



Grant making through Participatory Budgeting

A 'How To' Guide for Community Led Organisations
and community engagement workers

Scottish Government Community Choices Programme

Acknowledgements

This guide was originally prepared by PB Partners on behalf of the Community Development Foundation to support the Community First programme in England, which ran from 2011 to 2015.

It has been extensively updated by funding provided by the Scottish Government Community Choice fund, launched in 2016, to support community led organisations wishing to undertake a participatory budgeting initiative.

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About PB Partners

PB Partners are dedicated to community empowerment. Experts in the field of Participatory Budgeting (PB), we operate across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, developing meaningful community engagement programmes that really 'make people count'.



www.pbpartners.org.uk

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Summary

The Scottish Government supports Participatory Budgeting (PB) as a tool for community engagement. PB complements the objectives of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which provides a legal framework to promote and encourage community empowerment and participation. Creating new rights for community engagement and placing new duties on public authorities.

The Scottish Government has been raising awareness of PB since June 2014 and setting the conditions for it to be delivered in a meaningful and sustainable way across Scotland.

This includes funding PB consultancy support, producing learning resources, launching a website, exploring digital tools, funding an evaluation programme and establishing a PB Working Group.

The Community Choices Fund is a new mechanism to support PB. It was first made available in 2016/17 to enable local people to make decisions on local spending priorities and contribute towards stronger local democracy.

This booklet has been produced as part of the Community Choices programme to support communities who wish to run a PB initiative themselves.



1. Introduction

What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an innovative process which enables residents to have direct decision making powers over the allocation of resources in their communities in a way that is fair and transparent.

PB operates in many countries across the world, in many different forms.

Community Choices is the name used within Scotland to describe activities inspired by PB. In 2016 a special Community Choices fund was established. Designed to be accessible to community led organisations, so they could run their own PB initiative. In particular, a participatory grant making programme.

This guidance is therefore primarily for using PB to distribute Community Choices funds in the form of small grants.

Participatory Grant making can:

- ✓ Improve the quality and impact of the projects that you fund with your Community Choices money
- ✓ Involve more of your community in your Community Choices programme
- ✓ Lead to greater collaboration and information sharing between local groups

PB can also be used in partnership with public bodies and other funders for community led organisations to direct investments in the things that matter to them. This could include leveraging in time, skills, money and other resources, and through that helping everyone play a leadership role in improving their area or community.

This wider partnership approach can bring even greater improvements. Sometimes called 'mainstream PB', with citizens influencing a wide

range of budgets in the public interest, it is briefly discussed in the section called 'Where next.'

Done well PB will result in:

- ✓ A community with a better understanding of the range of groups that exist and activities going on in their neighbourhood or community, where everyone having a practical way to get involved.
- ✓ Neighbourhood groups, community members and residents better able to express their needs and influence decisions made about a community
- ✓ Greater collaboration and partnership occurs, often meaning more resources for distribution come into an area or community, and when they do they are well spent.

Seeing is believing:

You are encouraged to watch two short online films. They explain what a successful PB event can achieve. They are available on YouTube:

- **PB in Blaenau Gwent:**
A larger event, run by a community policing team in South Wales. £30,000 was given out to small community groups using the PB grant making format. The film shows some of the presentations, how the scoring worked, and reactions from participants. It is about 8 minutes long. Watch it by following this link:
<http://youtu.be/VWsouNScWqs>
- **PB in Longsight:**
This short video was produced in an inner city area of Manchester. It shows a PB grant distribution process led by the Police and community based organisations. Available to watch at this link:
<https://youtu.be/4ziUmkJuLc8>

Why use Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting is based on a simple concept: when the whole community has a say when money is spent, it leads to better decision making and to more people getting involved.

The allocation of funds to your local community, or community of interest, is one of the most important functions of the Community Choices programme. But that does not mean those holding the funds should have all the power. Local people know their community best.

The Scottish Government's interest in engaging local people in spending decisions is well known. They have a whole range of policies such as the Community Empowerment Act. Community Choices funding provides a way for PB to happen, and ensure it is led by citizens, not just public bodies.

Read the Ministers message on the PB Scotland website, where Minister for Local Government and Housing Kevin Stewart MSP speaks about his ambitions for PB in Scotland. Available at: <http://pbscotland.scot/blog/2016/7/22/a-message-from-the-minister>

One of the more effective means of achieving these aims, one that has been used all over the world, is Participatory Budgeting (PB). Hundreds of communities have benefitted from using PB, especially where there are scarce resources and lots of good ideas on how to spend available money.

The people most involved in community affairs are often already working within local groups or those who have direct experience of poverty, discrimination or exclusion. These groups and individuals often struggle to find even very small sums with which to make a difference. They know more than anyone what the need is and understand what works for them.

Too often grant funding panels and application forms force these groups to compete, as if they were facing a 'dragons den'. This does not provide a chance for them to collaborate or influence the outcome. Only a few 'expert' people get to read and approve applications and the wider community is generally unaware what money is being spent in their community.

What is different about Participatory Budgeting?

Community Choices is about a new way of working, which supports direct community, citizen or resident control over where the money goes.

There are a number of important aspects to PB which are different to other ways of distributing grants to community groups. Some may seem challenging at first, but lots of communities have done them successfully and recognised the benefits.

Everyone knows who else is bidding, and for how much:

All bids are shared with the other applicants and are presented to the community at a decision event or decided through an open and accessible process.

This helps to ensure that everyone knows the process is fair, knows what is going on and understands the wider aims of the Community Choices fund-holding organisation.



Sharing ideas and making plans at a PB event

Applicants present their idea to their community and then everyone scores the bids:

This presentation is generally 2 to 3 minutes in length, though the format can vary considerably. Some areas instead use a market place approach or even make short videos of each of the proposals and share them online. Whatever the chosen format, it's supported by written information taken from a simplified application form.

Members of the community are invited to score each of the proposals. They generally have to score or vote for more than one idea.

It's common that groups applying can score applications made by others, but cannot score their own. However the rules can and do vary. Each process is unique and should be designed to meet the needs of the community it benefits. See the templates in this document for further advice.

The whole community can have their say:

Not everyone will want to get involved but PB has been shown to be a 'Community friendly' way to distribute funds.

The presentation and voting format is engaging and participants get very interested when finding out who is doing what in their community. This is because people really do care and will take part if they can have a say and make a difference.

Expect 40 or 50 people to come to your event, maybe a 100, or even more, from all ages and sections of the community; not only people who are bidding or scoring, but anyone that has an interest in the community. Invite commissioners, elected members, and professionals too. Think who you want to be there to learn about your Community Choices project.

Different funders can pool their resources and build greater impact:

It is common that once a PB programme has been tried and seen to be successful, other people working in the same area realise they can use the same format to distribute their funds.

Greater control can be given to the community over bigger public budgets, like policing, health, youth work and environmental schemes. There are many examples of these on the PB Scotland website.

Better partnership working can occur and services can become more joined up.

Most importantly, un-met needs in a community can be recognised, and communities can take on greater responsibility for making their area better.

The added value of the PB approach

PB is more than just about deciding who to fund with your Community Choices money. It can become a celebration of positive action in the community. One that creates a long lasting legacy.

It has been shown time and again that the benefits of using PB can spread widely and have a lasting impact, beyond what the money can bring.

These meetings offer a rare chance to hear about the work of others and maybe think about taking new approaches to what you might already be doing.

- ✓ **Understanding grows:** People active in your community get to meet each other, often for the first time. This happens at the information event and at the presentation and scoring event.
- ✓ **New voices are heard:** Marginalised groups, who may be unused to completing long application forms and so struggle to get funding elsewhere, can often do well in PB processes. This is because they can speak directly to their wider community.
- ✓ **Money reaches further and goes deeper:** When there is a limited resource and lots of good ideas on the table priority is naturally given to small locally based projects with a commitment to improving their neighbourhood.
- ✓ **Aspirations are raised:** Participants learn on the presentation day what it takes to be a successful project and often leave with greater confidence in their ability to apply to other funds. Even initially unsuccessful groups will often go on to find funding elsewhere.
- ✓ **Positive relationships builds new opportunities:** Spending time with people who may become useful partners and collaborators can build a positive sense of what can be achieved. By working together we always achieve more.

Participants really value feeling they have made a difference, enjoy taking part and having done it once will want it to happen again.

2. Overview of our 10 step model to PB



Planning a PB process takes teamwork

There is a lot of advice you can access to help you plan your PB process, but in this booklet we aim to give you the basic information you need to distribute Community Choices funds by a PB grant programme.

It has been written by those with practical experience of running these kinds of PB events.

Overview of how to use PB to distribute your funds

There are a set of commonly used stages in any PB process. These have been tried and tested in communities large and small, on sums ranging from a few hundred pounds to many millions. As you plan a PB style Community Choices grant distribution you will need to consider the following things. More detailed information on each stage is available later in this guidance:

1. Form a planning group:

Your Community Choices panel should be the basis of your PB planning group. You should ask new people to join you to help organise things, especially if they can contribute time, skills or money.

Don't forget to invite representatives of any

communities that don't normally engage locally.

2. Give your PB process a name:

Select a good name that means something to people in your community. Make it clear in the name that they will be in control. Maybe include the name of your neighbourhood or locality, as that can help get people involved.

3. Agree your priorities:

Before your Community Choices application you may already have determined your priorities, and you may choose to use some or all of these for the PB process. But you might also wish to ask the community what their priorities are. Don't assume you know these.

4. Inform and engage with the participants, primarily through other local groups:

Invite local groups interested in applying for your Community Choices funding to an information sharing event. There they can learn about the process, develop and grow their ideas, and find out how to apply.

5. Receive the applications:

Make sure all the potential applicants know your priorities, and that they will need to make a presentation in front of a community audience. Tell them that they will be scoring other people's projects too.



Successful applicants celebrate their hard work

6. Hold your 'decision' event:

The most important moment for most people will be when all the ideas are shared and the community gets a chance to vote on where the money should go on the decision day.

7. Announce the results:

Celebrate the successful groups and don't forget to support unsuccessful applicants on the decision day by signposting them to other funding or support.

8. Keep in touch with what happens next:

Follow how the money is used and what benefits it brings. Make sure people do what they said in their application. This should not need to be complicated. Make paperwork proportionate to the amount of money received.

9. Spread the word:

Use social media, posters and word of mouth to tell people what you are doing, and the good things that have resulted.

10. Plan to repeat it:

The deeper benefits of PB come from repeating the process more than once. Think how you might get the funding to do it again.

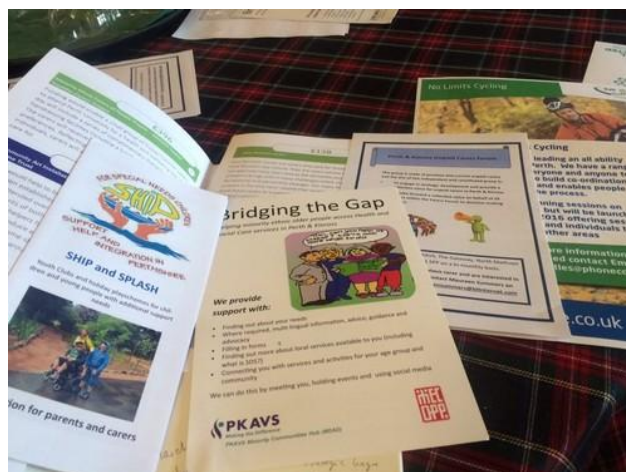
It is very important to agree the overall aims of your project

This will help get everyone working together. You can also use a record of your aims to evaluate and learn from your experiences later on.

Your aims, apart from distributing funds according to your Community Choices priorities, could be things like:

- ✓ getting more people involved making decisions;
- ✓ reaching new sections of the community, especially those that normally face barriers to participating in local affairs;
- ✓ improving your partnership working with public agencies;
- ✓ tackling the issues that matter locally to your group or your partners.

Carer Voice, Carers Choice: An example of a PB project in Scotland



Leaflets from bidding organisations at the Carers Voice, Carers Choice PB programme held in Perth in spring 2016. Singing, dancing and even a few tears - not something you might expect from a public decision making process but it was clear from the outset that the 'Carers Voice, Carers Choice' event in Perth was going to be something very different.

"Through this event we hope that carers will feel listened to and taken seriously. They're the ones with the skills and expertise and know what will help them and other carers."

Paul Henderson, of the Joint Strategy for Adult Carers Project Team

According to a survey taken by 61 people who attended Carers Voice, Carers Choice:

- ✓ 93% felt it was good for carers
- ✓ 97% stated they liked the presentations
- ✓ 95% stated the day was well organised
- ✓ 90% thought the event was held in a good location
- ✓ 95% stated they would do this again

See the section later on in this booklet related to the 'Principles of PB' for further information on the importance of having clear principles that guide your work, and of setting specific and achievable aims for your Community Choices funding.

3. The PB Step by Step Guide

This section offers guidance on each of the steps needed to run a PB style grant distribution, as well as a list of templates you can use.

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Supporting templates and examples are listed below.

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Step 1 – Form a planning group

PB programmes take more organising than a standard ‘expert’ panel. You will need a dedicated group of people to design the process, agree how much money can be distributed, decide when things happen and invite the community to participate. Your own organisation should be the basis of your PB planning group, but look wider for its members. If others can contribute time, energy, skills or even money you can ask these new people to help organise the process.

Once you have decided to use this approach there will be lots of things to agree such as:

“How much can people ask us for in their applications?”

In your planning group you might decide to distribute all or part of your Community Choices fund via PB in one process. Once you’ve agreed the amount to be made available, it’s important to set a maximum ‘bid amount’ per project. This is often set at about 10% of the total amount available – so if you have, for example, £10,000 in total, the maximum each project could bid for would be about £1,000.

This allows for a range of projects to be funded, and guards against one or two organisations monopolising the process.

There also needs to be enough bids to trigger a genuine contest on the day.

It is important the event is manageable in terms of the numbers of bids submitted: there have been examples of PB processes where an extra voting event had to be organised as a result of the number of bids received.

In practice, anything up to 20-25 bids at one event should be manageable.

There are many other scenarios we could give, but each process is unique and needs to be designed locally.

There is also a template for the first planning meeting agenda and another template for writing a PB delivery plan. You should adapt the timings and details to suit your own situation.

Typical questions to ask at your first planning meeting

- ? How might we promote the process well so the community and potential applicants know about it?
- ? How do people contact us with any questions or concerns?
- ? Who would be a good host, facilitator or compère to ‘chair’ the event?
- ? Do we need to bring in independent facilitation or can we manage it all by ourselves?
- ? Do we have the budget set aside to hire a venue, provide refreshments, send out publicity and print application forms?
- ? Do we have the appropriate insurance and risk assessments to make sure it’s safe, especially for vulnerable people?
- ? Are there suitable local facilities to hold an event, one big enough if we get a large turnout?
- ? If our expenses pot to deliver our decision day event is not enough, can we get free help or support from anyone?
- ? How will we resolve a complaint of unfairness or mismanagement?

Remember to follow the requirements of the wider Community Choices process and any application you make for funding.



A decision day event gets underway

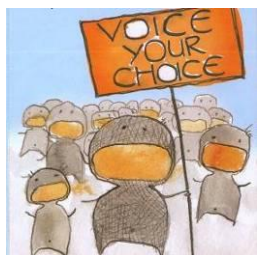
Step 2 – Give your PB process a name

When you want to attract people's attention you need a good name. Select a name for your PB programme that means something to people in your local community. Others have chosen names like 'U-Decide', the 'Big Dish Out', 'In your Hands' and 'The Community X Factor'. Maybe include the name of your neighbourhood too.

You can discuss ideas at your first planning meeting, or ask members of your community to come up with good suggestions. In one community they asked children at a local primary school to suggest and vote for the final name. That helped spread the word about the project and so encouraged wider engagement.

Consider whether you should include the name of the neighbourhood or community that will benefit. This may further help local people to understand that this is about things that matter to them and that they can influence.

You can make your publicity even more interesting if you devise a logo or picture to describe your programme. Here are a few samples of what other people have done:



Getting the message out

You want people to know about your Community Choices funding so that they can put forward proposals for funding. Later on you will want them to take part in the decision event.

To do that you need go to the places they go to pick up information about their community.

Use promotional techniques like placing articles in the local press, or get a mention in your local Council for Voluntary Service newsletter.

Don't forget to connect with a local Community Council or community planning forum.

Using social media is often very cost effective.

Flyers and posters in the right places will help to get your name out there too.

You simply cannot do too much publicity.

PB is always all about reaching out and involving new people

Step 3 - Agree your Priorities

Every community has different needs. What would be seen as a good project will be different in each Community Choices programme.

You should already have determined your own priorities in your Community Choices application, and you may choose to use some or all of these for the PB process.

Narrowing the focus by publishing simple funding criteria will help create better projects and attract good applications, and also help the community to score the projects when the time comes.

Priorities can be broad or more targeted, from improving the locality in general to more specific interventions around themes such as crime and community safety.

The important thing is to be clear from the outset as to exactly what the money is available for, so the bids can be assessed on that basis.

There is always the desire to do everything perfectly, but this can take away control from applicants. Work out what is an essential priority and what is just desirable or preferred by yourselves.

Keep it simple, and keep priorities and criteria as open as possible.

What needs to happen with your agreed priorities?

If you have decided to allocate all of your Community Choices funds through a PB process, then you may decide to accept projects which meet some or all of these priorities.

If you have chosen to allocate a portion of your funds using PB, you may decide to limit the priorities you wish the applying projects to address.

For example, if you have 4 priorities and have chosen to use PB to allocate a percentage of your funds, it would be appropriate to encourage applications from projects which address the most challenging priorities.

Why your priorities matter

Once you have agreed your priorities for your PB grant distribution, you need to inform potential applicants (local residents or community led organisations) who may want to apply for funding under these priorities. (See step 4 for how to do this).

If you get many ideas coming forward, your chosen priorities will also be used to help you select a shortlist of projects invited to go ahead and make their presentations. (See step 5).

When you hold your decision day event the agreed priorities will be used to score the projects, alongside the quality of the proposal, the passion of the proposers and the other ideas being put forward. (See step 6)

Finally, after you have handed out the money and seen the benefits of the project, you can use your priorities to evaluate whether this approach to distributing your funds was a good one, and whether you were able to make a difference in your community

Unless you understand what you hoped to achieve it is impossible to know whether you have succeeded

Step 4 - Inform and engage

Community Choices money is for you to allocate towards areas of need in your community, on behalf of your whole community. To do this you have to let the community know what is going on. There are two main ways you can do this, apart from the usual flyers and email messages. These are holding an information event, and using your website.

Holding an information event

Invite any local groups interested in applying for Community Choices funding to an information sharing event. There they can learn about the process and find out how to apply. You can also use this meeting as an opportunity to spot needs in the community. You can also work out ways you can work together and not overlap in what you are doing.

It is a good idea to hold this meeting a couple of weeks after your publicity has gone out and a couple of weeks before the closing date for applications. Invite local community groups, resident associations, churches and so forth to come along with their ideas for projects. They can then ask questions, and tell others a little about their idea. You will want to allow one to two hours for this meeting. Or have a number of drop-in sessions where people can discuss their application with someone involved in planning the programme.

On the Applicant Information day:

- Hold the event at an accessible community venue. Maybe ask your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to help you organise it, or contact your local council. You could ask a local councillor to chair the meeting. Recruit whatever help you can.
- Attendees introduce themselves and groups they are representing.
- Provide a brief overview of your PB programme.
- Ask attendees to give a brief (one minute) overview of their idea.
- It may be that a member of the community has an idea for a project but does not want to deliver it themselves. In which case, ask them to be clear about this and ask if anyone else would

like to help develop the idea. Part of the purpose of the information event is to get people working together.

- Give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and if possible allow time to discuss each proposal. Use this time to consider how other people could get involved in the project.
- At the end of the meeting you can hand out application forms. Remind people of key dates, such as when they need to get their completed proposals back to you.
- Ensure everyone knows they will have to make a presentation. Consider offering a practice session on making a presentation a few days before your decision day.

Produce information, flyers and application forms

Use the templates in the document to help prepare these, or ask people you know who have experience to help you. Local businesses for example might provide designers or help sponsor the printing of information. Try and share the load as much as possible, and get as much publicity produced as you can.

Use websites, social media and the press.

If you have a website or Facebook page you should use yours to explain what you are doing. Include things like key dates, where the decision event is being held, how to submit an idea for funding, and how to ask questions.

Consider sending information to partners to share on your behalf, and contact local newspapers or other media to get the word out as widely as possible.

After Community Choices money has been allocated you should continue to post news of the event. Add photographs from the day and if possible release ongoing information on how the projects are doing. It will all help to keep people informed and engaged.

***Go out to engage with people.
Don't require them to come to you.***

Step 5 - Receive and process the applications

Sometime after your information event will be the date by which completed proposals must be sent in to you.

These are some tips on how to get good proposals:

- ✓ It is best to design a simple application form.
- ✓ Applicants need to know what you, and the community, will want to fund. Make sure they know your priorities.
- ✓ Make sure they understand that they will need to make a presentation in front of a community audience.
- ✓ Tell them about the format and that they will be scoring other people's projects too.

See the templates section below for more advice on what you may ask on the application form.

Reviewing the Applications

Between the closing date and the date of the decision event, it is a good idea to hold a review meeting to look at each application. At least three people should be involved, preferably from different agencies or bringing new perspectives. It is a good opportunity to involve stakeholders from public bodies, or elected members, who also have an interest. Or representatives of marginalised groups who may understand their likely needs.

The main task of the review meeting is to check the applications against the eligibility criteria and consider whether any bidding organisations require further support at this stage.

It is important not to (or be seen to) 'select out' projects on the grounds of quality, as that is the task of the voters on the day.

However, if there are, for example, an unexpectedly large number of applicants, the review meeting is the place to decide on a strategy for the voting event(s), or applying criteria regarding eligibility regarding priorities, geography and the like.

Selecting proposals for going through to decision day

We suggest that you accept around 25% more applications than you can fund. This will mean there is an element of competition, but not too many disappointed applicants. But these are only guidelines. Each process is unique.

When selecting proposals, we suggest that you consider the following questions:

- ✓ Does the project address the local priorities the panel has set?
- ✓ Is the timetable for delivery achievable?
- ✓ Will the project result in an improvement in quality of life, in health outcomes, in finding work or building social networks for local people?
- ✓ What are the possibilities for the participation of local people and volunteers in delivering the project?
- ✓ What benefits to the neighbourhood will result from the project?
- ✓ Do the project costs seem reasonable?

Inform those going through to present

Once you have decided on which applications to accept, you need to invite them to attend the presentation day.

You may also want to give feedback on what your review panel thought about the application. Make positive suggestions, pointing out where a written application was unclear, or more information was needed.

Stakeholders engaged at the assessment stage can continue to work with you, or even directly with selected projects after the decision event. This could be by making useful suggestions, or agreeing amendments to how the money is being used.

Collaboration and mutual support is at the heart of a good PB process.

Step 6 - Hold a 'decision' event

The most important event will be the 'decision day', when all the ideas are shared and the community gets a chance to vote on where the money should go. This decision day normally lasts 2-3 hours, though you may need longer. It is generally held in a local community venue like a school, community centre or church hall.

Normally, presenters are asked to speak for 2 or 3 minutes. If time allows, it is also helpful to incorporate a brief (2 min) Q and A slot after each presentation. This allows the audience to ask follow-up questions, which provides them with more detailed information on which to base their decisions, and also contributes to the community ethos of the event.

It is important timings are strictly adhered to as this ensures:

- the event runs to a manageable length
- everyone has equal access to the process.

Encourage presenters to make their presentation engaging, by using music or poetry, bringing a poster, a model or display.

Provide the audience some brief and easily understood criteria against which to score projects.

We recommend avoiding PowerPoint presentations due to the technical necessities involved in showing them, which can be distracting and unfair on those unable to produce a slick presentation. But each process will be a bit different so you are encouraged to experiment.

There is a sample agenda, scoring sheet and evaluation form for the decision event in the templates toward the end of this guide.



Listening to the presentations

Checklist for running a decision day

Planning a public meeting always takes some degree of preparation and these are some of the arrangements you will need to make:

- ✓ Write an event plan. Think about doing a risk assessment, and make sure the venue is accessible.
- ✓ Have a team of helpers on the day - 4 or 5 people is a minimum.
- ✓ Allocate a person to run a reception desk where people receive their copies of the papers for the meeting and where voting slips are returned.
- ✓ Allocate seating to anyone presenting an idea - give them a table or seats near the front if possible
- ✓ Have a place the presenters will stand, so everyone can see and hear. Many venues will have some low staging or a podium.
- ✓ Decide who can be an independent monitor of the scoring or will help to resolve any disputes or complaints.
- ✓ Can you get a local celebrity or character to act as host and compère?
- ✓ Have an area set aside where you can count the scores. A spreadsheet and a laptop are helpful to add up the scores.
- ✓ If you have a large space, think about having a PA system or microphone. If anyone relies on a hearing aid you may need a hearing loop. Think about access issues carefully.
- ✓ You may want to provide those at the meeting with tea, coffee and other refreshments. Or you might put on an activity or display. Work out how much time you may need and how you will do it.
- ✓ Timing is important. Allow something like up to 3 minutes to hear each presentation. Assuming you have 10 presentations you may need to allow 45 minutes to hear

Appoint a time keeper so it is fair to all and people do not speak for too long.

Step 7 - Announce the results

This often happens on the day, after the last presentation is made and the votes have been counted. It is an opportunity to celebrate the successful groups and to show support to the projects that have been unsuccessful. Managing disappointment is important. Having an independent person on hand to check the results is a good idea.



Hearing the results at a PB decision day

Communicating to successful applicants on the day

Ideally you should aim to announce on the day who you believe has been successful. It is however a good idea to announce these as provisional results, to give yourselves an opportunity to double check your scores. Make sure you keep copies of all the voting papers.

You may decide to announce the results in a particular order and give out the actual scoring, so everyone knows which is the most successful project.

Or you can just announce the successful projects in no specific order. That way you don't emphasise that some projects are felt to be better than others. Until they have been delivered you can't know which will be the most successful.

Communicating to your community

Once you have checked the results you may wish to issue a press release, or put the results onto your website.

Perhaps invite participants to come back together in a few months to enable the community hear what has happened. Maybe at the next Community Choices round, if you have one.

Funding the selected projects

After the decision day you will need to be in touch with the successful projects as you begin to complete the funding agreement that you will make with them.

This may involve slightly amending their plans. Involving and engaging with those who will be delivering the project after the decision day is yet another opportunity to refine and improve the proposal before delivery begins. But if you do this you should not stray too far from what the community wanted the funding to be used for.

It is important to get the money out to the projects quickly. Especially if there are deadlines by which you need to report to your own funders.

You may need to develop some sort of funding agreement, and agree monitoring and reporting guidelines.

If the group being funded is unconstituted you might require they have a sponsoring organisation that holds funds on their behalf.



Applicants receiving their funding through PB

Take advice from existing grant distributing bodies, such as Community Foundations, your Local Authority or Third Sector interface agencies.

Step 8 - Keep in touch with what happens next

The hard work doesn't stop when you distribute funds on decision day. In fact, in many ways this is just the start of an often long period of project delivery. Whilst that is happening you need to keep in touch with all the projects, successful or not, and check they are on track and making best use of any funding they have received.

This isn't just about holding them to account. It's about being supportive and encouraging, and through that getting best value from your Community Choices project.

Don't forget to keep in touch with those who were unsuccessful too. Maybe they benefited in other ways. Such as gaining new volunteers, a higher profile in the community, or going on to successfully seek funding elsewhere.

Funding Agreements

It is a good idea to make sure you put in place a funding agreement with each successful project. This can take many forms, but fundamentally is a document or letter, signed by those responsible for holding the funds awarded to the project. It should include the names and addresses of key contact people, information about when the project is likely to be completed, and list the things that you need them to do. Such as:

- Keeping of receipts or evidence of expenditure
- Ways you want them to record activity, such as photographs, video blogs, diaries or collecting evaluation forms
- Any health and safety related requirements, such as completing risk assessments, taking out insurance or the safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
- What happens to unused funds, or if the project is unable to go ahead as planned

As said elsewhere in this guidance always be prepared to seek advice from others and don't 'reinvent the wheel'. Do remember to keep agreements in proportion to the sums being distributed. Don't tie up everything in endless red tape. Use your common sense as to what is reasonable, what is desirable and what is essential.

Monitoring

You may need to collect written evidence as the projects are being delivered. Collecting together receipts of expenditure, recording when activities occur and what happens to the funds. You might also want to collect evidence of the volunteer hours committed, or any added value through partnership working.

Monitoring data is generally thought of as either

- Quantitative: things you can count, such as money spent, numbers of participants at events, or their ages, ethnicity or sex.
- Qualitative: The value their involvement brought to then, in terms of things such as confidence, skills gained, and relationships strengthened.

It is important to be clear from the outset why you need this information, what use you will make of it. And whose responsibility it is to collect it.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of learning what worked and what didn't, in order to make changes to future processes or plans. In keeping with the spirit of community choices it is important to make your evaluation as wide ranging and open as possible.

Consider holding an evaluation day some time after the decision day, when projects have been completed or nearing completion.

Invite a wide range of stakeholders to come along and review what has happened. Invite along or gain information from beneficiaries of the projects.

Make sure you are evaluating against your initial priorities. So take time to review what you hoped for at the outset, and whether these outcomes have been achieved, with fully, to some degree, or perhaps not at all. Sometimes the best learning comes from understanding what didn't work, or didn't match your expectations.

Share your learning with others

Don't forget to share the learning with others. One way you can do this is send reports or case studies to the PB Scotland website at www.pbscotland.scot.

Step 9 - Spread the word

PB is about communicating to a wide local audience and this process is an opportunity to spread the word about the good work your Panel is funding. Use social media, posters and word of mouth. Engage with the local press, councillors and public officials throughout your process, so they know what is going on. Suggest to local partners doing it again, but perhaps aim for a bigger event next time.

It is a common experience that once a PB-type process has been tried in a community there is an appetite to do it again. One of the most useful ways to convince others to listen to the views of the community and fund further PB-style events is to produce a short 'evaluation' or 'outcomes' report.

The suggestions in the accompanying text box lay out some of the things that could be in your report.

Remember, this does not need to be a printed report in the traditional way. Use new technologies, such as your website or a local blogging site to spread the word.



North Ayrshire residents at their decision day

Producing your event report is a good way to get commitment and interest through recording and sharing your work. It should contain:

- Your priorities, and what you aimed to achieve.
- Some general information about your Community Choices Panel, such as when it was established and how to get involved.
- A brief overview of when and where your PB process happened
- A list of the successful ideas, including the amount and what the money will be spent on. A contact that people can approach to find out more is helpful. Include photos or other engaging ways to communicate.
- Results from your evaluation forms. See the template later on of an evaluation form to hand out and collect at your decision event. You might also want to gather personal comments on the day or afterwards.

Repeating your process is not a requirement of the funders, and different opportunities will exist in each community.

But if possible always plan to rerun your Community Choices programme.

The deeper impacts from PB come from repeating it a number of times.



Logo from an Icelandic PB initiative

Step 10 - Plan to repeat it

Participation becomes more effective given time to mature. Whilst an initial PB project can have some great impacts on community building, and residents generally express great satisfaction with PB, the real benefits can take many years.

Even operating at scale, where PB is being used by a public authority to direct 'mainstream' spending, the benefits in terms of improvements in basic services can take up to five years to really show through. Evidence from overseas proves that beyond 5 years authorities and communities using PB see increasing outcomes over places PB stopped or never started.

A successful community choices PB grant event can become the launch-pad for something more significant. But to do so it has to continue beyond the first experience.

Below are ways that you can seek to find funding to continue your PB after your initial programme

Make use of locality based budgeting:

More and more councils are experimenting with localisation or devolved services. That means areas which used to have services delivered as part of an authority wide programme are gaining greater responsibility for directing spend locally. Often that is being done as part of a partnership arrangement.

Consider approaching local authority service managers, your third sector interface organisation or locally elected members to press for the funds to develop a sustained local PB initiative that grows over time.

Local fundraising:

Some communities have successfully raised their own funds to run their own PB programme. In one community a local market, run as a social enterprise raised funds through the profits of running the market. That money was then spent on developing local small businesses and social enterprises through a form of PB. Or you might seek sponsorship from local businesses. Particularly if there are planning gains being provided for commercial developments that allow investments locally. Or why not approach community renewable energy initiatives (wind farms, solar or hydro-electric schemes), which may have a local pay-back fund

Approach national funders:

If you are a constituted organisation you may be able to bid to national funders, such as the National Lottery, or other social benefit fund holders that seek to empower communities. Many bodies are seeking to tackle contentious issues such as embedded poverty, discrimination, abuse or hate crimes. You could offer to run a PB style grant making process to target funds to the most deprived in your community.

There is a lot of evidence that a well planned PB programme can be an effective way to bring the community together, hear the lived experience of those in disadvantage and then fund grass roots responses.

PB has also been used as part of wider community planning or regeneration initiatives. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust, for example has successfully done this in many locations in Scotland, and believes PB adds value to their community led regeneration initiatives. One such example was when The Coalfields Regeneration Trust, and Midlothian Council, each put up £20,000 for the Woodburn/Dalkeith Participatory Budget.

Existing local grant distributions:

Some areas already have grant funding, either managed by a third sector body, or by the local authority which funds community initiatives. These could be on a locality basis or for a theme, such as youth or rural services. A number of Scottish Councils have considered already handing over responsibility for running these to a local steering group, either entirely, or as part of a partnership. Sometimes these funds come via national services, like the police or the NHS, sometimes from local members' budgets, or from long running community investment projects. Research what funding is available in your area, and approach the fund holders and see if you can persuade them to take a new approach.

The importance of your locally elected politicians or councillors' buying-into PB is well recognised. Without their support, PB is rarely sustained over time.

4. Supporting templates and examples

A: Sample agenda for PB planning meeting

A: Sample agenda for PB planning meeting

The planning group should be based on your group, REWRITE THIS but you might want to invite people to join you. A local community worker, a local councillor, a local head-teacher or school governor, a local business owner, for example, could all have something to contribute. You might also want to consider bringing in an independent facilitator. Allow up to a couple of hours for this meeting. Suggested timings are below:

Introductions **15 mins**

Elect a chair or spokesperson to run the meeting, and someone to take notes. Participants introduce themselves and suggest one thing they can contribute, if they wish.

Review the guidance **30 mins**

Those present receive an overview of the process and have a chance to ask any questions.

It may be useful to make a 'risk' and 'opportunity' list. Each person adds one 'risk', and one opportunity, onto a flipchart or large piece of paper.

The PB Fund **10 mins**

Agree how much you are putting into the programme, and how much each applicant can request.

Naming your PB process **15 mins**

Ask for suggestions for a name for the process. Select the best ideas and refine down to a short list. Vote using a show of hands.

Set the criteria for bids **15 mins**

Review your priorities for your Community Choices programme. The results will be used to request bids from the community. See step 3 in the guidance for more on setting priorities.

Set some important dates **20 mins**

See the timeline below to help set dates for:

- Publicity available in the community and an application form ready to distribute
- Date for the information session
- Closing date for applications, and where they should be sent
- The date of a review panel to check applications
- The date (and likely venue) of the decision event
- The date funds have to be spent and reported on
- Next date the Steering group meets

Evaluating the PB process **15mins**

Agree the key aims you are seeking to achieve by using a PB approach. This could be things like: wider community involvement; a fairer way to make decisions; improved collaboration; or a range of other things that matter to you.

Select about 5 key aims, which you can use later to reflect on how the process worked out for you.

B: Sample wording for an invitation to apply for funding

B: Sample wording for an invitation to apply for funding

THE *[Insert name of programme here]* Community Choices Programme

Apply for funding to make a difference in your community!

Through small financial investments our aim is to make our community a better place. We want to hear your ideas and we can fund the best. It's the community that will decide who is funded.

Purpose of a *[Insert name of programme here]* award:

This Community Choices programme has the following priorities, which members of your community have already agreed. Following these will help you focus your application on things that others in your community feel are important. These priorities are:

[List relevant priorities here.]

Who can apply:

[Insert any restrictions on who can apply and who can't]

How much is available:

- You can apply for up to: *[Insert amount each individual project can apply for]*
- The total amount of money we have to distribute is: *[Insert total amount]*

Before you apply

- Please read the information on our website. *[Insert link]*.
- If you are unsure if your proposal is suitable for this programme just get in touch and we will advise you. Contact us here: *[Insert contact details]*.

How to apply

- Come to our information event where you can pick up an application form, meet the other potential applicants and get help to develop your idea
[Insert details such as date, time and venue of the information meeting, as well as other ways to pick up an application form, such as through a website, or at a community venue.]
- You need to return your completed application by *[Enter closing date]* and send it to:
[Enter details on where to return applications].
- You will be asked to make a public presentation about your idea on:
[Enter date and details of decision event].
- You will have *[XX]* minutes to make your presentation. *[Insert how long or otherwise describe how they will need to present their project.]*
- Members of the community in the audience and other applicants will then vote on who gets funded. You won't be able to score your own application *[delete as applicable.]*

To find out more get in touch. *[Insert your own contact information]*

C: Sample plan for running a PB process

Use the table below to start making your project plan:

Task	From start of process (estimate)	Enter proposed date	Where or how activity will take place?	Key tasks/actions	Who is tasked with doing it?
Set up and hold first steering meetings	2 weeks				
Publicise and send out application forms	4 weeks				
Hold information event	6 weeks				
Receive applications	8 weeks				
Hold review meeting	10 weeks				
Hold the decision event	12 weeks				
Distribute funds and deliver projects	6 months or more				
Total recommended time to distribute funds using PB	12 weeks (3 months)				

D: Sample questions for application form

Below are questions you might put on your application form. It is worth checking to see if application forms can be made available by other Community Choices projects for you to copy or learn from.

Remember, the whole point of running a PB process is to make it easy for people to apply. Keep questions to an absolute minimum as the applicants will also be making a presentation, and it is on that presentation the final decision will be taken by the whole community.

Question	Application form questions
1	Name of group or individual applying for funds
2	Where are you based or located? <i>[Or Who benefits from your group? etc]</i>
3	What was your organisation set up to do, or if not yet formed tell us about yourselves?
4	What is your idea (that you are applying for these funds for)?
5	What need does your idea fulfil in your community?
6	How will you know that you have successfully achieved what you plan to do?
7	How much funding are you seeking?
8	Your contact details <i>[Lead person, telephone, address and email etc.]</i>

E: Sample Agenda and timings for decision day

In this example there are 15 groups presenting projects, each of 3 minutes. In general presentations run to time but for safety allow 4 minutes for each 3 minute presentation.

Agenda

[Enter date and venue]

Estimated Timings	Agenda item	Notes (for organisers)
Start time	Registration	<i>Register people and hand out scoring sheets (we have allowed 10 minutes for this but it might take longer)</i>
Start time +10 mins	Welcome and describing the process	<i>Ask your host to outline the running order and format of the day, and any rules. Remind all participants of the format and read out the priorities of the process to help people score projects against them.</i>
Start time +20 mins	First presentations x 5	<i>Allow up to 20 minutes to hear the first 5 presentations</i>
Start time +40 mins	Break for first scoring Round	<i>Allow 5 minutes to score first 5 projects</i>
Start time +45 mins	Second presentations x 5	<i>Allow 20 minutes to hear the next 5 presentations</i>
Start time +65 mins	Break for second scoring round	<i>Allow 5 minutes to score next 5 projects</i>
Start time +70 mins	Third presentations x 5	<i>Allow 20 minutes to hear the final 4 presentations</i>
Start time +90 mins	Break for third scoring round	<i>Allow 10 minutes to complete/adjust scoring and collect in scoring sheets</i>
Start time +100 mins	Scoring break	<i>Allow 30 minutes whilst scores are calculated</i>
Start time + 130 mins	Announcing the results	<i>Allow 20 minutes to announce results, hand out and collect evaluations and close the meeting</i>
Start time + 150 mins	Close	<i>Total meeting time 150mins = 2hrs 30 mins</i>

F: Example format for a scoring sheet



In this example EACH project receives a score out of 5 points, where 5 is the highest and 1 is the lowest.

Smiley faces helps to make sure people understand that 1 is low and 5 is high. Those scoring can simply place a tick in the relevant box against each project

- Make sure you include instructions on your voting sheets to help people who will be scoring. Such as that they MUST score every project for their voting sheet to count, or what 1 point means and what 5 points mean (e.g. which is low and which is high).
- You may want to add more information, such as a brief description of each project, and how much is being bid for.
- It helps to number each project for when you are counting the scores.
- It is a good idea to pre-number every scoring sheet so you can keep track of how many people voted

Remember there are many ways to ask people to score projects, such as ranking each project out of a certain number of points (as in this example). Or asking people to select their top projects (which each have an equal score). Or perhaps ranking every project from the best to worst. Choose something that is easy to do, as you don't want to have lots of spoilt or incorrectly filled in scoring sheets.

Make sure people have to score more than one project, so they don't just vote for their friends.

Number	Project Name	Notes of project						
			1	2	3	4	5	
Project 1	<i>[Print the project name here. Do this yourselves rather than leaving it to the scorers]</i>	<i>[space left for scorers to make their own notes, or where you add more information for them]</i>						
Project 2								
Project 3								
Project 4								
Project 5								
Project 6								
Project 7								
Project 8								
<i>etc</i>	<i>[add as many rows as there are projects]</i>							

G: Sample template for scoring applications

In this example each project is scored out of 5 points, with 5 being the highest. Using a grid like the one below enter and add up the scores. Each voter is given a numbered voting sheet and then that is used to enter their score on the table below (*first 3 lines in red are example scores*) having 5 equal votes to give to their top 5 projects.

(See the scoring guidance appendix for more on different ways for projects to be scored)

A spreadsheet is helpful to total the results, or you can do it manually with a calculator. Or you may decide another method of scoring, like each voter

Re-check your scores before you announce them: - it's easy to make mistakes when lots of people are voting and you are rushing to announce the result.

	Enter scores here (add more columns/re-number as needed.) It is a good idea to number all your voting sheets and match them to the numbers at the top of the columns, so you can check them later																	
Number on voting sheet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total score
Name of project																		
<i>[Insert name of first project]</i>	4	3	5	2	1	5	4	5	3	2	4	1	5	3	4	3	1	55
<i>[Insert name of second project]</i>	2	3	2	5	3	4	3	1	2	5	4	4	3	2	4	1	3	51
<i>[Insert name of second project]</i>	5	5	4	5	3	5	4	5	3	4	5	2	5	2	5	4	5	71
Etc....																		

Entered by:
Checked by:

Date:
Date:

H: Sample of an Evaluation sheet used at a decision event

Use a form to collect comments from all the attendees at your decision event. Here is a possible version of the questions to ask. You may also want to ask if people want to get involved in organising the next event.

[Enter event name]

Evaluation Form

Your Name: _____ (optional)

Contact details: _____ (optional)

How do you rate today's event? (5 is high, 1 is low). Circle your answer below:

The venue, catering and other arrangements	1	2	3	4	5
The overall content of the day	1	2	3	4	5
The presentations and supporting information provided	1	2	3	4	5
Your ability to contribute to the day	1	2	3	4	5
How much the day met your expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Is this a good way to make this sort of decision?	1	2	3	4	5

What was the best thing(s) about the day?

What was the worst thing(s) about the day?

What could be done better at future decision events?

Any other comments? (Add more comments overleaf if you like)

Thank you!!

Appendix: Where next? PB at scale

Within the UK the most developed form of PB so far has been local participatory grant making. That is, a wide pool of local people openly reviewing and scoring funding proposals for local projects.

This has worked successfully in a many places, but the challenge remains on how to scale up the influence of residents over the 'mainstream' money spent by public bodies, which annually reach into the billions.

Below are some PB approaches that have or could be tried, and for which you could campaign for, or request that your local authority test out.

Bringing it all back home – PB in Porto Alegre, Brazil

Porto Alegre is regarded as the home of PB worldwide. Starting in the late 1980's over time Neighbourhood budget committees have been given the authority to determine the citywide budget, not just the allocation of resources for their particular neighbourhood. This has been as large as 200 million dollars per year on construction and services subject to participatory budgeting.

Annual spending on fixed expenses, such as debt servicing and pensions, is not subject to public participation.

Up to fifty thousand residents of Porto Alegre have annually taken part in the process (compared to around 1.5 million city inhabitants).

- Community members identify spending priorities and select budget delegates
- Budget delegates develop specific spending proposals, with help from experts
- Community members vote on which proposals to fund
- The city or institution implements the top proposals

Case studies of eight municipalities in Brazil show PB results in more equitable public spending, greater government transparency and accountability, increased participation especially by marginalized or poorer residents, alongside considerable democratic and citizenship learning.



Participatory Budgeting In Porto Alegre

PB at scale around the world:

New York:

"In four years participatory budgeting has exploded from four to 27 New York City Council districts. With over 51,000 voters casting ballots last cycle to allocate a total of \$32 million dollars to projects across the city, New York's experiment in direct democracy has quickly become the largest of its kind in North America."

Colin O'Connor, Gotham Gazette October 2015.



PB In New York

Iceland's new Citizens Constitution supports PB:

- 950 Citizens initially involved
- Constitutional experts drafted 700 page guidance document
- 25 residents elected to finalise content in consultation with wider resident population.

"The City of Reykjavik has truly found a successful strategy to enhance public participation in the municipality." Icelandic Citizens' Foundation.

300 million ISK (about £1.4m) has been allocated per year for ideas from citizens on how to improve 10 different neighbourhoods in the capital city of Iceland each year.

Paris:

Ambitions for 426m Euros by 2020, which is around 5% of the city capital budget spent through PB. Uses online technology to receive, develop and prioritise project ideas coming directly from citizens.



Info-graphic from Paris's PB programme

Streamlining participation through PB

Many different public bodies spend public money. These include Health Authorities, the Police, Public Transport bodies, Housing Associations and Local Authorities. Each year most spending will be already committed to keeping existing public services going but some money can always be found for new investment or re-planning a service. This means that communities are often approached more than once, with each public body in turn consulting on their budget. The costs of a consultation can be considerable, so often it isn't done thoroughly, even though it is accepted that good engagement leads to better spending.

Proposal One: Pooling Partnership Investment Budgets in one process.

If public agencies are spending money without thinking about what other people are doing there can be a lot of wasted money through duplication, or a lack of 'joined up' services. The proposal is that these agencies combine their local consultation processes through PB, and thereby each year:

- Say how much money they will be spending in an area, or to tackle a problem.
- Agreeing to pool their budgets to create one PB fund.

- Sharing one process to decide how that pooled budget should be spent.
- Through that agree how much of each shared budget is spent by each agency.

The important features of this model are:

- The money is not given over to community groups to spend but is retained within the agencies pooling their budgets.
- Small amounts of investment money are grouped together so their impacts can be greater.
- Local people have a chance to say what is important within their area, and can see they are being listened to.
- There is one annual cycle of community engagement so the costs of consultation are reduced.
- Each area will have different priorities, and each area will get a different amount of spending by each agency, but overall agencies are likely to get back most of what they put in. Or maybe more.

Proposal Two: Reserve a part of a public budget for PB

The Scottish Government is proposing that 1% of all public budgets committed to PB is achievable. "I want us to be ambitious in what we do which is why we are committed to ensuring local authorities have a target of giving at least 1% of their budget to Community Choices.

This amounts to tens of millions of pounds which will be in the hands of local people to decide how best to spend that money in their communities, on their priorities."

Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing, 2016.

Proposal Three: Community led commissioning

The Western Isles community led commissioning process for rural bus transport, Edinburgh Council's Highways and Housing PB initiative in the South Central area and the North Of England NHS 'Commissioning Cubes' PB processes are all ways public agencies are involving citizens directly in commissioning public services. Any budget setting process can become more participatory.

Appendix: Principles of PB in Scotland

PB is most effective when underpinned by a set of principles. These should be reviewed and agreed by the steering group, as they can help with evaluation, or keep a project 'on track'.

For example, it's worth making sure the engagement work you do is informed by the newly revised National Standards for Community Engagement.

Information on these available at <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk>

The UK PB network list these following principles for PB:

- 1. Local Ownership:** Residents should be involved in setting budget priorities and identifying projects for public spend in their area wherever possible.
- 2. Direct Involvement:** PB should involve direct as well as representative engagement.
- 3. Support for representative democracy:** Participation mechanisms such as PB should be seen as supporting representative democracy rather than undermining it. PB can increase citizens' trust of councillors and boost the role of ward councillors.
- 4. Mainstream Involvement:** Over time PB processes should move towards residents being involved in decisions over mainstream budgets (as opposed to only small grants processes).
- 5. Accessibility:** Participants must have good and clear access to PB processes.
- 6. Transparency:** PB processes are designed to give citizens full and clear knowledge of public budgets in their area, even those over which they do not have a direct say.
- 7. Deliberation:** PB processes should take citizens beyond personal choice and involve real deliberation around budget decisions
- 8. Empowerment:** Citizens, officers, councillors and partners should plan and lead PB events together, demonstrating local people's empowerment.
- 9. Shared responsibility:** PB should build common purpose and a commitment from all stakeholders.

The full 2009 version of PB network Values, Principles and Standards are available at:

<https://pbnetwork.org.uk>

What Works Principles for PB.

In 2015 the What Works Scotland Programme produced a collaborative paper where it gave some alternative principles for PB. These were:

Principle 1: PB is a long-term endeavour.

Principle 2: PB requires strong leadership, time and resource.

Principle 3: PB should be independently facilitated.

Principle 4: PB enables an authentic representation of community interest.

Principle 5: PB should be a new and distinct approach.

Principle 6: PB must utilise existing community groups.

Principle 7: PB must be clear what form of democracy it will take.

Principle 8: PB recognises the challenges in engaging socially excluded citizens.

Principle 9: PB has realistic expectations of community representation.

Principle 10: PB allocates reasonable funding to a limited number of projects.

More information on these principles can be found in the document called Participatory budgeting in Scotland: an overview of strategic design choices and principles for effective delivery, at:

<http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/collaborative-publications/>

Whatever principles you decide best underpin your PB project, they should be simple to understand, and written in language that is meaningful for those involved in your process.

Appendix: On scoring/voting systems

When members of a community score presentations or project proposals there is a number of ways they can do this. Which method is chosen should be based on your own situation and agreed and ideally tested before the day through a 'dry run'. The right voting system can aid deliberation and fairness.

Scorers may be encouraged to score each project as they are heard, but often they are asked to hear from a few projects first before starting to score, to improve their judgement, and so not disadvantage the first few projects to present their idea. Or even to hear all the proposals and then make their choice.

In PB, unlike electoral voting (such as 'first past the post') its normal to have to make more than one choice, to encourage (or force) people to vote for more than their friends. Below are common systems and a few potential pros and cons for each method.

a) Score projects (using common criteria)

In this method each and every project is rated, out of (for example) 5 or 10 points, with 5 or 10 being high and 1 being low. Generally this is done on a voting sheet or by using an electronic voting pad. On the scoring sheet there may be a single box to write in a score, or a set of boxes from which you can select.

Pros:

- Everyone considers the merits of every project.
- Detailed results based on deeper deliberation.
- Can allow people to 'score as they go' or within scoring rounds.
- Can include visual cues such as smiley/sad faces to help people with their rating.
- Allows people to reward projects they think are well conceived or meet a definitive need.

Cons:

- Can be hard work to rate multiple options.
- Harder to re-score a project later (e.g. if you hear better or worse projects later on).
- Risk that people will give their own preferred project a high score and unfairly low scores for everyone else.
- Can be time consuming to count and announce results on the day.

b) Order projects (rank by preference)

In this method people are asked to rank some or all of the projects in order of preference. For example, giving 10 points to the best project, 9 to the next, and

so on down to 1 point. Or maybe to have 5 as the top score and then descending scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1.

Pros:

- Easier than scoring every project.
- Allows people to reward projects they think are well conceived or meet a need or criteria.

Cons:

- Easy to make a mistake (missing out scores or duplicating a score) leading to spoilt papers.
- Some projects could score zero points.

c) Multiple equal votes (approval ballot)

In this method scorers have a number of equally weighted votes. Typically 5 or 10 votes. These they distribute between the various proposals. They can do this on a paper scoring sheet (where they are asked to tick or put a cross against their selected projects) or they could vote with counters or tokens placed into voting receptacles for each project, or by sticky dots placed on a visual display.

Pros:

- Simple and easy to understand.
- Easy to count.
- Most effective when a lot of people are voting.

Cons:

- Risks of voting irregularities (check all votes are cast and some not withheld.)
- Risks of multiple votes going to the same project (when using voting receptacles).
- If using receptacles to collect votes or sticky dots when it's possible to see how others have voted you could get a 'herd bias' emerging. People tend to vote for projects others are already backing.

d) Ranking, but with added negative vote

In this method you can rank some projects (typically from 3 down to 1), but also have the option of a negative vote for projects you object to.

Pros:

- Easy to count and score fewer options.
- Identifies contentious projects, potentially allowing for further deliberation on why it is contentious.

Cons:

- Unfamiliar to offer negative votes too.
- May bring fears unpopular causes or marginalised community may be unfairly highlighted.

Appendix: Find information on PB

More information is always available if you need it. Just search for it or ask!

The PB Scotland website provides lots of free information on how PB is developing in Scotland. You are encouraged to send reports of your Community Choices project to them, so others can learn from what you did as well:

<http://pbscotland.scot>

The UK PB Network website also contains lots of resources about PB, including free to download toolkits, videos or news of how PB is growing in England and worldwide:

<https://pbnetwork.org.uk/>

PB Partners provides expert facilitation and guidance in developing PB programmes:

<http://www.pbpartners.org.uk/>

The National Standards for Community Engagement are available on the Voice website at:

<http://www.voicescotland.org.uk>

Equalities and Human Rights law and best practise in ensuring equal access to services is available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

Connecting to expertise through social media

To find out more about PB or to ask any questions about PB you can use online forums. All Community Choices projects are welcome to join them:

- Use Twitter to follow PB in Scotland using: [@PB_Scotland](https://twitter.com/PB_Scotland)
- Join in discussions, ask questions and find news on the PB across the UK on the PB Network Facebook group at: www.facebook.com/groups/278917175561062/
- Join the PB in the UK group on LinkedIn at: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3854882>

Or why not set up your own local online Community Choices group to engage with your community.



Don't try to reinvent the wheel.

Remember the value of learning exchanges and study trips.

Seeing PB in action and asking questions of those who have already done it is the best way to learn what works, and what doesn't.

Grant making through Participatory Budgeting

A 'How To' guide for Community Led Organisations and community engagement workers.

This booklet has been produced to inform communities who wish to run a Participatory Budgeting initiative themselves.



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