

Our Money, Our Planet

Engaging Citizens in the Climate Emergency
through Participatory Democracy

Refreshed 2025



Acknowledgements

Thanks go to all of the participants of our co-design workshops, who contributed their ideas and made this report possible.

About the Authors

Originally written by Alan Budge and Jez Hall in 2019, in 2025 this report was updated by Jez Hall to fix broken links, add refreshed content and reflect Shared Future's current branding.

Jez Hall is a leading expert in the field of participatory budgeting in the UK, having worked on supporting its development since 2000. For more information see:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/jez-hall/>

About Shared Future

Shared Future 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'.

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

Updated July 2025



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Need for Participatory Climate Action.....	5
Green Participatory Budgeting.....	6
Climate Assemblies and Juries	8
Local Government and Climate Policy....	10
When, How and Why to Take Action	11
Take the Plunge: Your First Steps.....	14
Appendix 1: Preface to 2019 version.....	16
Appendix 2: Values for Quality PB.....	17
Appendix 3: Useful References.....	18
About this Update	19



Introduction

Our Money, Our Planet

This report outlines some possible ways to make progress to achieving Net Zero, based on our experience and knowledge of participatory and deliberative democracy approaches. These put citizens into the driving seat of decision-making whilst also improving transparency and governance at a local authority level.

One such process is **Participatory Budgeting (PB)**. Another is **Citizens' Juries and Assemblies**. Both are discussed within this report.

We have drawn on the findings of our earlier series of 'Our Money, Our Planet' workshops. We held these workshops across the UK in 2019. Their aim was to explore how Participatory Budgeting might most effectively help to address our impending climate crisis, and its links to a Green New Deal.

Since then there has been increasing experiences of Green PB worldwide and in the UK, and we have included up to date case studies and fresh ideas.

In this report we make a number of recommendations, which are discussed in more detail in the section beginning on page 11.

In summary, the recommendations are:

- **Accessible Community led PB Funding for Local Climate Action**
- **Raise Awareness in Communities through adopting PB**
- **Link Participatory Budgeting with Citizens' Assemblies**
- **Engage All Stakeholders in the Climate Emergency**
- **Deepen the Debate**
- **Consider the Economic Impacts**



Cover Image: Your Pots Your Say, Lancaster 2023, participants
This page: Community voting at Your Pots, Your Say 2024



Your Pots Your Say, Lancaster 2024, applicant stall

Need for Participatory Climate Action

There is overwhelming evidence that we are in a climate emergency. It is of maximum importance that we move on from debating the evidence towards taking immediate action.

Given a reluctance by too many politicians to accelerate the shift to Net Zero, this remains a very challenging task.

Whilst the many recent declarations of a climate emergency by local authorities have shown increasing concern regarding climate change, the economic and cultural shifts required seem effectively beyond our reach. What can everyday citizens do?

Institutionally, change is slow, with complex rules over planning, transport and land use and many rules, regulations and policies to review in our attempts to reach net zero.

We live within a democratic and economic system that is still committed to growth. Personally, we have built our lives around a reliance on environmentally unsustainable convenience products such as cheap holidays, 'flown-in' foods and disposable fashion.

Many people feel powerless, and a lack of influence, over what is known to be an existential threat to our future, and the future of our planet. However, if we are to try to turn things around, we have to start somewhere.

Change needs to start locally

The Climate Change Committee, in its 2020 report on the role of Local Government in achieving Net Zero, identified that:

"More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level".¹

But, in responding to the emergency, it can be difficult for Local Authorities to identify major steps forward, that involves citizens.

What is Participatory Budgeting

PB has been rapidly growing worldwide and operates at many different scales, from very small budgets within villages or neighbourhoods, to multi-million pound citywide and even national processes.

Whilst not new in the UK, with examples stretching back 20 years, the last 5 years (e.g. 2020 onwards) have seen Green PB really take off in Scotland. This follows the commitment all 32 local authorities in Scotland spend 1% of their central government allocated budgets through PB. That commitment equates to about £100m per year across Scotland or an average of £3m per council. And even this could grow significantly, if PB starts to influence other funds, in Scotland and across the UK.

There is not one defined model, as PB must always be contextualised to the local conditions, but a set of common principles around PB have been emerging.

The seven defining characteristics of a well-functioning PB process are:

- 1) Citizens can directly decide on public investments
- 2) Political will to enable that and involvement leads to measurable change (it's not consultation)
- 3) Citizens can also shape the rules governing PB processes in their area
- 4) PB makes space for deliberation
- 5) PB redistributes resource based on need, so everyone benefits
- 6) Citizens are able to monitor spending
- 7) PB is repeated (e.g. on an annual basis).

A considerable body of expertise has grown up on how to do PB and a vibrant international academic and activist network sharing best practices, models and approaches.

¹ See: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Local-Authorities-and-the-Sixth-Carbon-Budget.pdf>

Green Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) originated in Brazil in the 1980s, and has since spread worldwide. It is a method of giving local people the opportunity to decide where public money is spent in their communities, towns and cities.

A Brazilian resident involved in PB in its early development said:

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

People naturally feel they want to have influence over where they live. The principle of having a say on the allocation of resources is central to PB, regardless of its scale. PB provides this sense of influence in a very practical way. PB is an effective community engagement tool, and offers more than merely a different means of allocating resources. PB aligns the priorities of citizens with policy-makers and through that can drive innovation.

The added value from PB

PB is fundamentally concerned with creating social capital and common purpose. It can connect people, and ensures they have influence over what happens in their community. PB is based on the principle that residents are ‘the experts’ in their communities.

Apart from an efficient allocation of resources the benefits that a PB approach brings are to be found in:

- Increasing trust between residents, politicians and public agencies
- A genuine sense of influence by individuals living within those communities
- Greater awareness of the constraints within budget-setting and spending processes
- Shared responsibility for wellbeing of the places where people live, work and study.

Expertise in how to do PB has been building over the last 20 years, and this supports the increasing use of Green PB across the globe.

Case Study: Dundee Climate Fund

Following up on its earlier PB work, Dundee launched its climate fund, one of a number of Green PB initiatives in Scotland.² As it did previously, Dundee uses the Consul digital engagement platform.

The Dundee Climate Fund was the first council-led green PB scheme in Scotland, with 22 city projects so far benefiting from a share of around £750,000 from the first and second rounds of the initiative.

In 2025 Dundee launched the third round with another £100,000. Community organisations can apply for between £2,000 and £25,000. The key themes of the Dundee Climate Fund 3.0 are:

- Energy – reducing consumption, energy efficiency, and renewables
- Transport – active travel and decarbonising transport systems
- Waste – minimise, develop circularity, recycling, and re-using resources
- Resilience – strengthen greenspaces, biodiversity, and local food initiatives
- Raising awareness – engage communities, and inspire the next generation of climate champions.

Councillor Heather Anderson, Climate, Environment & Biodiversity Convener backed the programme with these words:

“This is a fantastic initiative that gets support straight to the many Dundee based projects that have great original, community-driven solutions for minimising carbon emissions within the city... Residents can do their bit by voting directly for the projects they want to see get that backing.”

² See: https://www.dundee.gov.uk/news/article?article_ref=4682

UK and International Inspirations for Green or Climate PB

Green PB has been happening across the world. An influential report, *“Contributions of Participatory Budgeting to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation”* was published in 2020, and identified 15 cities and regions from many different continents.³

It raised awareness of PB’s huge (and as yet largely untapped) potential to help address the dramatic impacts that climate change has on millions of people’s lives. It also includes questions for future research and advocates for more climate-related PB.

In 2023 People Powered, a global hub for participatory democracy launched its climate democracy accelerator programme.⁴ Represented were partnerships of civil society and local governments from 11 different countries, many committed to using PB. Their action plans covered a wide variety of climate issues, ranging from waste management to watersheds and participatory environmental governance strategies.

The Green PB baton has also been picked up in the UK, particularly in Scotland; a wide range of examples and resources now sit on the website of PB Scotland. We believe Scotland’s example could be replicated across the UK. Find out more at the link on P.12 of this report.

Local Authority Carbon Budgeting

Earlier we referenced the role of Local Government in achieving Net Zero, and the important 2020 report from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) on the sixth carbon budget. Throughout, the CCC report stresses the key role of local government in meeting Net Zero targets. It argued that local authorities are the cornerstone of many climate change partnerships, which link the key delivery organisations able to deliver Net Zero. So, crucially, while they must take action on their own estates and activities, their primary role is in leveraging action by others. They are also

Case Study: Lisbon’s Green PB

Starting in 2019 Lisbon City Council’s first-ever ‘green’ PB.

An initiative supported and managed by South Pole and EIT Climate-KIC’s City Finance Lab, was allocated a €5 million budget to support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects selected by local citizens.

Part of Lisbon City’s wider participatory budget, it sets aside funds for projects with positive climate change mitigation and adaptation impacts, such as cycling lanes, tree planting for street heat reduction, or water capture and storage. The impact of Lisbon’s ‘green’ participatory budget is designed to be two-fold; ensuring constant annual investments into the city’s low-carbon transition, whilst also raising awareness among citizens of the benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

the closest form of government to local people, and they, and their citizens, know what works best for and in their areas. In its 7th Carbon Budget report, released in February 2025, the CCC commented

“targeted support and outreach were needed to ensure that everyone is included and able to participate in the transition, providing access to related cost savings and wider health, employment, and other benefits.”

In preparing their own investments and strategies, local government should reflect the concerns of its citizens – significantly the CCC identifies 80% of the UK public say they are concerned about climate change. Further, as the report states:

“Public engagement needs to go beyond one-way information provision. It should also enable governments to gain input from the public and build public buy-in.”

³ See report from International Observatory of Participatory Democracy: <https://oidp.net/en/content.php?id=1716>

⁴ Find out more on the People Powered website: <https://www.peoplepowered.org/news-content/accelerators-launch-26-new-participatory-climate-digital-programs>

Climate Assemblies and Juries

Alongside its PB work Shared Future CIC specialises in deliberative democracy.

Climate campaign groups are calling for a radical transformation in our democracy, to facilitate the necessary policies to address the climate and ecological emergency facing all of us. They believe responding to the climate crisis requires new democratic processes embedded into the DNA of our political culture at all levels; from local communities up to the highest levels of government.

Our work includes citizens' juries, forums, panels and assemblies, where climate themed conversations and recommendation setting occurs between randomly selected citizens. Our citizen-led deliberations, or mini-publics as they are sometimes known, bring together a 'microcosm' of the general public.

And our experience shows local authorities with political and professional commitment to implementing the recommendations of a deliberative process can deliver real citizen-led impacts to mitigate, and more importantly transition towards a changed climate. Producing outcomes that make a real difference to local people and the work of public bodies. Especially if they have a budget set aside to implement the recommendations.

On the following page we highlight some of our recent deliberative processes.

What are Citizen Juries, Assemblies and Mini-Publics

A citizens' assembly or jury is typically made up of a group of diverse local people selected at random.

Members of the inquiry share knowledge, expertise and opinions before questioning a series of 'commentators' (also known as expert witnesses). They are specialists called to provide different perspectives on the inquiry topic. Where possible we work to seek consensus before participants produce their recommendations. These are shared widely and action planned at a stakeholder's conference. Thereby influencing public policy and shaping the commissioning of public services. The main difference between an citizens' assembly and a 'jury' is in its scale. An assembly is typically over 50 people and a jury is around 30 people. Their smaller size makes citizens' juries more affordable at a local authority level.

Shared Future facilitates citizen-led deliberations on a huge range of topics. As the facilitators we stand apart from making recommendations, and see our role as supporting the quality of the deliberation and making sure best practice is followed.



Workshop at our Southwark climate assembly

The Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury

Commissioned by the Leeds Climate Commission in 2019, the Citizens' Jury recruited 25 randomly selected citizens over nine sessions to answer the question 'What should Leeds do about the emergency of climate change?'

An oversight panel of key stakeholders met to ensure the recruitment process was fair and robust and to agree which 'commentators' should present evidence to the jury.

The twelve strong oversight panel included representation from The City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Extinction Rebellion.

Bude Area Community Jury on Climate

The Bude Area Community Jury, which was commissioned by Bude Climate Partnership, brought together 34 citizens aged 16 to 86 from across the wider Bude area.

In the end the Community Jury produced 11 principles for future decision making on sea level rise, and 29 recommendations covering sea level rise, awareness raising, and other climate change-related topics.

Wandsworth Citizens' Assembly on Air Quality

At the beginning of 2023 Shared Future was involved in designing and facilitating the London Borough of Wandsworth's Citizen Assembly on Air Quality. The Assembly was the fruition of manifesto pledges to hold a Citizens Assembly to review its Air Quality Action Plan and to set ambitious new targets to clean up the borough's air.

Preston People's Climate Jury

In early 2024, Shared Future CIC was commissioned by Preston City Council to design and facilitate a two-month Climate Jury. Twenty-seven residents from the region were recruited for the process. They came together over 8 sessions to answer the question:

"How can we in Preston work together to address the opportunities and challenges of climate change in a way that is fair to everyone?"

Blackburn with Darwen Climate Jury

In 2023 26 local residents, carefully selected to reflect the diversity of the local population, utilised knowledge from researchers, scientists and local experts to produce a set of 15 recommendations. Nearly 100 people attended the launch of their recommendations at King George's Hall. We then supported some of its members to continue working to advocate for their recommendations.

Local Government and Climate Policy



Over 75% of UK District, County, Single-tier and Combined Authorities, have declared a climate emergency, and nearly 85% have a climate action plan, committing them to taking action to reduce their carbon emissions.⁵

This demonstrates genuine concern by most Local Governments of the need to talk about the issue and start to effect real change.

It has long been within the remit of local government to deliver on environmental issues; including recycling, pollution control, reducing harmful emissions by vehicles or by increased use of cycle lanes. They have considerable influence over planning policies, they invest in and manage social housing and play a big role in protecting our biodiversity.

Local action matters, but is hard

We feel an apparent indifference to climate issues by some residents or businesses can stem from a perceived inability to have meaningful influence on an intractable problem.

Despite the government setting out its pathway to Net Zero, and similar commitments across other parties, in general the required climate action is not seen as a vote winner.

Councils are also struggling to meet existing targets. When most local authorities are already under pressure to meet their

requirement to deliver upon statutory services, this, in turn, will naturally inhibit politicians and policy-makers in implementing effective climate interventions.

Supporting local action with citizens

We know that PB is a tried and tested way to engage the general public and for the following reasons, a 'natural fit' for allocating public funds for tackling climate change:

- Budgets, whilst always in flux are still available on an ongoing, annual basis
- The financial burden on councils from climate change will get worse if not tackled.
- A 'target audience' for PB is easy to define, if based on council wards and structures
- A small grants PB exercise, held locally, can be a 'quick win' for Local Authorities
- Residents want to protect their community; It's close and meaningful to them

We believe PB can improve relationships between citizens and their council. It's a means of empowering and connecting individuals to their neighbours and to their elected officials

'A great way of involving, energising, engaging and networking.'

(Quote from participant at the 'Clean, Green and Safe' PB event, in Bradford, 2004.)

⁵ See research from the MySociety CAPE project at <https://cape.mysociety.org/>

When, How and Why to Take Action

Our Money, Our Planet Workshops

We first held six *'Our Money, Our Planet: PB and the Green New Deal'* workshops between June and September 2019, in Oxford, Brighton, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester and Wigan.

Nearly 100 attendees, including local councillors, council officers and climate activists, came together to consider how a participatory approach to decision-making might impact positively on climate issues.

When combined with other initiatives, like citizens' assemblies, participants felt PB had a key role to play in developing responses to the climate crisis at a Local Authority level.

At the highest level this might be by developing inclusive policies for local Carbon Budgets. Offering a way to agree tough local carbon targets, and within such limits, individually and collectively decide what activities to prioritise, to reduce, or even stop altogether.

The discussions were wide-ranging. There was recognition there had to be difficult trade-offs, requiring citizens to also change their behaviour. Councils will not be able to do it alone. Through deliberative democracy, and through adopting PB, our workshop participants felt residents would gain an increased confidence to accept the changes required, over hard to communicate policies, like carbon budgeting. Some of the main emerging ideas and recommendations are listed below.

“PB is a way for communities to exert influence locally; to ‘green’ our own communities... rather than the common-place view of our powerlessness in the face of climate change.”

These quotes come directly from Our Money, Our Planet workshop participants, and we have given an example for each idea:

The Recommendations

A) Accessible Community led PB Funding for Local Climate Action

- People 'learn by doing'. Through engagement with local green initiatives a new awareness and new strategies towards a broader environmental agenda will naturally and organically develop.
- Local 'green' interventions require less specialist expertise, so anyone can start them, with the support of their community.
- Through greater local ownership of decisions PB can help foster community buy-in to existing green initiatives (such as building more cycle lanes or requiring more household recycling). That would mean more take-up, rather than a 'Transition Agenda' being imposed from above.
- It's important to start locally, on issues that can be delivered locally, and nothing too controversial to begin with. Aim to build the model up over time.
- Invite politicians to support residents. Both they and local citizens will see change happen as projects are built and finished. The ultimate outcome will be increased civic pride and stronger local government.



Your Pots, Your Say Regenerative Economy PB event in Lancaster 2024.⁶

⁶ Your Pots Your Say, a £200k PB programme in Lancaster. More at: <https://foodfutures.org.uk/2024-your-pots-grants/>

B) Raise Awareness in Communities through adopting PB

- 'Green' issues are not obviously most residents no.1 priority. PB can change peoples' mindsets about the severity of the environmental crisis. PB events would act as showcases to raise broader awareness of green issues.
- PB allows citizens and politicians to work together. Plus, you need to involve all potential partner organisations – the climate emergency is not just another council policy, its everyone's business.



Dundee Council has now delivered three rounds of Green PB spending, totalling over £800,000.⁷

“Once a Council had declared a climate emergency a (small grant) PB event would be a way to start.”

C) Link PB with Citizens' Assemblies

- Propose local government fund and develop ongoing citizens' assemblies, and so that it is not all just talk, connect PB into them to develop timelines and project plans.
- Focus activity first on delivering positive things that matter to people, like transport or environmental improvements. Use PB to make choices on how public resources are allocated, ideally based on priorities taken from citizens' own recommendations.
- PB can operate locally, and a citizens' assembly could be city-wide. Ideal to get into discussing more complex 'big money'.



Shibley Town Council established a Green PB programme after running their climate assembly.⁸

“Citizens' Assemblies allow citizens the means to influence wider plans around addressing the climate crisis”

D) Engage All Stakeholders in the Climate Emergency

- Councils need to better publicise the climate emergency, starting with the front page of the Council website. Supported by TV, radio and media coverage, with local celebrity or high-profile endorsement.
- To foster ownership of green initiatives there is a need for more staff within council and partner organisations to also be able to influence 'in-house' Carbon Budgets. It's not just something for communities.
- Connect better with investment by social landlords towards the transition; it is likely some part of what they are already doing.
- Spread the idea of setting up a local PB fund to local politicians and other grant funders, and get private businesses involved in supporting or even funding it.



The Green PB Benefits badge from PB Scotland.⁹

⁷ Image: Dundee Climate Fund 3.0. More information at: https://www.dundee.gov.uk/news/article?article_ref=4682

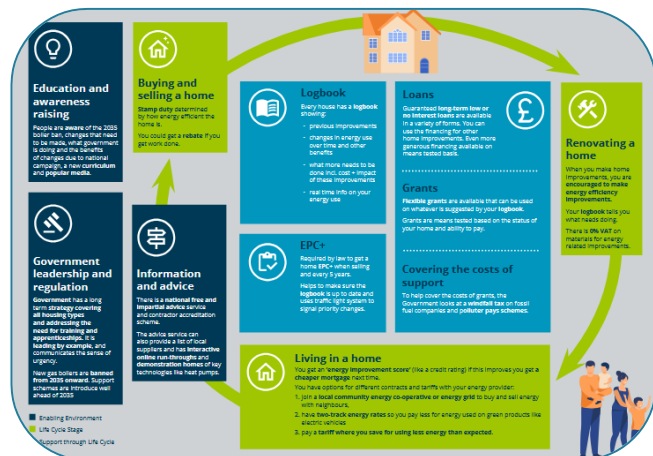
⁸ Image: Shibley Town Council. More at <https://shibleytowncouncil.gov.uk/2024/01/30/green-grant-success-for-shibley/>

⁹ Find out more about Green PB in Scotland at <https://pbscotland.scot/green-pb>

“More needs to be done to raise Green New Deal ideas with Local Authorities and their Partners.”

E) Deepen the Debate

- Help citizens understand where their Council’s money come from. Link up participatory democracy and open government initiatives.
- Improving public budget literacy will bring greater accountability and put pressure for change on the council and the wider system. With perhaps even the potential of raising local voices to a national level.
- Area and place-based regeneration and capital spending matters. Find ways for PB to shape larger capital budgets. That will help to shift the super-tanker of spend.



Infographic on enabling home owner retrofits.¹⁰

“By being imaginative we’ll better understand and grow the relationship between large scale top down and small-scale bottom-up solutions.”

F) Consider the Economic Impacts

- Make the link with programmes and policies such as climate employment, re-nationalisation and The Green New Deal.
- Consider if there is a need for Carbon Impact Assessments within any PB process.

- A robust sustainability agenda should underpin PB project design.
- Make use of any available national levers, because that is where the significant power lies. Find and encourage the signs of political will coming from the top.

“Are there possibilities to raise funding, such as a local tax for climate adaption, collected by the council and spent by those that contributed?”

Of course not all of these ideas are easy to achieve. The workshops also took a realistic approach to the inevitable challenges.

Some of the Challenges

- Traditional and social media like to emphasise conflict and drama, which can de-rail the debate and block innovation.
- There is always a challenge in letting go and devolving money. Power holds onto power.
- Avoid the trap of lip-service and tokenism. Not everyone will get the message, and the culture of local government can be very risk averse. There are no easy wins.
- Consider the risks from ineffective or unacceptable policies and the added costs for citizens. Are our politicians ready to take on that risk at the ballot box?
- How easy is it to use PB to make the longer-term budgetary commitments needed, up to or more than 5 years in some cases?
- We need to be realistic about the nature of human beings and our responses to threat and to grief. We will naturally have an emotional response to bad news.
- While we rationally know we have a short window to make changes, we also need to sustain change over the long period.

“Are we really willing to really embrace change?”

PB can help people engage with change in a positive way by putting power into their hands.

¹⁰ Infographic from our Citizens’ Panel on retrofitting the houses of homeowners: See <https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/reports/addressing-emissions-from-owner-occupied-homes>

Take the Plunge: Your First Steps

Shared Future have over 15 years' experience of developing PB models at both small grants and mainstream levels.

Our experience shows that when allocating public budgets, time after time, innovative PB processes have demonstrated their value in terms of community networking and sharing information. And excellent for developing greater levels of trust between residents, elected members and service providers.

“PB can operate locally, a Citizens’ Assembly could be city-wide.”
(A quote from our Brighton Workshop)

A key theme emerging at our national workshops was that locally run green PB events could act as recruiting grounds for creating greater understanding of climate change. It can also offer ways to develop the more strategic approaches tackle the climate crisis.

If, as per Lisbon’s example, PB events do *‘raise awareness among citizens of the benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects’*, that suggests strongly that green PB events have a double purpose; to allocate resources for community led climate programmes, and provide a pathway towards larger and more strategic approaches.

Many thousands of PB programmes have been recorded in the last 30 years.¹¹

Climate change represents a huge global challenge. Although PB and Citizens’ Juries and Assemblies won’t solve the problem on their own, they have an important contribution to make.

Shared Future, with its expertise in deliberative democracy and its PB Partners are ideally placed to provide tailored support to the development of these programmes, within your local authority area. Our programmes always

include partner organisations and third sector involvement, and put the voice of citizens first.

What Next?

To deliver a successful PB programme three things are necessary:

- Political and senior leadership approval.
- An identified budget to distribute. (An initial budget can be modest and in the region of £20,000 to £50,000).
- Staffing and public engagement infrastructure to enable the process.

In our experience, a small-scale PB voting event can usually be delivered within a six-month period. Ideally the commitment is longer.

The first action towards developing a PB programme is normally convening a stakeholder workshop.

Invite key influencers, interested parties and activists to a briefing on the theory and practice of delivering PB. After that first meeting you can move towards the detailed project design. We can also help you think additional considerations like:

- Using sortition to select a trusted, diverse citizen-led PB design group.
- Identify the areas where issues of equity, public interest and climate change align.
- Going straight to people; offering residents ways to make the case to public leaders.

A similar approach, of holding an initial design workshop is also needed if planning a citizens’ jury or assembly process.

‘Scotland’s PB journey has gone from a handful of voters in 2014 to over 97,000... Much of that is due to the expertise, professionalism and support provided by Shared Future, and I would have no hesitation in highly recommending them.’

Kathleen Glazik, Community Empowerment Team Leader, the Scottish Government.

¹¹ See Hope for Democracy by Nelson Dias at https://npms.cfh.ufsc.br/files/2018/09/hope_for_democracy_-_digital.pdf



Screenshot from the video 'Moving Towards the Mainstream' by PB Scotland, 2018

Appendix 1: Preface to 2019 version

The climate crisis

In August 2018, Greta Thunberg, a fifteen-year-old Swedish schoolgirl, went on strike.

She sat herself down outside the Swedish Parliament building and began her one-person 'climate strike'. One year on, schools around the world are now 'striking for the climate' on a regular basis.

In that time, the Extinction Rebellion movement has also grown into an internationally recognised phenomenon.

Whilst its tactics of closing thoroughfares, disrupting rail services and other direct actions have proved controversial, there is no doubt that the climate crisis is a far more pressing and visible issue for politicians, the media, and the general public than it was even 12 months ago.

For example, on 8th August 2019 the lead news item on both the BBC and Channel 4 highlighted a new IPCC report emphasising the need for major changes in food consumption and more sustainable land management.

Greta Thunberg's message in essence, is to believe the science, and stop burning fossil fuels.

There is a vast amount of available evidence that climate change poses a genuine threat to our future, and that the causes of this are the result of human activity, an unequal and unfair economic system predicated on growth, and of a failure of political will to makes changes that might be electorally unpopular.

If the mean global temperature of the earth reaches 1.5–2 degrees higher than at present, and there are plenty of indications that this increase will be surpassed, then the consequences in terms of de-population, mass migration, major disruptions to food supplies and rising sea levels will be catastrophic.

The ecological effects of climate change, of reducing biodiversity and destruction of habitats is equally worrying to our long-term well-being.

Time is short and practical solutions have to be found.

We hope this report will contribute towards the much-needed transition to a low and preferably zero carbon economy.

Alan Budge and Jez Hall, October 2019



Cover of 2019 version of *Our Money, Our Planet*.

Appendix 2: Values for Quality PB

PB is most effective when underpinned by a set of quality assurance principles

These should be reviewed and agreed by your steering or design group, as they can help with evaluation, or keep a project 'on track'. For example, it's also worth making sure the engagement work you do is informed by external principles such as Scotland's National Standards for Community Engagement. Information on these Scottish principles is available at <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk>

In 2024 Shared Future also updated the long existing UK Values, Principles and Standards for PB.

These are:

Local Ownership



Citizens should be involved in setting budget priorities, identifying unmet needs, proposing projects for public spending and making decisions concerning their community or place.

Scale



PB processes should move towards decisions over increasingly larger service budgets and investments (as opposed to only small-scale participatory grant making).

Shared Responsibility



PB is an effective way to build co-production, common purpose and a shared commitment from all stakeholders when there are clear roles, agreed aims and ways for everyone to become involved.

Support for Democracy



Participation, such as through PB, supports and strengthens representative democracy. Public bodies should advocate for a wide range of approaches for public participation within an ecosystem of local democracy.

Deliberation



PB processes should take citizens beyond personal choice and involve real, informed and meaningful deliberation around budget decisions.

Accessibility



Participants must have good and clear access to PB processes. This includes accessible venues, good information and support to participate.

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.

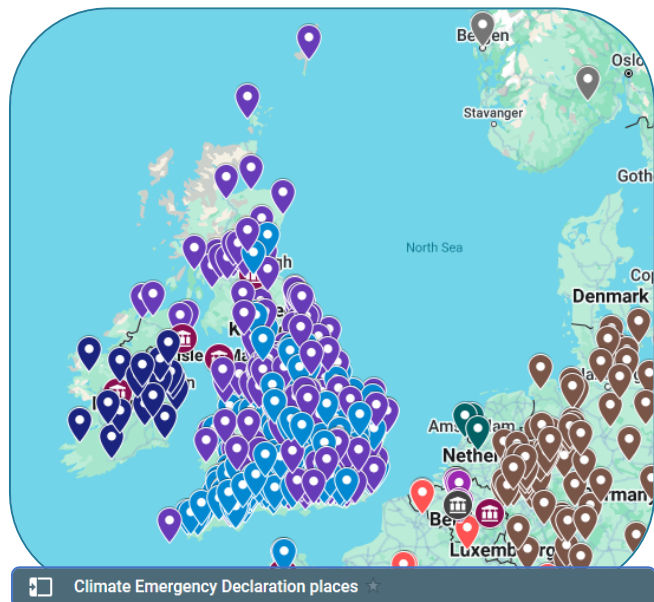
Our full 2024 PB Values, Principles and Standards are available at:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/values-principles-standards-for-pb/>

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

Appendix 3: Useful References

Councils Declaring a Climate Emergency Map



See the full results at:

<https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/map-of-local-council-declarations/>

Links to Our Toolkits

GRANT MAKING THROUGH PB.

A 'HOW TO' GUIDE:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/resources/grant-making-through-participatory-budgeting>

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AT SCALE.

MAINSTREAMING PB FOR SERVICE COMMISSIONING AND INVESTMENT:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/resources/pb-mainstreaming>

PB EVALUATION GUIDE.

HEAR THE VOICE, MAKE THE CHANGE:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/resources/pb-evaluation-guide>

YOUTH PB GUIDE: BUILDING YOUTH VOICE.

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/resources/building-youth-voice>

CLIMATE ASSEMBLIES: A GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES – PCAN /SHARED FUTURE.

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/resources/climate-assemblies-and-juries/>

Shared Future Blogs

'REFRAMING CARE FOR OUR WORLD' – Jez Hall

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/reframing-care-for-our-world-as-participatory-people-led-politics>

'CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES, CITIZENS' JURIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE' – Pete Bryant

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/citizens-assemblies-citizens-juries-and-climate-change/>

'BEYOND THE BALLOT' – Pete Bryant and Dr Rebecca Willis:

<https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/beyond-the-ballot-how-citizens-can-lead-the-climate-change-conversation/>

Green Economics

THE GREEN NEW DEAL GROUP UK:

<https://greennewdealgroup.org>

NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION:

<https://neweconomics.org/campaigns/green-new-deal>

DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS ACTION LAB:

<https://doughnuteconomics.org/>

Other Useful References

LISBON'S GREEN PB PROGRAMME:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353412597_Greener_Cities_and_Their_Citizens_Insights_from_the_Participatory_Budget_of_Lisbon

EDMONTON'S CITIZENS' PANEL ON ENERGY AND CLIMATE:

<https://participedia.net/case/982>

CONTRIBUTIONS OF PB TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

<https://www.oidp.net/en/content.php?id=1716>

GREEN PB IN SCOTLAND

<https://pbscotland.scot/green-pb>

About this Update

Our Money, Our Planet

This publication was originally produced in 2019, a time when many local authorities started to declare climate emergencies. In July 2025 it has been updated by Jez Hall to fix broken links, add refreshed content and reflect Shared Future's current branding.

It aims to support public sector organisations wishing to develop 'Green' Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiatives, or combine them with other approaches.

It is relevant to any organisation working in the UK with an interest in furthering democratic engagement at scale.

It complements our guides to Participatory Budgeting grant-making and other resources on our website.

Our track record

We've been building on learning about PB since 2000, when Jez Hall, a founding director of SFCIC took part in the first UK learning exchange to Porto Alegre.

In 2004 the first Green PB took place in the UK, in Bradford, to make that city 'clean, green and safe'.

In 2008 the Department of Communities and Local Government promoted the first PB national strategy in England. When that initiative ended Shared Future hosted the UK PB Network, which formed to retain the knowledge and build a legacy from that early PB work.

Subsequently the Scottish Government promoted PB under its Community Choices Programme, during which we trained every local authority in Scotland on how to deliver PB. Shared Future have also supported PB initiatives in Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as internationally.

This guide includes ideas and examples from many of these initiatives, as well as some more recent experiences in Scotland and elsewhere.

Images used in this report are from Shared Future's PB image archive, and our partners, unless otherwise stated. Please contact us for confirmation on how to correctly credit images before any reuse, and image reuse is only permitted with our prior permission.

All web references checked June 2025.

Our Money, Our Planet

Engaging Citizens in the
Climate Emergency through
Participatory Democracy

2025

