

# Glasgow's Participatory Budgeting Evaluation Toolkit



# What is the participatory budgeting toolkit?

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.

*“Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss spending priorities, make specific proposals and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring process.”*

Source: PB Unit

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This participatory budgeting toolkit is aimed at any organisation or community group in Glasgow leading a PB activity. It has been adapted from a wide range of evaluation tools and aims to provide a range of measures for evaluating PB activities. The toolkit can be used as a companion to the 2016 National Standards for Community Engagement: <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk>.

This toolkit is intended to support any individual or group organising a PB activity in Glasgow to decide how to evaluate how the PB process went and collate the evidence and information required. It offers a ‘pick and mix’ approach so that PB organisers can select what should be evaluated depending on the size and scale of the PB activity they are leading. It allows PB organisers to determine how best to assess how their organisation or community group did at:

- leadership and governance of the PB activity (planning)
- delivery of key PB processes (process)
- outcomes from the PB activity (impact)

The toolkit is intended to be user-friendly and helpful for the public sector, the voluntary sector and community organisations running PB activities. It seeks to enable Glasgow to become a ‘best practice’ European city in PB evaluation at all levels, allowing us to measure the difference participatory budgeting makes in Glasgow.

## How the toolkit was developed

In 2015, in collaboration with [What Works Scotland](#), Glasgow set up a Participatory Budgeting Evaluation Group (PBEG) to devise an evaluation toolkit for PB activities in Glasgow. The Group included members from various community planning partners and was led by Evelyn O'Donnell from Glasgow City Council and Alex Byers from Glasgow Life. Membership of the group consisted of Christine Tait from North West Health Improvement Team, the Third Sector Forum and Foundation Scotland, with support and facilitation from Oliver Escobar (University of Edinburgh) and Richard Brunner (University of Glasgow).

The PBEG adopted a collaborative action research approach\* where participants worked together systematically to examine a range of models, tools and resources for evaluating PB, including:

- *15 Key Metrics for Evaluating Participatory Budgeting: A Toolkit for Evaluators and Implementers* (Public Agenda)
- *Participatory Budgeting in Scotland: An overview of strategic design choices and principles for effective delivery* (Glasgow Centre for Population Health and What Works Scotland)
- *Participatory Budgeting Self-evaluation Toolkit* (PB Partners)
- *A People's Budget - A Research and Evaluation Report on Participatory Budgeting in New York City* (Urban Justice Center)
- *Community GAINS Evaluation, Glenrothes* (Fife Council).

The toolkit is intended to be flexible and adaptable to any PB process and can be used according to the aims and objectives of the PB programme you are undertaking.

\* See more about collaborative action research at [whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/how-to-design-collaborative-action-research](http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/how-to-design-collaborative-action-research)

## Why evaluate participatory budgeting?

Originating in Brazil in 1989, PB has since spread across the globe.

*“Part of the reason why PB has become one of the most popular democratic innovations of the last two decades has been its substantial impact in tackling inequalities, solving local problems and increasing civic engagement...”*

Harkins and Escobar, 2015: 38

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Glasgow City Council's Strategic Plan 2012-2017 states "As part of our approach to community planning and devolving responsibility for how services are developed locally, we will roll out participatory budgeting to local areas so local people have greater influence over, and input into, how services are developed and delivered."

The aims of this are to:

- increase community participation in the decision making process
- develop the communities' knowledge and understanding of public service resource allocation
- generate spending decisions that are fairer and better reflect the community's needs

So evaluating any PB activity should include measures to understand:

1. public involvement in the PB activity
2. how the PB outcome helps to solve locally-defined issues
3. how PB processes and outcomes address social inequalities
4. how wider democratic processes are impacted by the PB activity

In a nutshell, the toolkit helps you to evaluate the benefits and impacts from both a 'social' and a 'democratic' perspective.

## Getting started

The recommended starting point is to determine what your PB activity seeks to achieve and then select the measures from the toolkit to monitor and evaluate the process.

If you are running a large PB activity you will be likely to select a wider range of measures than for a smaller PB activity.

The toolkit is colour coded, to reflect the key dimensions of the PB activity that PB leaders may want to consider.

- What do we want to achieve? (Aim)
- How good is our leadership and governance of the PB activity? (Planning)
- How good is our delivery of key processes? (Process)
- What key outcomes have we achieved? (Impact)



There are three parts to the toolkit.

### 1. **Overarching questions**

These are 'big picture' questions that help you to think about your PB process in the broadest terms. These questions should be considered both as you start your evaluation process, to help you to consider strategically what exactly you are trying to achieve, and/or at the end allowing you to assess the impact from a strategic perspective.

### 2. **Challenge questions**

There are a total of 40 challenge questions contained in the toolkit. Each question is designed to assist you to better understand a particular aspect of your PB process. These challenge questions will help PB organisers to collect data to answer the questions for the three key dimensions: **planning, process** and **impact**.

Alongside each question you will also find a short description of what you should expect to learn from answering that question together with suggested evidence that should help to support your findings. These are all designed to assist you in your evaluation process and are not an exhaustive list.

### 3. **Improvement plan**

The last section should be completed at the end of your PB Evaluation. It is designed to help you capture and record where improvement is required.

This section lets you systematically record the key points identified and how, who and when you intend to address these in order to improve your performance/outcomes and impacts in future PB processes.

## I. Overarching questions

### What do we want to achieve?

Answering these questions will help to determine the added value from the PB process.

- What impact has the participatory budgeting had on the lives of the people it touches?
- What impact has the participatory budgeting had on the community?
- Has the participatory budgeting improved outcomes through collaborative working?
- Has the participatory budgeting changed the way our organisation works and behaves?

## 2. Challenge questions

How good is our leadership and governance?		
Challenge question	Description	Evidence
How well do we set strategic direction in relation to PB?	Indicates PB is embedded in strategic planning of the organisation.	Organisational planning documents
To what extent do we involve partners/communities in how we incorporate PB in our strategic planning?	Indicates the contribution and support of all relevant stakeholders and agreement and achievement of joint outcomes.	Stakeholder consultation and/or engagement business plan
How well can we demonstrate a strategic commitment to PB?	Indicates relevant and appropriate resources have been assigned to ensure success of PB.	Resource allocation including budget and staffing within strategic planning documents

## How good is our delivery of key processes?

### How well have we increased participation and ensured representation in the process?

Challenge question	Description	Evidence
How many eligible residents participated in the PB process?	Indicates PB's reach, representation and ability to engage the targeted participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Area/ward profiles</li> </ul>
What is the profile of the residents who participated in the PB process?	Indicates the socio-demographic breakdown of those participating in PB. Acts as a baseline which engagement of particular groupings can be measured against.	Participant questionnaires
How many PB voters are eligible to vote on the electoral roll but did not vote in the most recent local election?	Indicates PB's potential to engage residents who choose not participate in the mainstream political process. Acts as a baseline against which legacy can be measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Voters roll</li> </ul>
How many PB voters are ineligible to vote in local elections?	Indicates PB's potential to engage people who are excluded from standard forms of political participation owing to age, immigration status or other reasons.	Participant questionnaires
How many participants are from equalities groupings in comparison to the area demographic?	Indicates PB's potential to engage communities that are marginalised in the traditional political process, and highlights the extent to which participation is representative of local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Area/ward profiles</li> <li>• Maps marked with dots</li> </ul>

<p>What measures have been taken to involve groups with protected characteristics and people who are excluded from participating due to disadvantage relating to social or economic factors?</p>	<p>Captures aspects that increases and improves access to participation in the PB process.</p>	<p>PB organisers' data. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable transport</li> <li>• Caring for dependants (for example, childcare or care of older people)</li> <li>• Personal assistance or personal care</li> <li>• Suitable and accessible venues and appropriate catering</li> <li>• Access to interpreters</li> <li>• Communication aids</li> <li>• Meetings and events organised at appropriate times</li> <li>• Access to social media, video conferencing and online resources where appropriate</li> <li>• Out-of-pocket expenses</li> </ul>
<p>How many participants reported being new or returning to PB?</p>	<p>Measures both growth and retention of PB participants and various patterns of participation over time.</p>	<p>Participant questionnaires</p>
<p>How many third sector and community-based organisations were involved in PB at strategic level?</p>	<p>Indicates the extent to which PB engages voluntary and community sectors. Also an indicator of variation in how processes are implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of strategic meetings</li> <li>• Records of other strategic activities</li> <li>• Organisation questionnaires</li> </ul>

## What key outcomes have we achieved?

### How well have we developed the community's understanding of resource allocation?

Challenge question	Description	Evidence
How have people participating in PB developed their knowledge and understanding of resource allocation?	Indicates the extent to which PB has assisted participants to comprehend the financial and social situation and the challenges inherent in making decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Case studies</li> </ul>
How have PB funds been allocated by project type? (E.g. Youth, Early Years, etc.)	Describes how PB funding was allocated across types of projects. Informs difference in allocation and of equity in the distribution of PB funds in relation to organisation and city-wide priorities.	Number and percentage of funding allocated to successful projects by project type

### How well have we done in designing effective and efficient PB, which enables spending decisions that are fairer and better reflect the community's needs?

How many new, continued and discontinued PB programmes and activities have taken place in the current year?	Identifies trends in PB programmes and activities over time.	Count of active PB programmes and activities (e.g. categorise as; first-time, continued, discontinued)
What funds have been allocated to PB projects in current year?	Identifies trends in funding allocated to PB programmes and activities over time.	Budget allocated versus actual spend to PB programmes and activities
What are project completion rates and final project costs against budget?	Highlights the number and percentage of winning projects that are completed, and	Monitoring arrangements and reports

	total cost versus budget.	
How much additional funding has been secured to further support projects and needs as a result of participation in PB programmes and activity?	Indicates PBs potential to bring additional and new funds to communities.	Funding amount and source
How much has been spent on implementation of the PB process?	Measures how much money was spent on the PB process and how that compares with the funds allocated to PB projects, to enable identification of return on investment and social return on investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total spend on development, delivery and evaluation of PB (including staff time, venue hire, support costs etc.)</li> <li>• Total spend on PB projects</li> </ul>
<b>How well are we doing at securing support at a strategic level for PB?</b>		
To what extent has senior level bought in to, and driven, PB within the organisation?	Decision-making processes support PB, removing obstacles to implementation and roll out of PB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic and business plans</li> <li>• Team and individual work plans</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
To what extent can commitment to the future provision of PB funding be demonstrated?	Enables the process to be taken forward both in terms of money to allocate via PB and resources to cover the cost of delivering future PB processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management reports</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings</li> <li>• Public announcements</li> <li>• Financial monitoring reports</li> <li>• Budget allocation</li> </ul>
To what extent is sufficient planning and development time in place to ensure training and capacity building of staff responsible for PB is undertaken?	To identify the extent to which all parties are initially and regularly made aware of and supported in their role in the PB process to ensure continued buy in and improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance notes</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Training logs</li> </ul>

How well has PB engaged with community groups and organisations?		
How well has a communication strategy and delivery process been created and deployed to inform the community about the PB project?	To summarise how the PB process was promoted and how refinements made in response to feedback were implemented and communicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plan</li> <li>• Posters, leaflets, newspaper articles, media/social media articles, radio advertising</li> </ul>
How many community groups and organisations identified and engaged in PB?	To identify action taken to identify and contact local community groups and organisations and ensure appropriate representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of groups and organisations contacted</li> <li>• Monitor communications to groups (phone, email, meetings, social media, letters etc.)</li> <li>• Monitor communications from groups (phone, email, meetings, social media, letters etc.)</li> </ul>
How many of the identified community groups and organisations engaged in PB?	Indicates the extent to which new and existing groups have been encouraged to participate. Indicates the extent to which organisations participated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation questionnaires</li> <li>• Participants list</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> </ul>
How well are community groups and organisations included, encouraged and supported throughout PB process?	Provision in place to provide initial and ongoing support to all participants, including action taken to reduce barriers.	List methodologies used (e.g. was a key contact assigned, helpdesk set up, outreach or other engagement activities conducted?)
How well has the PB process improved public confidence?		
How many new or strengthened relationships have been established between	To reflect on how engagement in the PB process has positively changed the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> </ul>

residents, groups, councillors and officers as a result of participating in PB?	involved participants and organisations interact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population survey</li> </ul>
To what extent can transparency and accountability of the decision making process to the community be demonstrated?	To enable the public to have confidence in, and understand the decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality control process and associated documentation</li> <li>• Monitoring by independent observers</li> </ul>
<b>How well has PB enabled capacity building?</b>		
To what extent is responsibility for service delivery now shared between providers and/or residents as a result of participating in PB?	To determine the level of success in building shared responsibility between service providers and residents, and to what extent efficiency is improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Provider interviews</li> </ul>
How many of the organisation's workforce have developed a new skill as a result of their involvement in PB?	To indicate the impact of PB in building the skill base of workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace surveys &amp; workshops</li> <li>• Training needs analysis</li> <li>• Performance management</li> <li>• Interviews with involved staff</li> </ul>
How many of the workforce have changed an aspect of their working practice as a result of their involvement in PB?	To indicate the impact of PB in changing the way in which staff work with each other, partners and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace surveys &amp; workshops</li> <li>• Training needs analysis</li> <li>• Performance management</li> <li>• Positive changes to service delivery</li> <li>• Interviews with involved staff</li> </ul>
How many of the workforce have established new working relationships and partnerships as a result of their involvement in PB?	Indicates the impact of PB in changing the way in which staff interact with each other, partners and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace surveys &amp; workshops</li> <li>• Training needs analysis</li> <li>• Performance management</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive changes to service delivery</li> <li>• Interviews with involved staff</li> </ul>
<b>How well has PB impacted on community engagement?</b>		
How many participants feel more connected to their community as a result of taking part in PB?	To determine to what extent the PB process allowed participants to feel more connected to their local community and helped build social cohesion.	Participant questionnaires
How many participants have identified/ established new relationships and connections as a result of participating in PB?	To determine the impact in relation to building social capital and reducing isolation.	Participant questionnaires
How many participants are/have been more widely involved in their community and/or local decision-making as a result of taking part in PB?	To capture the change and growth of community participation as a result of the PB process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Population survey</li> </ul>
To what extent has PB involved people who haven't previously taking part in community engagement?	To capture new community participation as a result of the PB process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Population survey</li> </ul>
To what extent do participants feel PB gives them a voice in shaping local priorities and decisions?	To capture the wider democratic impact of the PB process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population survey</li> </ul>
<b>How deliberative was the PB process?</b>		
To what extent did the PB process provide opportunities to learn about wider community needs and priorities?	To capture wider knowledge gained from being involved in the PB process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Participant questionnaires</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observation notes (e.g. events, meetings)</li> </ul>
To what extent did the PB process provide opportunities to discuss local issues and priorities with other participants (before voting)?	To capture the extent and depth of dialogue undertaken during the PB process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method of PB delivery used (e.g. market place layout, time in the programme to allow discussion, approach taken to 'pitches' for PB funding)</li> <li>• Copy of programme outline</li> <li>• Observation notes (e.g. events, meetings)</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> </ul>
To what extent did the PB process provide opportunities for participants to explore/scrutinise all proposals?	To capture the level of detail and information made available to participants and whether there were opportunities to discuss and justify funding choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method of PB delivery used (e.g. proposals available online, copies of proposals available at PB event, time available and processes for scrutiny at event compared to number and range of participants etc.)</li> <li>• Observation notes (e.g. events, meetings)</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> </ul>
How did the information provided influence	To capture the extent of deliberation by	Sample questions:

<p>the decision-making?</p>	<p>participants in the PB process.</p>	<p>When you made the decision to support a project, what were your reasons for that support? (Tick all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I supported projects that would benefit me</li> <li>• I supported projects that would benefit my family and friends</li> <li>• I supported projects that would benefit my community</li> <li>• Other reasons</li> </ul> <p>Was your final vote/ranking informed by what you learned during the process? (Please state)</p> <p>How much did the following parts of the process inform your decision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning new information about your community</li> <li>• Discussing with others the priorities for our community</li> <li>• Conversations with others outside the PB process (e.g. friends, family, neighbours)</li> </ul>
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### 3. Improvement plan

What is our capacity for improvement?			
How will we address the gaps and issues identified to ensure continuous improvement?			
Areas for improvement	Action and responsibility	Timescale	Outcome

This table is also available to download as an editable document at [whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/glasgows-participatory-budgeting-evaluation-toolkit](http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/glasgows-participatory-budgeting-evaluation-toolkit)