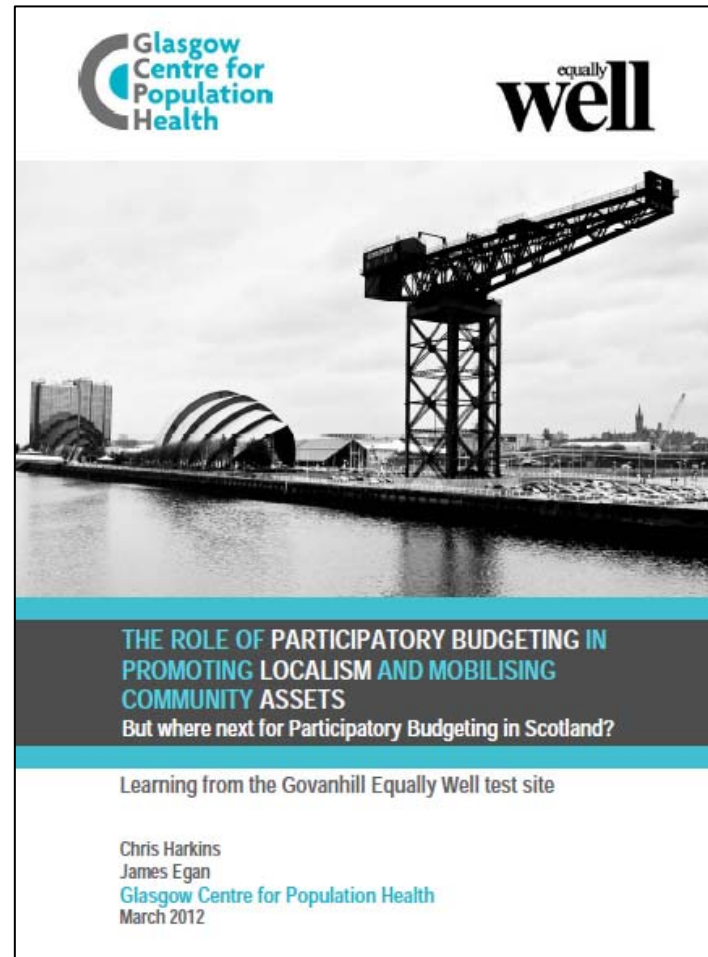


Participatory Budgeting – Govanhill Pilot

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equally
well

“ scotland's health is improving rapidly but it is not improving fast enough for the poorest sections of our society. Health inequalities ... remain our major challenge. ”

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today

- PB background
- PB within current political landscape
- study methods
- study findings
 - Govanhill PB pilot process
 - Govanhill PB pilot learning themes
- discussion ‘highlights’
- couple of key challenges

Definition of PB

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget

Transfers responsibility and accountability from the state to communities

PB is fundamentally about deepening democracy

The origins of PB?

- PB originates from Porto Alegre in Brazil (1989)
- following the demise of Brazil's military dictatorship
- born out of the desire to locally and democratically reallocate public money to where it was needed most
- Generally positive evaluations of PB in Latin America and in UK – although recognised as difficult process



What 'form' does PB take?

There are many approaches to PB, however two are relevant for the purpose of this study :

- UK approach to PB is 'community grants'
- more 'radical' approach is 'top-slicing' or 'mainstream' PB (Brazil)

What are the benefits of PB?

- enhances community engagement – social exclusion
- community empowerment, increasing confidence & skills
- meaningful – community, public and third sectors
- leads to innovative projects, tailored to local needs
- demonstrates the benefits of partnership working
- can lead to additional funding for disadvantaged areas

How does PB fit with the current political landscape?

- PB involves devolved local decision making, community empowerment and increased democracy
- PB's values of transparency, localism and voluntarism are at the core of the current political consensus
- PB is supported by both the political left and right due to the blanket appeal of community-led solutions to public service delivery at present

How does PB fit with the current political landscape?

PB within imminent public sector reform in Scotland?
Christie Commission:

‘Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use’

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How does PB fit with the current political landscape?

How does PB relate to health, and assets based approach?

2010 Marmot Review:

‘Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local levels. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities’

Assets-based approach to health improvement:

‘...also supports community empowerment and participation; calling for professionals to shift their approaches from thinking of a community’s deficits and greatest needs towards recognising and building on the strengths of local residents and the assets within communities’

How does PB fit with the current political landscape?

Until recently PB has been missing in action. Why?

- is there a lack of awareness of PB?
- cynicism surrounding 'empowerment' amidst cuts agenda?
- somewhat 'anaemic interpretations' of PB seen in UK?
- However Community Empowerment Bill – PB section
- GCC Community Budgeting commitment
- Good progress!

Govanhill PB Pilot

- £200k of 'community engagement' resource awarded to Govanhill Equally Well test-site
- Partners initiated PB pilot with newly formed Govanhill Community Action Group (GoCA) in summer 2010
- CHP and City Property were key partners and Oxfam facilitated the PB process
- Local CPP endorsed the approach



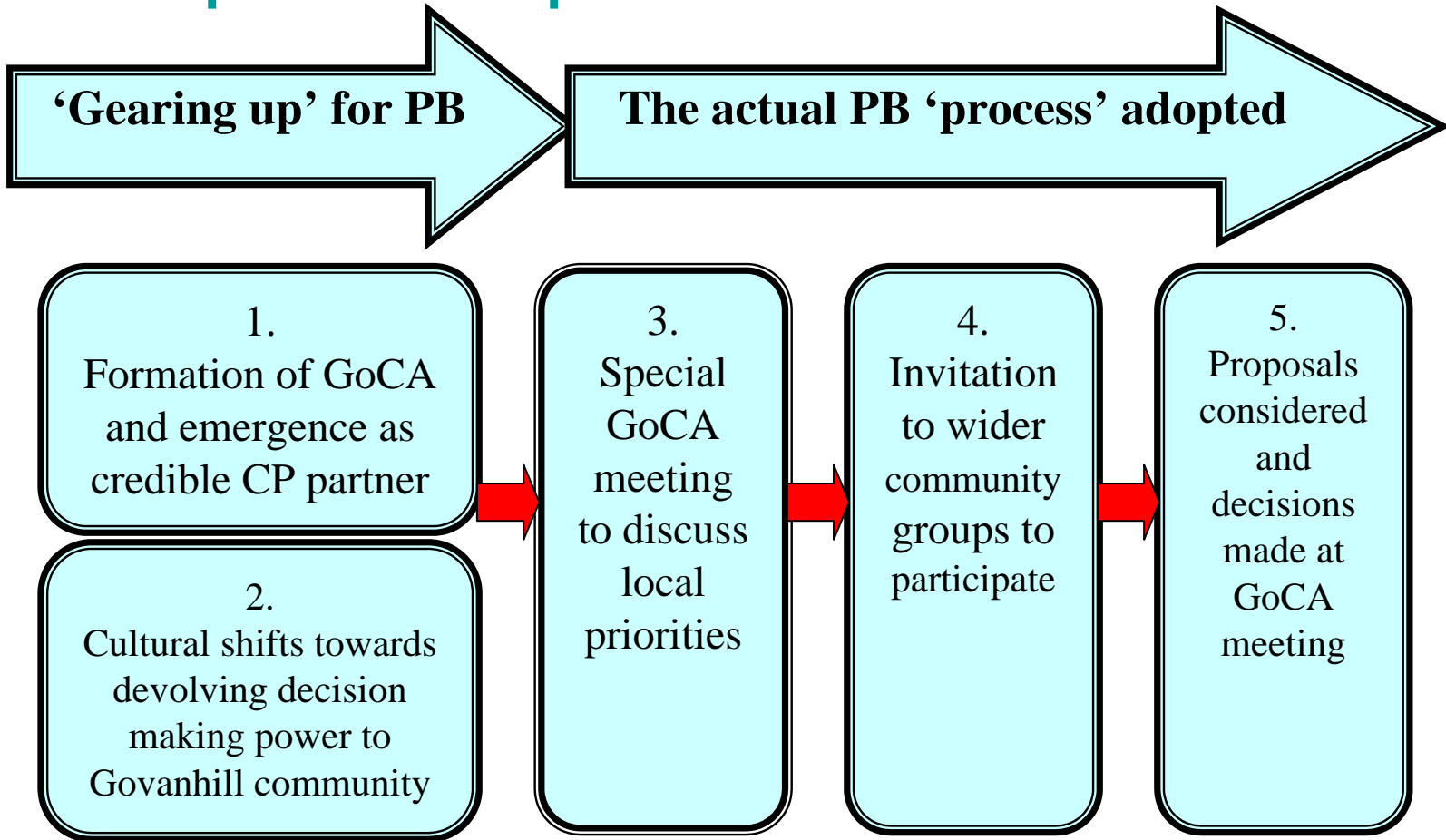
Govanhill PB Pilot

Evaluation methods:

- Qualitative
- 2 focus groups with GoCA members
- Interviews with public sector workers involved
- wider Test-site evaluation data was also used to explore influences and attitudes to PB and related issues

Findings

The PB process adopted:



Projects funded

Funded projects	Equally Well funds awarded through Participatory Budgeting
- Govanhill Addictions Family Support Group	£40,000
- Govanhill Community Justice Partnership	£60,000
- Govanhill Baths Trust	
- health and well being programmes	£50,000
- capital grant	£50,000

The learning themes

1. The importance of independent facilitation in the PB process
2. GoCA members embracing responsibility and empowerment
3. GoCA members' strategic and maximal use of funding
4. GoCA members' priorities: people firmly ahead of place
5. Abandoning the status quo: fresh thinking from the GoCA members

The learning themes

6. Time pressures within the PB pilot
7. Community representation within the Govanhill PB pilot
8. Transparency within the PB process
9. The public sector desire for 'community professionalism'
10. The role of PB in building foundations, relationships

Discussion 'highlights'

- Like any democratic mechanism the process adopted in Govanhill was imperfect
- PB fits entirely with the principles of localism, community empowerment, devolved decision making and the assets-based approach.
- PB is a well established and internationally researched localised democratic process

Discussion 'highlights'

- PB - meaningful and purposeful dialogue between community members, the third sector and public sector
- PB can enable closer partnership and 'collaborative gain' deemed vital by Christie and social policy in Scotland.
- PB can add significant 'pull to engage' within disadvantaged communities
- PB can mobilise human community assets

Discussion ‘highlights’

- The current political and policy landscape is crying out for a practical tool which purports to achieve these goals yet widespread awareness and acceptance of PB has been slow in Scotland.
- This can only be achieved when the awareness that more can be achieved for less by working with communities is recognised, evidenced and accepted – are we there yet?
- Leadership, build capacity, ‘lead in time’, front-loaded investment, essential cultural shifts required.

Couple of key challenges

- Is physical transfer of money essential to PB (legalities) or can PB process be implemented and then public sector procure decisions made? (transparency, value?)
- Community representation is a perpetual challenge in direct democratic processes – start with existing groups “usual suspects” and then broaden engagement?
- Public sector’s desire for community ‘professionalism’... a relatively unexplored barrier to engagement?

Many thanks

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