

## Transcript: Public service reform and participatory budgeting: How can Scotland learn from international evidence

SLIDE: Participatory budgeting and public service reform. What can Scotland learn from international evidence?

Julie Dickson, Community Learning and Development Area Team Manager, Fife Council: “I was really keen to find out, I’d heard so much about how Paris have been doing a fabulous job with participatory budgeting across Europe, they were the ones who were doing it on such a huge scale. So, I was fascinated to see how they made it work, but more specifically to look at how they engaged some of the more marginalised communities, how they were maybe measuring the success, what the impacts were, and obviously some of the technology behind doing something across such a huge city like Paris.

SLIDE: What Works Scotland’s collaborative action research programme supports public services to build new relationships and learn together from evidence. So in December 2016, we took members of Fife and Glasgow Community planning partnerships to Paris for two days to learn more about mainstreaming PB.

David McGrath, Community Learning and Development team leader, Fife Council: “My expectation was to see what worked in Paris and how could that be perhaps lifted and used in Scotland as such, could be used in Fife. Was there some comparisons that we did in Paris that we could say that would work in Fife? So, I think it was about compare and contrast for me.”

Professor Nick Watson, what Works Scotland and University of Glasgow: “I think the aim of this trip was people came to Paris and learnt what Paris had done. There’s a lot of similarities between Paris and Glasgow, because it was Glasgow that chose the site, and we just thought it was an ideal opportunity for people to learn from a city that’s gone further down the road than we have so far.”

Evelyn O’Donnell, Community Engagement Officer, Glasgow City Council: “Yes, we wanted to know at scale how they delivered at scale, in terms of the 100 million, how did they structure their departments around that and how that worked in terms of capacity?”

Ari Brodach, Head of Paris participatory budgeting unit, talking about a slide entitled Budget Participatif calendar 2017: “The first is the submission guide, so in 2017 it would go from 21st of January to 21st of February. Then from March to May we do two things, two different things. The first one is that we analyse projects, the meeting of the criteria and the feasible and simultaneously we are co-building projects. This year, in 2016, we got 32 hundred projects so it was much...way too much, so we tried to put them together on a topic basis of a geography basis so that we can decrease the number and have voting and make it easy to vote.”

Alex Byers, Community Engagement Manager, Glasgow Life: “Because I thought that Ari gave...it gave that overview, it gave the kind of the context to some of the kind of thinking behind it and the overview of the application. The other meetings then added to that and you could get a bit more from it or you could use the information you got at the beginning to ask more in-depth questions. But, I felt that, that was really, really, useful in being able to provide that oversight.”

Coryn Barclay, Research Consultant, Fife Council: “PB in Paris is based around their capital budget, so obviously we have a capital programme and we’re not currently using PB in relation to that. I think the other thing is around the incentives for people to get involved in PB, so you can see it’s very attractive for the arrondissements that they could bring in an additional two euros for every euro of budget. So, I found that interesting as a lever and as an incentive to make the links between strategic and local level.”

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David McGrath, Community Learning and Development team leader, Fife Council: “I think participatory budgeting needs political will, and I think that was just reaffirmed for me when I was in Paris. I could see the districts where it worked well was because there was good political will to make it happen and I could see the districts where it didn't work well, was because maybe the local Mayor wasn't interested or so forth. That's interesting, because I think about Fife, would that work in the same way that in seven areas, it might work well if you've got local politicians interested, but if they're not, would they just let it drop for something else? So, a lot to reflect on there I think.”

SLIDE: **Technology** is important. The Paris PB team created a bespoke digital platform for the public to propose PB projects and for officers to respond to proposals.

Catriona Morrison, Senior Analyst /Programmer , ACCESS LLP/Glasgow City : And, I'm not sure if Paris started small, I think they went for a big bang and couldn't believe that they did all that in three months, so yes, it was very useful.

Member of Paris PB unit, showing the digital platform internal interface: Then if you could click on one project, a specific project, then you have, here you have the internal comments, so everything in the direction, who is leading the project is put on for us to see and for other directions to see. So, everyone is working on the same tool and it's a way to communicate also, so that every time you change something about the project or anyone changes something they put it on here so that there is no errors.”

Councillor Soriya Siddique, Glasgow City Council: “Going through quite a significant journey the front end, the back end. Also about the number of votes that take place, the kind of interface between the Smartphones, the iPads, and the fact that you've got a significant variation between the number of votes that take place through the digitalisation, the paper vote and the kind of mobile aspect of it as well. I'm quite keen to see more digitalisation of it in Scotland and I think I'll take a lot back from that.”

Julie Dickson, Community Learning and Development Area Team Manager, Fife Council: “I think it's remarkable that they were able to respond to the political will to turn it around really quickly, so to be able to create a platform within three months is fantastic. I think probably the critical thing I've learned about that though is pace. I think whilst it's great they were able to respond to the political demand, I think there are some challenges, and for me, I think some of the questions that you were asking about some of the more marginalised communities and areas of deprivation they weren't able to answer because the technology didn't allow them to scrutinise in that level.”

SLIDE: **Partnership** between the city and citizens is crucial. The Paris PB team supports individuals and groups to propose ideas and merge projects. The team also looks at why people in some districts (arrondissements) participate less than in other areas.

Rosemary Milne, interpreter: “These are the workshops that were put forward by the town hall for the 2016 phase/round, and this is the support...so these are the supports that we put out for people. So, those were actually put forward by the Administration, but with the result of talking to local groups and so on, for example, investing in sporting facilities was put forward by a voluntary organisation working with young people who said that we have no sporting facilities. So, it was a partnership. These themes were actually arrived at, not simply by the Administration saying, this is what we want you to talk about.”

Julie Dickson, Community Learning and Development Area Team Manager, Fife Council: “It was fabulous for me to see that they also have local development officers that they have deployed to

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areas that maybe have been less involved in the past and voices less heard. So, that's something that we are really keen to develop across Fife."

Professor Nick Watson, What Works Scotland and University of Glasgow: "They have set up, they have invested a lot of money in staff, it's not just been done on a shoestring, that there's real investment in developing a workforce behind them and bringing the workforce with them."

SLIDE: Observing the Paris PB Steering Group helped the Fife and Glasgow teams reflect on the **structures and strategy** that might work for them.

Lauren Girard, Director in charge of Paris city council modernisation, speaking in French: "The steering committee meets every two weeks. This one was special because we saw a very interesting report made by the Paris urban research centre which studied what kind of proposals were submitted by residents in 2015, providing feedback about what Parisians want to be delivered. Tonight we were thinking about complementary reports we would need about 20-16 about the deprived areas. This has helped us to imagine a new ideation phase because PB is a yearly exercise which comes back quickly. That's why the online platform is about to be launched in a few weeks, so the steering committee was also about the launch event and the outreach strategy."

Evelyn O'Donnell, Community Engagement Officer, Glasgow City Council: "In Glasgow City Council Community Planning Partnership we don't have a steering committee at a strategic level such as in Paris. What we do have is a small working group at officer level and that involves the officers who are involved in coordinating, and we come together fortnightly, but we are officers. At a local level we have steering committees that involve neighbourhood community councils and involve officers and partner organisations, so there are small steering committees and most, some of the wards, not all of them, some of the wards have a steering committee that brings together the community council."

SLIDE: What key **lessons** did Fife and Glasgow learn from Paris?

Alex Byers, Community Engagement Manager, Glasgow Life: "We don't often get that many opportunities to go and really explore somewhere that has created something different and to have conversations about it and to see people structures, and I suppose Paris was interesting in the fact that the structure in Paris, albeit the fact that it's much larger, has got a lot of similarities to Glasgow in terms of its kind of social, the social aspects of it, but also the kind of infrastructure of the breakdown of areas and those kind of things, so it was quite interesting for me to see some of how that would work."

Coryn Barclay, Research Consultant, Fife Council: "I think one of the things that has struck me that's different from the Scottish model is that the Scottish model isn't about the public deciding how services should deliver their budgets, it's about a different way of working of services working with and for communities. So, I would, in the Scottish model I would expect citizens to be much more involved with implementation and perhaps even the delivery that it's not necessarily that it's automatically it would be the council that would deliver the local solution that's needed."

Councillor Soriya Siddique, Glasgow City Council: "It's very well structured, very well organised, I've certainly learnt a lot from the trip and I think I will be taking a lot back in terms of taking it back and having these discussions at a political level and within the kind of organisation within the city council as well, about what can be achieved, and just the lessons learned as well. The lesson Paris learned as well, the challenges that they faced, and the evolutions that they've gone through."

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Coryn Barclay, Research Consultant, Fife Council: “It was useful to have Rosemary to translate, I think it had a good mix across meetings where we've been able to, you know, we've ones that have been wholly in English, we've had a steering group meeting that was mainly in French, we've had other ones sort of in between. I did some translation of some of the background documentation before we came so that we did... so that we were familiar with some of the terminology and language used also.”

Professor Nick Watson, What Works Scotland and University of Glasgow: “But, I think one of the key things is that sometimes we need to make sure that participatory budgeting doesn't become an end in itself, that we look for what is the purpose of participatory budgeting. Is it about empowering individuals, which is the ultimate? Is that the ultimate aim through greater democratic participation? Or is it about the way changing the way we deliver our services?”

SLIDE: Glasgow and Fife also learnt from one another. The visit sparked new relationships to **support** the next stage of participatory budgeting in Scotland.

Evelyn O'Donnell, Community Engagement Officer, Glasgow City Council: “So, it's good to know and be able to measure yourself against another local authority, so we could see that Fife is just about to mainstream. They've been doing their small grant stuff only on a smaller scale but they're obviously at a very similar place to us which was really, really, comforting, because sometimes you need a measure and a barometer to know where you're at and to compare yourself against, because sometimes you're wondering if you're going in the right direction.”

David McGrath, Community Learning and Development team leader, Fife Council: “And, I'm hoping sincerely that it doesn't just stop here, that Glasgow, Fife, you know, that we have a stronger connection, because we have got people willing to do PB. So, to me, that's the difference it's made, it's brought people together with a common purpose who are keen, enthusiastic and have a belief that this could work.”

Dr Richard Brunner, What Works Scotland and University of Glasgow: “I think they need to write a blog on their experiences and reflect in that initial way. I think they need to talk to each other and also talk to Paris, What Works Scotland here has worked as a facilitator, if you like, we've lit the blue touch paper to allow Glasgow and Fife to take PB forward, learning from the Paris model, not replicating it, but learning from it, and I think they need to do that together and they've got a great opportunity here to build and develop from the contacts that they have made in Paris over the last few days.”

SLIDE: Thanks to:

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