

Participatory Budgeting

Overview

PB Partners is a project of Shared Future CIC that delivers expert advice and consultancy in the field of **Participatory Budgeting (PB)**. Regarded as one of the most successful innovations in participatory democracy, Participatory Budgeting is an asset based approach to co-producing public services. With benefits focussed on the hardest to reach and most deprived members of the community.

Building on many years of experience of delivering successful Participatory Budgeting projects, and involving the leading experts in the UK, we have been at the forefront of its recent rapid expansion in Scotland, which has seen upward of £2m being committed by the Scottish Government in 2016, and many new programmes being developed.

Participatory Budgeting can really empower citizens and help drive innovation in public services. As Shared Future is a social enterprise, you can be confident that the work we do leads to sustained change and represents excellent value for money.



Residents vote in the Acorns PB programme alongside members of the Acorns Neighbourhood Management Team.

For more information
visit the PB Partners
website at
www.pbpartners.org.uk



Case Study: Edinburgh City Neighbourhood Partnership.

Shared Future, through PB Partners, has been working with Edinburgh council on a wide range of different PB initiatives. One such project took place in the South Central Neighbourhood district. On Saturday 30th April 2016 the Edinburgh South Central Neighbourhood Partnership had over £200,000 worth of funding available for distribution and residents of South Central “Voiced their Choice” and decided which projects got funded. The money was for community grants for small locally based projects delivered by residents, but also mainstream spending delivered by public bodies.

Community Grants: There was a budget of £24,000 with 21 groups applying, with the bids totalling £36,524. Local people had some hard choices to make but over 200 residents voted to decide which project were their favourites. Because this was a competitive process some groups were not successful. However, we know they that they managed to attract some new volunteers and members and had a good chance to chat to the public and let them know more about what they do. All unsuccessful applicants were invited to attend a ‘Meet the Funders’ event in May 2016.

Capital improvements: Alongside the community grants residents could vote for mainstream money under the Neighbourhood Environment Programme. It was split into two “pots” of £200,000 for roads and £67,000 for housing improvements. Not all of the projects, which totalled £324,000, could be completed with the available budget and so local people were asked to list them in order of priority. Council contracts staff will work down the list until all the money is exhausted.

Testimonials

Participants in PB programmes generally report considerable satisfaction after being given the opportunity to have their say:

“I feel I am somebody. Thank you for making my vote count”.

Community participant in a PB programme supported by PB Partners

And evidence from independent evaluators shows that the decisions taken by residents are of high quality and support partnership working.

“I want to thank Alan Budge of PB Partners very much for his excellent guidance and support to Perth and Kinross Council, our health colleagues and the Carers Strategy Group in making our ideas around Participatory Budgeting a reality!

From the beginning Alan spelt out with clarity the vision as well as the practical reality of PB, and his personal involvement and engagement has helped us make the event today a real success.”

**Paul Henderson,
Service Manager, Perth and Kinross Council,
Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol team.**



Successful community groups celebrate the funding they received through the community voting for their project.

The Added Value of Participatory Budgeting

The skills acquired within a PB programme, and the support it brings to partnership working and co-production are considerable.

- Residents better understand the complexities behind spending public money and become inspired to do more in their community.
- Elected members see their leadership role in their communities strengthened. Trust in local democracy increases as PB grows in scale.
- Service managers find innovative new ways to deliver public services efficiently, knowing that they are supported and informed by those most impacted by their work.

Our expert consultants collectively have over 35 years experience designing, delivering and researching Participatory Budgeting, in the UK and internationally.

Find out about ‘PB’ at the PB Network



Read latest news on developments in PB in the UK and worldwide on the website of the PB Network:

www.pbnetwork.org.uk

Contact PB Partners

We can support your PB work through:

- Workshops on strategic thinking and how to implement a participation strategy.
- Hands on training on how to run your own Participatory Budget grant making process.
- Mentoring staff and accompanying your process from design right through to evaluation.

To find out more about our work on Participatory Budgeting contact the PB Partners on:

info@pbpartners.org.uk

www.pbpartners.org.uk

