PB Partners
Making People Count

Hear the Voice
Make the Change

10 ways to record and evaluate your Participatory Budgeting project

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PB Network
Making People Count

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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'. For more information on both see: www.pbpartners.org.uk

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Overview

This briefing has been produced in response to Scotland's Community Choices programme and aims to support public sector organisations wishing to evaluate their 'mainstream' Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiatives. The techniques outlined here are also applicable to PB grant making programmes.

It complements our recent guides to PB Grant-making and Mainstreaming PB produced in autumn 2016, both of which are freely available at https://pbnetwork.org.uk/resources/

The ideas within this briefing are relevant to any organisation with an interest in knowing how to make a record of and then reflect on their PB work.

We have been building on our learning about PB since 2000, when the first UK learning exchange to Porto Alegre took place. Later, in 2010, the PB Unit produced a detailed guide to self evaluation through PB. Ideas within this paper include work done at that time, as well as more recent experience within Scotland and elsewhere.

Without understanding why you are doing PB it's hard to know if you have succeeded.

Within Scotland, the Scottish Government has been raising awareness of PB since 2014, and recently began the Community Choices programme. This has set the conditions for PB to be delivered in a meaningful and sustainable way within Scotland.

For example, the £2m Community Choices Fund is a mechanism to support new approaches to PB in Scotland. It was first made available in 2016 to enable local people make decisions on local spending priorities and to contribute towards strong local democracy. Key to its objectives is to move towards larger scale PB, and that means mainstreaming. Community Choices also supports one of the principles of Public Service Reform; that people should have equal opportunity to participate and have their voice heard in decisions shaping their local community and society.

We believe PB also complements the objectives of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which provides a legal framework to promote and encourage community empowerment and participation, and the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement (revised 2016). Both of which promote meaningful community engagement, and offer practical guidelines and the policy framework for PB.

Introduction to evaluating PB

What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an innovative democratic process which enables residents to have direct decision making powers over the allocation of resources.

Over a thirty year period, beginning in Brazil in the 1980s, PB has demonstrated its effectiveness as a powerful method of community empowerment. Often bringing large numbers of new people into community engagement processes, as well as improving levels of understanding about public budgets. Fostering increased levels of trust between residents, elected members and public sector employees is central to its success.

The quote below, by a local resident of Edinburgh City and bidder in a PB process, typifies how PB can change relationships, for the better, between citizens and the public sector:
"It's really empowering for a community knowing their voice is being heard. That's really vital if you are trying to build a cohesive community".

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

PB began in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre in the late 1980s, quickly establishing itself as a respected way of allocating a percentage of the city's budget, from the generation of proposals and direct voting on them by residents. By 2000 around $160m had been allocated in Porto Alegre through PB and it is widely cited as delivering many improvements in the lives of citizens. Leading academics, conducting independent impact evaluation have demonstrated its effectiveness. PB spread to other South American countries and then across the world, with around 3000 experiences recorded to date on every continent.

Internationally, PB at scale is increasing, and evidence exists that over a number of cycles PB brings improvements in terms of social equity, increased participation groups and creates trust in government. The UK PB Network website records some of these experiences and more are listed on the Participedia and PB Scotland websites.

Image taken from an Oxfam Blog: What's the best way to measure empowerment, by Duncan Green, 2014.

Soft outcomes are hard to measure

One resident involved in the early stages of PB in Porto Alegre made the simple but crucial point:

'If it feels like we've decided, it's PB. If it feels like someone else has decided, it isn't'.

This is the deeply empowering feeling at the heart of PB. Citizens must believe that their participation is meaningful before they will engage.

PB has to also show it has benefits for politicians, in terms of improving democratic processes. It has to show to improve public accountability over public money whilst providing re-assurance and evidence to public officials that the time, energy and financial resources used are bringing real and measureable benefits.

However, how do we put a price on a smile, or score a sense of empowerment?

The challenge is to find ways that show citizens have had their voice heard and to explain what they valued about the process, without requiring citizens to adopt the often opaque language of public sector accounting and performance monitoring. By demystifying PB evaluation processes we hope this guide helps in doing that, whilst ensuring some degree of rigour is maintained.

Why evaluating PB matters

What would it take to really grow PB?

This question is currently being posed across Scotland following the Scottish Government's recent commitment to Local Authorities allocating significant public budgets through PB as part of the Community Choices programme.

At a recent masterclass event in Edinburgh, co-delivered with Audit Scotland and attended by over 20 experts in public sector performance improvement, we attempted to address some difficult issues around measuring, auditing and evaluating PB. One of the participants commented:

"Values are central. It cannot become a tokenistic tick box exercise. But it could easily become so!"

The goal of the UK PB Network and of the Scottish Government is for PB to move beyond its predominant UK model of allocating small pots of money to voluntary and community groups, towards repeatedly distributing significant mainstream public budgets, in line with international practice.

Change doesn't just happen

PB has been used in the UK since around the year 2000, when a delegation of community activists from Salford and Manchester visited Brazil to understand how PB works and how it might be implemented in the UK.

Since then PB has evolved in many different ways. Much of that led by 'champions'; people who have become inspired by PB and so perhaps willing to take risks. They may see empowerment as core to their life and their work. But without evidence to back up that passion PB often stops. With evidence it is harder to ignore these champions by asserting they are biased or partial with their facts.

Keeping up momentum in PB requires continually reflecting on and refining the work being done, whilst keeping true to the underlying purpose of the work. And then communicating that learning and experience in ways acceptable to those who haven't yet been convinced.

Our ambition is that public services routinely offer some form of PB for mainstream budget choices and

that as a norm citizens will expect it to be offered, and thereby;

- address inequalities in service provision and resource allocation
- engage and empower citizens within discussions on public budgets
- stimulate co-production and mutual responsibility between citizens and the state.

Terrifying but Magnificent

These are ambitious goals, and proving they have been achieved is difficult. Hundreds of highly qualified evaluators are currently exploring the real economic value of public participation. Being able to say with authority that your work has made a difference is a daunting task.

Often evaluators take a very objective position. They search high and low for 'quantitative' (numbers based) evidence, and compare that with more 'qualitative' (values based) outcomes. Evaluation is a skill, one that underpins performance management frameworks, evidenced based commissioning and the annual budgeting process of public agencies.

There will be no one perfect approach. For example a participant in a PB programme reported that speaking for the first time in a public arena, and winning the support of her community for her idea was *'terrifying but magnificent'*. This represents a significant moment for them. But for the community as a whole? That is harder to show. But it is essential if PB is to become the norm in public participation.

Why good recording matters:
- ✓ You discover the story behind the results
- ✓ It paves the way to project improvements
- ✓ Every voice counts, and with more voices the more trustworthy are the results
- ✓ One size does not fit all. Good evaluation requires planning and hard work
- ✓ DIY evaluation is possible. But having real auditable evidence brings greater trust.

Our 10 actions for evaluating PB

Why having a plan is important.

Before you begin any process it is good practice to plan your evaluation. It's hard once underway to go back and re-capture information about something, particularly people's perceptions, which are central to PB, but will change with time, maybe as a result of actually engaging with a programme, or based on factors beyond your process that happen concurrently. Consider your evaluation plan as early as possible, and even begin to make records, conduct interviews or collate information before you start your process.

What are the 10 actions?

We propose you consider the 10 actions before designing your PB evaluation. **These are not linear steps.** You should, for example, consider who you will be sharing your learning with (action 10) before setting your outcomes (1) or baseline (2). **If your PB contains a digital aspect also look at Appendix 5**.

For each activity we have tried to explain why they matter and how you can go about it:

1. Agree outcomes before you start
2. Establish your baseline
3. Regularly gather feedback
4. Ask participants what they felt
5. Keep track of the numbers
6. Use films to tell the story
7. Hold a stakeholder reflection event
8. Follow what happens next
9. Use external experts as critical friends
10. Share your learning!

What else to think about

Look at your available resources: Keep your evaluation work proportional to these resources, or you will add to the burden of actually doing your PB.

Consider what supporting information is available: Make use of statistics collated by others, such as local indexes of multiple deprivation, or surveys of public attitudes. Many local authorities and public agencies collect these as a matter of course.

Ask the experts: Universities and the third sector are full of people experienced in doing research, or may be looking to use your work for their own research. Consider approaching them to see if they can provide advice, be your critical friend, or maybe even research students looking for experience.

Consider how to isolate your PB results from other effects.

It has been recorded that in the first five years of the PB programme in Porto Alegre (1989-1994) the percentage of the city that had adequate sewerage provision went up from 46% to 86%. That the number of students progressing to University doubled, or truancy in schools fell from 9% to 1%.

These and other similar findings from PB delivered at scale supports the claim that PB improves outcomes for populations from poorer communities, yet they may not solely be the result of PB. Those supporting the PB programme were also keen to invest generally in social provision. Correlation (two things happening together) does not of itself prove causation (one thing leading from another). Good evaluation can however help make that case.

It's also recognised that deep change takes time. Even at scale it can take 5 years or more for statistical evidence for the effectiveness of PB to show. Yet, good evidence gathering, a control sample and robust impact evaluation has proved that done well, at scale, and over a period there is causation between PB and the reduction of poverty and inequality. As shown in the graph below:
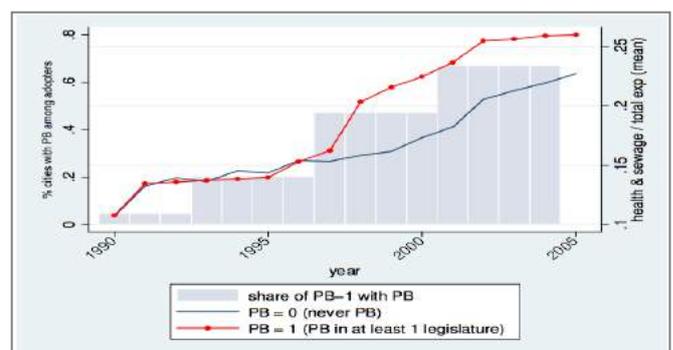
Evolution of the share of expenditures in health and sanitation compared between adopters and non-adopters of participatory budgeting (Goncalves 2013).

1: Agree outcomes before you start

'Not everything that counts can be measured, and not everything that can be measured counts'. Albert Einstein.

Before embarking on any PB process, it's crucial to decide what you are trying to achieve. What your 'success' or 'failure' can be measured against.

This is important because if the proposed outcomes are not clearly stated beforehand, it is easy to be open to criticism based on unrealistic expectations. For example, a relatively small sum of money, perhaps in the low thousands, allocated from a community safety budget, won't reduce crime levels overnight. But it might help towards increasing levels of trust between the Police and the community, with potential long-term benefits.

Outcomes are the changes or differences you expect your project to make. In terms of community development, outcomes might include better healthcare provision, greater community safety, environmental improvements, better educational achievement, or a host of other things.

At scale, outcomes might be measurable against levels of reported crime, examination results, or other statistical information. Though even these can be contested, as reported crime is not a measure of actual crime, or test results an indicator of educational excellence.

It is important to recognise that 'softer', perhaps even small-scale outcomes are also valuable. Such as perceptions of the influence people feel they have within their communities, of levels of community cohesion, or trust in authority.

PB can contribute to both types of outcomes, which will both generally form part of community engagement strategies of a Local Authority and their Community Planning Partners (such as the Police, Housing providers, or the Health Service).

Measure apples against apples

Participatory Budgeting processes have been implemented at widely different scales. In Porto Alegre, the 'home' of Participatory Budgeting, the PB programme, at its height, was influencing the allocation of $200 million of Local Authority capital funding annually. With this level of investment, it is possible to measure quantitative outcomes. That is, how the statistical numbers have changed.

At the other end of the scale, a church congregation in Scotland allocated £5,000 through a PB voting process. At this level it would of course be impossible to measure statistical outcomes, around crime, health improvements, or whatever. It is, though, perfectly possible to collect anecdotal and qualitative data from smaller scale PB processes.

By using ballot boxes this PB project made a link between PB and voting in elections. Encouraging democratic participation was one of their desired outcomes.

Small can be beautiful

For example, in Manton, an ex-mining community in Nottingham, a survey of participants in the local PB programme showed that almost 75% of residents surveyed felt they could influence Council decision-making processes. In two neighbouring areas who hadn't been engaged in PB, the figures were more or less reversed – only 25% of people thought they had influence. One respondent, having taken part in the PB process, commented: *'I feel I am somebody'*.

Share your proposed outcomes

It is also important to clearly communicate outcomes upfront, as this will inform the design and delivery of your PB initiative. It is possible, for example, to ask bidders into a PB grant making process to demonstrate how their project might help deliver against shared targets identified through community or neighbourhood planning processes.

2: Establish your baseline

Most Participatory Budgeting (PB) programmes have widening engagement as one of their core aims. And not just overall engagement, but ensuring those who might not engage in more traditional processes are now being involved.

Before you decide to go ahead it's helpful to reflect on what you are trying to achieve. Are you interested in overall participation rates, participation in the decision making event or events, or looking to see if a particular demographic or section of the community is participating?

You may also want to show the change in behaviour, so it's helpful to know, if you can, who might normally participate and who doesn't.

Image from the PB Unit's Comic Democracy project

When doing PB at scale, or over an extended period you will be looking for 'quantitative' measures, such as falls in unemployment, changes in crime rates, or improved life expectancy. That means you will need to do some initial research.

Establishing your baseline

A baseline is something you use to compare changes against. It's a record of where you start from or, to put it in more technical language, the existing conditions on the ground. A good way to start is to look at existing facts and figures about the communities in which your PB process is happening. There are many ways to do this, such as looking at neighbourhood statistics. These are often kept up to date by local or national government bodies as they are already central to how services are planned and delivered.

Factors that help establish a baseline:

- The geographic area and population of an area
- The main economic force or driver in the area
- Levels of employment, deprivation or poverty
- Particular health challenges, crime rates or educational attainment levels
- Demographics (age, gender, disability ethnicity etc) and information on the participation of these groups in community life.
- Migration (people moving to or from the area)
- Political make-up, voting levels, who doesn't vote and whether this is changing over time.
- Community perceptions of authorities, or of the PB process, or other significant local opinions
- Levels of integration, perceptions about conflicts over identity or cases of discrimination
- Levels of volunteering, of community enterprise, of hope in the future, or levels of social isolation.

"The truth about a city's aspirations isn't found in its vision, it's found in its budget." *Brent Toderian, City Planner, Canada.*

Don't forget to record how money is being spent in the community. Policies are important, but we believe that it is at the moment that the budget is approved that real power is exercised. That's when ideas are turned into actions. Budget spending information of your local authority or a public agency in your area will support your baseline. Before you start you might want to find out:

- How much is being spent by each department
- How much is being spent in each community
- How spending has been changing over time
- How much will be spent in the PB processes.

Once you have this information you can use it to compare with how expenditure shifts in future, especially if you are looking at mainstream PB.

Collect your own data

Once you have established your baseline you will be ready to undertake the next step; collecting your own facts and figures to compare against it. Below we show some ways to do this, and how to use your data to improve your practice.

3: Regularly gather feedback

A feedback form is the most basic way of capturing views about an event or as part of a process and should not be overlooked. It remains a crucial element of any evaluation process.

In terms of 'making the case' for PB, the responses relating to the value of the PB approach and desire to repeat the process can be powerful pieces of data going forward. But getting these takes planning.

A good feedback form requires striking a balance between asking enough questions to get back meaningful information, and keeping it short and simple enough to ensure a good response rate.

Depending on the format of the event or process in question, and peoples' abilities and willingness to respond in detail, a 'pick and mix' approach to the list on this page will be appropriate. People may have reservations around handing over 'too much' personal information. So you will probably need to keep their individual responses anonymous.

If you use voting handsets remember you can also use these to collect feedback about your PB event

Decide what you want to know

Below are questions (beyond basic demographic information) you might include on your feedback form, with the type of question and some suggested choices where they are re-ordained.

? **Which neighbourhood do you live in?** *(Tick one box:(e.g. area a/area b/area c/Other (specify)*

? **How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?** *(Tick one box):Very strongly/Fairly strongly/Not Very strongly/Not at all strongly/Don't Know*

? **How long have you lived in the area?** *(Tick one box) 1-2 years/3-5 years/6-10 years/11-20 years/more*

? **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?** *(Tick one box) :Very Satisfied/ Fairly satisfied/ Fairly dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied/Neither*

? **Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?** *(Tick one box): Definitely agree, Tend to agree/ Tend to disagree/ Definitely disagree/ Don't know*

? **Do you think PB is a good way of allocating public funds?** *(Tick one box): Definitely agree, Tend to agree/ Tend to disagree/ Definitely disagree/ Don't know*

? **Do you feel more or less able to influence decisions affecting your local area after today?** *(Tick one box):A lot more able to influence decisions/Able to influence decisions a bit more/No change/Less able to influence decisions/Don't know*

? **Do you think it is important that communities have a say on how money is spent in your area?** *(Tick one box): Yes/No/Don't know*

? **Have you found out more about your community as a result of participating today?** *(Tick more than one) (if applicable): I met new people /I found out about local groups /I found out about how decisions are made / Nothing I didn't already know.*

? **How involved are you in your community already (not just this event)?** *(Tick more than one box) (if applicable): I attend residents groups or local meetings/I run a local organisation/I volunteer with a local organisation/Not involved/Don't know.*

? **Have you enjoyed today's event?** *(Tick one box): Yes/No/Don't know*

? **What did you enjoy the most?** *(Open text box)*

? **What did you enjoy the least?** *(Open text box)*

? **Has today's event given you any ideas on how to improve your community?** *(Tick one box) Yes/No/Don't know*

? **Would you like to be involved if this event was to be repeated?** *(Tick one box) Yes/No/Don't know*

? **If YES, how would you like to be involved?** *(Tick more than one box) (if applicable) Steering group member /Setting priorities and suggesting projects/Voting on or discussing projects/Applying for funding.*

4: Ask participants what they felt

PB processes are often experienced by citizens as more than a means of distributing funding. Many people have had genuinely uplifting experiences through engagement with PB.

It can really add value to an evaluation report to include direct feedback or quotes from participants. Press releases usually include quote(s) from those involved as a way of 'humanising' the issue under consideration. They provide richness and context to what could otherwise be a dry report of the facts.

Ask for feedback in a variety of ways and at different points in the process.

You may decide to get feedback through interviews with a select sample of participants, or perhaps through using an online or paper based survey. You may try techniques like appreciative inquiry.

There are many times when getting detailed feedback is useful; at the start of your process to establish a 'baseline', at events or meetings, and after the project is complete.

You may decide to use a variety of forms and questionnaires for different occasions, but if so try to ensure the information being gathered is comparable. Besides individual comments you are also looking to produce information that can help spot patterns, or show if opinions shift over time.

Try to remain objective and systematic in collecting responses

At a PB event, it is helpful to have a designated 'interviewer', whose job it is to talk to participants about their thoughts or feelings about the PB process in general. It's also useful for them to speak to the same people at both the beginning and towards the end of the event, to see if their perceptions have changed.

Interview material collected via filmed interviews can also be used to supply suitable quotes for later written reports. **Always ask permission before using filmed interviews or pictures within publicly available film or evaluation report.** This also applies to attributing specific comments to specific people.

PB events can often become emotional, exciting affairs.

Here are some comments from participants at PB events:

- ✓ 'Tremendous – really, really good. Hope it happens again.'
- ✓ 'People are too ready to complain about how money gets spent – this was really transparent – a really good way of doing things'.
- ✓ 'Finding out about each others' work – there were a lot of groups I didn't know anything about before'.
- ✓ Brilliant way of making decisions. Well done.'
- ✓ 'It brought organisations, as well as the community together'.
- ✓ 'Communities learned to think about their own situations and priorities, rather than it being decided for them'.

It's a good idea to have an 'any other comments' box on your event evaluation forms. Participants will often add positive – and negative – comments regarding the process, which help to 'flesh out' their evaluation responses. It's often within the more negative responses that your real learning can occur, so don't just cherry-pick positive comments. **Your evaluation report will be more likely to be trusted if you are seen to be reporting a wide range of viewpoints.**

Participant diaries bring extra richness

A diary is an ongoing record of how people are feeling, or what they did. Many PB programmes ask people involved, either in the community, or as part of the organising group to keep a written or audio diary. They can be an invaluable record of the day to day successes and failures of your programme, and a way for people to reflect as they go along.

5: Keep track of the numbers

Without data it is hard to evaluate PB. Data can be qualitative, but most 'professionals' require quantitative evidence. That means number based.

Quantitative measures surround us. One crucial indicator of the effectiveness of PB as a tool for increasing levels of community engagement is to monitor 'first time attendees'.

"The fact is... it's a public voting thing. You have to be there to vote. That's the big message."
(Participant in a PB grant making event)

For example of 100+ attendees at one PB voting event over 50% had never attended a community engagement event before. A man in his sixties had never voted in any election in his life, but took part in the local PB process, because he *'could see some point to it'*.

Monitor participation rates in your PB

Not everyone will, can or wants to participate, but it is possible to measure who does, and thereby understand what you have achieved, or what changes you may need to make. Some information is better than none, and physical attendance at events or online goes a long way to showing you have engaged widely.

If you do count who participates, and there are many ways of doing this, it's helpful if you can break this down by neighbourhood or by demographics. Recording their age, gender, ethnicity and so forth. Also don't just record who attended events, but also who submitted applications, who voted online, who

participated in planning forums or awareness raising events, and who was successful in securing funding. You may also want to know who hasn't participated.

However its important people can choose to identify themselves as part of a specific demographic. Don't assume people fall neatly into, or are happy to be counted as belonging to a specific community or category.

Compare participation rates with areas not experiencing PB

Assuming increased participation is one of your primary outcome measures, you should be able to compare your participation rates against a control area not undergoing a PB process. For example, over time you may see other types of participation increase. Such as;

- Voting rates in local elections. Are these higher where you have done PB in relation to communities that experienced it?
- The number of complaints received about services. Counter-intuitively more complaints might simply mean people feel complaining is worthwhile, rather than a failure to provide a good service!
- Volunteering rates, or participation in forums such as Community Councils. Anecdotally, we sometimes hear that areas with PB are more likely to have an election process to join a local community council.

It's also good to know if the projects funded also reached and involved specific groups of people, or perhaps only worked within a specific community.

Use nationally collected data sets

Over time or across communities you may be able to demonstrate that resources influenced by PB are starting to show impacts on issues such as attainment in qualifications, health improvement or economic factors. While these will likely take many years to show, if your PB is going to continue and grow in scale it is important to try and identify these trends**. Read appendix 4 on Impact Evaluation, or guidance from agencies like Audit Scotland for more ideas about using data sets.**

6: Use films to tell the story

People have said at many PB events that the atmosphere had to be experienced to be believed. There has been much feedback to the effect that people only really understand the power (and the point) of a PB exercise through attendance at a live event. It was realised very early on that the 'next best thing' to being there was to make a video record of a PB event. In the UK so far, videos have tended to focus on small grant voting events, but it should also be possible to 'tell a video story' of how mainstream PB processes are developed.

Image from a PB film produced by Edinburgh City Council

Points to consider if making a video

Films can be expensive, but using local filmmakers where possible is a good approach. Often third sector partners or local colleges will have film makers, or film departments. Using these allows for more local ownership and identification with the process, as well as potentially saving money!

The filmmaker(s) will need to be briefed and supported to capture the 'spirit' of the event being filmed – so get a good balance of 'talking head' interviews, establishing shots of the room/audience, such as a shot of a packed venue over lunch with lots of enthusiastic interaction, as well as a filmed record of the presentations. **Quirky or amusing footage is helpful in engaging your audience, and so include emotional or humorous reactions.**

Be prepared and start early

The 'pre-business' part of the event during signing in or morning coffee can flash by, so it's important to be on the ball in terms of getting a good spread of interviews before the event starts. Then they can

also be re-interviewed after the voting or deliberations have taken place.

A range of interviewees is helpful – presenters, members of the public, officers, or elected members can all add new perspectives. Tailor specific message to those you want to reach. Politicians, for example, tend to trust other politicians.

Don't leave it to the film-maker

When recording interviews, it's useful to have someone at the event with local knowledge to introduce the film makers to potential interviewees and to ask the questions. Give thought beforehand to the right questions to ask and create ones that don't have simple yes /no answers. Such as:

? *What do you think of this event?*
? *Why is PB a good thing for this community?*
? *How are you feeling about presenting?*
? *What's the best thing that's happened today?*
? *How would you make it even better?*

Review all the footage

Involvement at the 'editing stage' of the filmmaking can be really helpful. Filmmakers have technical skills but often no real knowledge of the PB subject matter – it's important they understand the story being told. We've seen examples of films of PB events which have, at one extreme, been nothing more than a procession of talking heads, and at the other end of the spectrum, a statically filmed procession of similar presentations.

If you're aware on the day, or on looking at some of the raw material, of particularly strong moments or messages, it's important to make sure they are included, and not dropped because, in the filmmakers' view, the light wasn't 100% perfect!

Keep it short and engaging

With the current state of digital media, and the use of social media, the final product should be tailored depending on the desired audience. For training or evaluation purposes, a 10-15 minute film might be produced, but a 2 minute 'highlights clip' might also be generated from the main material to use as an online taster or for awareness-raising.

7: Hold a stakeholder reflection event

This page follows a format developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) for evaluating PB against the 7 Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement.

These are: Inclusion, Support, Planning, Working together, Methods, Communication and Impact.

It is suggested you hold a reflection event after completing your PB programme. Partners involved in planning the PB process should come together to evaluate their efforts against the National Standards for Community Engagement

After convening a group of key stakeholders and reviewing evidence on your programme you can complete a PB reflection report.

Firstly, in your reflection report describe how the review process was carried out (who was involved, where and when did they meet and the evidence used to judge performance).

Then, on a scale of 1-6, agree a rating against the following 7 questions:
(where 1 = unsatisfactory, 2 = weak, 3= satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = very good and 6 = excellent.).
After scoring each you should include comments to justify your score.

1. **Inclusion:** *How well did we involve the people and organisations that might want to participate in the PB process?*
   For example, did we involve a wide range of participants whose interest might be affected by the PB budget/process?

2. **Support:** *How good were we at identifying and overcoming any barriers to participation?*
   For example, were actions taken to remove any barrier and support people to attend or be part of discussions?

3. **Planning:** *How clear were we about the purpose for the PB process?*
   For example, was there a clear plan and theme for the funding? Was there enough time and resources to support the process and allow people to be involved?

4. **Working Together:** *How well did we work together to achieve the aims of the PB process?*
   For example, were roles and responsibilities clear and understood for all those involved in planning the process? Did methods of communication during the process meet the needs of all partners involved in planning the process?

5. **Methods***: How good was our PB methodology?*
   For example, did we use a variety of methods e.g. online participation, community pitches, community stalls etc to ensure that there is plenty of opportunities for deliberation? Did we obtain feedback on the method(s) to ensure that we are learning and adapting?

6. **Communication:** *How well did we communicate with the people, organisations and communities involved in the PB process?*
   For example, was information clear and accessible on the lead up to the process? Did we feedback on their pitch? Did we highlight alternative funding options to those who missed out on funding? Did we tell the wider community those who were awarded funding?

7. **Impact:** *How would we rate the immediate impact of the PB process and what has been learned to improve future PB processes?*
   For example, is the community happy that it was a transparent & democratic process? Has PB improved relationships between community groups? How will we assess the long-term impact?

Finish your reflection by asking yourselves:
? What key lessons have been learned as a result of the PB process?
? What next? How will we develop our PB to deepen our practice and thereby ensure we maximise the potential of our work?

More information on the national standards for community engagement in Scotland available at:
www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/NationalStandards

8: Follow what happens next

Once you have funded something it's not the end of the matter. Often it's just the beginning.

As with all publicly funded exercises, a PB audit trail will be required - whether it's a small scale community project, or a more ambitious budget from a mainstream provider. Hard data can be supplemented by project progress reports, which provide a tracking mechanism. Keeping in touch with what happens can be a challenge; especially the people you have funded are not used to reporting back.

There are some simple methods you might use to keep track. For example, visit projects if possible. Seeing is believing, and nothing beats actually going out and about and talking to people.

Alternatively you might want to hold some sort of end of programme event where you invite people back together to share what they have been doing. And of course you may have another round of funding to give out, which could be a good moment to call people back together.

Keep it simple and relevant

Whatever you decide to do it should be proportionate and useful. PB is about doing things differently, or at least being flexible about how you might do things. Often community organisations complain that they are being asked to monitor things in ways that don't matter to them, or for reasons they don't understand.

If you do require monitoring information, make sure it's done in a timely way. That people receive thanks for returning information on time, and are clear about what you expect. Do you actually need all those receipts and timesheets back? Or would evidence of activity and impact be more useful?

A good report goes a long way

Every PB process is unique and that means every evaluation process will be. But most funded programmes require a feedback report that proves the money was used as intended. The kinds of information you might want to capture can be almost endless and include:

- Projects or activities that have happened
- Amount of funding already used
- Additional funding brought in as a result
- Number of people directly benefiting from or involved in projects
- Number of additional volunteers gained
- What would have happened without PB funding
- Increased awareness in the community about the PB process used to disburse the money
- Follow on work from PB funded work
- Process improvements for next time
- Increased empowerment – more community activity whether as volunteers, activists, or just general awareness of what's happening locally
- Changes in perception towards PB.

These are just some suggestions. You may have other information that you want or need to collect – in which case you should ensure the questions asked on the questionnaire or in a focus group will provide you with the information you want. Sadly the best feedback request in the world is useless if people don't respond or do so in a 'tick-box' way. Take advice on getting good information back, and most importantly limit the time needed to complete it.

Face to face is best

Throughout this guide we have stressed the value in bringing people together and talking face to face. PB is all about building relationships and trust, and that is by nature a collective, social activity. Create as many opportunities for that as you can, and, most importantly, record these encounters.

But always get permission before you share personal identifiable information or images.

9: Find and use your critical friends

Your critical friend should not be directly involved in the process itself and they should have some understanding of either your local context or the nature of your PB process.

The tools in this guide are designed to help you evaluate your process effectively without placing unrealistic demands on you or your organising team. Our focus has been on self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation can be a very strong model of evaluation, harnessing your insider knowledge of the process and ongoing reflections on your work. However, self evaluation can attract the criticism that it is not independent and therefore not robust evidence. You can address this problem through using a critical friend or maybe, pay for an external audit. Though if you collect and reflect properly you may not need more than a friend to validate you.

What is a critical friend for?

Their role is to help you consider the process from all angles, ask the questions you haven't thought of, and identify gaps in your evaluation plans. Their job is not to evaluate your evaluation. It is to help you see things from a different angle. An 'outsider' can also keep you focused on collecting evaluation data at moments when you are understandably focused on the delivery of the process.

There are a number of different ways of finding a critical friend for your evaluation. These include asking a PB Network or support organisation for contacts, searching the internet, or asking a local voluntary umbrella organisation, or one of your stakeholders.

You may, if you have the resources to pay for it, want more than a friend, and decide to ask them to become your external evaluators or auditor. But such work may not come cheap. It's important you verify they are trusted by others to do a good job in advising you, especially if you intend to pay them. There are many techniques adopted by external evaluators. Some will be very numbers based. A financial auditor is a critical friend, for example, who helps 'quantify' your financial value and check you

have recorded your accounts properly. Evaluating a community engagement process is a bit different, and will likely use more 'qualitative approaches, such as focus groups, one to one interviews and participant diaries. Whatever the technique there is still a degree of rigour that a good critical friend, and especially a paid evaluator, should offer. They must be experts in a range of methods of community based evaluation, and will likely have already done many similar pieces of work.

Your critical friend may ask you
- Have the views of all stakeholders been considered at each stage of the evaluation?
- Do the methods being used suit the particular aims and values of the process?
- Are there possibilities for collecting a wider range of views and input?
- Has data been clearly and fairly represented in your reports?

What to expect from a critical friend
As a minimum, they should:
- Meet or speak with you prior to and after each evaluation event, such as a planning session, event or focus group session.
- Review the evaluation plan and completed evaluation documents.
- Check for missing stakeholder perspectives and suggest ways for filling gaps in representation and recording different perspectives.
- Comment on the final evaluation report.

They can also support the work of the evaluation in the following ways
- Attending the evaluation planning meeting (and perhaps subsequent meetings) to contribute an 'outside' perspective to the evaluation design process.
- Attending and report on some of the events, such as planning meetings or voting events.
- Review collected data and discuss with you how to analyse it, present it and whether there are any gaps that you could follow up.

10: Share your learning!

A stakeholder is anyone who cares about the work you are doing. They can be someone in the community, or one of your partners. They may be your funders, or elected politicians. They will be the people interested in your evaluation.

Stakeholders will care about different things, and it is important to consider all your stakeholders, and check as early as possible what they want or need to know. For example, if one of your stakeholders is your local health and social care partnership they will want to see evidence that your PB programme improves health and wellbeing. If they are a local school, they may be more interested in educational attainment. If a politician they will want to know that all sections of the community were engaged.

Continually engage budget-holders

Anyone funding your PB process must be central to your evaluation planning. Double check on their needs, and what they consider good evidence. They are going to be your primary evaluation audience. They need to know how it went. You need to tell them what you have achieved in ways that convinces them their funding was well spent.

Agree the audience for your evaluation

Deciding who your audiences are is a collective process, and involves a thorough conversation about why you want to do an evaluation, and what you hope the evaluation will achieve. It is worth considering which of your audiences you might want to involve in the evaluation itself. Consider if your stakeholders are your only audiences and then think more widely. While your audiences are likely to include your stakeholders, there may be other audiences you want to address.

Audiences can be local, national or international. They can be internal to the process (including yourselves) or less involved. They can be already supportive or sceptical. It's worth knowing what information each one would be interested in, why, and how they want to receive that information. For example, should you reach them through a film, on social media, or perhaps more directly through paper based reports or at an event? You will need information about them (for example, their interests, the reasons for their scepticism, or their organisational targets).

Report-writing and dissemination

You will need to collect all your evidence together in some form of report, which might contain analysis, tables and data you have produced.

Ensure it is easy to read. Present quantitative data visually (using graphs, pie charts or 'info-graphics'). Use quotes and comments to illustrate important points from the more qualitative data.

Organise your report so your readers know where to find things that matter to them. Use appendices to present data. Describe how you collected evidence. Focus on your learning, not just the evidence.

Share a first draft of the report with the evaluation team or critical friends. Share a second draft with key stakeholders if you can. Their comments should give you confidence that the picture you have produced of the process is a fair and accurate one.

Make sure that your learning feeds back into future process planning. Evaluation is an essential part of the PB process, and should involve everyone.
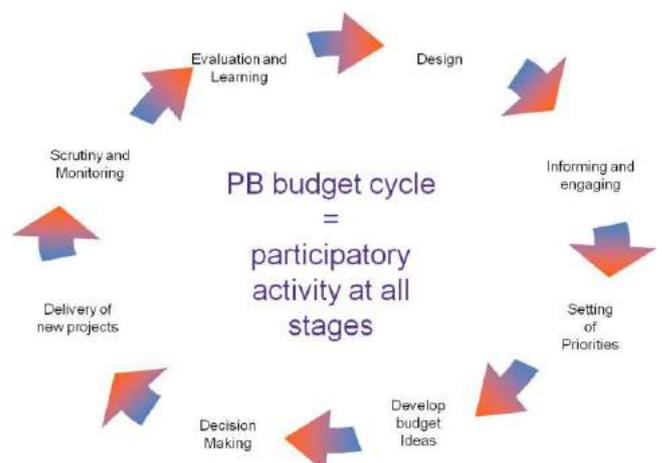
Conclusion

The aim of this guide has been to provide ideas and examples of possible practical ways forward for local authorities and partner organisations interested in evaluating mainstream PB processes.

It should be seen as a starting point to the evaluation of PB programmes, appropriate to the needs and aspirations of those involved.

It is hoped that, with relevant input from all concerned parties and stakeholders it is possible to do PB at scale. When evaluating your PB it is essential to:

- **Involve residents from the outset.** They should have a role to play in the design and delivery of the evaluation process. For that they need access to resources, which is why you must

- **Get buy-in from finance managers and heads of service;** who can release the staff needed to deliver and evaluate PB as well as the resources for the public to decide upon. But that is only possible if there is

- **Sufficient and sustained political will.** The support of elected members is crucial. Having their support makes it is more likely PB will continue long enough for the impact to show.

Meaningful engagement is hard work

With those ingredients in place, and with imagination and commitment it will be possible to develop vibrant, viable and sustainable mainstream PB programmes long into the future, and to be able to know that have had the intended impacts.

PB is about community empowerment, which is a heightened form of traditional engagement.

Empowerment implies a transfer of power and influence, and that is by its nature challenging to those already holding power.

Done well PB should bring benefits at all levels of public engagement, but it should always aspire towards deepening citizen led decision making, progressively, at scale and wherever taxpayer's money is being spent.

When is it PB? And when is it not?

International learning on PB has continually recognised that it is very context specific. That is, every situation where it occurs is unique, depending on the underlying institutional and political situation within which it happens.

As a result there is no one universally accepted definition of PB. Nor always agreement that a specific process can be called PB or not.

Reflecting on seeing many experiences Tiago Peixoto, internal expert on participatory governance at the World Bank identified:

7 defining characteristics of PB:

➢ **Directing public budgets is the primary focus of the process.**

➢ **Citizen participation has a direct impact on the budget.**

➢ **Citizens have the opportunity to decide on the rules governing the process.**

➢ **The process has a deliberative element.**

➢ **The process seeks to redistribute resources on the basis of greatest need.**

➢ **The process is designed to ensure that citizens can monitor public spending.**

➢ **The process is repeated periodically.**

Adapted from:
https://democracyspot.net/2012/09/12/participatory-budgeting-seven-defining-characteristics/

If successful PB can reinvigorate our democracy by involving ordinary people in the tough decisions being undertaken by public bodies, which are using billions of pounds of taxpayer money. Decisions which impact on the lives of all citizens, and particularly the most deprived and marginalised.

Without good evaluation it is unlikely the high ambitions for PB in Scotland will be achieved.

Appendix 1: Some other approaches

PB Partner's Case Study Template

PB Partners have a standardised template for producing standardised case studies of PB processes. These attempt to provide high level reviews useful for sharing learning , based on describing the "what, when, where, why, who and how" of an individual PB process.

Please contact us for a copy of the template.

SQW evaluation of PB in England:

The Department for Communities and Local Government asked SQW, a respected external evaluator write a report of the PB programme that ran in England between 2008 and 2012. It took a cost/benefit approach from an external perspective.

Whilst thorough, its reliance on quantitative data, a huge number of very different cases, and a not well developed model of PB in the UK at the time, in our view it struggled to provide useful learning.

A copy is available on the UK PB Network website.

The PB Unit Self Evaluation guide:

Academically informed and well designed, with a wide range of templates and supporting materials focussing on capturing better qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Much of our own guide is based upon its ideas of self evaluated PB. Well worth a look if you are considering a rigorous and detailed evaluation.

Also available on the UK PB Network website.
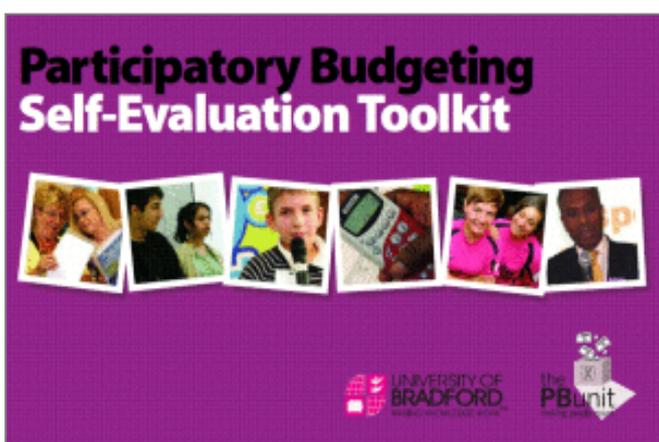
WhatWorksScotland's reviews

What Works Scotland is an initiative to improve the way local areas in Scotland use evidence to make decisions about public service development and reform. Working with Community Planning Partnerships involved in the design and delivery of public services to:

- learn what is and isn't working in their local area
- encourage collaborative learning with a range of local authority, business, public sector and community partners
- better understand what effective policy interventions and effective services look like
- promote the use of evidence in planning and service delivery
- help organisations get the skills and knowledge they need to use and interpret evidence
- create case studies for wider sharing and sustainability

See: http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/

Public Agenda's 15 key metrics for PB;

The USA based Public Agenda organisation produced a very useful set of key metrics for evaluating PB processes. These cover:

Impact on Civic and Political Life: *Does PB engage a significant and growing number of residents, including those who cannot or do not participate in mainstream political life? Does PB foster collaboration between civil society organizations and government? Is PB associated with elected officials' political careers?*

Impact on Inclusion and Equity: *Is PB engaging traditionally marginalized communities? Does PB facilitate participation? Is PB fostering equitable distribution of resources?*

Impact on Government: *Number of PB processes and amounts allocated to PB changing from year to year? Implementation rate of winning PB projects. Are additional resources being allocated to projects or needs identified through PB? Cost to government of implementing PB?*
See: https://www.publicagenda.org/pages/15-key-metrics-for-evaluating-participatory-budgeting

Appendix 2: Find information on PB

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

The UK PB Network website contains resources about PB, including free toolkits, videos or news of how PB is growing worldwide: You are encouraged to send reports of projects to them, so others can learn from what you did:
https://pbnetwork.org.uk/

The PB Scotland website provides information about Community Choices events, policy and resources in Scotland, with examples, pictures and videos of Community Choices in action:
http://pbscotland.scot

Participedia is an international repository of research into participatory democracy. Consider sending in your evaluation to add to their data:
http://www.participedia.net/en

PB Partners provides expert facilitation and guidance in developing PB programmes:
http://www.pbpartners.org.uk

Evaluation Support Scotland provides resources, guides and training in conducting evaluation:
http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

Equalities and Human Rights law and best practise in ensuring equal access to services is available at:
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com

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.

Connecting through social media

To find out more about PB or to ask any questions about PB you can use online forums.

Twitter:
Follow the UKPB network: @UKPBNetwork.

PB Scotland tweets on: @pb_scotland

The internationally recognised PB hashtag is: #participatorybudgeting

Join in discussions, ask questions and find news on the PB the on the UK 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 social media based PB group to engage with your community?

Appendix 3: Common terms

Common terms used in evaluation.

Aims: What you hope the project will achieve in an overarching more general sense that may not be easily quantifiable or measurable. For example, an aim would be to empower people.

Audit: an independent, objective quality assurance activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to assess and improve. Internal auditing is conducted by a unit reporting to management, while external auditing is conducted by an independent organisation.

Baseline: the status of services and outcome-related measures such as knowledge, attitudes, norms, behaviours, and conditions before an intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.

Cycle: In this case it means each round or session of participatory budgeting. This may be a repeated process in the same area or it may be new processes in different areas or a different process model but in the same area.

Indicators: a quantitative or qualitative variable that provides a valid and reliable way to measure achievement, assess performance, or reflect changes connected to an intervention.

Measures and targets: How you identify whether or not you have achieved your objectives. Targets and measures are specific and preferably quantifiable in some way. Again these should be scaled according to the size of the project. For example, for the above objective example you could set a target of 70% of participants feeling able to influence decisions and measure this through a participant survey at the end of the voting event or process.

Monitoring: Routine tracking and reporting of priority information about a program or project, such as its inputs and intended outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Objectives: What you hope the project will achieve in more specific terms than outcomes. Objectives should ideally be measurable. If objectives are met then an aim might be considered achieved.

Objectives should be scaled to the size of the project. For instance, if you are allocating £20,000 by PB in a grants pot process, it's unlikely you'll achieve significant changes to service provision. But you may increase levels of volunteering or increase awareness. For example, an objective within the aim example above would be participants feel they are more able to influence local decisions.

Outcomes: The changes or differences you expect your project to make. They include differences in people's knowledge, understanding or behaviour. Using the example above in 'Aims', an outcome might be that people feel that can take action, based on their sense of being more empowered.

Outputs: These are measurable actions, products or events that occurred during or as a result of your process. For example specific funding going to specific groups, a new toolkit being written, or numbers of people participating in training sessions.

Qualitative: information collected using methods, such as interviews, focus groups or observation, which can provide an understanding of social situations and interaction, as well as people's values, perceptions, motivations, and reactions.

Quantitative: Information measured on a numerical scale, which can be analysed using statistical methods, and can be displayed using tables, charts, histograms and graphs.

Vision: This is your long term aspiration for the project. The best way to answer it is to say 'what do I want the area or community to look like in 10 years time'. A vision is usually larger than the project itself but there is an aspiration that the project will contribute to achieving the vision. For example, a vision would be a strong and resilient community able to manage and react to change.

Appendix 4: Impact evaluation and PB

This section has been written by Michael Touchton of the University of Miami. A leading international researcher on the effectiveness of PB, his paper, "Improving Social Well-Being through New Democratic Institutions," co-authored with Brian Wampler, and presented at the Latin American Studies Association Congress was selected winner of the LAPIS 2013 Best Paper Award.

What is Impact Evaluation?

Impact Evaluation (IE) assesses if policy solutions work and why. Specifically, IE assesses whether and how policy interventions impact individuals and communities by comparing impact indicators over time for the same populations and across space relative to other populations.

Why is IE important?

IE is a rigorous analysis of cost-benefit tradeoffs across projects, including those surrounding different programs designed to meet similar goals, as well as variations in program design for the same type of policy. IE shifts the policy design logic from one where experts *"already know what's best"*, to one where experts *"can learn what's best in this context, and adapt to new knowledge as needed"*.

How IE Works

IEs focus on separating a policy impact from all other factors that could have made simultaneous impacts - these are known as 'confounding effects' and present problems for drawing conclusions from data. The aim is to know that it was the policy that impacted a population, rather than concurrent trends to which they are exposed.

IE allows evaluators determine what would have happened to the population of interest in the absence of the policy intervention. This is difficult because one cannot institute a policy, measure impact indicators, and then travel back in time to measure the same indicators for the same population without it having experienced the policy.

Instead, one needs to create a comparison population that is as identical, on as many dimensions as possible to those experiencing the policy intervention, except for the fact that they do not experience the policy intervention. Robust IE compares experiences of a 'treatment group', receiving the intervention, with a very similar control group.

Steps to perform Impact Evaluations

1. The Pre-test: IE demands baseline data collection before program implementation begins and optimally even before the program is announced to avoid any program-based contamination of the baseline data. This represents the "pre-test", before the policy treatment is administered. Options include considering: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, fairness, voice, etc. It is important to remember that these values may conflict; some policies may increase economic equality, assuming they are effective, but are they perceived to be fair?

2. The Treatment: Implementing the policy treatment through a randomised, controlled trial (RCT) represents the highest standard of IE design. Here, populations are randomly assigned into treatment and control groups. The main advantage of this design is that randomisation greatly diminishes the probability that any observed impacts are due to selection bias of the population receiving the treatment.

3. The Post-test: Evaluators collect impact indicators following the treatment for both treatment and control groups. Any changes can then be compared across the two groups to draw conclusions (e.g. did anything change across groups? Did the treatment group change more than the control group? Or less? Are these differences statistically significant?).

Other aspects of Impact Evaluation

It is important for evaluators to monitor implementation to help understand the results of evaluation as well as to properly time the post-test. Unintended impacts are common and evaluators should watch for these, as they often represent unexplored evaluation opportunities. Finally, there are other analytic options designed to approximate RCTs if randomization is not feasible. These include matching strategies, difference-in-difference estimation and regression discontinuity design.

Appendix 5: Evaluation and digital PB

Online PB enables people to participate at home, in the workplace, or anywhere else they prefer. Support may be needed.

Going online brings opportunities for evaluation, especially in promotion, the collection of data and getting feedback from participants. The following advice has been produced by the **Democratic Society,** experts in supporting digital (online) democracy.

Evaluating online PB is done much in the same way as evaluating your offline process! This is because **online and offline processes should always be integrated fully** – neither is distinct from the other. Below are ideas for evaluating PB process specific to digital tools.

What to consider when going online

Ideas below relates directly to the 10 actions used in this guide. Often the advice is simply the same. When there's a digital component to your PB, and there should be some online aspect, if only in your communications, here's what to consider:

1: Agreeing outcomes before you start: What do you hope to achieve by adding a digital aspect to PB? Examples of outcomes related to digital engagement:
- More ways for people to participate, or options for people to participate at a time that suits them
- Engaging new demographics
- Engaging more people in the PB process
- Raising awareness of the PB process

2: Establishing your baseline: What will adding a digital aspect to your PB process achieve? Baselines for comparison related to digital engagement could include comparing:
- *How many ideas you hope to generate, how many people you hope will submit ideas, register interest or eventually vote*

- *Number of ideas or applications generated for your current PB process vs. past processes*
- *Number of people participating in PB project (online and offline) compared to past PB processes or other engagement exercises.*

3: Gathering feedback
Example questions specifically related to digital engagement could include:
- *What promotional activities did you undertake in relation to your digital engagement?*
- *What benefits have you observed from using digital engagement?*
- *Have you had any issues with participating? Was there anything you were stuck on?*
- *Any other observations or comments you would like to share about participating online?*

Responses can help improve processes in the future. Don't forget to ask key partners about the set-up and implementation of your digital engagement tool.

4: Asking participants what they felt
Digital engagement provides an additional opportunity to gather feedback from participants. You could gather this by embedding a link, or redirecting them to an evaluation survey as soon as online participation is complete.

Alternatively, you can gather email addresses from participants when they register to participate, and then send evaluation questions once the PB process has concluded. Use online tools such as Survey Monkey (https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk) or Typeform (https://www.typeform.com) to collect online feedback.

Survey questions for citizen feedback may include:
1. *Did you use the website? (always add a link)*
2. *What was good about using this website? What was not so good?*
3. *Agree or disagree with the following statements?*
   a. *The website was easy to use*
   b. *The website made it possible for me to participate at a time that suited me*
   c. *Online voting is a good way to take part*
   d. *I'd consider using a website like this again.*
4. *Your suggestions to help us improve the website.*
5. *Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about using the website?*

Open text questions bring opportunities to gain insight into citizen's experiences in their own words.
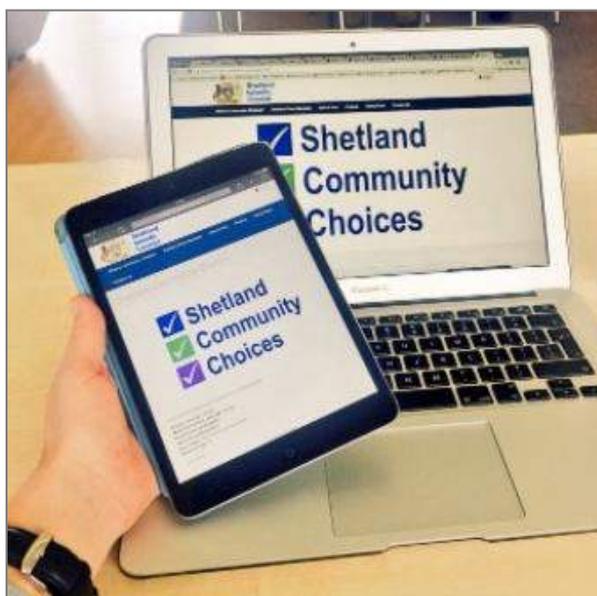
Promoting multiple ways to connect to an online PB portal enables even more opportunities for participation.

5: Keeping track of the numbers

Digital engagement can tell you:

- *Number of ideas submitted*
- *Number of individuals submitting ideas*
- *Number of people registered to website*
- *Number of comments submitted*
- *Number of votes cast*
- *Number of individual visits to the website.*

You can also collect quantitative data by using 'Google analytics' or similar online tracking tools. Such as the number of site visits, where people are visiting the site from or when they are participating (e.g. spikes in activity after promotion on social media or an event).

6: Using films to tell the story

Incorporate learning from online experience into any videos. You could post videos on to your digital platform, with a summary or explanatory video. You could post and share the video of previous processes. You could also use videos to present ideas on the site itself upon which people can make comments or vote.

7: Holding a stakeholder reflection event

Do evaluation sessions with your staff team and community members specifically on your use of online tools. Prepare a report of your key findings, and feed back to elected members if applicable. In an evaluation session ask the following questions:

Outreach and engagement

What went well? What were the challenges? (of both online + offline). What methods to encourage voting worked? Did you engage new individuals or groups?

Project process and resources

What went well, and what were the challenges? Have you identified any skills or resource gaps in carrying

out the project? How was using a digital tool as part of the process? Would having an online steering group have helped? How was the security and verification process? What's been the direct impact on the area?

Digital tools

Reflect on the website with regard to: Ease of use, display & layout, clear information and security. Was it a good way to make decisions? Was it a convenient way to involve people? Would you use it again?

Anything else?

What would you do differently next time? Any advice to someone about to start such a project? Did you think it was a valuable exercise? Is it something you would like to do again?

8: Follow what happens next

Digital tools can be helpful in a PB process as the site acts a visible and accessible repository for all ideas, information about your PB process, application forms, rules, documentation etc. People can access all the information from one place online, at any time.

You can put results on the site afterwards so people know what has happened because of their input – and you can keep in contact to build a relationship with participants by emailing them the results, or you could then send further related information to participants using their email addresses, **provided you have made it clear upon registration you may do so.**

You can use the site to raise awareness of your process and promote and encourage people to participate; shout about your PB process on social media by linking people to ideas on the site. For example, you could use the results (i.e. the opening of a new playpark) to advertise the next round of PB.

The advice for finding and using **critical friends,** and **Sharing your learning!** is identical for both an online and offline PB process.

Online and Offline is not either/or!

Online participation adds value to offline processes and should not replace it altogether, even if there may seem to be cost or other benefits from doing so. In Scotland, online PB is being recommended only when it is integrated fully with the offline process. Constant updating should also be taken into account, as digital engagement and democratic innovation is rapidly developing. The many digital tools used for PB in Scotland are under constant review and can be changed based on users feedback.

For more advice and support

Contact DemSoc at: **http://www.demsoc.org/**

Hear the Voice

Make the Change

10 ways to record and evaluate your Participatory Budgeting project.

This briefing has been produced to inform public bodies, elected members and others who wish to run a Participatory Budgeting initiative.

Produced by PB Partners

With support of the Scottish Government.

June 2017