear life.

The intersection happens in the communication phase, it lives on the shoulder of the start-up phase as that phase defines what happens within the communication phase. How do we find the hosts? How do we communicate with the host? And how does the host communicate with us?
This leads us to the feedback phase, how do we internalize all this information and communicate it? This is very much an organisational problem that stems from an individual level, how someone synthesizes the feedback from the gjestebud is based on their ability to apply it to the organisation of the municipality. How do we as employees deal with it, and how does the organisation apply it?
The main takeaway from this framework is that it becomes more apparent that any intervention in the system must tackle that the system is highly reliant on people. While that can be said about a lot of systems, especially most soft systems, this system and process work because people fill the holes with abilities only they possess. No one can do their job like they can right off the bat. So how can we possibly intervene in a system where it has been optimalised for people with such specific knowledge? A process that only works because they make it work, for them.

I think this is the core of the problematique. All issues come back to this core question.
Conclusions

So to sum up. So far I’ve investigated the process, and found that there are three main phases where intervention is fruitful. I’ve also found that these phases are very dependent on specific people with specific knowledge. I’ve tried to understand the people involved, with citizens feeling like they don’t have a lot to say, but that they feel that they have some opportunity if they would like to.

From here we have to look in to the future of what this project can be. I see 4 questions and 1 huge issue that needs to dealt with in some way to create a project that creates value.

The 4 questions are:
How can we scale this process to another municipality?
How can we improve the quality?
How can we improve the touch points?
How can we design good feedback mechanisms?

So as mentioned in the previous chapter, these questions sit on top of one major topic. The reason this process works so well is due to the people with specific knowledge that make it work, and make it work well. They ask the important questions before the process, what is the purpose of this process? So maybe exploring this topic further is the more fruitful path? What if we don’t need the process to scale, but maybe we just need to create a way for people who work in the municipality to ask and answer this question more and better? What is the purpose? Why are we doing it like this?

This will be the next stage of this project, to find out how we can scale the people, not the process.
Leverage Points
Intervening in the system
This report aims to argue for the systemic leverage points and potential intervention areas identified throughout my collaboration with Svelvik Municipality. This report bases itself heavily on the work done by Meadows (1997) to be able to weight the potential leverage points against each other.

To start off it’s important to recap where we left off in the last chapter:

What if we don’t need the process to scale, but maybe we just need to create a way for people who work in the municipality to ask and answer the questions more and better?
What is the purpose?
Why are we doing it like this?

So what this refers to is what I like to describe as the «core process», the process where the municipality defines what the gjestebud process really is about. The hypothesis that sprung out from the last phase that maybe this process is more central than we would like to admit, and that this really is the driving loop.

To explain this further, we’ll recap some of the things that led me to this finding.
The invitation

So to start a discussion I made some new invitations for explaining and anchoring the gjestebud with hosts. I had earlier identified this as a potential fruitful avenue, as the invitation sets the expectations for both the discussion and the results of the gjestebud.

Simply put, the hypothesis was that a good invitation could facilitate a better discussion and therefore a better delivery from the hosts. So after creating a very simple prototype, the topic was briefly discussed in a meeting with Svelvik.

I never got to show the prototype invitations to the people in the meeting because it became clear very quickly that the invitations I had made were already too far and too deep in the process we were talking about.

Gjestebud

Hey Alfred!

Fantastic to have your input to the arrangements for the event you have agreed to arrange.

The theme for this event is “loneliness in Svelvik”, and we are very interested in what you think about the theme.

Questions we in the municipality find interesting:

- How do you define loneliness?
- How does loneliness look like in Svelvik?
- How can we work with loneliness?

Mvh,

Alfred and all of us in the municipality.

We greatly appreciate you participating in local democracy in Svelvik.

@alfred_holmen@me.com

medvirk.no/svelvik Svelvik municipality

3060 Svelvik

Project plan Follow the process here:

record plan

representatives

Følg prosessen her:

Mvh

defender

prosessen

@medvirk.no/svelvik

Mvh.

Alfred and all of us in the municipality.

Vi setter stor pris på at du deltar i lokaldemokratiet i Svelvik.

Mvh.

Alfred og alle oss i kommunen.
Interestingly the output of that meeting was pretty much the opposite of what I expected. While the invitation is interesting, it is different every time the process is run through.

What that means is that creating a standard is not that useful as I originally had thought. In the bigger picture this finding has a bigger meaning, it means that the everything past the «core process» is dynamic and ever changing.

A crucial part of gjestebud is that it is very flexible and dynamic. So let us zoom out one level.
The core process

So to zoom out one level and to look at the core process I asked to be a part of any meeting where this would be discussed.

Core Process

What do we want to know?
Who do we want to involve?
How do we involve them?

And when?

input define input

input define input

define input define

Luckily I was able to attend one quite quickly. The meeting I was invited to was to discuss the strategy for the cultural institutions in Svelvik. Attending the meeting were the leader of the library, the leader for the arts and the leader for youth initiatives as well as Anne Synnøve as a process driver.
The goal of the meeting was to discuss the elements of the strategy defined in previous meetings, and how to go forward with the next stage, this being citizen involvement in to what the strategy should be (or?).

So the meeting was the «core process», a meeting about how to do citizen involvement. My strategy for the meeting was to be a fly on the wall, take notes and see how they deal with these somewhat hard and convoluted questions.

This strategy worked well, I eventually took part in discussions to get more insight, though as I reflect on it now, more probing would probably have been very fruitful. A total of 5 pages of notes were done.
Findings from the meeting

Firstly, observations from the meeting gave me a lot of insight into how the municipality talks about these issues. There was a lot of talk of why this was important to do. Which in a way is a level above the core process: why do we do citizen engagement in this process? Why do we even do the core process? So already there do we have an avenue of intervention. Providing municipalities with clear arguments and case-studies of instances and ways of doing involvement seems like a fruitful avenue.

Another thing was that there seemed to be a feeling of Gjestebud being the already chosen method. While it was communicated that Gjestebud wasn’t chosen yet, there seemed to be a lack of other alternatives. While this most likely is due to the fact that the other people in the meeting did not have any other experience with citizen involvement. But it still reveals itself as an interesting avenue of intervention. Giving the municipality the means to explore and understand different approaches to citizen involvement then seems like a fruitful avenue.

In relation to the earlier research these findings make a lot of sense. Earlier it was identified that Anne Synnøve was the person driving the process, and in this meeting that was seen to be true. It was also identified that the core process is very important, a thing this phase revealed was that this process is also difficult to do. It in may ways proved the hypothesis that the core process is important and that it can’t really be done autonomously in a lot of processes.
Summary: Leverage points

From consulting with several people with the summaries from this meeting 3 leverage points emerge:

Process tools
So as mentioned, there seemed to be a somewhat fuzzy process discussing what to actually do when it comes to why, what, how. Also as mentioned this part of the process is crucial to the outcome of the process. So here we have identified a small part that affects the rest in a big way. So what is the scope of opportunities here?

To get an idea we can look in to other process tools. Already there exist some tools to figure out how to service innovation:
samveis.no (2015)

Summarized, these tools take a step-by-step approach to explain and help municipalities do service design. Processes that are very similar to the «core process» of Gjestebud are explained in these tools. So would it be possible to do a similar service, but for citizen engagement?

It all depends on the level the tools exists within I think. Making something that can be used actively so anchor why and what and why where people are drawing on it workshop style?
It all depends on the level the tools exists within I think. Making something that can be used actively so anchor why and what and why where people are drawing on it workshop style?

Or are we making something that is more as a resource tool that works more like the digital process tools like samveis?
I think both or a combo are fruitful interventions, the digital process tool is more geared toward different municipalities communicating how they do citizen engagement and learning from each other. In terms of the framework by Meadows (1997) this is potentially fairly high up there. We are talking about moving the power of process and citizen engagement in to a more distributed system, as well as moving government in to a position where they can more easily do citizen engagement.

In terms of the physical tool for discussing and describing process, this is meant to supercharge the discussion and quickly describing and finding the right approach when it comes to citizen engagement. This is more of an internal tool for each municipality, and when it comes to the framework by Meadows (1997) I would argue this isn't as high, but it is also more short term. I would argue it's in the realm of driving feedback loops, creating discussions and creating awareness of the possibilities.
Another thing identified by several people is that the municipality isn’t present when the most rich information in the process is available. The actual Gjestebud only exists to the municipality through the summaries and minutes developed by its participants. There is a lot of richness that is potentially missed by the municipality. What do people argue about? What do they say and what do they say it?

Those elements are very rich in information and are elements we as designers care a lot about. What people say might not be what they do. So how do we capture this richness? A core part of the Gjestebud process is the fact that the municipality doesn’t participate in the Gjestebud. So the challenge here is to be able to capture the richness without the municipality being present. Giving them cameras? Giving them some other prompt?
I think this avenue is super interesting, because it switches up the power structure slightly, giving the citizens more power in the process. So according to our framework (Meadows 1997), we can say that this lives on a lower level both in the framework and in the process. This is a leverage point that creates more feedback loops with the citizens and planners and might have more of a tangible difference in the process.
Opinions

Talking to several different people about these two main directions leads to be even more split and unsure of which is the best avenue. Mosse from AHO and Thale from Svelvik were very interested in the digital process tool, while Agnete from Making Waves and Kaja from AHO prefer the richness concept.

While the feedback from Svelvik weighs a lot more, there are clear advantages with both. So to be honest I’m unsure. I feel I need some pointer to which is actually the better concept, so do I prototype both on a small scale? Killing a darling is hard. Maybe there exists some middle ground?
Prototyping plan

So the obvious next step is the prototyping phase. Currently the plan is to make a very basic form of the digital tool with the analog tool based on my previous research of what I feel would add, and then try it in a meeting with Svelvik. The previous meeting I attended would have been the perfect opportunity, but there are several planned I think.

I was also thinking of trying to do a second Gjestebud (metabud) about Gjestebud, but this time about the potential digital tool. As part of this I would also try to capture the richness as an example of the things that could potentially be part of improved minutes.

An important thing to note is that during the writing of this report two very important meetings are coming up:

Meeting with Larvik Municipality who have used Gjestebud actively. In this meeting I aim to present small prototypes of both concepts to get feedback of usefulness both across municipalities and on the actual content. This is municipality that is slightly far away, so I don’t think they’ll be a weekly meeting partner, but it’s a great opportunity to create value across municipalities.

Meeting with Asker & Bærum Municipality who have an innovation centre and use citizens actively. In this meeting the aim is to get a deeper understanding of how these concepts could work in their processes and get feedback on the low key prototypes. I see Asker & Bærum as a potential key partner. It’s not far away and they have a great platform for prototyping and bouncing ideas off of.
Main takeaways

To sum up it comes down to three main points:

A digital process tool is a high level avenue for intervening. A low-fi clickable prototype is «easily» made and could be used to test with two different municipalities.

An analog process tool is a low level avenue to help discussions around the citizen engagement processes and methods. A low-fi printable prototype is easily made and could be used to test with two different municipalities.

Increasing the richness of the Gjestebud process is a low level avenue to increase both the power of citizens, but also the quality of the output. This is slightly harder to prototype on a bigger scale, though could be applied to small groups as a case-study.
Prototyping
Failing forward
The starting point

To start off this section, I think it would be beneficial to preface with the conclusion of the previous chapter:

”While the feedback from Svelvik weighs a lot more, there are clear advantages with both. So to be honest I’m unsure. I feel I need some pointer to which is actually the better concept, so do I prototype both on a small scale? Killing a darling is hard. Maybe there exists some middle ground?”

This middle ground is the focus of this report. I realized through conversations with both Svelvik and several others that both making a tool for municipalities combined with making a ”boots on the ground” ”Gjestebud-pack” would actually be great.

So the hypothesis’ for this part of the project become:

"Creating a tool for municipalities to better understand their own and others process would lead to significant change.”

"Creating an example of a ”Gjestebud-pack” to challenge the process would lead to significant change.”
So, this is our jump off point. This part of the report describes how I have prototyped and experimented myself through these two hypothesis’. As the individual elements of the project are very tightly knit together (teaching process, process example) they have very often been presented together, so this phase includes a lot of simultaneous development of both.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me with their opinions and insights.
The national prototyping roadtrip was created to explore several different municipalities in a quick and efficient way. The goal of the trip was to get feedback on the direction and elements of the project, as well as get insight into how they do their processes.

Askem Kommune - The first stop.

From what I gathered from talking to Svelvik and Riche at Halogen, they regard Askem Kommune as one of the best municipalities when it comes to innovation.

This also became very clear when I went to visit. I was scheduled to meet with Geir Graff and Lene Bergseth at the "Knowledge Center" in Askem. After finally finding my way, I realised that this center is Askem Kommunes Knowledge Center, not just any knowledge center. This means that the sole purpose of this department is to learn and share knowledge within the municipality. These people are perfect (for my project at least).

We started the whole meeting with a "walk-and-talk", where they showed me the building and how they work in it. They also showed me all the small things they do to create innovation within their own organisation. This is everything from nudging people to sit with new people to showing projects on screens and having people present in the lunch. This is all part of Askem Kommunes innovation strategy, small steps make big changes, so just sitting with a new person might spark some innovation.
They call it "innovation by chance".

This innovation by chance theory intrigued me. I got them to elaborate more on it, and as we turned a corner I saw a great sign on the wall:

"We don’t make mistakes, we do variations"

And then it clicked. Svelvik have done 4 Gjestebuds, and every single one has been different in some way. These are not mistakes as such, but small innovations.

And as Geir and Lene continued to talk about it, they mentioned that a lot of their learning comes from talking to people at conferences and network meetings. Talking about mistakes and talking about variations. Then they take what they learn and apply it to Asker. A new project is born.

We then discussed Gjestebud specifically and they explained that they are trying it out "now". They saw what Svelvik had done, and made it theirs. It is being used now for trying to get insight in to an area of Asker where both very poor families and very rich families share the same space. By doing Gjestebud, they can try to create understanding between the neighbours, as well as creating insights for the municipality. In short, they have taken what Svelvik has done and then applied to it their context and their process, a small change at a time.
So could my digital tool facilitate this? Allowing municipalities to easily share their process so that others might take it make it theirs?

**Gjestebud**

Hei Alfred!

Fantastisk at du har sagt ja til å arrangere gjestebud!

Temaet for denne gangen er "ensomhet i Svelvik", vi er veldig opptatt av hva dere synes om temaet.

Sporere til vi i kommunen synes er spennende:

- Hvordan definerer du ensomhet?
- Hvordan ser ensomhet ut i Svelvik?
- Hvordan kan vi jobbe med ensomhet?

Mvh,

Alfred og alle oss i kommunen.

Vi setter stor pris på at du deltar i lokaldemokratiet i Svelvik.

Mvh,

Alfred og alle oss i kommunen.
Larvik Kommune - The second stop.

I visited Larvik because I know they have done at least one Gjestebud, so I was interested in what they learned, what materials they used and what they would change. With the learnings from Asker in my backpack I also was interested in knowing how they learn and improve from other municipalities.

I walked off the train in the rain, Larvik is just one long hill, so after a long walk I finally got to the municipal building (which of course is at the top of the hill).

There I was going to meet Gillian Hockly, a planner in the municipality and the person responsible for a lot of user involvement in the municipality.

Together we discussed their take on Gjestebud, where the municipality is a lot more active than in Svelvik. They go out in the street and have ad-hoc Gjestebud with people in the street and advertise it on social media and in the newspaper. It’s a very different structure, but it remains true to the core idea of Gjestebud.
From here, we co-created a potential structure for the service and which elements should be included in the "package".

One of the core takeaways from the meeting was to validate my ideas and sketches, which Gillian seemed very positive about.

What she was a bit hesitant about was deciding to what degree the municipality can capture richness. Because Gjestebud exists as a low economical and staff cost initiative, with a high degree of freedom. So increasing the amount of data points might be counter-productive.
To sum up my prototypes at this stage in words:

**Digital tool**
Help municipalities share and take inspiration from each other's application of the same method. Asker and Larvik might learn a lot from sharing their process and thoughts with each other.

**Gjestebud Package**
Meeting and overdelivering on citizens expectations on both what it means to co-create with the municipality, but also to empower their voice in planning processes.
Prototypes at this stage

Trying to visualize and include as little and as much of the process as necessary. What is the core this process and how can I communicate it?

Transitioning from a more letter-ish style to more magazine style with a cover and a step by step guide on how to do the Gjestebud.
Prototypes at this stage

Trying to visualize and include as little and as much of the process as necessary. What is the core this process and how can I communicate it?

Transitioning from a more letter-ish style to more a magazine style with a cover and a step by step guide on how to do the Gjestebud.
Halogen - The third stop.

I had planned a different third stop in Arendal to talk to a planner named Micheal Fuller-Gee, but my south-coast roadtrip fell through due to some unexpected events.

So I returned with new energy to Oslo and to the offices of Halogen, a design company in Oslo. There I was meeting with Riche, a person who was instrumental in my research phase.

She has deep knowledge of municipal issues, and was very happy that I had taken the trip down south to ”talk to all her friends”.

The topic of our meeting was mainly the ”richness issue”, how to increase richness, without increasing data points or pressure on the participants? What we came up with were concepts for distributing the power of a host. What if there was a way to document in a ”co-creation style” included in the package?
While I was at Halogen, I also had a quick and dirty prototyping session with Peder Torget, a designer at Halogen and former AHO student. I gave him the package I had made, and we went through it together. His comments echoed a lot of the things Riche mentioned.

To make it more “instant gratification”, that you get to know what happened with the thing you did to spark motivation. To be even freer from the constraints and tone of voice of a municipality. But also that I should think about how one could show to the world what one as a Gjestebud host had done. He also said the liked the package and concept, but was quite unsure what to do with it post-fact. Do I deliver it back? What do I keep and what do I throw away? Online delivery or offline?
Gjennomføre Gjestebud

**Ja?**
- Du kan selv bestemme når.
- Du/dere kan selv bestemme når.

**Nei?**
- Dette er helt opp til dere.
- Hvilken kjønn er venkløs?
- Hvordan kan det bedre forstå resultatet?

**Levert?**
- Vær redd for å levere inspill fra gjestebudet.
- I pakken er det lagt ved frimerker, dere kan også ta borte eller skanne det dere har og sende til:
  - Anne@svelvik.kommune.no
  - Tlf. 97 75 44 45

**Takk for tilbakemeldinger.**

Vi har hørt og forstått flere forandringer i planen. Her er noen av kommentarene dere sendte inn, og våre svar.

"Bra at planen er kort og lettlest, men savner noen tøffe grep som for eksempel 500-1000 nye tomter med sjøutsikt innen 2020."

**Vi gjorde**
- Prioriter standsonen høyere i flere deler av planen. Vi har også kommunisert dette videre til teamet som jobber med strandsonen nå.

"Mindre fokus mot "unge eldre", må konsentrere oss om de som virkelig er pleietrengende."

**Vi gjorde**
- Vi ser på denne gruppen som svært viktig, vi har troen på at vi klarer å jobbe forebyggende slik at disse unge eldre ikke blir pleietrengende.

For dybere informasjon se:
- www.Medvirk.no/Svelvik/Gjestebud

More visual and "playful" instructions on how to hold gjestebud.

Gratification. Sending an update on the process with:

What you said.
What we did.
Vertical timelines work better on screens when comparing two different processes. Trying to define "a core" for the process.

Also adding clearer "download" buttons, and adding an element of commenting and story telling through text.
Svelvik – *The fourth stop.*

The second to last stop. Validating and verifying with Anne, who is the project owner, and the new Mayor of Svelvik, Andreas Muri. Funnily enough the only meeting room was the main municipal hall, so the meeting felt very official.

In this meeting we went through the package in detail. Anne highlighted some very interesting points:

*Gjestebud is about trust, and trust comes with pressure to perform. We don’t want to create too much pressure.*

*Saying you want “better” results implies our citizens are not doing well enough, which they are.*
I think Anne comes with some great points there. If I trust you to give me good feedback, it creates pressure for you to give me good feedback. This is counter productive to Gjestebud as the transactional cost is supposed to be very small.

The second point is that by empowering people we imply they need empowering. There are a lot of nuances in play here, when does empowering someone become a negative? When does trust become pressure?

Another great point she had was about the amount of guidance supplied. In the prototype at the time there were varying degrees of examples and explanantions. Some parts, like the ”how to do Gjestebud”, metioned several examples (dinner, café, at school etc). Does this limit or promote creativity?
In terms of the digital tool, there were less comments. This might have been due to it not being as close to their hearts as Gjestebud, but also because it is less tangible.

Again, Anne comes with a great point. In the interface I try to explain a process, but two processes can have the same steps and at the same time be very different. Take the difference between an open meeting and a hearing, one is people meeting to discuss a topic with the municipality, the other is people meeting to discuss a topic with the municipality. It’s the content, expectations, the next steps, the theme, the tone etc. That make it different, or is it?

Here we enter the stage where the project becomes very big and cloudy. We’re in to the metaphysicality of things. What makes a thing different from another? Can a thing be two things at once? At what point does a thing become another thing?

Without questioning reality itself we can frame it in Platos "problem of universals":
Do unique properties exist?
Does gjestebud have unique properties?
In that case, what are they?

These questions are very hard. So I can with my hand on my heart say I’ve tried to navigate them as best I can in the final prototype.
Final prototypes: Interface

The Core

- No municipal employee present.
- Involving people who usually wouldn’t get involved.
- Trusting citizens to do it how they would like
- Informal and personal tone of voice.

Trying to answer to our philosophical questions, do unique properties exist in Gjestebud?

Here I’ve tried to define what I see as “The Core” of gjestebud independant of the timing or frame of the process. For me trust is the most important point, trusting your citizens to be creative and to deliver on the things you want. If you cannot trust them with this task, then Gjestebud is not for you.
The timelines is part of this metaphysical discussion. But it’s main function is as storytelling device. What happens when with who, and what documents were used?

Here again we encounter the problem of examples vs creativity. The documents are linked in the story, so if one ever wonders what “e-mail them invitations” actually looks like one can just have a look.

Also, an interesting point is the need to write ”start” at the top, because during testing several people thought that was the end. This opened up an interesting idea, one could make this like a facebook timeline if it the process is still under way.
Lokalutvalg Meningsmåling Gjestebud

Gjestebud oppsto som et forslag fra innbyggere, til hvordan kommunen kan få innspill fra innbyggere som er berørt av temaer, og innbyggere som kan være vanskelige å nå på folkemøter. Metoden er så langt brukt i Svelvik i forbindelse med høringene i kommuneplanens samfunnsdel og arealdel. Videre vil vi vurdere bruk av metoden i forbindelse med kommunereformen, arbeidet med folkehelseoversikt og helse- og omsorgsplan.

Featured: Gjestebud

You know what you want so you search or find it in the list.

You don't know what you want, so you can pick from the most up to date one, or choose the featured one.
The page for Gjestebud. It includes a shot intro, the core properties, its metatags, a description of the process with documents in context.
The package consists of 4 main pages and a kit for creating and documenting discussion.

The two pages (above) introduce the theme. The other two thanks the host for contributing, explains where in the process we are and gives them an instruction on how to do a ”Gjestebud”. 
This page thanks the host for holding the Gjestebud. The timeline here shows where in the process the Gjestebud happens, and is taken from the Medvirk Project by Julia Grundström and Ragnhild Nordgård. Their project is a portal to processes like Gjestebud, where citizens can follow the process.

The aim of this section is to thank, to build context and expectations and to possibly make it easier to follow the process in the future.

**Tusen takk for at du bidrar!**

Denne runden gjestebud skal ta tak i de Syriske flyktingene og hvordan vi kan huse og integrere de som kommer.

Det overordnede målet er at vi kan kunne lage en god plan som virkelig løser noen av de utfordringene vi står overfor.

Gjestebud er en metode vi i Nordstrand Bydel bruker for å få til tetttere dialog mellom bydels innbyggere og bydelsutvalget.

**Hjertelig hilsen,**

Bydelen

For dybeinformasjon se:

www.medvirk.no/oslo/nordstrand/gjestebud

Medvirk er et projekt av Julia Grundström og Ragnhild Nordgård
(http://juliagrundstrom.com/project_gk6_medvirk.html)
These are the two main discussion tools. The first one (above) is there to spark discussions about what is important out of all the things discussed. It's a tool that helps the Gjestebud focus, as well as make it easy for the municipality to analyze.
The second (below), is there to put in the middle of the table so that the guests are not bound by the host to know what questions are included in the package. It is an attempt at creating a more distributed and democratic relationship in the meeting.

**Sentrale spørsmål**

- Hvordan kan vi integrere bedre?
- Hvor burde de bo?
- Hvordan burde de bo?
- Hva kan vi som bydel gjøre?
- Hva kan vi som medborgere gjøre?
The "instant gratification" that came up in the research has been tackled with the update letter I also made. What people missed the most was a clear cause and effect of their input. So the structure of this document is simply that, what you said and what we did.

While in practice it might not be possible to include everyones individual feedback, I still strongly recommend the structure, as all participants involved in testing found it a great piece of feedback. This patches up the overall loop, where participants can get confirmation that their feedback was taken in to account, possibly creating more motivation.
Hosting a Gjestebud with my friends. This was great to try, as the three people in the session all have different perspectives on the municipality. Martin (left), is a filmmaker. Marius (middle) is a lawyer and Iver (right) is a writer. This gave me feedback on both the emotional storytelling as well as the more rational mechanisms of the package.
Hosting a second Gjestebud with my mothers friends. In the photos below you can see the discussion tool being used so that both sides of the table have access to the questions.
Included a notebook in the package so that users might take notes and just send it back. A lot of fun was had with the fact that I forgot to remove the price tag (30kr).
The final prototype: Learnings

From these two Gjestebuds, a post-fact discussion about the tool was done. From observations and discussions some main feedback points emerged:

Text is crucial. The current text in the package, even after three iterations still has elements of hard to understand language. It could be even more direct and targeted.

Examples are a hot topic. Both Gjestebud were spilt in whether or not to include examples for all parts (how to do, how to document, how to deliver).

The description for the host of how to do the Gjestebud has the wrong structure. Instead of HOW, WHAT, WHO, WHEN it should have: BEFORE, DURING, AFTER.

On rewards of participating. Both Gjestebuds questioned possible rewards, a card and sticker to show off or an invitation to the Mayor came up as possible versions.

On a positive note, all Gjestebud participants found it engaging and interesting. I am also quite happy with the final prototype.

-Alfred