

Community Choices

Mainstreaming Participatory Budgeting in Scottish Local Authorities

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

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Context

- In Scotland local government have committed to allocating at least 1% of council budgets using Participatory Budgeting Community Choices 1% Framework Agreement
- Work underpinned by principles outlined in the PB Charter and work of National Strategic Group
- COSLA support local authorities in meeting the 1% Framework Agreement and use the CONSUL digital platform.
- PB is a key tool for councils to engage with communities using principles outlined in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) – Pt 10.

Local government and democratic innovation

Strengthening Local Democracy and Decision Making

Blueprint for Local
Government

#EssentialEveryday

- Scottish local government advocate for enhanced local decision-making as part of public service reform, delivery on best value and in progressing a human rights agenda. Decisions should be bottom-up, decided upon by communities in response to locally identified priorities and needs.
- PB is one tool in a suite of empowerment and engagement methods available to local government in Scotland. Scotland's national performance framework links policy priorities such as [Scotland's Place Principle](#) (place-based policy making) and [Community Wealth Building](#) agendas. This sits within the broader National Performance framework for Scotland.

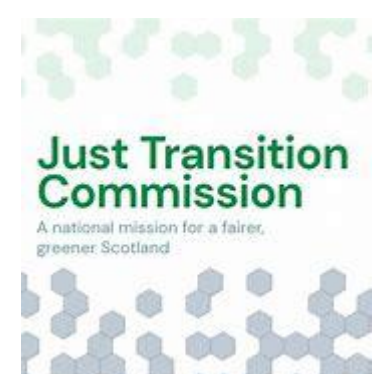
Mainstream PB – Scotland's Journey

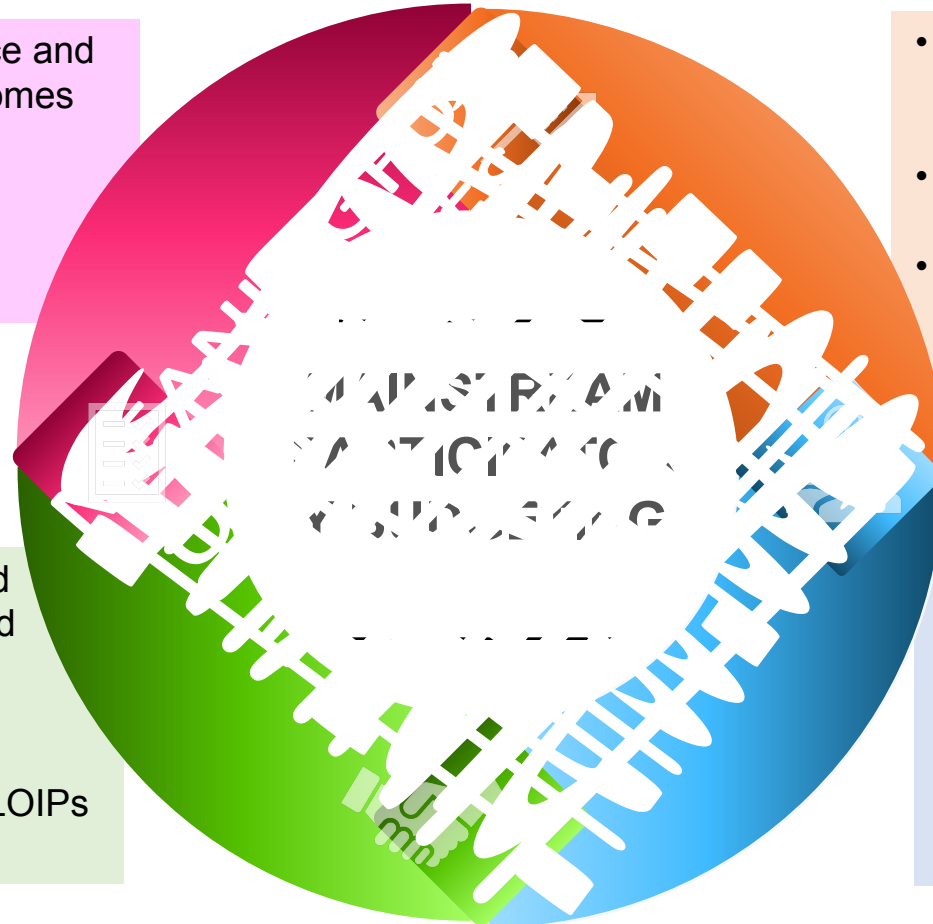
2017-19

- Range of processes primarily small grants with different deliberative methods included - citizens assemblies, mini-publics etc.
- Move towards mainstreaming commitment upscaling of work and budgets.
- Strategic commitment of senior leaders and politicians – reviewing existing participatory activity

2020-21

- Significant progress towards 1% target - £75m 2020/21 allocated via participatory/PB/PD
- Continually evolving practice as PB is integrated across service areas and departments e.g. procurement, infrastructure, health and social care, housing.
- Also seeing integration of PB/PD across national and local policy and funding– education, housing. Most recently Green PB commitment Just Transition Commission.





- PB uses existing evidence and indicators to inform outcomes
- Communities help define priorities and scope

- PB is embedded within corporate and/or strategic plans
- Scope is clearly communicated.
- Purpose of PB activity is clearly defined and aligned to community priorities

- PB brings together elected members, council staff and communities
- PB links with existing engagement activity e.g. LOIPs or community planning

- PB activity is inclusive and representative of diverse communities
- PB is open and transparent
- Aims of PB are clearly communicated

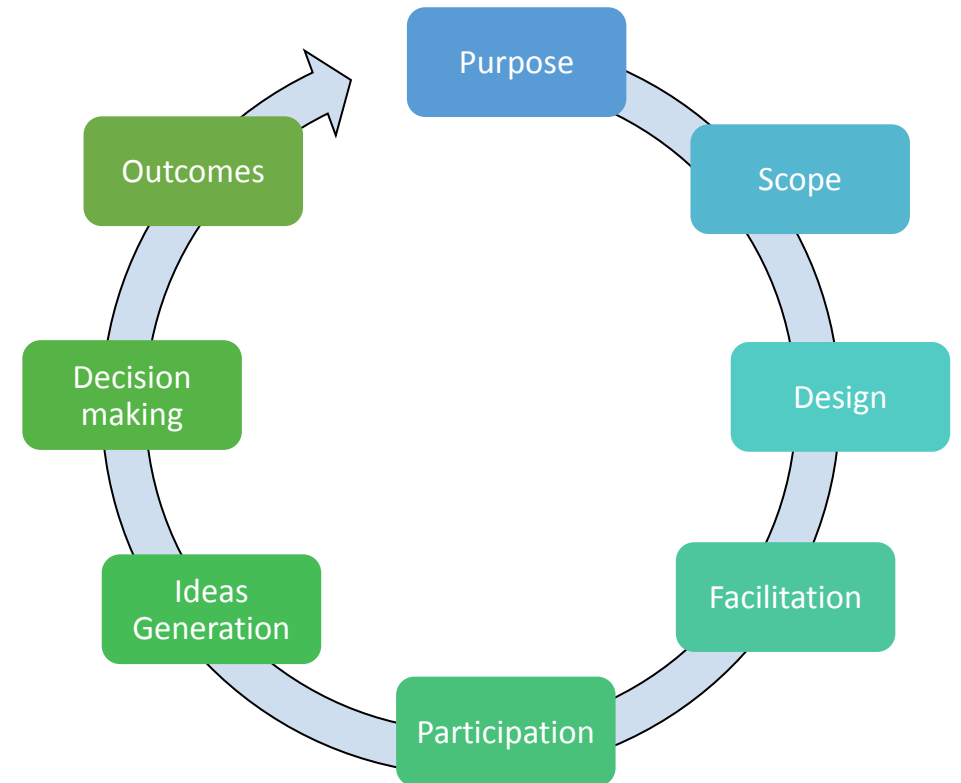
Learning from Mainstream PB across Scottish local government



- The 1% target and CEA provides legislative mechanisms for communities to participate. MPB is a valuable tool to build community capacity and nurture community mandates.
- MPB requires partnership approach across elected/officer/community spheres and broader public sector partners.
- MPB provides an opportunity to enhance and develop community mandates to sit alongside political and officer led plans.
- Outcomes of these processes show enhanced understanding and transparency – consensus building on difficult issues
- Opportunity for better informed local services as part of reform and pandemic recovery
- Need to further embed equalities approach – early deliberative work
- Challenge of time, resource and capacity which needs to be built to ensure systemic change.

Evolving practice

- Ongoing and evolving area of work. Guidance under development.
- Lessons from 32 regional councils shown that PB will also take many forms locally involving different forms of participation (e.g. deliberation/vote/citizens panels)
- Mainstream PB across Scottish local authorities is bringing together traditional PB alongside dialogue, deliberation and co-production.
- Mapping how community participation can be integrated at different stages of the PB design and implementation process.



PB, equalities and human rights

- Mainstream PB shows the importance of dialogue and deliberation, alongside voting, to navigate conflict, achieve consensus, negotiate complex issues and define the scope/purpose of local decision making.
- Deliberative methods can assist local government meet statutory duties in partnership with local communities.
- Deliberation used alongside a vote allows additional agency and voice to 'easy to ignore' groups.
- MPB can also be used to work with communities and build consensus on shared community priorities.
- Work with local government officers to develop proposals, explore opportunities, agree parameters of activity and enhances transparency on local spend and statutory requirements.

