

Shetland Partnership

Methods and Techniques



Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (often shortened as PB) is a way for people to directly vote on how local money should be spent.

It lets the public decide on budgets and investments, whether it is for small projects or big organisational plans. The number of people involved can vary, but usually includes those who use the service, are interested in the issue, or are most affected by the decisions.

Suitable for:

PB can be useful for making decisions because it gives power to the participants. It is used to make specific choices, understand what people prefer, and come up with new ideas. This method ensures that the voices of those directly impacted are heard, leading to fairer and more inclusive outcomes.



Type of engagement:



Consult



Involve



Delegate

How to do it:

Participatory Budgeting (PB) can be done in many different ways, depending on what you want to achieve. But no matter how it is done, there are three main steps:

- **Ideas Step** - People come up with ideas on how to use the budget or resources
- **Voting Step** - Participants vote on which ideas they like best
- **Results Step** - The ideas with the most votes get funded or put into action.

Because PB can be done in so many ways, you can find lots of helpful resources on the [PB Scotland website](#).

★ Advantages

- It gives people a direct say on how public funds are spent, empowering communities to make decisions that affect their lives
- PB makes the budgeting process more transparent, as participants can see how decisions are made and where the money goes
- It involves a diverse group of people, ensuring that different voices and perspectives are heard, especially those who are most affected by the decisions
- By involving the community, PB can lead to more informed and relevant decisions that better meet the needs of the people
- It brings people together, helping them feel like part of a community; everyone gets involved in talking about and deciding on important matters
- PB can lead to creative and innovative solutions, as participants bring new ideas and perspectives to the table.

⚠ Challenges

- It will cost to organise and run the process
- The success of PB often depends on the support of political leaders; without their backing it can be difficult to implement the decisions made by participants
- Getting a wide range of people involved can be tough; it needs good outreach and engagement to make sure everyone who should be involved gets a chance to participate
- PB can be tricky because it involves many people and needs good coordination and openness, making it hard to manage
- Keeping PB going for a long time can be tough, especially if political priorities change.

Further information:

PB Scotland Resource Hub: [PB Resource Hub — PB Scotland](#)

[Participatory budgeting | SCDC - We believe communities matter](#)

Case study:

Shetland Islands Council examples of Participatory Budgeting

(see online at: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/participatory-budgeting>)