

# Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative

## Programme Level Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of Scottish Government and COSLA

by the Participatory Budgeting Unit

March 2011



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# Introduction

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In March 2010 the Scottish Government and COSLA launched the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative having selected five areas to run participatory budgeting pilots: Glenrothes in Fife, Dunblane in Stirling, Forgewood in North Lanarkshire, Overton in South Lanarkshire and Staney Hill in Shetland. The Scottish Government contracted the PB Unit to provide support and guidance to the pilots and to evaluate the implementation of the programme. This report presents the findings of that evaluation and covers the time period of one year from March 2010 to March 2011. This programme fits within the broader Anti Social Behaviour framework.

The pilots themselves run beyond this timescale, as the projects funded through each process continue to be delivered. Therefore, this report is not a final evaluation of the pilots, but presents learning from the implementation of the programme as a whole. The pilots are undertaking their own local evaluations to capture learning from the projects funded through the PB process, as well as evidence of longer-term changes. These evaluations will be available from each area in due course.

## Participatory Budgeting: a short introduction

Participatory budgeting (PB) began in Brazil, following the collapse of military dictatorship and the reinstatement of democracy. The municipal government of Porto Alegre had no money and basic infrastructure was severely limited. As a result of overthrowing the dictatorship, there was a strong civil society, particularly among the poorer areas of the city, which successfully argued for a small proportion of the budget to be spent in their areas on projects they decided upon. And so PB was born. It then subsequently spread across the city to all neighbourhoods and increasing levels of budget, to other cities in Brazil, and then to other countries in Latin America and beyond.

In 2000, a group of activists from Salford and Manchester went to visit Porto Alegre to find out about PB. They brought the model back, and developed an approach they believed would work in the UK. Over time, a number of pilots started to emerge in England, which in 2005 became supported by the then Office for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In 2006, the PB Unit was officially formed as a national project of the charity Church Action on Poverty, through which the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) continued to support the development of pilots.

Now, there are over 120 initiatives in England, over 20 in Wales and 7 in Scotland, including the 5 in this report. More than £25million has been allocated by UK citizens through PB to date.

## A definition

The PB Unit and the Department for Communities and Local Government agreed upon the following definition for PB in the UK context. The Scottish Government agreed with this definition:

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget. PB processes can be defined by geographical area (whether that's neighbourhood or

larger) or by theme. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on spending priorities, make spending proposals, and vote on them, as well giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process and results to inform subsequent PB decisions.

As this report demonstrates, PB processes are designed and implemented according to the needs of the local area and people. As a result, there are many different variations of PB, both within the UK and internationally. There are approximately 4 different broad models being used in the UK currently, with more being developed. These are community grant giving, neighbourhood level with specific service(s), mainstream funding across an authority area and county wide schemes. Thus a single definition is somewhat limiting for a term that can cover a range of processes and is always locally designed and developed. To provide greater flexibility and clarity than a single definition can provide, the PB Unit developed 8 values, and a set of corresponding principles and standards.<sup>1</sup> The values are more important than a single definition because they provide the parameters to PB; they provide the spirit of what's intended through PB. PB is not a neutral process, it is value laden, and as this report demonstrates, each stakeholder will come to the process with their own values and motivations. The overarching PB values provide a focus and framework for designing a process with multiple stakeholders with varying values and motivations.

## The pilots

The values enable individual PB processes to be considered within the PB umbrella whilst providing sufficient flexibility for locally developed processes. This is very much the case with the five pilots of the CWCI programme. The differences between them are intentional and are a strength to the programme because the quality of the processes are higher than if PB had simply been transplanted to each area. Each pilot within the programme is connected to the established Community Safety strategy in the area, and embedded within the partnership framework that is delivering that existing work. For this reason, each of the five pilots in the programme has distinct and different aims, goals, timescales and designs.

South Lanarkshire was the first to hold their voting event, in July 2010. In this process, a partnership group of citizens, officers and councillors commissioned local organisations to design community safety interventions which were then voted on by the local community. In the Fife pilot, community safety grants were distributed to community organisations in Glenrothes via a participatory vote held in August 2010. The Shetland voting event was held in September 2010. Here, council officers worked with a community organisation to design and implement a community grant-giving process. In North Lanarkshire, council officers worked with a group of young mothers new to community engagement of this type, alongside a smaller number of more experienced community activists, to develop a menu of council interventions which were put to a community vote in November 2010. The Stirling pilot is a youth-led process focused on addressing the disconnect between young people in Dunblane and the wider community. The voting event is planned for May 2011. Project delivery is well advanced in South Lanarkshire, Fife and Shetland (though somewhat delayed by bad weather over the winter), and underway in North Lanarkshire.

All five are considering plans for how to progress PB in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The full Values, Principles and Standards document can be found on the PB Unit's website: <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/about-pb-unit/our-resources>

These five pilots also fall within the framework of the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement.<sup>2</sup> This framework is broader than the PB specific values, but has a similar purpose of ensuring good quality engagement and participation. The Scottish Government and COSLA were keen to see how they were utilised locally, and the degree of relevance to PB specifically.

## The report

The five different pilots provide a greater range of data than if the pilots been followed a uniform model, because in each case PB has been developed within the context of the local situation. This has enhanced the quality of learning available through the programme, as the evaluation has been able to look at cross-cutting themes, commonalities and differences. It has been possible to look at what type of processes produce which kinds of outcomes, and what motivations may produce what kind of processes.

Rather than comparing and contrasting, which isn't possible given that each pilot is different, the report has been able to look at the broader questions about PB and rather than answering the question 'does this work?' it looks at 'what works where and why and how?'. As a result, we hope the findings can provide useful guidance in the development and design of future PB processes.

The evaluation brief posed the following questions:

- What is felt to be an appropriate role for local councillors in relation to PB processes?
- What was the impact of the PB pilots on relationships and trust between community members and statutory organisations?
- In what ways has PB enhanced local democratic cultures?
- How did the PB pilots impact local perceptions of anti-social behaviour?
- Did the PB pilots have an impact on community capacity?
- Have the PB pilots resulted in changed decisions / outcomes in the local area?
- To what extent have the National Standards for Engagement been utilised through the PB pilots?

These questions are addressed in the main body of the report under a number of broad themes. Following the executive summary, Chapters 1 and 2 provide an overview of the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative Programme and the five pilots. The remainder of the report explores the outcomes of the pilots, with sections on community capability, the impact of the programme on local democratic cultures, antisocial behaviour and other outcomes. Chapter 6 reviews the inclusivity of the pilots, and reflects on how the two frameworks (PB values and the National Standards for Community Engagement) have been utilised within the programme. Finally, the report concludes with a number of questions for the future. The evidence available mean that these lie outside the scope of this report; they were, however, generated through the evaluation and may be useful for practitioners in taking PB forward in Scotland

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<sup>2</sup> Information on the National Standards for Community Engagement can be found on the website of the Scottish Community Development Centre: <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

# Executive Summary

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The five pilots were chosen by the Scottish Government and COSLA through an application process. They were looking for innovation within community safety and for proposals that utilised PB as a way of addressing larger issues as part of a coherent strategy to address anti social behaviour. Thus, all the pilots are unique, with very different processes, steering groups, motivations and outcomes.

What has been clear from the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative is that the motivations and process design affect the outcomes that will be delivered. It's clear that PB does not deliver one set of objectives – what will be delivered is determined locally.

It's also clear that those motivations and process design in the case of the five pilots, wasn't accidental. The differences between the processes were intentional because they were a considered response to local issues, based on community consultation to understand local issues and needs from the communities' perspective. Thus, rather than PB being a process that was 'parachuted in' to different circumstances, PB has been a tailored response to specific issues within a broader framework of addressing community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour.

For example, in Stirling they chose Dunblane for their PB project to address a particular issue of disconnection between two parts of the community. Dunblane is not an area that would be traditionally earmarked for targeted pilots, as it's not a deprived area, but developing a locally specific PB response to the community cohesion issue is beginning to demonstrate results. Their decision to have the entire process designed and led by young people is an unusual and challenging one, but it was locally appropriate to the issue.

In South Lanarkshire, they chose to limit community involvement on the steering group because they recognised that the community didn't have sufficient capacity to be involved at that level at the start. The process has enabled the officers to find out more about different community groups and make connections that weren't there before. Going forward they plan to develop the steering group so it's community led.

All five pilots are tailored to local circumstance in a very deliberate way, and they all set out to achieve fairly specific outcomes based on their existing programmes and partnerships for community safety. This chapter summarises some of those key elements which make each pilot a unique response to their local issues.

## Motivation

The main motivations for getting involved and staying involved in the pilot projects were:

- Enhance democracy
- Improve or increase engagement
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Improve quality of life/improve the neighbourhood
- Increase community spirit (cohesion ,stronger communities)

- To test out a process that could be used in other ways

Motivations were common across pilots with different approaches, and across different stakeholders, although some motivations were more common amongst certain groups than others.

Where the process was more overtly focused on delivering a certain outcome, the motivations corresponding to that outcome were strongest. For example, those pilots most specifically focused on reducing anti-social behaviour had strongest motivations around this outcome.

Officers and councillors had more strategic motivators than community members. In particular, officers and councillors tended to express motivators in terms of improving quality of life or improving an area, whereas citizens tended to express motivators in terms of bringing the community together (community cohesion) or making the area safer (reducing anti-social behaviour), which are more immediate issues that might be seen as part of a strategic whole.

### Community capability

The PB process has a significant impact on community capability. This can include personal development of skills, experience and confidence for individual community members, organisation development for community organisations and cohesion outcomes for the wider community.

Process design impacts strongly on the kind of community capability outcomes generated. For example, the steering group is a key site for personal development, so involving less experienced community activists here generates the most marked outcomes of this kind. Focusing officer attention on the application process (or involving community organisations rather than individuals in the planning process) can maximise outcomes for organisations. Emphasising the collective and deliberative nature of the voting process can maximise community cohesion outcomes.

The public nature of the process (in contrast to a written funding application or even attendance at ward committee) benefits the relationship between community organisations and the wider community. This can include greater knowledge of community services and organisations, increased accountability of community organisations and closer links between different community groups and organisations.

PB processes have generated significant community cohesion benefits in terms of increased knowledge, understanding, solidarity and positive connections between different sections of a community, as well as providing a public opportunity for the expression of these views, and of pride in the community.

### Impact on Local Democracy

The sustained engagement of the steering group is a key site for democratic learning, including increased knowledge, confidence to voice opinions and views, and opportunities for engagement. This results in more positive forms of citizen engagement, including a problem-solving approach rather than simply describing problems.

PB can promote greater faith in the local democratic system, to the extent that people are satisfied with the outcomes of their involvement through PB. This indicates the limits to faith in existing systems for democratic engagement. The evidence suggests that greater faith in the system arises because PB demonstrates a different kind of system. This suggests that greater faith in the system is promoted by changes in the system rather than changes in participants (reduction in 'apathy' for example).

As a community-led process, PB clearly involves changes to decision-making power. However, the depth of the change is limited by the extent to which officers retain control over the process of engagement itself (process design). Lasting shifts of power are maximised by community involvement both in the development of the PB process and with regard to ongoing plans for PB. Critically, the extent to which there is a genuine shift in power depends on whether PB remains at the discretion of existing decision-makers, or becomes an entitlement of the community.

There is strong evidence that collective working (rather than merely increased contact) between the state and citizens can lead to improved relationships. Most of the evidence from these pilots relates to improved relationships between officers and citizens (where the overwhelming majority of joint working took place), rather than between councillors and citizens. These pilots indicate that trust increases as a result of concrete changes in agency practices (in other words, the move to using a participatory process such as PB) and increased officer visibility. The evidence suggests that better relationships do not depend on citizens overcoming anti-state 'prejudices' but on the extent to which PB can counteract prior negative experiences. These are understood to be the result of systemic failings; participants did not criticise individual officers.

Where councillors are directly involved, there are similar positive outcomes. However, these are relatively limited within this programme of pilots because councillor involvement has itself been limited. Furthermore, there is some evidence that lack of councillor engagement can in fact impact negatively on perceptions of councillors, as community members may infer that their councillors do not value increased engagement.

Within the programme, there are overwhelmingly positive reports regarding the quality of community decision-making. Decisions were taken seriously and with consideration and reflection. This was supported by good facilitation, the availability of information and opportunities for discussion between participants and presenters.

Where concerns exist regarding possible future abuse of the system such as tactical voting or 'packing' a voting event with supporters, it is generally felt that these issues could be addressed by maximising the participation of the 'general public' rather than restricting voting to those connected with applicant organisations.

## Outcomes

### Reduction in anti-social behaviour

All of the pilots had relatively high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour and some had high levels of crimes associated with anti-social behaviour. All of the pilots specifically sought to address this in one way or another as these were community safety pilots.

All pilots demonstrated some reduction in perceptions, or greater awareness amongst citizens of their perceptions (barriers being broken down between groups upon meeting each other for the first time through the process), or greater determination by citizens to address the issues.

Some saw a reduction in reported figures for crimes associated with anti-social behaviour although it's difficult to draw a causal link between a reduction and PB, as PB was one of a number of initiatives or enforcement interventions that happened either at the same time, or just before or after the PB process.

However, it is fair to say that PB has had a positive contributory impact on changes in perceptions of anti-social behaviour and a reduction in anti-social behaviour itself.



## Other outcomes

The main outcomes emerging from the pilots are:

- Community cohesion and capacity-building;
- Improved understanding of community needs and improved services (more in keeping with community priorities);
- Improved support for community groups;
- Improved local democracy;
- Additional funding brought into the area.

Whilst each of these outcomes were seen in at least 2 of the pilots, and most in all of them, the outcomes do seem to be linked with the type of approach taken by each pilot. For example, community groups felt better supported in those pilots that adopted a community grants pot model which allocated the funding to community groups rather than public sector services and pilots who allocated the funding to mainstream service providers saw more projects and services delivered in-line with community priorities.

## Inclusion, National Engagement Standards & PB Values

### Inclusion

All of the pilots sought to address issues of inclusion with different approaches. All succeeded to some extent, however, all identified aspects where they could improve on the breadth of inclusion or numbers of people participating.

### National Standards for Community Engagement

Across the five pilots the standards which were felt to have the most relevance to their processes were:

- Involvement
- Planning
- Working together
- Sharing information
- Working with others
- Improvement
- Feedback (information from only 3 pilots)

It is clear that all the pilots had regard for the standards and had incorporated each standard to varying degrees within their process. Where a standard was incorporated less than they felt it had relevance they recognised there was room for improvement in the future.

## Section Summary

This chapter has summarised the key findings within this evaluation report. The remainder of the report elaborates on the themes in more detail, drawing out the patterns and differences across the programme.

# Overview of the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative Programme

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The Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative is part of the Implementation Plan (Vol 3) for the Anti-social Behaviour Framework: Promoting Positive Outcomes, which was published by the Scottish Government in March 2009. The Framework sits within the overall National Performance Framework as part of making communities safer & stronger.

The Implementation Plan seeks to deliver the anti-social behaviour framework through three themes:

- Developing & sharing knowledge
- Supporting practitioners, partners and community
- Developing and communicating a coherent picture

Whilst the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative could, arguably, support delivery of all three themes, it sits within the second one in terms of the Implementation Plan.

The Supporting practitioners, partners and community theme has three objectives:

1. To provide support to practitioners that will empower and enable them to fulfil their roles
2. To provide guidance and tools rather than prescriptive process
3. To provide support and guidance to partners to instil confidence and trust in partnership working

The Initiative is one of two components within this theme. The other is the Safer Communities Programme. Within the Anti-social behaviour Framework the Scottish Government and COSLA committed to establish a participatory budgeting pilot exercise across at least three Community Planning Partnerships and the government provided up to £100,000 to support the pilots (providing match funding was also provided locally).

The objectives of the pilot programme are to:

- Bring diverse people together and support community cohesion
- Enhance the ways in which local people, elected members and council officials work together
- Promote empowerment of individuals and communities
- Promote active citizenship to create better public services

- Promote community development and capacity-building within communities
- Support the Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan that has been developed

Five pilot areas were chosen through an application and selection process: Fife, Stirling, Shetland Islands, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire.

The Scottish Government contracted the Participatory Budgeting Unit (PBU) to provide support to the pilot projects and to evaluate the implementation of the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative. This is the final evaluation report for the programme.

The PBU is a project of the charity Church Action on Poverty. Church Action on Poverty works to eradicate poverty in the UK. The PBU operates nationally, and is primarily funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government for its work in England. The PBU promotes and supports the implementation of PB by providing information, resources, tools, and guidance – both ‘hands on’ and more remotely. The PBU was set up in 2006 following the development of five participatory budgeting pilots by the then Office for the Deputy Prime Minister.



Successful applicants in Glenrothes

# Overview: Community GAINS, Glenrothes, Fife

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## Area Context

Glenrothes is one of seven Council Committee areas in Fife, comprising the New Town of Glenrothes and its associated (and older) towns and villages. According to the Glenrothes Area Community Safety Profile 2008, it has nine data zones in the top 10% for anti-social behaviour in Fife. The Area Committee has a clear commitment to both community safety and community engagement. In addition, Glenrothes has a history of effective inter-agency partnership working, and a strong tradition of active community associations and organisations working to improve the area.

## Process Overview

- Funds distributed: £30,000
- Steering group: Fife Council: area team, housing, community learning and development officers, equalities and research officers; Fire Service, Education and Funding, Police.
- Process overview: a Participatory Budgeting Group was established under the auspices of the Glenrothes Community Safety Co-ordinating Group and the Glenrothes Area Committee. The group planned and designed the PB process, publicised this in Glenrothes (through local media, leaflets, posters, letters to local community organisations, information stands, and word of mouth), invited and short-listed proposals, supported applicant groups with their preparations, and held a voting event at which 8 out of 12 projects received funding.
- Voting day attendance: 89 voting participants, plus 22 facilitators and steering group members

## Good Practice

- Focusing officer time and attention on support for applicant groups delivered concrete outcomes in terms of learning for community organisations as well personal development for community activists and young people involved in the process (some groups receiving officer support for the first time through this process)
- Building a strong officer team enabled effective partnership working, developed trust between agencies and enabled a smooth and well-organized event.
- Good facilitation, availability of information about the projects, 'speed networking' at the event and the provision of opportunities (and encouragement) for participants note down comments and questions during presentations (in preparation for the 'networking' slot with applicant groups) all contributed to reflective and considered decision-making.

## Learning Points

- Community Gains organisers want to increase community participation in process planning; focusing community participation at the event itself restricts the opportunities for community members to develop strong working relationships with officers, and therefore limits the potential for changed ways of working and increased mutual understanding between community members and agencies.

## Next Steps

- The Glenrothes Participatory Budgeting Group is keen to develop the Community Gains programme, aiming to involve community members in planning and delivery in future, and will hold 2 further events this year, one focusing on young people. The group also hopes that Community Gains can act as a model for agency working in Glenrothes, beyond the area of community safety. Other areas in Fife have also shown interest in Community Gains, and organisers recommend rolling the programme out across all 7 area committees in Fife.

# Overview: Have a Voice, Forgewood, North Lanarkshire

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## Area Context

Forgewood has a population of just less than 5000, in a small area with clearly defined geographical boundaries, and relatively high percentages of flats, single person occupancy and lone parent households. The Forgewood area is in the bottom 5% of wards in Scotland (Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2009). Despite regeneration activity in the early 1990s, the area has experienced ongoing decline. Crime and fear of crime has increased and the area suffers from a perception of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Forgewood has a local Community Council, among other resident organisations, and a (pre-existing) local action plan centred on community safety issues and regeneration of the estate. Forgewood is traditionally seen as an area with low community engagement.

## Process Overview

- Funds distributed: £55,000
- Steering group: Forgewood 'Positive Parents Group' (supported by the Council's Community Learning and Development Service), local representatives from Motherwell Community Forum (providing a connection to North Lanarkshire's Community Planning structures) and local young people.
- Process overview: the North Lanarkshire Partnership formed a steering group of officers and community members which met regularly to plan and oversee the PB process in Forgewood. The group undertook a mapping exercise which brought together local and 'official' knowledge, conducted 'walkabouts' around the estate to identify issues, distributed an ideas form and event publicity to all households and held a voting event at which 5 out of 8 projects received funding.
- Voting day attendance: 20 voting participants, plus local service providers.

## Good Practice

- Have a Voice in Forgewood created comparatively high levels of involvement between local people and local agencies. Regular steering group meetings between officers and community members played a very important role in building relationships and overcome existing mistrust or preconceptions.
- Detailed planning and preparation involving officers and community members was effective in generating outcomes beyond the funding distributed, officers addressing community safety issues as they were identified.
- The mapping exercise and 'walkabouts' brought officer and community knowledge together in a practical way.

## Learning Points

- Community members of the steering group felt that participation might be increased by holding a communitywide event with family activities, or a number of smaller events held at venues and times where people would already be, rather than expecting people to come to a single event solely for the purpose of voting.

## Next Steps

Organisers recommend using the walkabout model to enhance the work of Local Area Teams and inform Local Action Plans, as well as using 'known officer intelligence' about areas to create a model where votes are cast on predefined options, to effectively prioritise services in the current fiscal climate. However, officers feel that the intensive support needed for capacity building may mean replicating the whole process is not practical, given the current financial climate. Community members of the steering group are actively considering how the process might be improved in future.

# Overview: Particip8 in Overton, South Lanarkshire

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## Area Context

Overton sits within the deprived area of Halfway, Cambuslang, to the south of Glasgow, and comprises 440 households. There are significant levels of unemployment primarily due to the loss of industry in the Cambuslang area over the past 20 years. A number of young people come from families experiencing chaotic lifestyles, and drug and alcohol misuse is high. As a consequence crime and anti-social behaviour is high, with young people involved in gang related antisocial behaviour and violent crime.

## Process Overview

- Funds distributed: £40,000 (£20,000 from Scottish government, £20,00 from Community Safety Partnership)
- Steering group: South Lanarkshire Council's Community Safety Partnership and local problem solving group, local Councillors, Strathclyde Police, Overton Tenants & Residents Association, and Changing Places.
- Process overview: The steering group carried out a household survey to understand residents' community safety priorities and developed interventions, under 4 themes, which addressed the priorities. A task group was established to deliver under each theme. These were presented to the local community at a fun day, where residents were able to find out more about the projects before voting on them at a separate voting event.
- Voting day attendance: 30 (21 at a voting event and 9 from a ballot box in a library), however over 300 attended the fun day prior to the voting event.

## Good Practice

- By linking the process to a previous enforcement intervention and having task groups for each theme, the process is already delivering benefits in reducing anti-social behaviour and developing community cohesion.
- The steering group worked hard to involve local agencies working in isolation, with the result that groups including the local Salvation Army now have an increased commitment to partnership working in the area.
- Stakeholders also clearly identified the strong partnership working as crucial to the process and one of the reasons the process is working so well. Stakeholders feel the strong partnership came from individual partner commitment to the process and a strong sense of care for the community.

## Next Steps

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## Learning Points

- Stakeholders felt that the community could have been engaged earlier in the process, and had a more visible presence on the steering group. Members of the steering group suggest going to the community where they feel comfortable rather than expecting residents to come to designated places, in order to increase engagement in future. They plan to develop the steering group so that it becomes resident rather than statutory partner led.

The steering group will continue to operate in Overton working to reduce anti-social behaviour and help improve the quality of life for local residents. Councillors on the steering group are keen to see it continue, and how the outcomes from the pilot can be integrated into existing local decision making events where residents have a say in how antisocial behaviour mainstream budgets are spent.

# Overview: Wir Community, Wir Choice, Staney Hill, Shetland

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## Area Context

Staney Hill is an area of Shetland's capital Lerwick; it is geographically distinct, sited on a hill, which gives the area a distinct identity but also makes access to services difficult. The 2009 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation identified 3 areas of Lerwick as becoming more deprived, and although they remain in the top 85% least deprived areas in Scotland, they are among the lowest ranked in Shetland. Staney Hill includes a 'settled' community of predominantly older residents, and a 'transient' community, partly housed in caravan units. Staney Hill often gets a 'bad press' locally as a result of concerns about drug use, unemployment, vandalism, litter and community safety and cohesion. However, despite these issues, residents report that they are happy in Staney Hill, which combines access to the town with the rural feel of the countryside.

## Process Overview

- Funds distributed: £40,000 (Shetland Islands Council, Scottish Government, EU LEADER fund)
- Steering group: North Staney Hill Community Association, Shetland Islands Council Infrastructure Department, and Community Services.
- Process overview: a steering group of officers and community members met regularly to plan and oversee the PB process in Staney Hill. This involved a community questionnaire, the subsequent development of community

## Next Steps

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priorities (Wir (our) People, Wir Environment and Wir Activities), 4 newsletters inviting proposals and keeping the community informed about the process, and a voting event at which 13 out of 14 projects received funding.

- Voting day attendance: 71 voting participants, plus statutory officers present as facilitators or in similar roles.

### Good Practice

- The active involvement of officers in a positive community process can revolutionise officer views of an area which they more usually visit to deal with problems or incidents, as well as providing opportunities for officer learning about and from communities.
- Officer support and partnership working with communities (recognising that both officer and community knowledge is important) can change community members' attitudes to officers, especially where past experience has generated a more negative view of statutory agencies.
- Well designed projects can maximise community engagement outside the voting event itself (for example, community members are involved in designing a funded community garden).

### Learning Points

- Wir Community, Wir Choice organisers believe that is important to have an adequate number of projects applying for funding, so that participants are able to make a real choice and so genuinely shape services and facilities in their area.

There is strong council and community commitment for the process to be repeated, both in Stoney Hill and elsewhere in Shetland. The lead officer is working on possibilities for future processes (suggestions include youth and island communities). Community members hope to see it move beyond a pilot process to become an ongoing structure with stronger links to the wider local decision-making system.

## Overview: Dunblane Young People's Project, Dunblane, Stirling

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### Next Steps

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## Area Context

Dunblane is a relatively affluent commuter town of around 10,000 residents, within easy reach of Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The adult population is highly organised and has a strong civic presence, including involvement in community and land-use planning for the town. There is a perception amongst some adults that young people are a problem in the community, particularly with regard to inappropriate alcohol use and high numbers of young people congregating in the town, with the result that there is a perceived disconnect between the adult population and young people of high school age. Young people have reported feeling apart from the wider community and disempowered from active citizenship.

## Process Overview

- Funds to distribute: £65,000 (£30,000 Scottish Government, £35,000 Stirling Community Planning Partnership) • Steering group: Stirling Community Safety Partnership (Stirling Youth Services, Communities Team, Safer Communities Team, Central Scotland Police, Community Planning Partnership), Dunblane Community Council, Dunblane Development Trust, Dunblane Centre, Dunblane Christian Fellowship.
- Process overview: The project in Dunblane specifically seeks to address the issue of inter-generational community cohesion and perceptions of anti-social behaviour. It is being designed, planned and run by a group of 12 young people. The young people designed and undertook a survey of all ages to identify their priorities. They plan to report on these to the community, invite project ideas and then hold a voting event.
- Voting day attendance: planned for May 2011.

## Good Practice

- Both the steering group and the young people felt that the time taken developing their skills, knowledge and confidence was a significant advantage to the process. Although this meant it is taking longer than other processes, both groups feel that what comes out of it at the end will be sustainable and have a lasting impact.
- Having the entire process led by the young people is a highly innovative approach to community cohesion, but both groups felt it was the best approach to their circumstances. The process had led to significant empowerment and changes in perceptions of the young people within their peer group already.

## Learning Points

- The steering group felt that they became too involved in operational details of the process and needed a stronger approach to ensure the group delivered on its stated outputs. As a result, the process has taken longer than anticipated, and the adult community groups have been involved at a later point in the process than they would have liked. Members of the steering group intend to develop greater accountability and robust mechanisms for ensuring all partners deliver what is expected of them.

## Next Steps

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The voting event is planned for May. In addition, the young people are being trained with the hope that this process will feed into wider strategic planning processes. Officers intend the process to move towards the mainstream in future. Youth workers are considering if it could be applied to youth work elsewhere in Stirling.

## Next Steps

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# Why stakeholders got involved

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Understanding the motivations of different stakeholders enables us to know if the outcomes they were expecting were realised, as well as facilitating increased engagement in future. It also helps in designing and managing the PB process itself, as different process designs generate different outcomes.

Frequently mentioned motivations include:

- Enhance democracy
- Improve or increase engagement
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Improve quality of life/improve the neighbourhood
- Increase community spirit (cohesion ,stronger communities) To test out a process that could be used in other ways

These aims are expressed across different stakeholder groups and are not confined to one role or point of view. They are also expressed across two or more pilots. Thus, while there are certain patterns (discussed below) the motivations for getting involved and staying involved seem to be broadly common amongst different stakeholders and might be more attributable to a certain type of person rather than a certain role.

## Enhance democracy

Many citizens participated because they felt that community members should direct where resources are spent in their areas.

“This was a good way of enabling the community to decide on what’s best for themselves” (community member, Shetland)

Some officers felt that it shouldn’t be only themselves or councillors deciding how money is spent but that it should be a collaborative decision. Officers tended to have a longer term view compared to citizens, seeing the PB process as part of a strategic programme of longer-term processes.

“I truly believe in the power of local people to influence things. I think that where there are opportunities we need to maximise those opportunities. I think we need to see things, not in isolation but as part of longer term processes.” (Community development worker, South Lanarkshire)

Councillors who were involved (generally fewer in number than citizens or officers) felt that whilst they have a legal obligation to decide how resources are used, how to spend money wasn’t solely their decision. They saw themselves as community leaders, enabling people to take responsibility for their community.

“It gives people the opportunity to actually take decisions for themselves. And I’m not one of these people that believes it should all just be dictated to the people and just be grateful for what you’re given, that’s not why I came into politics.” (Councillor, South Lanarkshire)

### Improve or increase engagement

Because PB is used as an empowerment tool, this is a commonly stated aim for the process and why many officers choose to get involved. When officers see the impact PB can have on engagement, it encourages them to stay involved. This directly relates to the citizen motivation of enhanced democracy, which is how community members might express their hopes for greater engagement.

“We’ll be able to solve some of the problems that come up, get more people involved, get other things happening and you can see it’s already having a benefit” (Officer, South Lanarkshire)

### Reduce anti-social behaviour

As a community safety programme, these pilots were focused on reducing anti-social behaviour. Accordingly, some of the stakeholders’ motivations related to this. This motivation was strong in North and South Lanarkshire where there was a distinct focus on reducing anti-social behaviour, but was also present in the other pilots.

The motivation was strongest amongst citizens; however, both officers and councillors involved in the process were keen to see a reduction in both perceptions of and actual instances of anti-social behaviour, as part of an overall aim of improving the quality of life or improving the area. Citizens often expressed motivations around improving the community as reducing anti-social behaviour whereas officers and councillors tended to express in terms increasing community cohesion or community spirit, (see below). This may relate to the common usage of terms by different stakeholders; however, there are clear links between the motivation to create real change and improvement in an area. For example, citizens see (or perceive) anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods regularly, whereas officers and councillors tend to be slightly more removed. In addition, the prevalence of language around quality of life in policy documents may lead officers to couch their motivations in these terms.

“I’m here because I’ve lived in the area for 34 years and I have had a lot of bother. And now, I can see the difference it’s making because I enjoy my life now.” (Residents’ Association representative, South Lanarkshire)

“I want a better and safer future for my children.” (Community steering group member, North Lanarkshire)

### Improve the quality of life or improve the area

Often an area is chosen to pilot PB as a result of deprivation or other particular local issues that need addressing. As a result, improving people’s lives or improving the area are often common motivations for getting involved. People are encouraged to stay involved when they start to see tangible improvements delivered through PB. This seemed to be a stronger motivation amongst citizens and community representatives, although not exclusively so. As mentioned above, officers and councillors tended to express it slightly differently – in terms of creating stronger communities or creating community cohesion which are covered under other themes, although they are all connected.

“I joined [because] I know what Dunblane is like and it’s a chance to change it and make it better and I thought I should just go for it.” (Young person on planning group, Stirling)

“I’ve always cared passionately, about the hopes and aspirations and quality of life of the people within my community” (Residents’ association member, South Lanarkshire)

## Increase community spirit, cohesion or create stronger communities

This theme, which connects clearly to a number of the other motivations, was a particularly strong motivation across all stakeholders. Because 'sense of community' is experienced directly by community members, emerging benefits of this kind can be a strong motivator for keeping people involved. This motivation was strongest amongst officers; however, it wasn't exclusively an officer motivation and both residents and councillors expressed similar motivations. Again, it may be that officers are more used to expressing aims in these terms, and who are used to recognising that stronger communities are more able to deal with other issues such as anti-social behaviour, although it may also indicate that officers and citizens see the location of the problem in different ways (is anti-social behaviour a structural issue or a community issue – or both?). Further exploration of motivations in future processes might help in understanding the causes of such differences between stakeholders.

“Problems in communities get sorted out if a community is stronger and has a sense of cohesion and a real sense of belonging, and I thought that PB was a way of making people feel that, and get a sense of doing something together as a community.” (Council officer, Shetland)

“I love the community and I care passionately about it...I feel they've lost power, they've lost confidence and we need to find some way of getting that confidence, and eventually, empowerment, back into the local communities.” (Councillor, South Lanarkshire)

“It was good to meet other Forgewood people and feel as if we were doing something for the good of Forgewood.” (Community steering group member, North Lanarkshire)

## Test out a process to see if it could be used in other ways

This motivation, understandable within a pilot programme, comes primarily from officers as their remit goes beyond the community or the money that's currently involved. It's within their roles to consider other applications for test processes. However, both councillors and residents expressed a desire to see how the process could be used in other ways, so this isn't exclusively an officer motivation.

“There is something that at the end of the process is of value that the partnership would seek to roll out across [the area]. Not just with pots of money but how we deliver our mainstream spend which is a huge one, but that was one of the reasons for doing this from the partnership perspective.” (Council officer, Stirling)

“It'll be interesting to find out what the next stages are. I don't see this as the end; I see it as the start of something.” (Councillor, South Lanarkshire)

“I can't think of a more effective method of planning with limited resources” (Community association member, Shetland)

## Summary

There are a range of different reasons why people get involved in PB process, and why they stay involved. Furthermore, motivations may change over time. This section has shown that motivations overlap strongly across different stakeholder groups. This in itself has proved helpful for partnership working in the pilots with many stating the shared reasons for being involved as supporting the partnership and making it stronger.

# Community capability

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Findings from the programme reinforce the view that PB processes can have significant benefits in developing community capacity. We have found evidence of several forms of community development outcomes, relating to individuals, community groups and organizations and the wider community more generally. These include: improved personal skills and confidence, stronger connections between community groups, development opportunities for groups and organisations, increased community cohesion, enhanced levels of community activity and strengthened pride in the community.

## Personal skills and confidence

Participants and stakeholders from all five areas reported the difference that the process had made to individual community members' skills and confidence. These benefits derived from the process itself, but also as a result of projects funded via PB.

### From the process

Citizen participation in the steering group can have a profound effect on the individuals involved. Areas where community members played a direct role in process planning reported gains in citizen confidence and skills. Where the steering group contained members new to community involvement of this type, the gains were most dramatic. However, all steering groups which involved community members reported some new learning, skills and confidence.

Officers in Stirling reported that the length of the process was a factor in this outcome, because time was needed to develop the skills and confidence of the young people involved in the steering group. For one youth worker, this was particularly significant because the group were new to this kind of process. They didn't sit on pupil councils or forums; therefore, they did not bring those skills or that experience to the process, but developed them within it. The young people themselves confirmed that they took the process seriously; this shared commitment of officers and participants helped create the learning:

"I don't think it's a joke, it's actually for real. You know you can't just turn up one week ... and not turn up the next"  
(young people's steering group member, Stirling)

The young people's newfound confidence has been displayed as they feel a greater sense of belonging in the community, and have become role models. They are proud to wear their DYPP hoodies, which are talked about as a 'badge of honour', and a source of respect:

"I've seen them interact with the younger ones in the centre and point [their behaviour] out to them and take ownership of it, so people come to them as well and I think they take some pride in that, and they've got some respect in the community" (centre manager, Stirling)

Adult community members of other groups have had similar experiences, for example in North Lanarkshire; through regular meetings a group of young parents developed confidence to get the views of other community members.

It is important to note that these gains came because the process was seen as important for its own sake, not because members were seeking personal development. One community member in Shetland described how the process was

daunting at first, but he did it because it was important for the community, and how it became easier through doing it, and through officer support. He did not get involved to gain skills, but this was an important outcome nevertheless.

Involvement with the steering group led to concrete outcomes of training or employment in a significant number of cases. Two community members in South Lanarkshire took youth work training, one going on to get a job as a result. Similarly, a steering group member from North Lanarkshire described the impact that involvement has had on her life:

“I feel more confident and taking part helped me feel more capable in getting a job.” (Community steering group member, North Lanarkshire)

In Stirling, young people have gained accreditation through Millennium Volunteer Awards, Youth Achievement Awards and Duke of Edinburgh awards, as well as through their school. In North Lanarkshire, community steering group members have signed up to take part in North Lanarkshire Council's First Steps to Youth Work training. Others are taking part in the Health Issues in the Community course and are working towards the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) module Working with Others.

The processes were similarly confidence-building for applicant groups. Presenting in front of a large group was a new experience for many applicants, and this was widely reported as an important outcome. A youth worker describes the process:

“I’ve seen a couple of my young people actually grow through it. Because they’ve understood what’s involved, they’ve presented, which took a lot for them ... It was quite daunting to actually get up in the process and speak in front of people, but it was mutually beneficial. They gain a lot through it. And they understand what funding was about.” (Youth worker, Fife)

The same youth worker directly attributes this outcome to the nature of the process, which meant that:

“There is less room for me to do actually do it for them, and more room for them to actually do it ... I think the process has allowed the group to take this forwards.”

These outcomes for applicants were particularly significant where officer support had been offered to each applicant group.

Finally, it was noted in Shetland that simple attendance and voting, where the steering group had been able to involve more vulnerable participants (described as people with ‘chaotic lives’), can demonstrate impressive and unusual confidence and effort.

#### [From projects](#)

Because the five areas are working to different timescales, most of the funded projects were not able to include evidence about the outcomes.

However, where this was possible (primarily in South Lanarkshire), funded projects told stories of project participants who had changed their lives through involvement in the pilot. For example, connections between the funded projects meant that one young person from the ‘Move the Goalposts’ project was recruited by the local Salvation Army onto a Future Jobs Fund post they had vacant. Move the Goalposts uses football to engage with young people involved in gang related antisocial behaviour and crime in the area.



“Me and my mates were born to be footballers; just we didn’t know it till we came here!” (Move the Goalposts participant, South Lanarkshire)

Another organisation, Regen FX, provides Youth Work training for local volunteers in the area by increasing individual capacity, confidence and skills, and a local youth project will provide new opportunities for local residents to deliver youth group activities in the area.

The opportunity for continued participation through the projects was a strong theme in Shetland, where projects were just getting underway. Specifically, a community garden project and a bulb planting scheme are designed to involve community members in planning and implementation.

Of course, outcomes from such projects are not dependent on their being funded through PB. However, community members and officers in Shetland pointed out that community members tended to fund projects run by local organisations rather than short-term outside interventions, maximising opportunities of this kind. Also, the involvement of community organisation members in designing the PB process was reflected in participatory project design in the community.

### Development opportunity for groups / organisations

The process also provided clear developmental opportunities for community groups and organisations. This was evidenced very clearly in Fife, where officer support to community organisations was a strong feature of the process.

However, this outcome was also present in other areas.

In Shetland, the effort put into establishing community priorities through the process meant that the community association was able to respond directly to these when making applications to the process. This strengthened their service to the community. This was a two-way process, with the voting results described as a “vote of confidence, in public, of the work [the community association] does” (council officer). There were practical benefits too: greater awareness meant that use of the community hall increased from 4 bookings in a month to 33. Involvement in the steering group as an organisation generated a collective benefit for that organisation too:

“I think there’s a huge difference in what the association see themselves as able to achieve” (community development worker, Shetland)

In Fife, a number of organisations described the process as a positive team-building exercise:

“We found it really great as a team-building thing for our organisation, because we all got involved” (applicant group member, Fife)

Others came to council attention for the first time, because the informal nature of the process enabled different kinds of groups to apply:

“I have never, ever asked for money before, so they never knew that we existed, so it opened many doors for us” (volunteer youth worker, Fife)

Similarly, the commissioning model used in South Lanarkshire meant that the Community Safety Partnership was able to involve voluntary sector organisations in the partnership by inviting them to develop an intervention to meet

community priorities identified through the consultation process. This meant that organisations were able to move from working in relative isolation to working more closely with other agencies in the area.

Using public presentations rather than application forms or even attendance at area committee meetings had a number of benefits in terms of organisations' relationships with their own communities. Groups valued the opportunity to take their message directly to the community, both as a means of communication but also because it encouraged them to focus on what community members themselves want. Though there are fears about whether 'unpopular' work would get funded, this is also seen as an opportunity, a chance for less understood causes to explain their work.

"It was a great opportunity for us ... the whole thing's helped us to focus, to re-look at how we get our message out as well, so it's been a very positive thing" (mental health employment organisation, Fife)

This has benefits in terms of community group accountability too:

"There's much more accountability in the process, because people know exactly what you're doing. And people are asking me, how's that bike track getting on? I think because more people are aware, you're much more accountable" (youth worker, Fife)

Some organisations noted that the opportunities for organisational learning and development would be increased further if there was capacity for better feedback, support and follow up for groups that didn't receive funding through the process.

### Connections between groups

The public nature of the voting event has a particular benefit in terms of increased knowledge within the community. Many participants described how informative the voting days were, and how they enjoyed learning about what went on in the area.

"It's been a great day for networking, for highlighting the work that we do as an organisation to a number of different groups that previously didn't know about us" (project presenter, Fife)

Concrete examples of joint working emerging from voting day connections include one organisation introducing a service user to a more appropriate local organisation, and a mental health project linking up with a community centre to offer services together.

In South Lanarkshire groups that received funding through the process found the whole process beneficial. The Salvation Army were funded to run a community gardening scheme that would enable homeless people in their shelter to volunteer to tidy gardens in the community, particularly for elderly or disabled residents. The scheme aims to provide skills and training for the service users within the Homeless Unit and provide a much needed service to local residents. The Salvation Army felt that the Homeless Unit was viewed warily by the community, but that through being involved in the project they are starting to be seen as part of the community. The fun day which showcased proposed projects ahead of the voting event was seen as key in helping this to happen.

"Even from just the [steering group] meeting last week, we had conversations with Regen FX [funded project]... it makes us feel a part of the community ... certainly this process has made us feel like it." (Salvation Army worker, South Lanarkshire)

Some participants in other areas suggested that stands for each project would have increased opportunities for participants and groups to speak to one another, and so maximised these positive outcomes.

### Community cohesion and collective action

The opportunities provided for connections and learning on the voting day and during the process has more general benefits for the wider community. The impact of the process on community cohesion was mentioned frequently by both organisers and participants.

The voting day provided an opportunity for different sections of the community to interact in ways that they didn't always get a chance to. This ranged from intergenerational connections, symbolised in Fife by an older community member deep in conversation with a young presenter explaining his project, to different geographical areas, where there might be existing preconceptions (as between settled and transient areas in Staney Hill, Shetland).

Intergenerational connections were felt to be especially important in some areas, as younger participants expressed their sense of prejudice against them. In Stirling, the youth steering group had strong hopes that their involvement would help others see that they could make good decisions and improve their relations with the rest of the community, so that:

“The older community [will] actually trust our age ... and that they don't stereotype us, 'cause they do that quite a lot” youth steering group member

Some community group members (also on steering group) felt that these outcomes would have been enhanced by involving a wider range of generations earlier on in the process.

Significantly, these outcomes are not attributed to people simply coming together, but to the process they were collectively taking part in. PB allowed people to put into action their (sometimes less obvious) desire to help less fortunate or more vulnerable people, for example, the settled community in Shetland voting for a community cafe that serves the most vulnerable members of the community. Steering group members commented on the importance of knowing that the process is about everybody's needs being met, the community coming together to address issues for the community as a whole. Voting together was also seen to develop a sense of shared concerns as others vote for similar projects, helping people “realise that they have things in common” (community development worker, Shetland).

In a similar vein, intergenerational conversations focused on shared issues, as at a community lunch in South Lanarkshire, where older and younger community members talked about their concerns.

The collective nature of the activity was felt to be important in generating these outcomes:

“There was a collective feeling of having experienced something together” (voting day participant, Shetland)

“It was good to meet other Forgewood people and feel as if we were doing something for the good of Forgewood” (community steering group member, North Lanarkshire)

Furthermore, these outcomes were enhanced where the process brought a mix of more experienced community activists and previously unengaged community members together, as on the 'walkabouts' in Forgewood.

This may be a consideration in process design (some areas are considering more individual voting methods such as 'drop-in' sessions and texted or on-line votes as a way of potentially increasing voter numbers).

The collective process was seen to extend beyond the voting events themselves, as they generated opportunities for people to get more involved in delivery, for example, a participant volunteering to help build the bike track he voted for. Officers and community members both commented on how community decision-making and project delivery positively increased community understanding of the work that community members do themselves: “that it is not all done by the council, but by actual communities working together” (participant, Fife).

Indeed, this was a key aim in South Lanarkshire, where the steering group set out to increase the number of residents involved in the area, as a lack of community spirit and community responsibility for the neighbourhood is felt to be a significant local issue. The steering group aimed therefore to increase participation both through the process and within funded projects, involving the community not only in priority-setting and voting, but in designing and supporting the funded projects and helping individuals get involved. This was possible because the project employed a commissioning model, drawing up a 'menu' of choices to reflect community priorities. Examples include approaching the Salvation Army, to help run a gardening project involving homeless users of their existing project in the area. Their aim is to encourage people from the shelter and other volunteers to tidy and improve people’s gardens and waste ground in the area. Their hope is that the volunteers will gain confidence and skills. They are also employing people through the Future Jobs Fund to manage the project and to help provide future employment opportunities for Salvation Army’s service users and local volunteers.

The collective nature of the process connects importantly to an increased sense of pride in the community, a feeling that the community is working together to address local issues. The voting events serve as an opportunity to both express existing positive views about the area and the community publicly, and to develop a sense of community spirit and empowerment. This was expressed by a number of community participants, a sense that the voting events make visible collective efforts of community members to improve where they live:

“I have enjoyed that everyone is working with the community and working within their own communities to unite ... and make this a place a better place” (Participant, Fife)



Successful applicants in Overton

# Impact on Local Democracy

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“People power – that’s not radical!” (Community member, Shetland)

Participatory budgeting is a form of direct democratic decision-making, and as such, there is an often-expressed belief that it can make a real difference to local democracy. This section of the report looks at evidence that the process supports community learning about local government structures and how to influence, its effect on faith in local democracy, whether it contributes to improved decision-making more widely within the local authority, leads to real shifts in decision-making power, and improves relationships between citizens, councillors and council officers. We also look at the quality of decision-making within the PB processes.

## Democratic learning in the community

Participation in a PB steering group offers the clearest opportunities for learning about council structures and services, which in turn facilitates democratic engagement. In Stirling, the young people’s steering group learned about the community planning process and the Community Council, and so how to get involved in local decision-making. They also had 3 sessions of work experience with the council, learning about different services and roles. In North Lanarkshire, other service organisations such as the police attended the steering group. They provided information about the community policing model and how it operates in the area, a clear example of community learning about public services. In both these cases, involvement with the steering group has meant increased knowledge which enables people to engage with local processes more effectively.

Democratic learning can also be about gaining the confidence to speak out to the authorities. In South Lanarkshire, steering group members report that community members are “making suggestions, not just complaining, which wouldn’t have happened before” (chair, tenants and residents’ association). Similarly, organisers in Shetland commented that community members are thinking about priorities (rather than demands or problems). In North Lanarkshire, local parents involved in the steering group said they attend councillor surgeries more regularly as a result of involvement in the PB process. These examples demonstrate a greater awareness of what decision-making involves. In Shetland, organisers spoke about participants feeling the weight of responsibility for decisions, but also pride to be part of the decision-making.

Participation elsewhere in the process, for example during consultation or at the voting event, can also provide opportunities for democratic learning, albeit more limited ones. A youth worker in Fife described how presenting at the voting event created “a better understanding of the whole process, actually going along and seeing how democracy works”. However, the evidence clearly suggests that most democratic learning occurs as a result of more sustained engagement, specifically through involvement in a steering group process.

Finally, democratic learning involves understanding what is needed for better local democracy. In this sense, the learning is iterative. Experience of democratic process generates further effort to improve democracy. Thus in Shetland, the steering group discussed the need for PB to become embedded in the decision-making system, rather than operate as one-off events. For one community steering group member, this is clearly about democracy first and foremost, rather than improved service delivery or community development:

“It’s not a challenge; it’s very easy to do. You just do it. And restore democracy to the UK!” (community association member, Shetland)

### Increased faith in local democracy

In this vein, the pilots demonstrate a clear potential for restoring a level of faith in the democratic process. If learning how to influence refers to increased capacity for democracy within communities, then faith in the democratic process is the context needed for this to happen.

Detailed feedback from voting day participants in Shetland, for example, indicated overwhelming positivity about engagement of this kind, while in Fife participants interviewed at the voting event commented positively on their involvement in decisions over resources: “it’s good that the general public have a say in how money is spent”.

It is important to note that these comments revealed a corresponding lack of faith in the existing system of decisionmaking, illustrating the need for change if this confidence is to be developed:

“Great idea – it would be good to see members of Fife council use the same system as to how their money is spent!” (Participant, Fife)

Importantly, greater faith in the system is not simply a matter of building confidence but of demonstrating that the decision-making system is itself worthy of that confidence. As a member of one community association put it:

“I can’t think of a more effective method of planning with limited resources” (community steering group member, Shetland)

### Improved local authority decision-making

Just as experiencing the process can impact on participants’ understanding of how local decisions should or could be made; the experience can have a similarly positive effect on officers. Officers in four of the five areas commented specifically on how learning from the pilot could or would influence decision-making practices beyond the process itself, through demonstrating a new way of working:

“It’s given me a lot of satisfaction on a personal basis, but it’s also given a lot of incentive when I go back to writing up policies and about how we direct services and about how much money goes out of these services. We can take a better view about how we do that.” (Council officer, South Lanarkshire)

“The voting day event was great! It set the benchmark for future community events in Shetland” (policy manager, Shetland)

In North Lanarkshire, a key achievement was the development of ‘walkabouts’ involving service providers and local residents, which allowed officers improved access to local knowledge about problems. Organisers recommend that this way of working should be used more widely in future.

### Shifts in decision-making power

One clear sign of improved democratic process would be evidence of a concrete shift in power over decisions. While these processes are small-scale, there is some indication that experiments in direct democracy can encourage existing power holders to think differently about decision-making responsibility. For example, in Stirling, youth workers described how they deferred to the young people over how to classify young people (as under 20 rather than 25), despite council practice

being different, because “it’s not about us, it’s about the young people ... and that was their decision”. Similarly, in Fife, officers observed that councillors saw and did not challenge decisions that they wouldn’t have themselves taken in committee:

“Our politicians have let go a bit, which is a big step for them” (council officer, Fife)

The decisions made by the community also indicate a shift in power. In some areas, there was a sense that the outcomes were different to the decisions that would have been made otherwise. In Shetland, there was a strong sense that a number of the projects would not have been funded without the PB process, or would have had to offer a lesser service. In Fife, officers firmly believe that different groups were funded through the process, where the traditional decisionmaking process might only have included the groups that “shout loudest”. In North Lanarkshire, where the vote affected council service provision, community members chose to fund things that would either not have been paid for by the council otherwise (such as pruning privately owned trees that the community felt affected community safety) or that the council had placed much lower down their list of priorities, such as street lighting (again, felt to affect community safety). Thus, they took decisions which the usual decision-makers would not have been able to take.

However, in some cases decision-making power over the process was clearly retained by public officials; the forms of engagement open to residents, and thus what power over which decisions, were defined by officers. This clearly limits the extent to which a PB process can challenge (or open to scrutiny) existing forms of power and decision-making. For example, in Fife oversight was held by an officer only group. This can of course be a stage on the journey to greater participation; officers in this group are keen to involve community members at this level in future.

However, in all cases the pilots depend on the commitment of the organising body or partnership. This unambiguously illustrates the limits to the shift in power. For a real change in how power operates, citizens need to know that it is their right and responsibility to take decisions, as one community member describes:

“It would be very disappointing if it was just suddenly to end, as a pilot project ... if it progressed and became a regular feature in the calendar it would be much more useful. Just an injection of cash now and again doesn’t really help much. It needs to be a continuous thing ... getting to be a bigger part of the whole [decision-making] system.” (Community association member, Shetland)

In practice, officers (and councillors) decide whether or how to take the process forwards. In some cases, this feels to be an extension of the joint working between community members and officers demonstrated through the process. This was notable in Shetland, where the steering group took a “conscious decision ... [to] be at the top end of the participation and community [range in the PB toolkit]”. Similarly, in South Lanarkshire, the only area where councillors, officers and community members working in partnership on the steering group, there is a strong shared commitment towards developing PB using mainstream budgets:

“I’m actually quite excited because I think there’s so much more we can do with this ... generally, how budgets work and how people can be involved in that. I think that’s really powerful to see.” (Councillor, South Lanarkshire)

In other areas, decisions about the future appear more as the outworking of constraints on officers, which may not be understood or shared by community members. Thus in North Lanarkshire, council officers expressed doubts over whether the intensive levels of officer support required by the process can be justified, while community members focused on how to improve the process in future. While constraints clearly exist in all areas (and may limit future development of PB in any

or all of the areas), the extent to which decision-making power has shifted is illustrated by the extent to which community members and officers appear to be working together on the basis of a shared understanding to take this new form of democratic participation forwards.

### Relationships between citizens and public officers

The potential for improved relationships between citizens and public officers arises most clearly through the community / agency partnership working often built into PB process design. Where this was the case, this was seen to be an effective way of working, leading to improved services. This was as a result of better access to community knowledge, as in North Lanarkshire where officer / citizen 'walkabouts' enabled community issues to be recorded and addressed. Community involvement meant that the process focused on local needs, rather than starting from agency systems, and direct contact made it easier for community members to initiate action on issues that concerned them, as for example in Shetland where the Head of Housing attended a community association meeting and followed up on issues raised. Similarly, for agencies, PB can provide a route into the community, which can allow them to deliver their services more effectively.

Importantly, as community members in Fife noted, the process provides something for officers and community members to work together on, to have a dialogue about. It is not contact alone that makes a difference to relationships, but joint working.

More specifically, the main cause of increased trust and improved relationships between officers and community members relates to changed community attitudes as a result of changed agency practice and increased officer visibility. Steering group members in all areas commented on this aspect of the process.

In North Lanarkshire, the joint officer / community steering group enabled community members to feel more confident that their views would be listened to, and that officers were genuine in their statements about local issues.

Community members of the working group in South Lanarkshire felt that they had previously tried unsuccessfully to get agencies working together in their community. They attributed the success of the PB process to the fact that it was a genuine partnership between agencies and community members.

In Stirling, young people on the working group valued the time taken to listen to them, and help them develop skills, which generated trust. They distinguished adults involved in the process from others who they felt would disregard them and wouldn't listen to them.

In Fife, community groups referred to the fact that the police and the council were working hard with community groups: "everybody working together, you're not working separately".

Finally, in Shetland, the experience of officer support directly changed community members of the steering group's attitudes to officers:

"[the council officers] were wonderful to work with and they helped with every step of the way ... that's something I didn't expect from council officers anyway, out of my experience, but I must admit that I'm having second thoughts on my attitude in that respect" (community working group member, Shetland)

It is important to emphasise that for community members this is not simply about 'overcoming prejudices' towards agencies (as suggested in one area), but the fact that partnership working between communities and agencies as



exemplified by PB counteracts previous experience of interactions with public agencies. The quote above makes clear that this is not a criticism of officers as individuals, but recognises the fact that existing systems can at times obscure the goodwill of individual officers. Improved relationships follow the recognition that changed ways of working are needed.

While this unsurprisingly happens most strongly within the sustained steering group partnership, the public nature of the process means that these improved relationships can be made more visible to the wider community. As a South Lanarkshire councillor put it:

“I think this team is a role model, the actual way it’s worked together; nobody’s fighting ... and that gives a very strong message to the public, to show you’re committed”

Similarly, in Fife, community members who participated in the voting event spoke of the hard work of the officers in organising the process. Their observed neutrality and fairness helped increase faith in the council. In Shetland, participants commented on the fact that the number of officers present on the voting day meant that direct agency / community discussions took place throughout the room, which broke down barriers & increased confidence in the council.

Equally, the process enabled officers to experience community members working in a different way, problem-solving rather than complaining (as mentioned above). This enabled officers to learn from community members, which had a direct impact on trust and relationships:

“It was totally outside my comfort zone ... quite a challenge [but] it was amazing working with the community group that were so positive about something that was really a challenge ... we were learning every step of the way” (Council officer, Shetland)

Finally, new relationships were developed because the process brought agencies into contact with different groups and community activists; it moved them beyond the easy shortcut to the ‘usual suspects’. This was also the case in Stirling where an officer on the steering group mentioned how his organisation usually goes to the people who are willing and eager to engage because it is easy, but through the PB process they are engaging with a group of young people they had never engaged with before. They hope they will continue to engage with other new groups and individuals as the process continues, giving them a richer understanding of the community and its needs.

Of course, partnership working and relationship-building also brings challenges. Council officers referred to problems in getting colleagues in their own and partner agencies to prioritise the work, and the need to ‘manage’ the different elements of the steering group. Council officers in some areas also reflected learning that problems could have been avoided if all relevant community stakeholders had been involved from the start of the process, rather than bringing them in later when feelings of exclusion had built up. Community members talked of problems of communication in at least one area, the need to know what was happening earlier than busy agency colleagues had time to do.

While improved relationships within the processes are important, long-standing change requires that these be embedded beyond a one-off process. While it is too early to see evidence of this, there are positive signs in some areas: “It’s not just a short, sharp fix. It’s going on for some time and I’m just hoping it’ll continue long after the major work’s been done .... I don’t see this as the end; I see it as the start of something.” (Councillor, South Lanarkshire)

## Relationships between citizens and Councillors

In all areas, council officers reported that one or more councillors were supportive of the process, though with differing degrees of proactive involvement. Where councillors were directly involved in the process, the pilots report similar improvements in trust and relationships. For example, in Stirling young people described their increased contact with a ward councillor.

Councillors in South Lanarkshire, the only area where they formed part of the steering group, commented very positively on the teamwork and partnership of the process. There was a strong sense within the steering group that the involvement of councillors was rooted in their existing good relationships and commitment to their ward.

In Shetland, facilitators reported that local residents responded well to the one councillor who attended the whole event, and felt a greater sense of connection as a result. Similarly, areas where councillors did attend the event reported across the board that the attending councillors responded very positively to the experience.

However, it is fair to say that across the five pilots there were only relatively isolated examples of sustained councillor involvement. In Fife, councillors were invited but chose not to attend the first meeting. In Shetland particularly, there was regret that councillors weren't more supportive, despite sustained efforts to involve them. This obviously limits the degree to which the process can have a positive effect on relationships between councillors and citizens:

“I was disappointed at the turn-out from the elected members, given this is a pilot project, especially those representing this area” (Shetland community member)

Indeed, the lack of direct councillor involvement appeared to heighten local perceptions that councillors did not want to encourage more participatory decision-making, suggesting that non-engagement of councillors can have an actively negative (rather than neutral or static) effect on relationships.

In some of the pilot areas councillor attendance and participation was strongly encouraged. Therefore, any future possible benefits in terms of improved relationships between councillors and citizens depend on councillors themselves choosing to take up a greater level of involvement. However, in two areas it appears that officers were content to limit the involvement of councillors, for a variety of reasons. These included officers' sense that the councillors already knew the community well, low expectations of councillor involvement (3 out of 11 is “not bad for a Saturday morning”), and a sense that councillor involvement might be negative if they tried to unduly control the process rather than allowing it to be fully participatory. While such concerns would need to be addressed, these pilots suggest that improved trust and relationships between citizens and their representatives are unlikely to follow from a process which directly involves only officers and citizens, and not councillors.

Issues of trust between politicians and citizens evidently run deeper than a single pilot can address. However, it is clear from the very different outcomes between public officers and citizens that participatory processes such as PB can have an impact. As such, the limited direct involvement of councillors in these five processes feels like a missed opportunity for developing greater trust and closer relationships.

## Quality of decision-making

In four of the five areas, there were two main sites of community involvement in decision-making: the steering group and the voting event itself (the exception being Fife, though officers aim to involve community members in the steering group in future). All pilots reported good decision-making in the steering group setting, speaking positively about the quality of

partnership working and information-sharing. At the planning stage, good decision-making included acting as facilitators for wider community views rather than simply making decisions on the basis of their own views. The young people on the steering group in Stirling provide an excellent example of this:

“If the community come back and tell us that they want something completely different to us, we’re going to have to do what they want, because it’s not about us, it’s about the community.” (Youth steering group member, Stirling)

However, the main focus of public decision-making occurred at the voting events. Two areas, Shetland and Fife, reflected in detail on the quality of decision-making at their events (Stirling has yet to hold their voting event). Overall, officers and community members were extremely positive about the quality of discussions and decision-making, remarking on the respect shown by participants to one another, levels of concentration and careful listening. There is strong evidence that the process was one of deliberative decision-making, with participants taking their time to make their minds up and discussing the merits of each project. The importance of deliberation is illustrated by the fact that participants in some cases changed their minds as a result of the discussion. Facilitators reported that participants appeared to make decisions on the basis of benefits to the community, rather than the quality of the presentation. Reasons given included voting for projects that benefited the many rather than the few, value for money, distribution of existing services and effectiveness (whether the project is likely reach the most in need, for example). One participant expressed fears about whether ‘unpopular’ but worthwhile causes would be supported through such a process.

However, this was in the context of future events rather than a comment on observed decision-making.

The quality of decision-making in both areas was felt to be supported by effective facilitation and, in Fife, by ‘speed networking’ which allowed participants to ask presenters questions without expecting presenters to answer in front of the whole audience. This process worked well, and was assisted by the inclusion of space on the voting day forms for notes and questions in preparation for the networking slot. Facilitators commented that this allowed participants to ask presenters ‘challenging’ questions; in other words, it was felt that the responsibility of decision-making was taken seriously. In Fife, there was broad agreement that there was plenty of opportunity to get information in order to make an informed decision, including paperwork on the projects, discussions, and break-out sessions. Participants also suggested information stands for each project, for future events, to maximise opportunities to talk to presenters, as well as more information about projects prior to the event and allowing longer for the speed-networking. More information in advance could also address a concern expressed by officers: that the process did not allow for as much scrutiny as usual, so the link to community safety might have been somewhat tangential in places. In Shetland, organisers commented on the balance between providing sufficient opportunities to get information and ensuring the event remained informal. However, following the event participants and organisers felt that it would be beneficial to include time for direct questions to presenters in future.

While the decision-making was clearly taken seriously by participants in all areas, some organisers reflected that greater competition for resources would be important, both in encouraging ‘harder thinking’ and to ensure the process is seen as valid decision-making. As one officer put it:

“I think the process is made legitimate by the choosing aspect” (council officer, Shetland)

The voting itself was seen to be fair and transparent in both areas, though the experience in Fife suggests the need to ensure that the voting system is clear and understood by all participants. There was some discussion over whether ‘tactical voting’ (advance agreements between projects over how to vote) could or did happen, and ‘packing’ (a particular project

bringing large numbers of supporters to ensure their success). Prioritising rather than giving discrete scores (referred to as Eurovision style voting) was suggested as a solution to the problem of tactical voting. Two suggestions were put forwards as a solution to possible 'packing'. Firstly, to limit the numbers of votes each project could receive, or secondly, to increase the number of 'general members of the public' present at the vote, to dilute or neutralise any group voting. The second proposal was more widely supported, by community organisations, participants and some officers. Those in favour of this solution seemed to have a gut feeling that although democracy may be flawed, it matters that the vote is open. As one officer put it:

“The big thing for me is part of this project was that the public were getting an opportunity to vote, so if you're taking that away...” (Council officer, Fife)

Attracting a wider pool of voters is of course an issue in itself. This was discussed in several areas, with suggestions put forward including: voting at a bigger event such as the 'fun day' held in South Lanarkshire, text voting, and allowing votes on the basis of information stands and literature (not requiring participants to stay for the presentations and discussion). The effectiveness of these methods is outside the scope of this report, as there in general not tried in this round of pilots (with the exception of South Lanarkshire, where 9 votes were generated by using the local library as an alternative voting venue following information stands about the projects at a fun day). However, evidence included in the 'community capability' section on the benefits of a collective process suggests that there may be trade-offs between numbers of voters and cohesion outcomes. This does not point to either method, but does emphasise that process design must be clearly tied to specific, local aims, as all processes will not deliver the same outcomes.



Voting in Forgewood

## Outcomes from the pilots

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All five pilots reported positive outcomes from their individual processes. Stakeholders in most areas did discuss the potential for greater impact as the processes develop, as a result of the pilot experience.

This section looks at what outcomes have already been achieved in reducing anti-social behaviour and perceptions of it. It also covers other outcomes emerging from the pilots, including those relating to:

- Community cohesion and capacity-building;
- Improved understanding of community needs and improved services (more in keeping with community priorities);
- Improved officer support for community groups;
- Improved local democracy;
- Additional funding brought into the area.

Some of these, particularly those relating to increased community capability, have already been discussed as significant aspects of the programme in their own right. Such outcomes are referred to more briefly here.

It's important to note that it is difficult to prove a causal link between PB and any reduction in community-level behaviour or perceptions, for example anti-social behaviour, particularly over the limited time period of a programme such as this. However, the evidence suggests that PB has had a positive effect in changing behaviour and views and at least coincides with reductions in both perceptions and instances of anti-social behaviour. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to say that this is entirely attributable to PB, but the people involved in the pilots have observed a clear contribution made by the PB process. A similar caveat must be made with regard to the broader outcomes discussed below. However, the evidence suggests that PB has contributed significantly to the range of outcomes discussed in this section.

### Impact on perceptions, anti-social behaviour and community safety

All five pilots undertook some form of baseline consultation process to identify perceptions of anti-social behaviour and community safety issues, prior to the start of the PB process. A mix of data has been provided including some of the consultation results, some crime data and some other information.

#### South Lanarkshire

In Overton 80% of respondents to a household survey felt that anti-social behaviour was an issue in their area and felt that drinking, excessive noise and shouting in the street, groups of young people hanging about, damage or theft of property and vandalism were the main forms of anti-social behaviour in the area. 59% of respondents felt the area was safe or very safe, while 69% felt it was unsafe walking in the neighbourhood at night. From the focus group which included a range of stakeholders, it was generally considered that crime and anti-social behaviour were big issues in the area and a cause of fear. There was also a sense that people felt powerless to change this, particularly with regard to activity at night.

The Overton pilot reports reductions in perceptions and actual incidences of anti-social behaviour. This was a particularly strong theme in the Overton focus group. All the participants (from a wide range of stakeholders) felt that there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour, improved community relations and less fear in the area, although it's important to note that the PB pilot was conducted following a targeted enforcement intervention in the area so the impacts cannot be entirely attributed to PB. It is fair to say that steering group members felt that PB had significantly contributed to its continuing reduction though, as part of the overall problem-solving approach in the area.

“We’ve noticed the difference in the decrease in anti-social behaviour from youth. And youth disorder. And the important thing is, the facets of the project that are ongoing, have all been voted on and determined by the community” (Community steering group member & participant)

#### North Lanarkshire

In Forgewood, 53% of respondents to a household survey were satisfied with Forgewood as a place to live with 73% of them feeling fairly or very strongly that they belonged to Forgewood. However, only 27% of respondents felt that Forgewood was a safe place to live with 53% feeling it wasn’t and 80% of respondents feeling unsafe outside at night. Officers involved in the process recognised the issues with anti-social behaviour but felt that previous prescribed solutions for the area, didn’t involve people in the processes or the decisions which had an impact on how well they were received by the community and the impact they ultimately had.

In Forgewood, they undertook community mapping exercises which brought together community knowledge and perceptions of anti-social behaviour with crime figures and enabled statutory partners on the steering group to respond to issues as they arose through the process. For example, a confidential information service was established with the police as a result of identifying it as an issue in the mapping exercises. This happened in addition to any projects funded through the PB process. As a result of this, and of regular meetings of the steering group, good relationships were fostered between the mothers and young people on the steering group and the statutory agencies so that the mothers and young people believed at the partners were genuine in their desire and actions to reduce anti-social behaviour and the steering group also believe that the projects funded through the process will reduce anti-social behaviour. They will be undertaking follow up exercises as well as looking at crime figures for a final evaluation in the coming months.

#### Shetland

In Stoney Hill the PB steering group didn’t specifically ask people how they felt about the area or how safe they felt in their household survey. However, they did ask them what they’d like to change about the area and what irritated them. The responses included repeated complaints about drug users & dealers, alcohol abuse, dog fouling and littering, noisy neighbours and speeding cars, demonstrating anti-social behaviour issues (and perceptions) affecting residents.

Comparing calls to the police over anti-social behaviour that required a response from prior to the process and after the process, there has been some reduction already (a reduction from 233 incidents to 187 between the same periods of time in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011), particularly on Ladies Drive which was identified in the preliminary residents survey as an area of particular concern to residents for anti-social behaviour.

In Stoney Hill, the focus group didn’t reveal clear changes in anti-social behaviour but themes around bringing different parts of the community together and people voting for the good of the community and for projects provided by local groups rather than larger service providers came through clearly. Whilst not directly a reduction in real or perceived antisocial behaviour this demonstrates changes in the community response to anti-social behaviour.

“Residents who wouldn’t normally have a reason to come together [came together through the process]”  
(community development worker)

#### Stirling

In Dunblane, specific data wasn’t provided on perceptions of anti-social behaviour, however a presentation given by officers about the PB project states that although incidents of anti-social behaviour are low, there are high perceptions and high numbers of police calls regarding perceived anti-social behaviour and a perceived and anecdotally evidenced level of

distrust and disconnection between the adults and young people in the community. Their aim was to address these issues through the project.

In Stirling, the process is still ongoing with the voting event scheduled for May 2011 so the outcomes of the process are not yet known. However, youth workers in the focus group spoke about the impacts on anti-social behaviour that the process is already delivering. The young people involved in the planning group are becoming more aware of how their actions might be perceived by adults and community centre staff have observed that they are taking on the role showing younger children the impact of their actions. As one youth worker said:

“There was an incident when they were mucking around in the car park after a [planning] meeting and putting car wipers up. And they didn’t make the connection between what was happening in the meeting and what they were doing outside. But once you brought it to their attention they saw how it would be perceived.”

### Fife

In Glenrothes, the latest household survey (conducted in 2009, not specifically for this pilot) on perceptions of anti-social behaviour shows generally low perceptions, with only 22% of respondents feeling worried they may be a victim of crime and 14% worried about anti-social behaviour from neighbours. Significantly more feel unsafe outside their homes at night; at 61%, this is similar to the other pilot areas.

In Glenrothes, while participants expressed strong confidence that the projects funded would make a difference to community safety, at the time of writing they are just getting underway, and so evidence provided is at a much more general level. It must therefore be treated with caution as evidence regarding PB. Reported crime figures for the 6 month period prior to the PB process being implemented and the 6 month period during implementation show a marked decrease of from 667 to 540 anti-social behaviour and criminal damage reported crimes. An area committee report from November 2010, on these figures for the Glenrothes area says:

“The largest reduction in reported crime to date is around anti-social behaviour, vandalism and criminal damage. The number of anti-social behaviour offences has significantly reduced by 247 over the same period last year whilst vandalism/malicious mischief has reduced by 111 offences. In addition, Breach of the Peace charges have reduced by 143.”

### Anti-social behaviour summary

In all of the processes the household surveys identified fears of anti-social behaviour particularly outside at night. The pilots sought to address issues of anti-social behaviour and some are beginning to see reductions in anti-social behaviour and perceptions of it. Stakeholders in all the pilots believe that these changes have been contributed to by the PB process, although there may not be a direct causal link. Those with a particular focus on reducing anti-social behaviour, through concentrated partnership work on priorities and identification of issues are demonstrating the most in terms of outcomes so far. The others indicate some changes, though less marked.

### Community cohesion and capacity-building

All five areas reported improved or increased community cohesion and community spirit through the pilots, including Stirling, where the process has not yet been completed. This suggests that the process itself delivers community cohesion outcomes in addition to the impact of funded projects. These outcomes, discussed in more detail in the community capability section, are expressed by a voting event participant who described the day as follows:



“A real buzz, sense of pride in being involved and that a lot of activity is going to happen” (voting day participant, Shetland)

Similarly, all five areas reported community capacity-building and empowerment as strong outcomes emerging from the pilots. These have also been discussed extensively in previous chapters. These outcomes included: participants finding out more about what’s going on in their area and how they can get involved, residents meeting people and getting on better with their neighbours and developing more capacity to take responsibility for their neighbourhood themselves, increased volunteering and community activism, community groups feeling more empowered and able to take on more of a role as community leaders, increased connections (and accountability) between community organisations and the wider community, and specific target groups developing skills and capacity by being directly involved in designing and planning the PB process (young mothers in North Lanarkshire and young people in Stirling).

### Improved understanding of community needs and improved services (more in keeping with community priorities)

Stakeholders across the pilots reported that the process led to improved understanding of community needs, due to community members and officers worked together on designing and undertaking consultation processes which were directly linked to the spending of a specific budget. This in turn led to services being more tailored to community priorities.

In South Lanarkshire, officers spoke of having made better connections with community groups, which has led to increased understanding and mutually beneficial relationships. Officers described the positive impact this has had, as they are more able to be effective in other areas of work because they have better knowledge of the community.

“I’ve actually gained a lot of knowledge and put faces to names. And for me, that’s been beneficial because it means that as the new tenants are moving in I can steer them towards certain groups .... Maybe a year ago, I knew they were all out there, but wouldn’t have been able to direct.” (Housing officer, South Lanarkshire)

This can have a direct effect on community cohesion too. The involvement of the housing officer quoted above means that “as soon as people are coming into the area, they’re now suddenly being involved in the community” (council officer, South Lanarkshire). This is understood to be a direct benefit of the housing officer's membership of the steering group, suggesting that the kind of community-based partnership working exemplified by the PB process can help create more inter-connected and effective council services.

Some officers found the pilot challenged their assumptions and existing skill-set, in that it uncovered complexities within communities, including sometimes hidden cohesion issues. The process enabled officers to have a much better understanding of the community. As a result, these officers hope that this pilot will have a bigger impact on the issues.

“We came with an assumption that it would be an easy piece of youth work because we’re used to working with kids from very difficult communities. But we were presented with some very different challenges ... We didn’t think we came with preconceptions but obviously we do.” (Youth worker, Stirling)

“What’s changed ... is an understanding of the dynamics of Dunblane, [it's a] complex community, and the partnership is looking at how it can respond to the complexities.” (Partnership officer, Stirling)

Learning can also be about 'hidden positives', as in Shetland:



“I am an outspoken supporter of Stoney Hill now, whereas before, all I ever saw was those little issues that all added up to a view of Stoney Hill, so it has made a difference for my views of the area ,and it’s given me confidence for what can happen for any community.” (Council officer, Shetland)

This learning, in connection with the joint community-council consultation mentioned above, enabled the pilots to focus in most cases to focus their resources more closely on community priorities. However, areas which addressed mainstream service provision rather than grant-giving saw more direct outcomes in terms of improved services. For example, in North Lanarkshire, as issues and priorities were generated through the community walkabouts, statutory agencies responded to these and put in place different or additional services (in addition to the PB voting) throughout the PB process. These services wouldn’t have happened without the PB process because the issues or priorities hadn’t been identified. The process served well in bringing together local knowledge, partnership working and service provision to provide a more coherent picture and response.

### Improved officer support for community groups

The two areas that showed this outcome most strongly were South Lanarkshire and Fife, who both worked closely with community groups (through a grant-giving model in Fife and a commissioning model in South Lanarkshire). Thus, where pilots are working more directly with community groups, they are showing stronger outcomes around supporting groups, just as processes centred on mainstream service provision show stronger outcomes in that area. Unsurprisingly, then, the nature of the process impacts strongly on the nature of the outcomes.

For example, in Fife, new groups were brought to the attention of council officers and accessed financial and officer support for the first time. In South Lanarkshire, the community groups felt that the PB process was a breakthrough in terms of the levels of support and partnership working they received from the statutory agencies. Previously they felt that statutory agencies weren’t very involved in what they were doing. They also felt that the networking (both with statutory agencies and other community groups) had supported and improved their funded projects, and that council support impacted on how they were seen by the wider community.

“There’s a very genuine interest and willingness about our partners who sit around the table with us and that is becoming reflected in the community reaction to the project.” (Tenants & Residents Association representative, South Lanarkshire)

### Improved local democracy

As discussed in previous chapters, the PB process has had in many cases a direct effect on improved relationships between citizens and public officers. This has been more limited in relationship to councillors, as their involvement has itself been more limited. Other democratic benefits include increased citizen knowledge of how to influence, increased confidence to do so, and increased faith in the democratic process (as it relates to PB, at least). The pilots have generated significant evidence that the quality of decision-making within PB processes is very high, though in some areas steering groups see a need to guard against future abuses of the system, including tactical voting and 'packing' the process with supporters, by seeking a much greater involvement of the wider community.

### Additional funding

Through the work of the steering group in South Lanarkshire, this area is in the process of attracting other funding to the area, in terms of community groups bidding for money from elsewhere, and as well as funds from Changing Places, a local group which has contributed £10,000 to the process for environmental work, which they carried out a parallel consultation

process in the area. Whilst PB was not used to distribute the £10,000, it is money that wouldn't have otherwise been spent in the area, but which was as a result of the PB process.

## Chapter conclusions

Overall, the five pilots have had an impact on perceptions and incidences of anti-social behaviour in the areas. They have increased community cohesion and supported communities in feeling proud of their neighbourhoods. There has been a positive impact on trust and relationships, particularly, between officers and citizens, within the local democratic setting. Officers have gained an increased understanding of communities needs, and so have tailored services to address these priorities.

Whilst many of the outcomes are similar across different PB approaches; there are differences in the outcomes depending on the approach. For example, mainstream service provision is more realigned to community needs and expectations if the approach taken redirects the funding through PB to mainstream public sector services. However, community groups are better supported and volunteering is more prevalent with community grants pot approaches where the primary recipients of funding through PB are community groups. Awareness of which processes tend to produce which outcomes can help to design future processes to deliver the intended outcomes.

This chapter summarises evidence of outcomes to date. However, as the areas are currently at different stages of their pilots, with one still to hold a voting event and others where the services or funded projects are not yet complete. Therefore, it is likely that other outcomes will be recorded over time. More complete information may be available directly from each area in time.

# Inclusion, National Standards for Community Engagement and PB values

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This chapter looks at the quality of the community engagement in the pilots, in terms of how inclusive it was and how the National Standards for Community Engagement were utilised. The chapter ends with a discussion on the PB values, and explores how the pilots reflected them.

The National Standards for Community Engagement are regarded within the CWCI programme as important, and the pilots offered an opportunity to observe how they are utilised within community engagement practice. To this end, we developed a checklist for the standards through which each pilot could assess how relevant (from 1 – 5) each indicator was to their particular process, and how much it was included in their process (not included, somewhat included, fully

included). The checklist also asked for evidence of their claims and any additional comments which illustrated the indicator.

In addition to the Standards, the PB Unit considers accessibility and inclusion of all parts of the community as key to realising the full potential benefits of PB. The PB Unit has developed 8 values for PB, and corresponding principles, standards and matrices which areas can use to assess the development of their projects. The values are especially important when there is central government encouragement for PB, as they help to safeguard against implementing PB as a 'tick box' exercise.

## Inclusion

All the pilots specifically considered inclusion of different parts of the community for their pilots. Some were more broadly based than others, but all captured the different aspects of the community they were aiming to affect by the process. It's encouraging to see this focus on inclusion from the start of a process, especially as it resonates both with the National Standards for Engagement and the PB values.

### Glenrothes, Fife

The steering group in Glenrothes focused on engaging with different community groups and found that by bringing the different groups together for the process, community cohesion was fostered. Participants at the voting event commented on the effect of the event on community spirit and empowerment. There were also inter-generational opportunities, with young people presenting bids on the day alongside adult participants. This enabled them to understand the needs of older residents in the community, as well as understand more about democracy and how it works. As one participant said:

"I have enjoyed that everyone is working with the community and working within their own communities to unite and make one and make this a better place."

As a result, a number of people at the voting event have gone on to volunteer in the community – helping to generate ongoing community spirit and empowerment. In term of the projects proposed, they covered a wide range of communities within the area which was helped by an accessible application format. Impact assessments showed that no part of the community was excluded from taking part and active encouragement and support was given to enable people to submit and develop their own ideas.

It was also felt by stakeholders that different groups were funded as a result of the process. It wasn't just 'the usual suspects' or those that 'shout loudest', demonstrating that the process has had a wider impact on the community than more typical grant-giving processes.

However, the steering group was officer-only in Glenrothes, meaning resident participation was limited to submitting a bid as part of a community group or voting on the bids (or both). They had no involvement in the planning and design of the process. The steering group recognises this as learning for the future, though, with a desire to see more residents on the steering group.

### Forgewood, North Lanarkshire

In Forgewood organisers focused on engaging with a young parents' group. One of their aims was to involve groups in the area who have traditionally been less engaged with. Their engagement with the young mums' group worked well. The steering group was made up of mums from the group plus two young people who were also new to involvement of this kind. The group met regularly which helped to build confidence amongst group members, so they felt more able to ask

other community members for their views. Thus the inclusion of individual citizens within the steering group had an effect on wider inclusion across the community. As Vince Howe, a PB Unit facilitator said:

“Getting a group of young mothers active in their community and feeling they can actually make some decisions about something things that historically they have informally been denied – that seems to be the point”.

The steering group also included more experienced activists working alongside the young mothers. Council officers felt this provided good inter-community engagement and helped develop the less experienced members’ skills and confidence.

Whilst the overall numbers at the voting event were low, which meant that a cross section of the community wasn’t really represented in the vote, the steering group is considering how to increase this, for example through text voting, which would more directly involve young people and not restrict it to a single day of voting.

### Dunblane, Stirling

The focus in Dunblane is engaging with disconnected young people, and addressing the lack of cohesion between the adult community and the young people in Dunblane. Organisers chose Dunblane because although it was different from more usual choices for a community safety pilot, the area has longstanding cohesion issues that date back to the primary school shooting tragedy of 1996. And as such, this pilot is a challenge for all involved. As an officer in the steering group said:

“Most of the communities [in the other pilots] are more challenged than Dunblane is. The partnership thought it would be relatively easy for us to do a pilot in a similar area. But we thought that we’re already working in these areas, but there are different issues in Dunblane that we need to get to the guts of, which has made it more difficult.”

The pilot has spent considerable time developing the young people’s confidence, skills and capacity to design and deliver the PB process. As a result they have successfully managed to engage with a group of 10-12 previously disengaged and disempowered young people, who have gone on to engage with an influence their peers (again illustrating that intensive engagement with a small number of citizens at steering group level can have a positive impact on inclusion within the wider community). The adult community are now beginning to be involved in the process and the aim is that the process is for the whole community, not just the young people, and that it improves cohesion between the young people and the adults. The young people designing the process feel it’s important that the whole community is involved. As one young person said:

“If the community come back and tell us that they want something completely different to us, we’re going to have to do what they want because it’s not about us, it’s about the community.”

Some of the organised adult community groups do feel that they were excluded from the process at the start and would have welcomed earlier involvement. They recognised the need to build capacity in the young people but felt this could have been done without their exclusion from the process. They do, however, welcome their involvement now.

“It would be better if [adult community] groups were engaged earlier going forward, from the start.” Community group representative

### Staney Hill, Shetlands

In Shetland, the steering group wanted to bring together two distinct communities in an area called Staney Hill. One is a relatively transient community suffering from high unemployment, health issues and levels of crime; and the other is a

more permanent community who, although they are proud of where they live, do not like the negative associations the other community bring to the area. This pilot sought to break down the barriers between the two communities.

As a result of the process, those that participated felt that they had more control and it seemed to the residents that they were more confident about representing themselves. Some very positive outcomes between both communities emerged around pride in the area and a desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. The community association felt that there was increased community cohesion between the two groups, and that both engaged in the PB process. It broke down the barriers between the different sections of the community and brought the community together as a whole. As one participant said:

“It was good seeing people in the area coming together and being more like a community.”

At the voting event, the participants favoured projects delivered by local organisations, rather than those more removed, and several of the projects were designed so as to generate ongoing participation by the community, with the aim of further fostering community cohesion.

However, there were far more participants from the more settled part of the community than from the more transient section. This may well be down to their personal circumstances and ‘chaotic lifestyles’ (as a resident put it), but the steering group recognises that there is still an imbalance between the two sides of the community in terms of engagement.

#### Overton, South Lanarkshire

The South Lanarkshire steering group’s main aim in involving people was about the community being empowered and able to do things itself, rather than constantly having initiatives happen to them. As a consequence, this was less about engaging with particularly excluded parts of the community, as with the other pilots, and more about engaging with the community as a whole. Whilst the steering group felt they could have engaged with more of the community if they’d started the process of engagement earlier, overall they felt that they had achieved their objective of bringing the community together, fostering community spirit and providing building blocks for the community to take increased responsibility.

A particular focus of one of the projects funded through the PB process, Move the Goalposts, is to work with disengaged young people who are involved in antisocial behaviour and more serious crime. The steering group was very positive about this project in terms of what it had already achieved in terms of developing community spirit and reducing antisocial behaviour. This includes the involvement of the wider community in designing and developing the project:

“Great to have Move the Goalposts ... giving the kids something to do in a safe and friendly environment. Smiles are back on the faces of adults ... creates a feel good factor for everyone that can only be good for the area.”

As a result, the community remain engaged, and continue to develop confidence and skills. As a community development worker said:

“The main positive about the project had been getting local residents speaking to each other, and that voice. The community are getting together.”

The steering group also mentioned intergenerational work as an aspect of inclusion: events such as the fun day which brought younger and older people together to discuss issues and break down barriers.

The steering group recognised that perhaps more community members would have been involved had they undertaken the door-to-door household survey earlier and had they integrated the open day with the voting event. This may have led to increased transparency and community involvement in decision-making. However, the steering group do recognise these are learning points for the future.

Going forward, the steering group plans to have more community members on the steering group, with the aim of a more community-led process. The steering group felt that the community capacity wasn't there at the start of the process, but feel that it is growing, with the steering group committed to building on this for the future development of the pilot.

## National Standards for Community Engagement

The 10 National Standards are:

- Involvement
- Support
- Planning
- Methods
- Working together
- Sharing information
- Working with others
- Improvement
- Feedback
  
- Monitoring and feedback

Within each of the standards there are a number of indicators which set out more explicitly how the standard can be realised. The pilots were asked to assess their project against each indicator as to how relevant it was to their process and how much it was included in the process.

Four out of the five pilots returned completed checklists, the exception being Shetland, who used a system called VOICE to prepare and evaluate engagement within their pilot. The system utilises the Standards and assesses the process against them; therefore the Shetland pilot considers their process to have full regard for and inclusion of the Standards.

The remaining four considered that all the Indicators were at least somewhat relevant to their process. With the exception of the Planning Standard, all of the Standards were felt to be fully relevant by at least one of the areas. However, there was only universal agreement on the degree of relevance each Standard had to the process for two of the Standards: Involvement and Planning. There appears to be far more variation in how the relevance of the others are viewed depending on the local process. Stirling did not provide information on the Feedback and Monitoring and Evaluation Standards because they have yet to complete their PB process.

With the occasional exception, where there was a discrepancy between the degree of relevance and the degree of inclusion of a Standard, the Standards were generally less included in the process than their relevance would indicate. This

indicates the usefulness of the Standards in highlighting such discrepancies, and focusing attention on particular issues for future development.

#### Involvement

All the areas felt this standard was fully relevant to their process. Two had fully included it in their process; two had included it somewhat.

#### Support

One area felt this was fully relevant, two mostly relevant and one somewhat relevant to their process. In all cases they had included it as much as they felt it was relevant.

#### Planning

All of the areas felt this standard was mostly relevant to their processes. Two of them had mostly included it in the process; two had included it somewhat.

#### Methods

There was little agreement between the pilots on how relevant this standard was. This is to be expected because methods are process specific, and as the processes themselves varied so significantly between the it is in keeping that views of this Standard also varied. Two areas had fully included it in their process, one had mostly included it and one had somewhat included it.

#### Working together

Most of the areas felt this was fully relevant to the process and included it at least mostly in their processes.

#### Sharing information

Two of the areas felt this standard was mostly relevant to their process, one felt it was fully relevant and one somewhat relevant. Three of them included it mostly in their process and one somewhat (this was in keeping with them considering it only somewhat relevant to their process).

#### Working with others

Three of the areas felt this was fully relevant and one mostly relevant to their process. Two had included it somewhat in their process, one fully and one mostly. Of all the standards, this probably shows the most discrepancy between relevance and inclusion, identifying an area for improvement.

#### Improvement

Two areas felt this was fully relevant to their process, one mostly and one somewhat relevant. Two felt they included it somewhat, one mostly and one fully in their processes..

#### Feedback

Two areas felt this was mostly relevant and one fully relevant. In all areas they had the corresponding level of inclusion within their process, suggesting that this standard was the most coherent and easily related, within these pilots.

#### Monitoring and evaluation

Two areas felt this was somewhat relevant and one area felt it was fully relevant. There was a mix of inclusion levels across the three pilots, which indicates that this could be an area for improvement in the future.

Overall, there is a strong resonance between the National Standards and the local experience of the pilots. There are mixed levels of inclusion of the Standards, but certainly there is considerable regard for them, with the pilots considering, overall, that they have general relevance to PB locally. Stirling adapted the National Standards for their locality, which is good practice learning because where the Standards are less relevant, these can be adapted to have more meaning and relevance to the process.

## Values, principles and standards

The eight PB values are:

- Accessibility
- Empowerment
- Local ownership
- Shared responsibility
- Deliberation
- Transparency
- Support representative democracy
- Mainstream involvement

With the exception of mainstream involvement, all of the values relate easily to the National Standards for Engagement, so there is a strong overlap with the previous section. And even though mainstream involvement doesn't feature with these pilots, a number of them intend to continue using PB to look at mainstream budgets – demonstrating the progression that PB can take.

How the pilots relate to the values is mostly covered in different sections because the values are inherent to PB. So supporting representative democracy is discussed in the section on democracy and relationships, and empowerment and local ownership is discussed in the outcomes section. The evidence clearly suggests that the values have been incorporated into all of the pilots, albeit to varying degrees.

What is clear is that the motivations of the different stakeholders involved centre around improving outcomes and quality of life for the communities involved in PB, rather than any mandatory requirement, or points scoring attitude with the Scottish Government, which is an environment in which the values are more likely to flourish.





Participants in Stoney Hill

## Conclusion

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A wide range of contributors from diverse communities across Scotland came together to create the five pilots that make up the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative. The programme aimed to implement a participatory budgeting approach to facilitate a collective response to community safety issues, through each pilot was different; each tailored to local contexts and circumstances, and strongly embedded in existing partnerships and work. Furthermore, the varied participants and stakeholders included community members new to formal engagement as well as experienced community activists, council officers, a wide range of other statutory partners, community and voluntary groups and elected members, who brought with them an even wider range of motivations, both shared and personal.

These motivations included improving the area under consideration (including reducing anti-social behaviour and improving community safety), improving the planning and decision-making systems that affect those areas (broadly, better democracy: both within the pilot, but also by trialling a new technique that might be more widely useful), and improving the communities themselves – making them stronger and more resilient. Significantly, while there are variations, partnership officers, councillors and citizens do broadly share all three motivations (better democracy, concrete changes in outcomes – in this case, community safety – and stronger communities), and all three are felt to be fundamental objectives for the process.

While there are inevitably qualifications to be made about the extent to which individual processes generate particular outcomes, evidence from this programme suggests that participatory budgeting can impact positively on all three objectives. Specifically, with regard to improved democracy, it can have a significant impact on improved relationships between citizens and the state, provide opportunities for democratic learning amongst participants and demonstrate the potential quality of participatory decision-making. With regard to stronger communities, it can have a significant impact on participants' personal skills and confidence, strengthen organisational capacity within communities and contribute to cohesion and pride in and between different sections of the community. With regard to concrete changes, this programme – though short-term and relatively small-scale – has demonstrated that money spent via PB can impact visibly on particular service or policy areas (in this case, community safety and perceptions of community safety).

With regard to the qualifications about the extent to which these outcomes are delivered by particular projects, some discussion is required. Participatory budgeting is not a defined technique which operates in one consistent form. Rather, it has become an 'umbrella term' for many different processes. The term captures an idea of participatory democracy, and at its simplest level, means that citizens have some direct control over the spending of public funds – in line with the definition we offered at the start of the report. However, while some practitioners, participants and observers may have much narrower definitions of what is or isn't PB, the reality is that many people with many connected but varied conceptions of participatory budgeting locate themselves under the 'PB' umbrella. As a result, participatory budgeting comprises a great number of practicalities and systems which are correspondingly 'connected but varied'. We cannot therefore say that 'participatory budgeting' delivers, or even is likely to deliver, any one particular set of outcomes.

Therefore, the aim of this evaluation is to help us understand what systems and processes generate outcomes most in line with the aims and values that stakeholders bring to the process. This is not the same thing as drawing up a checklist of values to measure each process against, as stakeholders across and within different processes will have different aims and values. Equally, it is not useful or practical to ask whether participatory budgeting 'works' or not. We must rather ask what form of participatory budgeting is most likely to generate the kind of outcomes we want.

For this reason, we began this report with a review of motivations, and our exploration of the evidence has sought to identify patterns in the data, looking for connections between types of process and types of outcomes.

Firstly, the steering group is a key site for outcomes of all kinds. Therefore, the nature and remit of the steering group is critical in terms of the kinds of outcomes that a process is likely to generate. A steering group which includes citizens new to community involvement of this kind, and supported by experienced activists and / or officers and councillors, generates significant results in terms of personal development, including growth in democratic and personal confidence and a shift from listing problems to taking a problem-solving approach. A steering group which includes citizens, officers and councillors working together on an equal footing is likely to generate clear outcomes in terms of democratic learning, and improved trust and relationships between citizens and officers (and councillors, where present). A steering group formed of officers from different public sector organisations is likely to contribute to improved partnership working across these agencies.

Secondly, the nature of the process generates different outcomes. This partly depends on where energy and capacity is targeted most clearly. Where energy is given to one-to-one support for applicant groups, there are likely to be significant gains in terms of community organisation development and capacity. Where energy is given to consultation prior to inviting proposals, the funded projects or services are more likely to accord with known community priorities, and officers are more likely to benefit from increased knowledge about the communities they serve. This appears to be particularly the

case where officers and citizens work together on consultation, and where the consultation is directly linked to the funding allocation process.

Thirdly, a related finding suggests that the overall focus of the process significantly affects the nature of the outcomes produced. Unsurprisingly, processes that are designed to fund alternative (or even additional) public services are most likely to lead to changed service provision, as well as potentially impacting on how services operate beyond the PB process itself. By contrast, grant-giving processes have a much greater impact on connections between and across community groups and the wider community, as well as related benefits such as community group accountability and increased volunteering.

Connected to this, the type of voting process is significant in generating a further set out of outcomes. All the pilots in this programme utilised a single voting event format. However, alternatives (including voting by text or at 'drop-in' sessions) were put forward after the event as possible ways of increasing turnout. The public (and to an extent deliberative) nature of the voting event is closely linked to outcomes such as increased community knowledge about what goes on in the community, what services and groups exist, and about other sections of the community. It also provides a forum for different sections of the community to come together in a shared process for their community, which impacts strongly on community cohesion, through a sense of working together for the good of the community. This in turn strengthens positive feelings of community pride and community spirit.

Deliberation within the voting event can enhance the benefits described above, as different generations, residents of different areas, or different sections of the community, come together to discuss and decide. Deliberation – supported by good facilitation and adequate access to information – also increases the potential for good public decision-making. Overall, participatory budgeting suggests that public decision-making can be reflective, considered and serious.

Finally, to the extent to which PB is embedded within the existing system rather than treated as a discrete process, it can have a significant impact on faith in the democratic process, because it demonstrates a genuinely different form of politics from citizens' prior experiences. While the PB processes discussed in this report are at present at the pilot stage, and so not embedded in that way, there are indicators regarding the degree to which they may come to represent a more lasting shift in power. These include the extent to which citizens, officers and councillors are able to work together on developing and embedding the future development of PB in their locality, and the extent to which PB is likely to become an 'entitlement' rather than a discretionary process initiated by individual officers or councillors.

\*

In this section of the report, we have offered an overview of connections and findings that we hope may help in designing future processes which generate the outcomes that motivate participants and organisers to get involved. Democracy is, however, always a fluid process, and participatory budgeting is no exception. Processes will be designed and redesigned by their participants on an ongoing basis. To this end, the following chapter poses some broader or longer-term questions which have been generated by this programme but which lie outside the scope of the evidence from the processes themselves.



Walkabouts in Forgewood

## Learning and questions for the future

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This report has sought to systematise learning rather than measure the success of the 5 pilots. The programme as a whole has produced a number of key learning points about implementing PB. More detail on these points can be found in the executive summary, the conclusion and throughout the report.

The programme has also generated some wider questions which are beyond the scope of the evidence available from this programme, but which nevertheless may be useful for PB practitioners and participants to consider.

### Key learning

PB is an effective means of making local decisions which can have a wide variety of positive outcomes. These include: improved relationships between citizens and the state, opportunities for democratic learning amongst participants, improved citizen skills and confidence, strengthened community organisational capacity, greater community cohesion, increased faith in the democratic process, improved understanding of community needs, services delivered more in line with community priorities, and – importantly – concrete changes to funding outcomes, in this case, perceptions and instances of anti-social behaviour.

PB is an approach not a technique. Different PB processes do not therefore deliver a consistent set of outcomes. PB can generate the benefits listed above, but every process will not deliver all the outcomes equally. Designing the process in accordance with local priorities will maximise the outcomes that are most important in your area.

PB demonstrates that citizens are capable of effective and considered decision-making. This is facilitated by informed and structured deliberation.

The steering group is a key site for learning and development outcomes. The make-up of this group is therefore crucial in terms of maximising priority outcomes. In this programme, different pilots have focused variously on inexperienced community activists, community organisations and public bodies at the steering group level, with correspondingly different outcomes in each process: growth in individual skills and confidence, organisational development or improved agency partnerships, for example. The sustained engagement of the steering group can lead to a shift on how individuals and organisations work together, fostering a shift from listing problems for ‘the council’ to solve, to a problem-solving approach.

Working together builds trust and improves relationships. The potential for PB to improve local democratic cultures is therefore maximised when officers, citizens and councillors work together throughout the process, rather than simply coming together for a decision-making event.

This programme suggests that active councillor involvement in PB (as opposed to more general support for the process) is significantly more limited than officer or citizen involvement. This limits the potential for improved relationships and increased trust, and there is a danger that it may even impact negatively on perceptions of councillors who are not seen to value increased engagement.

The experience of these five pilots suggests that PB is an effective means of engaging with a wider cross-section of the community than more traditional means of making public finance decisions. While clearly barriers to inclusion remain, the pilots are best understood as a journey towards greater inclusion, with the involvement of a greater number of citizens within the pilots in turn contributing to ongoing and active reflection on how to increase inclusion still further in the future. Thus, the intensive engagement of a smaller number of citizens within the steering group setting can have a pay-off in generating greater engagement across the wider community.

Frameworks such as the National Standards for Community Engagement and the PB values have a clear utility in focusing attention on the values and motivations underlying implementation techniques, and as such are useful in process planning as well as evaluation. This helps link delivery closely to the desired outcomes. Furthermore, such frameworks clearly offer the potential for identifying discrepancies between aims and achievements, and so can focus organisers’ and participants’ attention on areas for future development.

The public and collective nature of decision-making is crucial in generating some of the community cohesion outcomes claimed for PB, including increased knowledge about and within the community, the expression of solidarity between different sections of the community, and the expression of pride in the community.

## Questions for the future

How can the future development of participatory budgeting in Scotland be best supported and by whom?

How can PB practitioners and stakeholders in Scotland build on the work done to date, and ensure ongoing shared learning?

How can existing and future PB work link in with a wider range of national partners and networks?

What potential is there for PB to spread to other public services and funding areas in Scotland?

What motivates councillors towards more active involvement in participatory budgeting, and what are the barriers to their involvement?

What is the impact of party political support on the development and outcomes of participatory budgeting?

How will budgets cuts affect the development and operation of participatory budgeting in Scotland?

What potential is there for PB in Scotland to become an embedded part of decision-making systems: an entitlement rather than a discretionary process?

How can PB in Scotland fulfil its potential to create real and lasting change in communities and to how democracy operates?

## Appendix 1: Programme Evaluation Methodology

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Each of the 5 pilot areas in the Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative undertook a process of self-evaluation. While the PB Unit offered support in using self-evaluation tools, which was taken up by some groups, each area created an individual evaluation design, and produced a local evaluation based on local aims and evaluative interests.

As participatory evaluators, we believe that this locally determined evaluation is of primary importance in terms of learning and development for each area. Local aims and objectives should not be superseded by external goals, nor should local processes be evaluated against targets which were not their core motivation. However, a national programme such as this offers a rich opportunity for learning, and can provide broader insights beyond the learning from each individual processes. The aim of the programme evaluation was therefore to draw out any wider themes from the five discrete pilots, and is as such focused clearly on learning and development rather than audit or assessment. The programme evaluation is not intended to provide a comparison between 5 areas with different aims, processes and timescales (and who have collected and provided very varied data sets).

In keeping with this ethos, the Scottish Executive's Community Safety Unit did not set national parameters for the programme in terms of anticipated outcomes. The programme evaluation questions were drawn up in discussion with the Community Safety Unit, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the five pilot areas themselves, to reflect the different and shared interests of the programme participants. The questions agreed as of interest for the programme evaluation (while recognising that local aims may mean that the questions are not equally relevant to each area) are as follows:

- What is felt to be an appropriate role for local councillors in relation to PB processes?



- What was the impact of the PB pilots on relationships and trust between community members and statutory organisations?
- In what ways has PB enhanced local democratic cultures?
- How did the PB pilots impact local perceptions of anti-social behaviour?
- Have the PB pilots resulted in changed decisions / outcomes in the local area?
- Did the PB pilots have an impact on community capacity?
- To what extent have the National Standards for Engagement been utilised through the PB pilots?

We asked each pilot area to provide both raw and analysed data as collected for their own evaluations (a list of data sources for each area is provided below). In addition, we asked to visit each area to conduct a maximum of two focus groups with programme organisers and / or participants and applicant groups. The following areas accepted our request to visit: Fife, Shetland Islands, Stirling and South Lanarkshire. These visits enabled us to explore the programme level concerns, and to get a first-hand sense of the process in each area, which contributed immeasurably to our understanding of the other data provided.

This report offers reflection on the programme level questions. Local evaluations, which include more detail on both local aims and outcomes and on the practicalities of each process, will be available from each of the five pilot areas.

## Data sources

In addition to the sources listed below, all areas completed a Local Context Recording Sheet and a Scottish National Engagement Standards Checklist.

### Fife

Application form  
 Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative report  
 Focus group with process organisers (full transcript)  
 Focus group with funding applicants (full transcript)  
 Community Gains event review meeting, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
 Community Gains meeting notes  
 Press releases  
 PB evaluation report to the Area Committee, January 2011  
 Reports to the Community Safety Partnership Group and Area Committee  
 Steering group interview  
 Community Gains Voting Event internal evaluation summary  
 Integrated impact assessments  
 Video interviews with voting day participants  
 Community Gains process materials and publicity  
 Crime and community safety data

Evaluation and monitoring framework  
 Particip8 household survey results  
 Minutes of Community Wellbeing Champions Meeting  
 13<sup>th</sup> August 2010  
 Report on outcomes from Centre Spot Development project (funded project)  
 Recorded focus group & transcript with mixed stakeholders  
 Particip8 household newsletters  
 Young people's questionnaire form  
 Particip8 household survey form

### Shetland Islands

Application form  
 Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative report  
 Focus group with funded projects (full transcript)  
 Focus group with process organisers (full transcript)  
 PB in Shetland preliminary report, November 2010  
 7 participant observation diaries, completed by officers and community members  
 Wir Community, Wir Choice process materials, newsletters and publicity  
 Crime and community safety data

### South Lanarkshire

## North Lanarkshire

Application form

Community Wellbeing Champions Initiative report Focus group with process organisers (notes from facilitator)

Steering group meeting minutes

## Stirling

DYPP project update report November 2010

Listening to communities presentation slides

Dunblane community council census profiles Recording & transcript for focus group with young people

Recording & transcript for focus group with steering group

Stirling council key statistics August 2010

Health profiles for Dunblane 2010

Dunblane community plan 2009 – 2014



