



National Evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in England

Interim Evaluation Report



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SQW Consulting, supported by Cambridge Economic Associates and GFA Consulting

March 2010
Department for Communities and Local Government

The Views expressed in this report represent those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department

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Key findings

1. In October 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) commissioned SQW Consulting (SQW), supported by Cambridge Economic Associates (CEA) and GFA Consulting (GFA), to undertake Phase 1 of the national evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in England. This report summarises the Phase 1 findings.
2. Phase 1 of the Participatory Budgeting Evaluation sought evidence to answer four questions:
 - Why do Participatory Budgeting?
 - What does Participatory Budgeting involve?
 - How much will Participatory Budgeting cost?
 - What will we get for our money?
3. In answering these questions case studies identified critical success factors and barriers to success and how they can be overcome.

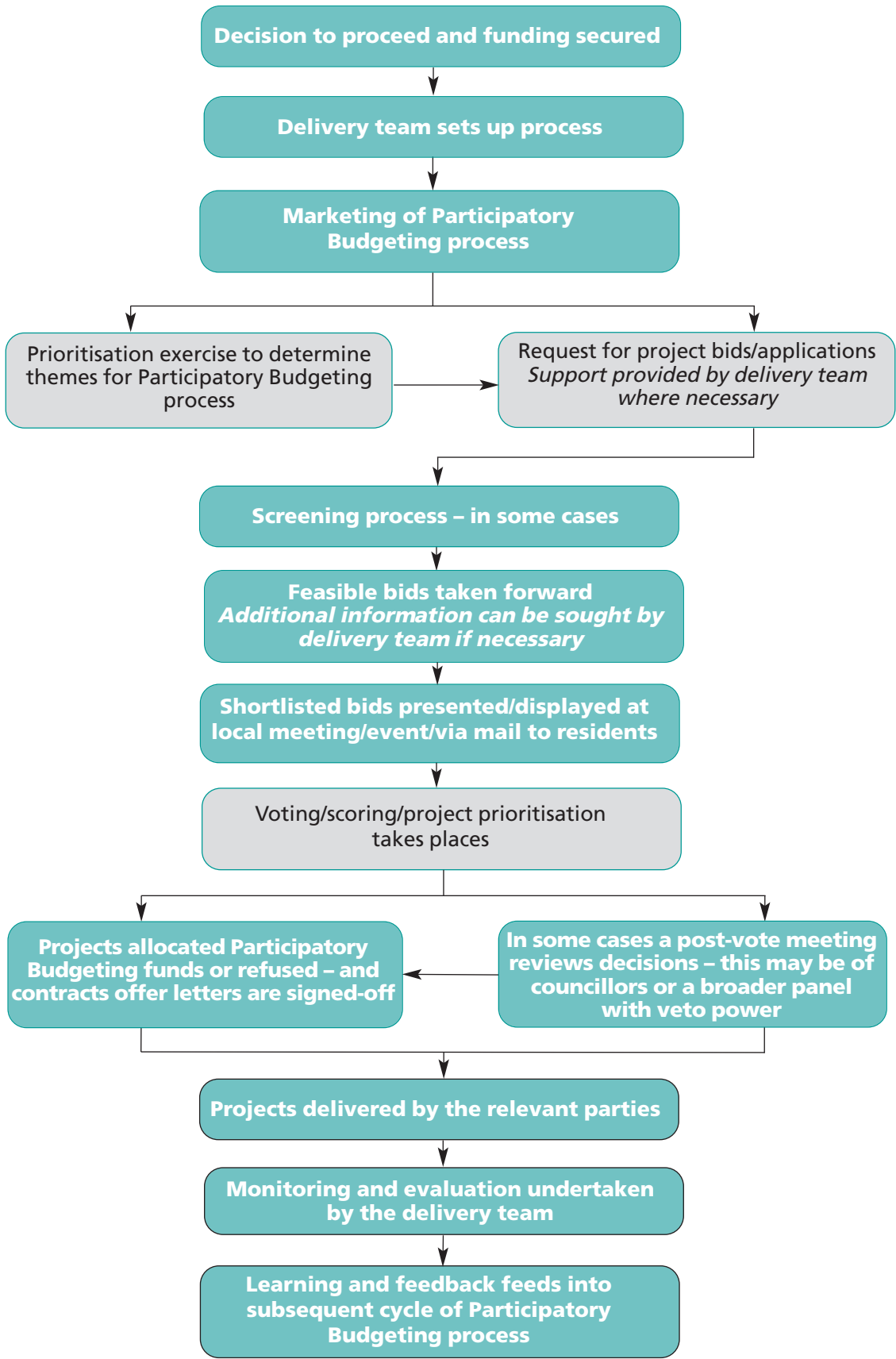
Why should we do Participatory Budgeting?

4. Participatory Budgeting helps to improve relationships within communities and between communities and service providers. In addition, the process draws on local knowledge and opinions to ensure resources are spent on what matters to local people. Case study areas provided a range of reasons for introducing Participatory Budgeting, most of them related to issues associated with community empowerment, including:
 - to facilitate meaningful participation by residents in local decision making with a view to improving local accountability, the quality of local services and the quality of life
 - to increase community pride and sense of ownership
 - to increase community cohesion and bring different people together
 - to enhance the development of social capital
 - to enhance the relationship between residents and councillors
 - to increase awareness of how the council works and constructs its budgets
 - to get people to understand better how public money is spent
 - to develop effective support and project planning mechanisms
 - to establish clear processes and lines of accountability.
5. Where public sector agencies wish to engage more often, more meaningfully and effectively with the public than traditional approaches allow, Participatory Budgeting offers a workable option.

What does Participatory Budgeting involve?

6. The case study evidence indicated that Participatory Budgeting was often developed to complement existing community engagement/empowerment initiatives, and for the most part that Participatory Budgeting was viewed as one of a number of community empowerment tools. Even so, it generally took between 6 and 12 months to set up the process and hold the first decision-making event. Other evidence from the case studies suggests availability of staff resources to support the development and running of Participatory Budgeting initiatives is the main constraint on the speed at which Participatory Budgeting gets rolled out.
7. In terms of the involvement of elected members, there appears to be a strong link between councillors and Participatory Budgeting process in the majority of areas – with councillors helping facilitate or advise at events.
8. The study showed that Participatory Budgeting operates in different ways in different places. The bulk of activity in case study areas focused on the allocation of small grants. In the period 2005/6 to 2009/10, Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas influenced the allocation of over £5 million of discretionary resources and supported 2,366 projects. Over two-fifths (43%) of projects were small (costing between £1 and £1,000); while over one-half (55%) were in the £1001 to £10,000 size band. Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas has therefore been predominantly about allocating discretionary grants to small local projects. Overall, the average project size across all case study areas and the whole period has been £2,195.
9. One-third of projects analysed (33%) focused on the maintenance of public spaces and a further 28% on highways improvements, including road safety. A further 9% were focused on street cleaning and refuse collection activity. Of the remainder, dominant project activities included grants for a wide range of voluntary and community based activity (12%) and expenditure on youth work projects (7%). Five per cent of projects were focused on public health activities.
10. The evaluation found some basic steps are likely to be required if Participatory Budgeting is going to work effectively in the allocation of small delegated budgets.

Summary of Participatory Budgeting core process for allocation of discretionary or small grants funding



Source: SQW Consulting

How much will Participatory Budgeting cost?

11. The evaluation worked with case study areas to estimate the public sector costs of Participatory Budgeting. The costs were then analysed to reflect the cost per resident and cost per participant in the process and the cases where Participatory Budgeting was targeted in part of a district and where it was carried out in all areas across a district.
12. The total public sector cost per resident of setting up and running Participatory Budgeting for a year in part of a local authority district was £1.18 (of which 26 pence per head was additional financial costs, i.e. excluding staff time). Where Participatory Budgeting operated throughout a district the public sector cost per resident was 65 pence (of which 14 pence per head was additional financial costs). The total public sector cost per participant in Participatory Budgeting processes was £45 (of which £10 was additional financial costs) where the process ran in part of a district. The total public sector cost per participant where Participatory Budgeting operated across a whole district was £104 (of which £25 was additional financial costs).

What will we get for our money?

13. At this stage of the evaluation, local practitioners report improvement in terms of:
 - the self-esteem and confidence of those who participated in the process
 - people's sense of their ability to influence local decision-making
 - people's understanding of budget setting and the local democratic process
 - relations between councillors and their constituents
 - community capacity in an area – especially when linked to wider community development work or neighbourhood management initiatives
 - better reflecting local people's views on how to allocate resources
 - an area's ability to lever in additional resources.
14. The case studies also reported improvements in relation to environmental and health outcomes – the areas where the bulk of funding has been concentrated. However, there is little hard data on this, as the costs of monitoring and evaluation would be disproportionate to the level of money allocated to projects.
15. In Phase 1, it was not possible to derive a consistent set of output indicators and quantify outputs and outcomes because of the diversity of project activity and output measures. Furthermore, case studies emphasised outcomes could not be expected on a significant scale, given the relatively limited scale of expenditure involved. They also flagged up that outcomes may take some time to emerge, particularly as many of the projects were undertaken only within the last two years. These are all issues to be considered in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

What critical success factors were identified?

16. Table 1 summarises the learning from case studies on critical success factors.

Table 1: Summary of critical success factors for delivering Participatory Budgeting		
Category	Critical Success Factors	Outcome
Inception	Senior level buy-in and drive within the Council or governing body	Decision-making processes support Participatory Budgeting, removing obstacles to implementation and roll out of Participatory Budgeting
	Commitment to the provision of funding	Enables the process to be taken forward both in terms of money to allocate via Participatory Budgeting and resources to cover the cost of introducing a new form of decision making
Planning and set-up	Sufficient planning and development time – ensure training and capacity building undertaken	All parties are informed of the role they are to play in the process, which alleviates any anxieties or concerns – including councillors, officers and residents Development of more formal capacity building at the outset of a process
	Development of a vision which sets out what initial Participatory Budgeting events will lead to in terms of involvement in wider decision making	Clear objectives and goals are set for the process, which means people know what is to be achieved and can track progress over time
	Access to sufficient levels of external support to set up and plan the process	Independent support provides background on what's been learnt from elsewhere – so pitfalls can be avoided and brings a 'challenge' function to the set up process, making sure the process is rolled out effectively
Delivery	Embedding the process within low level and easily recognisable geographies that are in line with the level of funding available for allocation via Participatory Budgeting	Residents relate to and witness tangible benefits within their area, thereby securing higher levels of buy-in to the process and building local people's confidence that the process can make a difference
	Appropriate delivery team to facilitate the process – e.g. Neighbourhood Management team, who work closely with local residents and community organisations – as community development activities are key	Full range of community development techniques used to engage a wide range of residents and therefore increased participation – furthermore, increased levels of participation in other civic events or activities
	Technical expertise required to test the feasibility of ideas and to cost prospective projects	Introduces theoretical and practical knowledge of relevant policy areas Selection of appropriate/affordable shortlisted projects and presentation of accurate material to the wider community – reducing the possibility of dashed expectations, if proposals have to be withdrawn at a later date as they are not practical or have not been costed correctly

Table 1: Summary of critical success factors for delivering Participatory Budgeting <i>continued</i>		
Category	Critical Success Factors	Outcome
Delivery	Communication and transparency throughout the process – including successful marketing at the beginning of each process	High levels of attendance and participation at events Buy-in from the community Re-enforces the outcomes and impacts of the process raising awareness
	Clear decision making/funding criteria, which is disseminated to all potential bidders	Clarity of purpose and provision of clear and informed project applications
	'Pitching' at a level and in a form that the community can understand and respond to	Communities understand the purpose, the intentions of the process and each prospective project and therefore are actively engaged in the process – leading to more effective decision-making processes
	Transparent decision making process	Helps build confidence in the process and illustrates tangible results to those participating
	Effective monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure the benefits of the process and its subsequent activities are recorded and are fed back to local residents and funders	Maintains local engagement and enthusiasm for the process Funders understand what they got for their money and are therefore more willing to fund activity in the future
Representation	Ensure decision making is attended by a balanced representation from the relevant groups of interest in a local area without introducing bias into the process, particularly from specific well organised groups	Resultant projects are based on the pooled knowledge and views of the local community Increased community cohesion and social capital

Table 2: Summary of barriers to delivering Participatory Budgeting and lessons on how to address them

Category	Barriers to delivery	Methods to address the barrier	Examples of mitigation activities
Engagement	Lack of understanding of what Participatory Budgeting is and what it involves – i.e. service providers and communities struggle to grasp the Participatory Budgeting concept	Use community outreach and engagement work to raise awareness of the relevant process and to illustrate the potential influence residents could have on the outcomes of the process	See Figure 4-1 above, which illustrates examples of community engagement used by the study areas
	Lack of public interest	As above Keep the events/decision making process as simple as possible, to ensure that residents are not put off attending and participating	In Haringey , the simplicity of its one page project application form was cited to be one of the critical success factors of the process, as it encouraged residents to participate as they felt able to complete the form. This procedure was accompanied by a follow up process where the relevant members of the Neighbour Management Team gather additional information from the prospective bidders In the Manton Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder , decision making events have taken place in conjunction with key community events or venues (such as schools), which was felt to have significantly aided the engagement and participation process
	Councillors worried about where they fit within the process and what it means for their role in the local area	Ensuring that all councillors are offered the opportunity to take part in sufficient training to increase their understanding of their role in the Participatory Budgeting process	In Salisbury , Area Board members (which included Councillors) were given a presentation by the Participatory Budgeting Unit and were shown film footage of events in other areas. In addition, the Cabinet at the Council were provided with a project plan for the process, which set out the intended objectives and activities and therefore raised awareness
	Limited political support for the process, which could hinder a roll out of the process	Use examples to illustrate potential positive outcomes and increased community engagement as a result of a Participatory Budgeting process Demonstrate councils of all parties are operating Participatory Budgeting, suggesting it is not a party political issue	See Table 5-3 in Chapter 5

Category	Barriers to delivery	Methods to address the barrier	Examples of mitigation activities
<p>Availability of resources</p>	<p>Limited level of funding available to allocate through the process often means that the process needs to be isolated to pilot activities or particular geographies</p>	<p>Seek buy-in from local authority departments and align the process with the strategic aims of the council to increase the potential funding avenues</p> <p>Make the process appealing to mainstream partners so that they can see the benefits of committing resources</p>	<p>A number of the study areas reported that links had been made with various departments at the relevant Councils to enhance both the project sift process (where ideas were passed onto the relevant departments for feasibility checks) and the project delivery process. For example, in Haringey, the process has helped to foster new relationships between the Neighbourhood Management team which facilitates the Participatory Budgeting process and other Council departments, including Youth Services, Housing and Environmental Services</p>
	<p>Resource intensive during set up phase – needs significant level of resources to get the process off the ground</p>	<p>Participatory Budgeting process should align and tie into existing community engagement and empowerment activities and should not be viewed in isolation</p>	<p>All participating study areas stated that the PB process had been designed and implemented to act as a supplementary activity to existing community engagement and empowerment activities</p> <p>A number of the areas facilitated the set up of the PB process through staff teams which regularly worked with local communities and therefore whose job remit included community engagement/development activities</p>
	<p>Funding uncertainties mean it is not clear the Participatory Budgeting process will be maintained, a. as discretionary resources may not be available; and b. because of a reluctance to use Participatory Budgeting to determine budget priorities where savings are needed</p>	<p>Ensure sufficient senior level buy-in and drive within the Council or governing body</p>	<p>See Figure 4-5 above which sets out examples on how the study areas gained senior level buy-in to the Participatory Budgeting process</p>
<p>Strategic alignment</p>	<p>Lack of an overarching strategic plan which helps communities to prioritise issues/projects</p>	<p>Exploration of ways in which the relevant governance structures can become more strategic through the introduction of strategies/action plans at the local level, which are agreed by communities at the start of each cycle</p>	<p>In Tower Hamlets, a menu of services was presented at decision-making events. The menu was in line with the Cabinet's priorities and therefore projects supported as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process complemented the council's priorities</p>
<p>Delivery weaknesses</p>	<p>Lack of mechanisms to ensure consistency of delivery between areas within a local authority district</p>	<p>Development of minimum standards to facilitate the processes which are embedded across an area</p>	<p>Both barriers were cited by a number of the study areas, which were in the process of either considering or designing minimum standards to facilitate the PB process. This is likely to include guidance on the minimum levels of support and feedback that are to be provided to project applicants and similarly, the embedding of consistent and clear monitoring and evaluation processes</p>
	<p>Insufficient levels of feedback and monitoring, which could leave project proposers feeling alienated and reluctant to engage in future processes</p>	<p>Development of clear monitoring and reporting procedures which are deployed across an area</p>	<p>See Figure 4-12 above illustrates good practice examples on the collation and dissemination of monitoring information</p>

Executive Summary

1. In October 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) commissioned SQW Consulting (SQW), supported by Cambridge Economic Associates (CEA) and GFA Consulting (GFA), to undertake Phase 1 of the national evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in England. This chapter introduces the concept of Participatory Budgeting, the aims of the evaluation, the purpose of this report (which marks the conclusion to Phase 1 of the research), and the approach to the research.

What is Participatory Budgeting?

2. Communities and Local Government (CLG) in conjunction with the Participatory Budgeting Unit developed the following definition of Participatory Budgeting:

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss spending priorities, making spending proposals and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process.¹

3. And the Local Government Information Unit defined it as:

A process for bringing together local communities to the decision-making process around public budgets that makes new connections between residents, political representatives and local government official.²

What is this evaluation about?

Aims and purposes

4. The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the terms of reference, were as follows:
 - to develop and provide evidence on different types of Participatory Budgeting approaches/models; track the processes and experiences of Participatory Budgeting, exploring how and why different types of Participatory Budgeting have an impact in different environments
 - conduct a pre-Participatory Budgeting baseline exercise and post-implementation cost and impact analysis of Participatory Budgeting in the study group.

¹ CLG, (2008) Participatory Budgeting: a national strategy

² Cox E, (2006) Participatory Budgeting: Principles and Key Features, LGIU Spending Power Seminar

5. The primary purposes of the evaluation were to:
 - improve implementation of Participatory Budgeting in local government and encourage its take-up
 - spread good practice
 - build understanding of how to maximise the beneficial impacts and cost effectiveness of Participatory Budgeting.

Work to date

6. The evaluation is in two phases. Phase 1 included scoping work and a 'process evaluation'; and Phase 2, which has been commissioned to run until March 2011, will be an 'impact evaluation'³. This report sets out the findings from Phase 1. The findings are based on reviews of literature from eight case study areas; fieldwork, including observation of decision-making events and neighbourhood meetings; interviews with stakeholders (including residents, councillors and officers); feedback from two workshop events for all Participatory Budgeting areas; and material provided by seven areas via self-reporting.
7. The work was structured around a 'logic model'⁴ that looked at context, objectives, inputs, processes, and results in terms of (outputs, outcomes and impact).

What did the evaluation find out about contexts?

8. The evaluation selected case studies that provided a mix of urban and rural areas, different political control, and a range of sizes and local authority types. Case studies did not indicate that any of these factors particularly affected the operation of Participatory Budgeting. However, previous arrangements for community engagement did affect the operation of Participatory Budgeting.

Arrangements before the introduction of Participatory Budgeting

9. Although each area has its own history, it is possible to say that, prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting, the allocation of local authority resources was led by relevant members of the council, with residents' input gathered using a wide range of methods. These methods included large-scale statutory consultation exercises and resident representation through elected members.
10. At the local/ward level, many case study areas previously facilitated some form of devolved decision-making through organised governance structures, such as Area Assemblies, Community Committees, Ward Assemblies or Area Boards. This generally involved the delegation of a limited level of discretionary funds or a community chest to the relevant local level, which could be spent on

³ A process evaluation seeks to explore what is working well and what is not in a project/programme/policy and is therefore aimed at improving an intervention during its implementation. An impact evaluation assesses the changes in the well-being of individuals that can be attributed to a particular project, programme or policy.

⁴ A logic model links outcomes with programme activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the programme.

community projects. The decision making processes for allocating these local funds tended to be councillor-led and involved some form of discussion and consultation at the local level. Extensions to this devolved approach sometimes involved a panel which was collectively responsible for decision making and was made up of both councillors and other stakeholders (including residents).

11. Areas covered by neighbourhood management or New Deal for Communities (NDC) Programmes had different arrangements, in these cases projects were developed on the premise that the community/local residents should lead the process and sometimes, residents were given the opportunity to influence the behaviour and budgets of mainstream service providers via neighbourhood/NDC arrangements.

What did the evaluation find about objectives?

12. There were national policy objectives as well as local objectives.

National objectives

13. While national policy objectives were not seen as prescriptive, consultees agreed that:
 - Participatory Budgeting provides a mechanism through which communities and citizens can play a greater role in local decision making processes and aims to improve the quality of this participation.
 - Participatory Budgeting will enhance community empowerment and engagement by encouraging residents to have more of a say in what happens in relation to budgets and the prioritisation of services.
14. Few consultees referred to efficiency and service improvements in the context of Participatory Budgeting.

Local objectives

15. Areas had different combinations of objectives, but the following list provides a core set of objectives, based on local plans and interviews with consultees:
 - facilitate meaningful participation by residents in local decision making with a view to improving local accountability, the quality of local services and the quality of life
 - increase community pride and sense of ownership
 - increase community cohesion and bring different people together
 - enhance the development of social capital
 - enhance the relationship between residents and councillors
 - increase awareness of how the council works and constructs its budgets
 - getting people to understand better how public money is spent

- develop effective support and project planning mechanisms
 - establishing clear processes and accountability lines.
16. As the study came to its conclusion, it became apparent that some areas were reviewing objectives in the light of economic circumstances. Thus, Phase 2 needs to review local objectives in order to inform the impact evaluation.

What did the evaluation find out about inputs?

17. The evaluation sought to understand the resources (both in-kind and financial) that went into the Participatory Budgeting process in the study areas. This is an important first step in developing a cost-benefit analysis for Participatory Budgeting. Cost-benefit analysis issues will need to be explored in more detail in Phase 2, which will explore benefits in greater detail.
18. The data collected in Phase 1 sought to distinguish between set-up and running costs, costs to the public sector in terms of time and financial costs. It also sought to distinguish between the additional costs associated with Participatory Budgeting and costs that would have been incurred anyway. That is, participating areas were asked to estimate the proportion or level of the identified set-up and ongoing costs that would have essentially been spent in the absence of Participatory Budgeting on other engagement activities.
19. In order to allow comparison across different scales of activity, the evaluation analysed the additional costs of operating Participatory Budgeting per resident. The total cost per head of setting up and running Participatory Budgeting in part of a local authority district was £1.18 (of which 26 pence per head was additional financial costs). Where Participatory Budgeting was operated throughout a district the cost per resident was 65 pence (of which 14 pence per resident was additional financial costs, i.e. would not have been incurred in the absence of Participatory Budgeting). The total cost per participant in Participatory Budgeting processes was £45 (of which £10 was additional financial costs) where the process ran in part of a district. The total cost per participant where Participatory Budgeting operated across a district was £104 (of which £25 was additional financial costs, i.e. would not have been incurred in the absence of Participatory Budgeting).
20. Another way of looking at costs is to view them in terms of cost per pound sterling managed. Based on the evidence from the eight case studies, the total resource cost per £1 allocated through Participatory Budgeting was around 47 pence. It is important to recognise that in many cases Participatory Budgeting has been at an early stage of development and therefore, if we assume that the approach is maintained and matures over time, it could be expected that the resource cost per £1 allocated would fall, i.e. Participatory Budgeting may mature and therefore seek to allocate larger sums of funding, once areas move through the pilot stage.

What did the evaluation find out about processes?

Set up

21. Participatory Budgeting was often developed to complement existing community engagement/empowerment initiatives, and for the most part Participatory Budgeting was viewed as only one of a number of community empowerment tools that could help an area to make progress against National Indicator (NI) 4⁵ and the 'Duty to Involve'⁶. For example, in **Manton** (Bassetlaw) Participatory Budgeting was introduced as part of the Manton Community Alliance's (MCA) broader approach to building the social capital of the community and therefore built on other community empowerment activities delivered by the MCA and various Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) projects that preceded it. Having established a rationale for developing the relevant Participatory Budgeting processes, a number of areas set up working groups or nominated a group of lead officers to take the idea forward. Most areas undertook some form of development work prior to running a Participatory Budgeting process (Table 3).

⁵ National Indicator 4 the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.

⁶ On the first of April 2009 a new Duty to Involve came into force for all best value organisations across England, including all Local Authorities. The new duty requires local councils to 'embed a culture of engagement and empowerment'.

Table 3: Capacity building/support provided during the set up of the Participatory Budgeting process

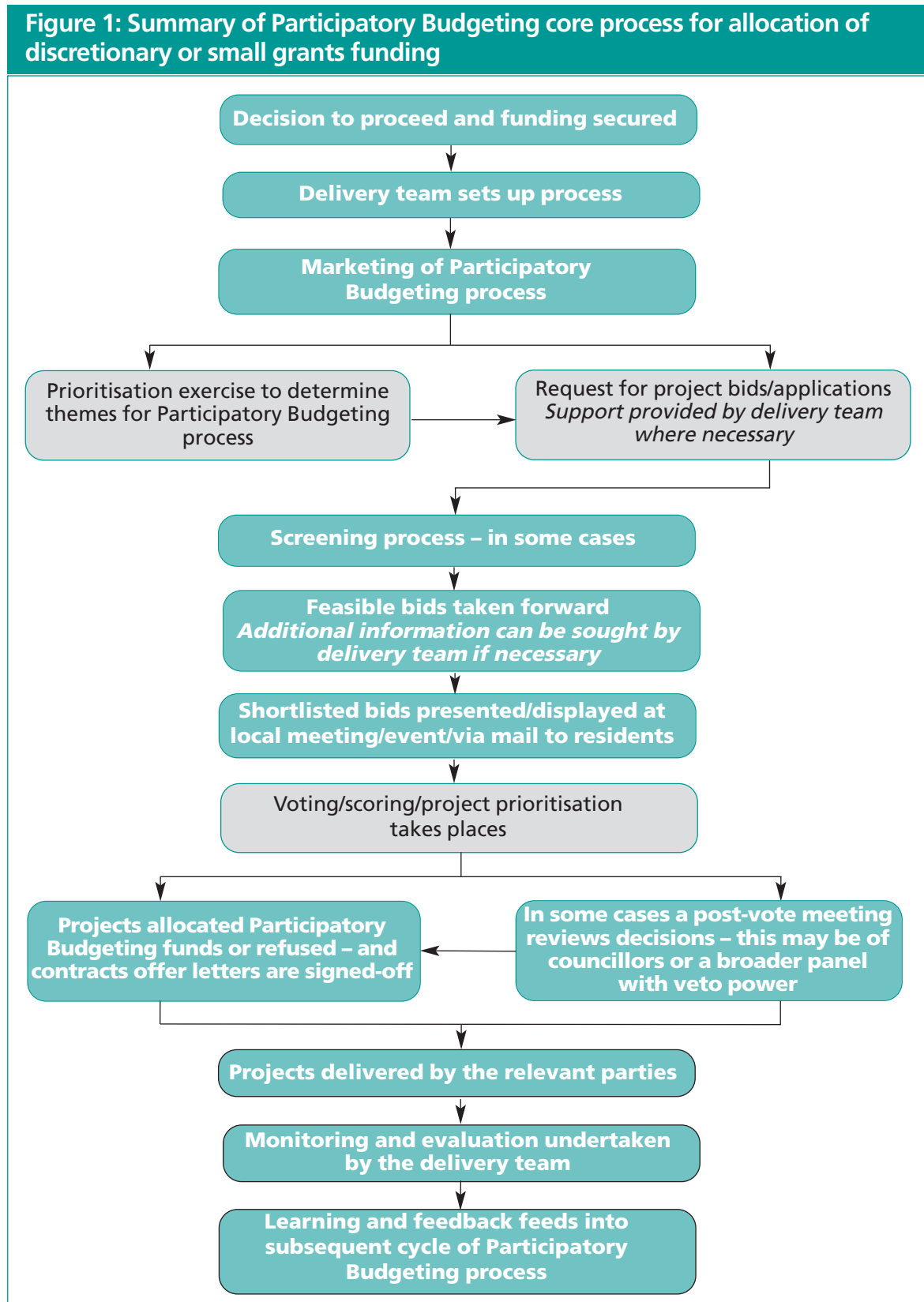
Area	Support and advice from the Participatory Budgeting Unit	Evolved organically from local area governance structures	Provided training to delivery staff	Provided training to local Councillors	Provided training to local Residents/ organisations
Case study areas					
Haringey		✓	✓		✓
Manton		✓			x
Newcastle	✓		✓		✓
Salford	✓	✓			
Southampton NDC	✓	✓	✓		
St Helens		✓		✓	
Salisbury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
York		✓			
Self evaluation areas*					
Buckinghamshire	✓		✓	✓	
Hartlepool			✓		
Mansfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Redcar and Cleveland	✓	✓	✓		
Sefton	✓				✓
Tower Hamlets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walsall NDC	✓	✓			✓

Source: National Evaluation study research

* Please note that blanks indicate that the information was not provided, rather than no activity

Participatory Budgeting processes and events

22. The majority of areas under review ran Participatory Budgeting processes that allocated delegated budgets to local projects, rather than allocating mainstream budgets. Figure 1 provides a diagram setting out the process – which has to be preceded by work to ensure a decision to introduce Participatory Budgeting is taken.



23. A majority of areas said that all residents that lived within the area in which the process was taking place were eligible to participate in decision making. However, the make up of participants did not always reflect that of the local community (as some members of the community chose not to participate or were not sufficiently engaged). Areas that actively sought to engage a representative sample of their local population reported successful engagement of some of their hard-to-reach communities through promotional outreach work. Figure 2 provides examples of practice in this form of engagement.

Figure 2: Representation

Ensuring all groups are represented

A number of the study areas used a community development approach and outreach techniques to identify and engage individuals and community groups who were 'less engaged' or 'hard-to-reach'. This generally involved working through local teams e.g. Community Development Officers or Neighbourhood Management Officers, who established good relationships with residents in a particular locality, and therefore could introduce the concept of Participatory Budgeting and the particular process the study area had chosen to follow and as a result, encouraged 'less engaged' individuals and groups to participate.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets sought to ensure its decision making events were attended by a representative group of the population. This was facilitated through the event(s) registration process, which asked people to provide both contact details and equalities information, which produced information on both where people were coming from and the type of people who were registering and as a result enabled the team to specifically target those groups that were under-represented. Similarly, **Haringey** undertook community outreach work to increase the participation of their less engaged communities and therefore to raise awareness of the process. For example, they facilitated the *Meet the Neighbours* initiative, which provided an informal mechanism to engage hard-to-reach members of the local population by giving them an opportunity to share their experiences and to introduce other residents to their culture through discussion and the provision of food.

A number of the study areas also sought to increase involvement and engagement by holding multiple decision making events – thereby not limiting decision-making to a single event.

24. Once resources were allocated, the local delivery teams were generally responsible for monitoring and implementing the Participatory Budgeting process and ensuring activities funded were delivered as planned. This stage of the process was again viewed as resource intensive, and case study areas felt it was important to highlight that the process did not end after the decision making event/the voting process had been completed.

25. Monitoring and contracting processes appeared to be relatively informal in the majority of the study areas, in part due to the limited/small-scale budgets that were awarded. However, the evaluation has identified examples of effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Good practice examples on the collation and dissemination of monitoring information

Monitoring and feedback to participants

At the time of the research, the delivery team for **Newcastle** was about to introduce more formal approval, contracting and monitoring processes, to ensure that the process is more transparent and can generate information on the progress made by funded projects. This will entail all projects being subject to the city's standard procedures for allocating grant aid, irrespective of which organisation implements a project (council department, voluntary organisation, other agency etc.). The authority will issue formal offer letters at the point at which funding is awarded, and all those participating will be required to sign up to the grant conditions and thereby produce quarterly monitoring information.

York provides ongoing feedback to local residents on a regular basis through a quarterly newsletter, which includes general information about the local area, progress updates on project implementation and feedback on the annual Participatory Budgeting process.

St Helens has a ward committee structure, which involves support officers producing briefing notes (for each of the 16 ward committees) on an eight-weekly cycle. These reports include local statistics, an overview of council activity in the area and a progress update on every project idea put forward at the previous meeting. The report therefore states whether each project idea (a) is viable or not, and the reasons to justify this, such as legal or technical issues, (b) has been appraised/costed, and therefore the ward committee needs to decide whether to take the project forward, (c) is in the process of being delivered, or (d) complete. The council also provides an ongoing process for acquiring feedback, which is facilitated through local councillors, each of whom are given access to the council's electronic tracking system, and can therefore supply information on demand. The council was also considering developing online ward committees to enable residents to propose ideas or track projects between the meetings. Consultees in this area felt that transparency of the process and community involvement in monitoring progress had increased a sense of empowerment and satisfaction that 'something is being done'. It also led to greater overall satisfaction with the Council, and an increased likelihood for residents to attend meetings regularly.

The Participatory Budgeting process in **Mansfield** undertakes its monitoring arrangements as per the terms of the specimen contract in the Participatory Budgeting toolkit issued by the Participatory Budgeting Unit, where the area pays additional attention to local circumstances relating to project delivery.

Critical success factors for and barriers to delivering effective Participatory Budgeting

26. With regard to introducing and operating Participatory Budgeting, the participating study areas identified some critical success factors and barriers to the effective delivery of the process. Looking first at the critical success factors, the study areas identified a number of points which included the need to ensure the process had:
- high level buy-in linked to the hierarchy of the Council or governing body
 - commitment to the provision of funding
 - sufficient planning and development time to ensure sufficient levels of training and capacity building is undertaken
 - a strong and effective delivery team
 - embedded itself within low level and easily recognisable geographies that are in line with the level of funding available for allocation via Participatory Budgeting
 - clear decision making/funding criteria
 - transparent decision making processes
 - sufficient levels of monitoring and evaluation post the decision making stage.
27. Looking now at the barriers to effective delivery of the Participatory Budgeting process identified by the study areas, it was clear the majority had been experienced as a result of the process being relatively new and therefore untested within the English context. For example, a number of areas highlighted:
- anxieties on the part of local councillors who were unsure of where they would fit within the process and in turn, what implications this would have on their role in the relevant local area
 - the resource intensive nature of the set-up process for Participatory Budgeting (see Chapter 3 for more detail on the inputs associated with the set up and running costs associated with Participatory Budgeting)
 - insufficient levels of monitoring and feedback during the decision making and subsequent stages of the process.
28. It was therefore clear that in the majority of cases the factors identified could be addressed over time and as the processes in question evolve and mature in their nature.

What did the evaluation find about results from Participatory Budgeting?

29. Phase 1 of the evaluation was concerned with understanding processes. Phase 2 will look in more detail at outcomes and impacts. However, areas did provide some information about the effect Participatory Budgeting had in their areas, along with the difference the process had made to local projects and services.

Outcomes from Participatory Budgeting events and activities

30. Local practitioners reported positive outcomes in relation to:
- the self-esteem and confidence of those who participated in the process – although areas have not conducted tests of participants' self-esteem, third parties, such as parents or local authority staff, have reported improvements in self-esteem arising from involvement in Participatory Budgeting
 - people's sense of their ability to influence local decision-making
 - people's understanding of budget setting and the local democratic process – this is inevitably a difficult outcome to assess, and evaluators need to consider how best evidence of this can be captured in Phase 2
 - relations between councillors and their constituents – councillors were involved in Participatory Budgeting events in most of the areas and those that were involved reported improvements in relations with their constituents, although further work is required to gather the views of constituents themselves
 - community capacity in an area – especially when linked to wider community development work or neighbourhood management initiatives, the importance of the relationship between Participatory Budgeting and other forms of community empowerment, such as neighbourhood management, needs to be assessed in more detail in Phase 2 of the evaluation
 - better reflecting local people's views on how to allocate resources – case study areas provided evidence that projects were more closely aligned to local needs, e.g. by using consultation processes to identify priorities, followed by calls for projects
 - an area's ability to lever in additional resources – some areas provided evidence of the power of Participatory Budgeting to lever in resources, having made successful bids for lottery funding; however, the attraction of additional resources needs to be identified as an objective if extra resources are to be levered in effectively.
31. Local practitioners report limited progress in the following areas:
- understanding of issues surrounding resource allocation – in part this may be linked to the difficulty of assessing levels of understanding
 - improvements in the political efficacy, social capital and social cohesiveness of the community
 - increased engagement from hard-to-reach groups – some areas reported specific efforts to target some groups who might have been excluded from the process, but other areas did not make a specific effort to engage hard-to-reach groups, in part due to limited amounts of resources
 - increased levels of community and voluntary sector involvement
 - increased empowerment of councillors
 - increased satisfaction with local services – evidence on this may prove difficult to produce at the level of the ward, as not all areas collect data at this level, equally it may take time for improvements to be made and there may be a further lag in local recognition of improvements

- increased community cohesion
 - speed of decision making
 - distributive efficiency
 - costs of community engagement
 - changes in the culture/attitude of the local authority (and other public sector bodies) to public engagement in decision-making
 - changes in roles of councillors and officers.
32. Phase 2 of the evaluation needs to identify local evidence of progress and the factors leading to it.

Spending patterns and influence

33. In the period 2005/6 to 2009/10, Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas influenced the allocation of over £5 million of discretionary resources. The annual average resource allocated through Participatory Budgeting across the eight case study areas was £211,000. Four of the areas allocated around £50,000 per annum in the years when Participatory Budgeting operated, two had allocated around a quarter of a million per annum on average, one allocated an average of £365,000 and the final area allocated an average of £620,000 per annum. These last two areas were both operating on a local authority-wide basis and had been running Participatory Budgeting for some time.
34. Participatory Budgeting-allocated resources supported a total of 2,366 projects in the case study areas in the period 2005/6 to 2009/10. Over two-fifths (43%) of projects were small (costing between £1 and £1,000); while over half (55%) were in the £1001 to £10,000 size band. Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas has therefore been predominantly about allocating discretionary grants to small local projects. Overall, the average project size across all case study areas and the whole period has been £2,195.
35. One-third of projects analysed (33%) focused on the maintenance of public spaces and a further 28% on highways improvements, including road safety. A further 9% were focused on street cleaning and refuse collection activity. Of the remainder, dominant project activities included grants for a wide range of voluntary and community based activity (12%) and expenditure on youth work projects (7%). Five per cent of projects were focused on public health activities.
36. It was not possible to derive a consistent set of output indicators and quantify outputs and outcomes because of the diversity of project activity and output measures. Furthermore, case studies emphasised outcomes could not be expected on a significant scale, given the relatively limited scale of expenditure involved. They also flagged up that outcomes may take some time to emerge, particularly as many of the projects were undertaken only within the last two years. These are all issues to be considered in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) commissioned SQW Consulting (SQW), supported by Cambridge Economic Associates (CEA) and GFA Consulting (GFA), to undertake Phase 1 of the national evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in England. This chapter introduces the concept of Participatory Budgeting, the aims of the evaluation, the purpose of this report (which marks the conclusion to Phase 1 of the research), and the approach to the research.

A brief introduction to Participatory Budgeting

- 1.2 Participatory budgeting schemes vary in different ways, but a useful working definition characterises the practice as:
- ...a mechanism (or process) through which the population decides on, or contributes to decisions made on, the destination of all or part of the available public resources.⁷*
- 1.3 Participatory Budgeting is a practice that began in Brazil in the late 1980s and is now used in over 140 cities there. It is recognised as an effective way of involving local people in making decisions about how and where to spend council funds. In Porto Alegre, where it began, it is estimated that up to 10% of the city's population participates in the annual budget setting process, and this has led to a shift in the spending priorities of the city's council and is reported to have led to an improvement in the extent and quality of the provision of basic services to the city's disadvantaged communities.
- 1.4 In 2000, representatives from Brazil met councillors and other community representatives in Salford and Manchester who were interested in developing Participatory Budgeting pilot schemes. Since then, interest has grown; more councils have picked up the idea as a new way to involve local citizens in decision-making that is more in-depth and meaningful than traditional consultation processes.

The UK policy context

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, which was previously a division of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), formally began to examine Participatory Budgeting in the UK context during 2002. This research was extended in 2004 when funding was provided through the ODPM Special Grants Programme to set up the Participatory Budgeting Unit, which was commissioned to explore how Participatory Budgeting might work in a number of pilot areas. This initial set of pilot areas included Sunderland New Deal for Communities Programme, Bradford Local Strategic Partnership, Salford City Council and Newcastle City Council⁸.

⁷ "72 Frequently Asked Questions about Participatory Budgeting", Global Campaign on Urban Governance, UN-HABITAT, July 2003

⁸ Zipfel T, (2006) Participatory Budgeting: Background paper for seminar, NRU, ODPM.

- 1.6 This initial activity was consolidated in the subsequent government-led community engagement/empowerment publications, which included *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter*⁹ (2005), the Local Government White Paper, *Stronger and Prosperous Communities* (2006), the joint CLG/LGA *Community Empowerment Action Plan* (2007) and the recent White Paper, *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power* (2008). This collection of literature illustrated the Government's growing support of Participatory Budgeting as a mechanism for empowering communities to help set local priorities for spending and thereby create the opportunity for them to influence council budgets and policies.
- 1.7 The key messages from the White Paper were also reinforced in the National Strategy for Participatory Budgeting, *Giving more people a say in local spending* (2008). This set out an introduction to the concept and four key elements that will help to drive an effective and expanding usage of Participatory Budgeting:
- **Promoting awareness:** increasing the extent and depth of understanding amongst public decision makers of how Participatory Budgeting can help them respond to the concerns of local people more effectively, especially when that public input will be based on informal deliberations
 - **Creating opportunities:** increasing the number and range of local spending decisions that involve local people, widening their coverage in geographical and policy terms
 - **Providing guidance and support:** ensuring there is quality and consistent advice through published guidance and training to help those devising participatory events to get it right
 - **Learning from evaluation and research:** gathering and disseminating research finding so that all those planning and delivering Participatory Budgeting events can learn from on-going initiatives and improve their own practice.

Participatory budgeting in England – the 34 study areas

- 1.8 The Participatory Budgeting Unit, a project of Church Action on Poverty, was set up in 2004 to promote and co-ordinate the delivery of Participatory Budgeting. The organisation helped to set up ten Participatory Budgeting study areas that became part of the voluntary Participatory Budgeting programme in July 2007. A second and third group of twelve and twelve study areas respectively were announced in December 2007 and September 2008, thereby producing a total of 34 Participatory Budgeting study areas across England by the end of 2008.

An evolving definition of Participatory Budgeting

- 1.9 The body of literature on Participatory Budgeting has tended to use varying terminology both to describe and critique the concept. For example, the evaluation identified articles/publications which refer to the way in which Participatory Budgeting is operating in places as approaches/ practices/forms/types and has described its defining characteristics as key features/values/principles/criteria etc. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion between the various terms, Table 1-1 sets out the language we intend to use throughout the report.

⁹ ODPM and Home Office (2005) *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter*, ODPM: London.

Table 1-1: Participatory Budgeting terminology to be used in the National Evaluation

Description	National Evaluation Terminology
The overarching method by which Participatory Budgeting is operating in a place/study area – including the source of the budget which is to be allocated by Participatory Budgeting and the spatial area(s) within which it is to be allocated	Participatory Budgeting approach(es)
The way(s) in which a Participatory Budgeting approach is delivered in a place/study area	Participatory Budgeting process
Activities that occur as a result of Participatory Budgeting	Local projects or changes to service provision

Source: SQW Consulting

- 1.10 The evaluation identified that ‘Participatory Budgeting’ as a concept has been defined in various ways. For example, CLG in conjunction with the Participatory Budgeting Unit developed the following definition of Participatory Budgeting:

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups representative of all parts of the community to discuss spending priorities, making spending proposals and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the scrutiny and monitoring of the process.¹⁰

And the Local Government Information Unit defined it as:

A process for bringing together local communities to the decision-making process around public budgets that makes new connections between residents, political representatives and local government official.¹¹

- 1.11 The varying forms of definition have left the term open to interpretation. This appears to be particularly the case in England as a result of the embryonic nature of Participatory Budgeting, which means approaches and processes have yet to mature. Therefore, Participatory Budgeting should be viewed as an evolving concept which will change in its nature and approach overtime.
- 1.12 As Participatory Budgeting was intended to be flexible and localised in its nature in England, the overriding process by which it is to be delivered has not been prescribed and guidance has instead focused on the key characteristics of Participatory Budgeting. For example, a paper was produced for ODPM in 2006¹² which set out a background and introduction to Participatory Budgeting. This stated that the following were key characteristics of Participatory Budgeting:

¹⁰ CLG, (2008) Participatory Budgeting: a national strategy

¹¹ Cox E, (2006) Participatory Budgeting: Principles and Key Features, LGIU Spending Power Seminar

¹² Zipfel T, (2006) Participatory Budgeting: Background paper for seminar, NRU, ODPM.

- focus on mainstream spending
- emphasis on local flexibility within the city-wide strategy to enable priorities to be shaped through dialogue between neighbourhoods and the centre
- need for a city-wide framework for local community engagement
- annual cycle of dialogue and decision making
- network of community outreach workers
- budget workshops for residents, councillors and VCS
- transparent systems for identifying budget allocations and accounting spending
- control and responsibility for the budget remains with the council and local councillors.

1.13 A similar set of characteristics were detailed in the Local Government Information Unit's Participatory Budgeting: Principles and Key Features¹³ presentation, which detailed the following five 'benchmarks' for Participatory Budgeting:

- engagement with mainstream budgets and strategic service planning
- neighbourhood engagement and action-planning
- transparent mechanism for linking neighbourhood to mainstream
- an annual cycle of incremental development
- focus on tackling poverty and exclusion.

Participatory Budgeting from the perspective of other government departments

1.14 Looking at the wider context, the following government departments have also indicated an interest in developing Participatory Budgeting approaches and processes:

- **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)** – the department manages the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF), which provides discrete revenue and capital budgets for young people to control and decide how money should be spent on positive activities and youth facilities in their area. Empowerment and deliberation over local spending decisions are therefore key elements of both funding programmes, which is highlighted in the guidance produced for the funds:

*The involvement of young people, especially disadvantaged young people, is central to the Funds. Giving young people genuine influence over local services is recognised as the most effective way of ensuring better access and increasing participation in positive activities.*¹⁴

¹³ Cox E, (2006) Participatory Budgeting: Principles and Key Features, LGIU Spending Power Seminar

¹⁴ <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/youthfund/>

- **DCSF** also produced the Aiming High for Young People strategy in July 2007, which set local authorities a target to devolve 5% of their budget for youth services to the control of young people by 2010-2011. The strategy also set out a longer-term aspiration to increase this target to 25% of local authorities' budgets for positive activities for young people.
- **Home Office** – the department committed in its 2008 Policing Green Paper¹⁵, to work with CLG to develop Community Safety Participatory Budgeting pilots with a view to piloting the idea with a few police forces to create a knowledge base to help inform the wider roll-out of Participatory Budgeting in 2009. The Green Paper also states a need to establish a clear and agreed set of criteria for extending Participatory Budgeting into the policing context.

Aims of the evaluation

1.15 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the terms of reference, were as follows:

- to develop and provide evidence on different types of Participatory Budgeting approaches/models; track the processes and experiences of Participatory Budgeting, exploring how and why different types of Participatory Budgeting have an impact in different environments
- conduct a pre-Participatory Budgeting baseline exercise and post-implementation cost and impact analysis of Participatory Budgeting in the study group.

1.16 The primary purposes of the evaluation were to:

- improve implementation of Participatory Budgeting in local government and encourage take-up
- spread good practice
- build understanding of how to maximise the beneficial impacts and cost effectiveness of Participatory Budgeting.

1.17 The evaluation was to have two phases. Phase 1 was to have two parts:

- Phase 1a, which included a scoping study that reported findings from a literature review; a survey of Participatory Budgeting areas; and the proposed evaluation framework, including the development of a cost and impact tool.
 - ◆ The proposed evaluation framework followed a 'logic model'¹⁶ based on understanding the context in which Participatory Budgeting was introduced; the inputs to the process, e.g. staff time; the Participatory Budgeting process itself, i.e. how Participatory Budgeting was operated in an area; and the outputs, outcomes and impacts of a Participatory Budgeting process and the projects it funded (Annex A sets out the 'logic model').
 - ◆ The scoping report recommended use of a standard report that could be used in all Participatory Budgeting areas. The report template was to

¹⁵ Home Office (2008) *From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together*

¹⁶ A logic model links outcomes with programme activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the programme. The model facilitates thinking, planning, and communications about objectives and actual accomplishments. It is a systematic and visual way of presenting and sharing understanding of the relationships among the resources operating a programme, the planned activities, and the anticipated changes or result.

incorporate evidence on costs and impacts. It also suggested eight case studies should be explored in more depth. The eight areas were selected to ensure a mix of urban and rural areas, types of authority structure, political control and length of time Participatory Budgeting had operated.

- Phase 1b, a process evaluation that involved research in eight case study areas using a mix of research techniques including, face-to-face interviews, focus groups/workshops, surveys and analysis of monitoring data; plus the testing of formats for reporting costs and impacts.
- 1.18 Phase 2 of the evaluation will be an impact evaluation that tracks and identifies 'second round' or longer-term impacts of Participatory Budgeting both in terms of the processes involved and the projects and activities funded by a Participatory Budgeting process.

Purpose of this report

- 1.19 This report sets out the findings from Phase 1b of the evaluation which looked at:
- the processes used in Participatory Budgeting events
 - what worked?
 - what has been achieved to date?
- 1.20 The findings are based on reviews of case study literature; findings from fieldwork, including observation of decision-making events and neighbourhood meetings, interviews with stakeholders (including residents, councillors and officers); and feedback from two workshop events for all Participatory Budgeting areas.
- 1.21 The report seeks to provide practical support to those considering the adoption of Participatory Budgeting and a detailed account of the variety of approaches that are currently in use across England.

Approach to the research

- 1.22 The study developed a theoretical framework as a means of understanding and reporting areas' approaches, activities and impact. It took place at a time of economic uncertainty, which meant finding evidence of the 'business case' for Participatory Budgeting became increasingly important. Therefore, the study worked with areas in order to find not only what worked in terms of good practice, but also what worked in terms of making the business case for Participatory Budgeting.

Theoretical framework

- 1.23 Phase 1b involved in-depth work with the eight case study areas and work with non-case study areas that wished to write-up a local report.¹⁷ The research

¹⁷ The areas are introduced in more detail in the next Chapter.

looked at process issues and issues related to specific local projects and/or changes to service provision that occur as a result of Participatory Budgeting (Table 1-2). Although, as noted above, this stage of the research focused on ‘first round’ and ‘process outcomes’, rather than the long-term impact of Participatory Budgeting activity.

Table 1-2 Main elements of the research	
Key elements of research on Participatory Budgeting processes	Key elements of research on impact of local projects promoted as part of a Participatory Budgeting process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context</i> i.e. the baseline situation, including the characteristics of the area, such as previous decision-making arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context</i> i.e. evidence on the existence (or not) of ‘local projects’ and/or services in the area of operation; including information on costs and outputs and outcomes from ‘local projects’ and services prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Objectives</i> i.e. the purpose of the Participatory Budgeting process from the view of the local participants – this will be a mix of quantitative and qualitative information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Objectives</i> i.e. the different aims and objectives of the different types of ‘local project’/service covered by the Participatory Budgeting process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inputs</i> i.e. the financial and non-financial inputs in to the process of Participatory Budgeting, including any set-up costs, e.g. capacity building work or external consultants/facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inputs</i> i.e. the financial and non-financial resources required by the ‘local projects’/services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Process/activities</i> i.e. what happens and how; as well as what did and did not work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Process/activities</i>, e.g. does the Participatory Budgeting process change the way services are delivered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Results/outputs</i> early outputs from the introduction of the Participatory Budgeting process, such as increased levels of community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Results/outputs</i> the changes achieved by the ‘local projects’ and services, e.g. reduced time to deliver housing repairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outcomes</i> what the process has delivered in terms of the quality of the process, its effect on participants etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outcomes</i> the effect the outputs have had, e.g. greater satisfaction, increased number of people who feel they can influence local decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impacts</i>, e.g. significant changes in local decision-making processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impacts</i> changes in the indicators that can assess changes in the contextual conditions surrounding the original rationale for the local project/service

1.24 The study worked with participating areas and the CLG's steering group¹⁸ in order to develop a framework that captured what the areas did in practice and how that practice differed from other forms of devolved decision making and community development and engagement. The research then used this framework to understand what the areas were doing. The framework sought to understand Participatory Budgeting in relation to:

- the *level of 'control'* exercised through the Participatory Budgeting process, e.g. whether the process achieved more than an exchange of information or a gathering of residents' views, by delivering 'collective choice' for participants; and, if relevant, whether arrangements go beyond traditional Participatory Budgeting and on to some form of community control of assets and services
- the *geographic coverage* of Participatory Budgeting, e.g. whether the activity was authority-wide or targeted on a particular area/ward
- *governance arrangements*, e.g. the extent to which the Participatory Budgeting process was linked to wider governance arrangements, such as ward or area committees and/or local strategic partnerships (LSPs)
- *universal or targeted approaches*, i.e. whether the process was open to any resident, or whether it was aimed at a particular group, such as children
- the *source of funds*, which affected the extent to which the process was linked to 'mainstream' services, discretionary funds from public sector agencies or special, time-limited initiatives, such as those associated with the New Deal for Communities (NDC)
- the *scale of resources*, which provided both an understanding of the level of responsibility that had been devolved and the scale of resources available, relative to the scale of the challenges facing local areas.

Case study selection

1.25 Case study areas were selected using the following criteria, they should:

- be information rich
- provide coverage of both urban and rural areas
- provide a mix of political control
- ensure adequate coverage of the dimensions of Participatory Budgeting (control, different geographies, targeting and universal engagement, and scale of resources).
- be recommended by stakeholders as sites of good practice.

¹⁸ The Steering Group comprised CLG researchers/policy colleagues, Participatory Budgeting study areas, the Participatory Budgeting Unit, policy colleagues from other Government Departments and representative members from other interested research and non-departmental public bodies.

Interim reporting

- 1.26 In July 2009, a progress report was produced for the steering group and the participating areas. Figure 1-1 provides a summary of its conclusions, which are relevant to this report and, some of which will be relevant to Phase 2.

Figure 1-1: Summary of conclusions from progress report on the process evaluation of Participatory Budgeting

The case studies provide a variety of experience that will be applicable in a number of different circumstances, which should mean findings can contribute to a roll out of Participatory Budgeting.

There are a number of issues that require further exploration, including:

- links between Participatory Budgeting and other decision-making processes
- critical success factors and barriers to delivery
- the role of councillors
- the relationship between the decision-making process and people’s sense of empowerment and improvements in the allocation, distribution and use of resources.

There were some difficulties in assessing set-up costs and the counterfactual for those initiatives that have been running for some time and these require further work.

Overall the findings indicate that the case studies can provide the necessary evidence. However, as expected in the original brief, evidence of impact is not likely to be available in some areas; but, given evidence from those areas that have been operating Participatory Budgeting for some years, it is reasonable to assume that data on the impact of Participatory Budgeting would become available in 2010/11.

Source: SQW Consulting unpublished progress report on the process evaluation, July 2009.

Basic questions required to make the business case

- 1.27 As a means of assisting areas to understand and then make the ‘business case’ for Participatory Budgeting, the study sought to find evidence to answer the following questions:

- Why should we do it or what problem is Participatory Budgeting addressing?
- How will it be done or what does Participatory Budgeting involve?
- How much will Participatory Budgeting cost to set up?
- How much does Participatory Budgeting cost to run each year?
- What will we get for our money? And when will we get it?

1.28 The conclusion to this report returns to these questions.

Structure of the report

1.29 The report has the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2: An introduction to the areas** – provides a short summary of study areas; a brief commentary on the processes that were used prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting; a list of local objectives for introducing Participatory Budgeting; and a summary of the case study areas' progress in relation to the six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting identified in Phase 1a.
- **Chapter 3: Costs of inputs to the Participatory Budgeting process** – summarises information on costs, including information on the set up costs and the annual running costs of Participatory Budgeting, based on case study findings and self-reporting if appropriate.
- **Chapter 4: Participatory Budgeting process and activities** – sets out basic information on how long Participatory Budgeting has been in operation in each area, governance arrangements, and the processes used; it also identifies critical success factors, barriers to Participatory Budgeting and issues associated with the operation of Participatory Budgeting.
- **Chapter 5: Early findings on process outputs, outcomes and impacts** – provides evidence on what has been achieved by the use of the Participatory Budgeting process, e.g. in terms of democratic engagement, the role of elected members, understanding of local issues and needs, residents' influence on local decision-making etc.
- **Chapter 6: Early findings on project/service improvement outputs, outcomes and impacts** – sets out the early findings on the impact of Participatory Budgeting projects on their areas and/or on service provision.
- **Chapter 7: Summary and conclusions** – sets out the reports main findings in terms of the evidence available to answer the basic questions required to make the business case for Participatory Budgeting.

2. An introduction to the areas

- 2.1 This chapter provides an introduction to the study areas that participated in Phase 1b of the National Evaluation, which included eight case study areas and seven areas that completed the self-evaluation template (hereafter referred to as the *self-evaluation areas*). The chapter also provides:
- a commentary on the sorts of arrangements that areas used prior to introducing Participatory Budgeting
 - a summary of local objectives in introducing Participatory Budgeting
 - a detailed account of activity in relation to the six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting identified in Phase 1a.

Local area context

- 2.2 In order to understand how flexible Participatory Budgeting is, in what types of circumstances it can operate, and whether local context affects the inputs and processes and/or the results achieved, a mix of case study areas was selected. The areas were selected on the basis that they were potentially 'information rich' and exhibited variety in their characteristics, for example the selection included a mixture of urban/rural areas and reflected areas that were governed by different political parties.

Basic characteristics of the areas

- 2.3 Table 2-1 illustrates some of the key characteristics of the case study areas and self-evaluation areas. It shows the variety of areas that participated in the evaluation and the range of contexts in which Participatory Budgeting may be operated.

Table 2-1 : Local area characteristics

Area	Local area characteristics	Urban/rural Urban	Political control
Case study areas			
Haringey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Borough • Participatory Budgeting delivered at the level of the Community Committee across the area • Population size: 225,00 	Urban	Labour
Manton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder – forms part of the District Council • Participatory Budgeting delivered across the Pathfinder area • Population size: 7,900 	Urban	Conservative
Newcastle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council • Participatory Budgeting delivered on a ward basis, over several wards, and on a thematic basis across the area • Population size: 270,000 	Urban	Liberal Democrat
Salford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council • Participatory Budgeting delivered in 2 out of 8 Community Committees (CCs) • Population size: approx 62,000 / 220,000 (x2 CCs/city total) 	Urban	Labour
Southampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thornhill Plus You NDC project in City Council • Participatory Budgeting delivered across the NDC area • Population size: 10,900 	Urban	Conservative
St Helens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Borough Council • Participatory Budgeting delivered at the level of the Ward Committee across the area • Population size: 177,000 	Urban	Liberal Democrats/ Conservative
Salisbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unitary Authority • Participatory Budgeting has been piloted in a particular part of the authority as part of a theme based exercise • Population size: 41,000 	Mixed	Conservative
York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unitary Authority • Participatory Budgeting delivered uniformly across the authority • Population size: 193,000 	Urban	Minority Liberal Democrats

Table 2-1 : Local area characteristics *continued*

Area	Local area characteristics	Urban/rural Urban	Political control
Self evaluation areas			
Buckinghamshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County Council Participatory Budgeting piloted in three sub-district local community areas using theme based approaches Population size: 491,000 	Rural	Conservative
Hartlepool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unitary Authority Participatory Budgeting delivered within priority neighbourhoods across the area Population size: 91,000 	Urban	Minority Labour
Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Participatory Budgeting delivered at the level of the Area Assembly across the area Population of relevant Area Assemblies: 100,000 	Urban	Other
Redcar and Cleveland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coast and Country Housing Association Resident population size: 12,000 	Mixed	Labour / Independent
Sefton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metropolitan Borough Council Participatory Budgeting has been piloted in a particular part of the authority Population size: 276,000 	Urban	No Overall Control
Tower Hamlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Borough Council Participatory Budgeting delivered at the level of the Local Area Partnership across the area Population size: 215,000 	Urban	Labour
Walsall NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDC project in Metropolitan Borough Council Participatory Budgeting delivered across the NDC area as part of a theme based exercise Population size: 13,000 	Urban	Conservative

Source: SQW Consulting

Arrangements prior to Participatory Budgeting

- 2.4 In order to see what difference Participatory Budgeting makes, the evaluation had to understand what processes and activities might otherwise have been in use in the study areas. Developing this understanding helps answer the question: ‘What would have happened without Participatory Budgeting?’
- 2.5 Although each area has its own history, it is possible to say that, in general, the allocation of local authority resources was led by relevant members of the Council, with resident-input gathered using a wide range of methods. These methods included large-scale statutory consultation exercises and resident representation through elected members and councillor roles.

- 2.6 At the local/ward level, many areas previously facilitated some form of devolved decision-making through organised governance structures, such as Area Assemblies, Community Committees, Ward Assemblies or Area Boards. This generally involved the delegation of a limited level of discretionary funds or a community chest to the relevant local level, which could be spent on community projects. The decision making processes for allocating these local funds tended to be councillor-led and involved some form of discussion and consultation at the local level. Extensions to this devolved approach sometimes involved a panel which was collectively responsible for decision making and was made up of both councillors and other stakeholders (including residents). Figure 2-1 provides an example of this local form of delegation.

Figure 2-1: Local level delegation of discretionary funds

Example 1: Salford Community Committees

Since 1999, Salford has devolved an amount (currently £3.02) per head of population per annum to each of its eight neighbourhood Community Committees, which amounted to approximately £100,000 per annum per neighbourhood. The use of these resources was for the Community Committee to decide, but was underpinned by a Community Action Plan which reflected the Council's seven thematic priorities. Applications were made to the Community Committees Budget Group (typically a small number of residents and councillors) who considered whether to approve them. The Budget Group then passed on its decisions to the Community Committee, which had responsibility for ratifying the selection.

- 2.7 Notable exceptions to either centrally-led or councillor-led arrangements were illustrated in the areas covered by neighbourhood management or NDC, where either:
- projects were developed on the premise that the community/local residents should lead the process
 - or
 - residents were given the opportunity to influence the behaviour and budgets of mainstream service providers.
- 2.8 Looking now to how this previous activity has influenced the local introduction of Participatory Budgeting, it is evident that Participatory Budgeting has tended to be developed as part of or as an extension to earlier forms of community development and engagement. For this reason, Participatory Budgeting is often viewed as part of a continuum of community engagement and empowerment, which aims to complement existing activities of a similar nature.
- 2.9 Figure 2-2 provides examples which illustrate the influence previous activities have had on the shape and form of the subsequent devolved decision making activities.

Figure 2-2: Influence of previous experience

Example 1: St Helens Neighbourhood Management Pilot

St Helens trialled several different forms of community consultation prior to the implementation of their current Ward Committees, through which they now facilitate a level of devolved decision making. In addition, the case study evidence highlighted that the positive experience gained through engaging residents in their neighbourhood management pilot gave St Helens Council Officers more confidence in engaging local communities in the subsequent Ward Committee process; and demonstrated that residents were much more likely to engage if they were able to influence budget spend in their local area and see results quickly, which again helped to shape the objectives and subsequent actions of the Ward Committees in the area.

Example 2: Haringey SRB Community Chest

The Single Regeneration Budget programme in Haringey facilitated the provision and allocation of community chest funds. This decision making process sought to involve local residents in the allocation of £40,000 of funding to community related projects. Evidence showed that this process influenced the shape and form of the subsequent devolved decision making process which is facilitated through Area Assemblies across the authority.

Example 3: York Unitary Authority

York introduced Area Forums 15 years ago, in order to engage local residents in making decisions about spending and policy priorities in their local area. This included an element of Participatory Budgeting, as residents were asked to vote to show their preferences between prospective projects.

- 2.10 The following section sets out the rationale for adopting Participatory Budgeting and the objectives and therefore added value study areas felt the approach would facilitate.

The introduction and operation of Participatory Budgeting in local areas

- 2.11 The evaluation aimed to test the extent to which there was ‘vertical integration’ between national and local objectives. To do this, local stakeholders were asked for their understanding of national (government) objectives in relation to Participatory Budgeting and for a statement of the local objectives for using the approach at the local level. It also sought to understand local aims/objectives, so that progress at the local level could be traced.

- 2.12 When examining the results of the following and subsequent sections, consideration should be given to the fact that some of the areas under review were still in the process of developing their approaches to community engagement, devolved decision-making and devolved budgets. Thus, in practice some areas were on the journey towards implementing Participatory Budgeting, by using elements of the process.¹⁹

National and local objectives

Views on national objectives

- 2.13 While there are no prescriptive objectives established by national government; there was a consensus among consultees that national objectives focused on 'process issues'. The general view was that:
- Participatory Budgeting provides a mechanism through which communities and citizens can play a greater role in local decision making processes and aims to improve the quality of this participation
 - Participatory Budgeting will enhance community empowerment and engagement by encouraging residents to have more of a say in what happens in relation to budgets and the prioritisation of services.
- 2.14 Few consultees referred to efficiency and service improvements in the context of Participatory Budgeting.²⁰ Thus, there appears to be vertical alignment with regard to national and local priorities with regard to the community and participative aspect of Participatory Budgeting; but less clarity about Participatory Budgeting's role in the wider service improvement and efficiency agenda.²¹

Local objectives

- 2.15 As part of the evaluation, each area was asked about its local objectives for delivering Participatory Budgeting or a decision making process which formed part of the journey towards a Participatory Budgeting approach. Table 2-2 illustrates the responses provided by each area; it shows the diverse range of objectives and motivations areas had for delivering the relevant Participatory Budgeting approach (definitions of the National Indicators, NIs, are provided in the Impacts section of the Evaluation Framework in Annex A).

¹⁹ The findings are reported on the basis of what was found in the areas. Where it aids understanding, judgements are made on the extent to which the practices can be viewed as being Participatory Budgeting, as opposed to community engagement with elements of Participatory Budgeting.

²⁰ And few have set such targets for their Participatory Budgeting process; although some areas have linked Participatory Budgeting to the Local Area Agreement.

²¹ This is not surprising as central government has not said that service improvement is an objective of Participatory Budgeting. However, the impact of Participatory Budgeting on services is of research interest, hence its inclusion in the scope of this study.

Table 2-2: Local objectives for Participatory Budgeting:²²

Area	Local objectives
Case study areas	
Haringey	<p><i>Local programme was not designed to align with the national objectives or general concept of Participatory Budgeting and therefore should be viewed as an example of an area that is on the journey to delivering Participatory Budgeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving and empowering residents • Enhancing the relationships between residents i.e. community cohesion, and between residents and Councillors • Increase awareness of how the Council works and budgets • Increase residents' sense of belonging/ownership of their local area • Community capacity building • Achievement of NIs 1, 2, 3, 4
Manton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the development of social capital • Increase community engagement and empowerment <p><i>Over the longer term:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce levels of deprivation • Increase local democratic activity so that residents exercise meaningful influence and are an integral part of local decision making • Achievement of NI 4
Newcastle	<p><i>Real value lies in the process rather than the outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting people to understand better how public money is spent • Involving residents in decision making around public expenditure • Increase community engagement and participation in decision making • Achievement of NI 4
Salford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Budgeting is viewed as a powerful mechanism which can be used to involve people in decisions that affect their quality of life • Achievement of NIs 1, 2, 3, 4
Southampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering local residents • Increasing resident participation in decision making • Establishing clear processes and accountability lines • Develop effective support and project planning mechanisms • Community involvement and capacity building
St Helens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate meaningful participation by residents in local decision making with a view to improving local accountability, the quality of local services and the quality of life • Achievement of NIs 1-7 and NI 21 and Duty to Involve
Salisbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community engagement and empowerment • Building social capital • Achievement of NIs 1-6, NI 54, NI 110, NI 69, NI 23 and the Duty to Involve

²² Please refer to Annex B for a full description of the National Indicators

Table 2-2: Local objectives for Participatory Budgeting *continued*

Area	Local objectives
Case study areas <i>continued</i>	
York	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community engagement • Empower more people with confidence and skills to engage in decision making • Increase community pride and ownership • Increase community cohesion and bring different people together • Improve quality of services and tailor services better to local areas • Improve understanding of the council and councillors, and improved relations between local people and the council • Improve governance processes
Self evaluation areas	
Buckinghamshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase available information to residents and help contribute to build their capacity around the Council's budget making process • Enhance residents awareness and understanding around local democracy and the importance and complexity of being a local Member, councillor, or officer • Improve understanding of the council and councillors, and improved relations between local people and the council • Increase community cohesion and bring different people together • Strengthen local democracy • Increase community pride and ownership • Increased understanding of the needs of disadvantaged, disengaged, and/or vulnerable groups and their access to services including transportation, youth activities, health inequalities and crime.
Hartlepool	<p><i>Objectives of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which Participatory Budgeting strategy forms a key part of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower local people to have a greater influence • Contribute towards community cohesion • Promote involvement of everyone making a positive contribution, especially children and young people • Contribute towards improved outcomes for local people particularly in disadvantaged areas • Increase resident satisfaction levels with their local area as a place to live
Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase citizen involvement in democratic processes and therefore achievement of Duty to Involve • Encourage a greater sense of local identity • Increased involvement with decision making on other and mainstream resources • Increased joint working between statutory and voluntary sector partners • Increased understanding of local need and means to address the identified needs
Redcar and Cleveland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident empowerment • Increased community cohesion • Increased resident participation in decision making • Raising the aspirations and building the confidence of the residents

Table 2-2: Local objectives for Participatory Budgeting *continued*

Area	Local objectives
Self evaluation areas <i>continued</i>	
Sefton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the authority with an opportunity to engage on a neighbourhood level • Increase participation in the democratic process and in decision making • Improve community engagement • Identification of local level issues • To go towards the achievement of the Duty to Involve and compliment prevailing policies, e.g. Local Government and Health White Papers
Tower Hamlets	<p><i>Participatory Budgeting was introduced as a different means of engagement and one that uniquely provided residents with the chance to help set the budget</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve perceptions and performance of local services • Develop proper participation within the Tower Hamlets community • Generate social capital
Walsall NDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the effectiveness of Participatory Budgeting in delivering benefits in comparison to other methods • Engage children in project development, working together in groups, and demonstrate budgeting and decision making skills • Develop local acceptance and ownership of the process and a willingness to trust young people with real school budgets

Source: SQW Consulting

- 2.16 Thus, the majority of local objectives relate to the ‘process’, i.e. the Participatory Budgeting exercises, rather than particular services or projects. The indicators of success reflect this emphasis e.g. community cohesion and improvements in social capital, as opposed to improved service provision or efficiency savings. It should also be noted that many of the ‘process issues’ are linked to the national agenda, e.g. achievement against National Indicator 4²³ and responding to the duty to involve.
- 2.17 The data also highlight the similarities in the objectives of the areas that were viewed as being ‘on the journey towards a Participatory Budgeting approach’ and those that were delivering a Participatory Budgeting approach. Therefore, it is again evident that Participatory Budgeting-type activities form part of a continuum of community engagement and empowerment initiatives, which seek to involve more residents in local decision making processes.

Basic characteristics of Participatory Budgeting in the study areas

- 2.18 The evaluation sought to assess the position of each Participatory Budgeting study area against a set of six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting and understand the trajectory of each area’s development. The six dimensions explored were: control; geography and governance; whether participants were targeted or whether participation was open to all; sources of funds subject to Participatory Budgeting; scale of resources available; and mechanisms used. For example:
- What level of control did residents have in the past? What level do they have now? What level does the study area aspire to in the future?
 - What spatial area was, is and will be covered by Participatory Budgeting? How did, does and will it relate to wider governance arrangements? In order, to gauge the extent of Participatory Budgeting and how it relates to wider decision-making processes.
 - Which budgets were, are and will be subject to Participatory Budgeting? As a means of understanding Participatory Budgeting’s relationship with mainstream budgets.
 - What was, is and will be the scale of resources covered by the Participatory Budgeting process?
 - How were, are and will residents be engaged in decision-making?
- 2.19 Consequently, each area was asked to assess its position against each of the dimensions prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting, in relation to their current situation and in relation to the situation they forecast themselves to be in, in approximately five years.
- 2.20 Table 2-3 summarises the findings on where the areas currently sit in relation to each of the dimensions. General observations are presented on each dimension in the following sub-section.

²³ National Indicator 4 refers to the % of people who feel they can influence decision in their locality

Table 2-3: Summary of assessment against the six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting: Current position

Area	Control	Geography and governance	Target user groups/ constituencies	Source of funding to Participatory Budgeting	Scale of resources	Participatory Budgeting allocation mechanisms
Case study areas						
Haringey	Responsible accountability => Collective Choice Collective Choice	Groups of wards (across the local authority) Neighbourhood level	Universal approach Universal approach	Revenue Support Grant Primary source is the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, which has been supplemented by PCT, Nottinghamshire County Council, Community Safety Partnerships funding	£350,000 per annum (with £50,000 provided to each of seven Area Assemblies) £50,000 per annum Increased to £70,000 per annum	Preference voting Identification of priorities, followed by a voting exercise
Newcastle	Collective Choice => Service Control	Ward/several wards/local authority level	Mixture of universal and targeted events	Numerous funding sources, e.g. Area Based Grant, Environmental Ward Stewardship Fund, Ward Support Fund	Medium to large scale – ranged from £65,000 to £249,000 per annum	Prioritisation exercise, followed by a voting exercise
Salford	Elements of Collective Choice and Service Control Collective Choice => Service Control	Several areas/wards Neighbourhood level	Universal approach Universal approach	Highways budget PCT	£200,000 per annum (with £100,000 provided to each of the two neighbourhoods that facilitated a Participatory Budgeting process) £50,000-£70,000 per annum	Voting / scoring Single voting event
St Helens	Responsible accountability ==> Collective Choice	Ward level across the local authority	Universal approach	Environmental Services	£500,000 per annum (allocated across the wards, leading to an allocation of approximately £30,000 per ward)	Voting
Salisbury	Responsible accountability ==> Collective Choice	City Area Board	Currently, young people engaging with disabilities, including carers. With expectations to extend the process.	District Council and Home Office	£30,000 from District Council £20,000 from Home Office In 2009/10, Area Board will have an allocation of £58,685 for community projects (with potential for a % allocated to Participatory Budgeting)	Voting at an event
York	Collective Choice	Ward level across the local authority	Universal approach	Environmental Services Budget	£600,000 across the City (split across 18 ward committees)	Indirect mechanism - residents vote with ultimate decision taken by the Ward committee

Table 2-3: Summary of assessment against the six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting: Current position *continued*

Area	Control	Geography and governance	Target user groups/ constituencies	Source of funding to Participatory Budgeting	Scale of resources	Participatory Budgeting allocation mechanisms
Self evaluation areas						
Buckinghamshire	Consultation => Collective choice	19 Local community areas (sub-district areas) either facilitated through (1) Local Areas Forums or (2) the Youth Bank/Youth Council	(1) Parish councils as representatives (although forums were open to the public) and (2) young people	(1) Transportation highway maintenance fund and (2) the Youth Opportunities Fund	(1) Minor road maintenance works totalling £65,000 and (2) Youth projects totalling £59,000	(1) Bids put forward by parish councils in the area and forums vote for allocation of the funds and (2) Young people develop bids and schemes then voted on and funds allocated by young people
Hartlepool	Collective choice	Neighbourhood – facilitated through Neighbourhood Action Plan Forums	Forum meetings open to all residents who live in the relevant area WNF budgets – more limited involvement as projects are required to be targeted to address worklessness	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (2001-2008) Working Neighbourhood Fund (2008-2011) Neighbourhood Element Budget (2006-2010)	£106,600 for 2009/10	Local priorities set by the neighbourhood forum with relevant service providers commissioned by the Forum to deliver projects against these priorities – any resident who regularly attends the Forum meetings can vote
Mansfield	Consultation => Collective choice	Several wards – facilitated through Area Assemblies	Universal targeting	Surplus grant monies Policy Authority	2008/09: Grant monies - £34,995 Police - £34,412	Direct - All citizens have the right to participate directly and each participant takes part in the vote/scoring system
Redcar and Cleveland	Responsible accountability	Local authority wide	Open to all residents	RSL and Redcar & Cleveland Police	£65,000 for 2009/10 (including £5,000 from the Police)	Direct - All citizens have the right to participate directly and each participant takes part in the vote/scoring system
Sefton	Responsible accountability	Several ward areas working towards ward areas	Targeted to all residents in the relevant wards	Area Based Grant / Regeneration Initiatives funding (held by the Neighbourhoods Division)	£51,500 to the Participatory Budgeting pilot	Votes/scoring was restricted to the residents of the geographic area of the Participatory Budgeting pilot
Tower Hamlets	Collective choice	Several wards (representing a Local Area Partnership - LAP)	Open to all residents – actively aimed to engage a representative sample of the population	General Fund – money set aside from the Council budget for Participatory Budgeting	£2.4 million per year divided between 8 LAP areas	Direct – any resident can attend and vote
Walsall NDC	Collective choice	NDC area	Children aged 6-11 attending school within the NDC area	NDC	£15,000 for the pilot	Carried out through training with children who acted as representatives of their class mates and then a final voting event attended by the children who had received the training

Source: National Evaluation case study fieldwork and self evaluation reports

Control

2.21 In order to identify a framework to understand areas’ progress in putting local people in control, the scoping report drew on the spectrum of responsibilities described in *Why Neighbourhoods Matter?* (Table 2-4). The framework does not refer to who gets involved or how, but the level of responsibility they have; issues which are addressed below.

Table 2-4: Spectrum of engagement/responsibility					
Description of control dimension					
Dimension					
Extent of control	To what extent does the Participatory Budgeting approach and process change the responsibility for the resource allocation decision making process?				
	Less responsibility	==>			More responsibility
	Information	Consultation	Responsible accountability	Collective choice	Service control
	Simply facilitating communication between service providers and the citizens in a neighbourhood	More formal mechanisms for consulting communities about services (e.g. to resolve problems and make best use of resources)	Representative and democratic forms which service providers are obliged to consult and/or account to (e.g. deliberative forums)	For example, choosing on behalf of a community between service options available from a provider or council	Empowerment to control service delivery (e.g. by commissioning additional services). Likely to be over very local services

2.22 As noted previously, the majority of the areas reported that they had facilitated information sharing and consultation exercises prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting, and therefore that they sat somewhere between the first two dimensions of the spectrum. Most areas moved to somewhere between ‘responsible accountability’ and ‘collective choice’; which is where Participatory Budgeting should fit on the spectrum. However, this was often on a limited budget and/or set of issues.

2.23 Exceptions to the above consensus included a small number of areas that stated they were situated somewhere between collective choice and service control. For example, the **Southampton NDC** case study area, stated that their Participatory Budgeting activities enabled the community to have a direct impact and say on which services should be commissioned in the area. Similarly, in **Newcastle**, consultees reported that their Participatory Budgeting processes did not simply prioritise a menu of options from a range of providers, but instead offered the opportunity to shape the design of those options via participation in community road-shows and other intelligence gathering activities.

Geography and governance

- 2.24 This dimension seeks to identify the area covered and how its arrangements fit with broader governance in the local authority. The figure below sets out a proposed spectrum against which areas assessed themselves.

Table 2-5: Spatial scales at which Participatory Budgeting operates					
Dimension	Description and scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Spatial level at which Participatory Budgeting process operates and at which priorities are set	At what spatial levels does the Participatory Budgeting process operate?				
	Lower spatial level	==>			Higher spatial level
	Street	Neighbourhood	Ward	Several wards/area	Local Authority wide
	At what spatial level does the resultant resource allocation or activities take place?				
	Lower spatial level	==>			Higher spatial level
	Street	Neighbourhood	Ward	Several wards/area	Local Authority wide

- 2.25 The majority of areas facilitated their Participatory Budgeting process at the level of groups of 1 to 4 wards within the relevant authority district. This level of implementation was felt to be appropriate for the existing Participatory Budgeting processes, which sought to allocate relatively limited levels of funding per area. The case study evidence also highlighted that residents were more likely to engage in democratic processes at this lower-level, as the resultant decisions would be tangible/visible to them.
- 2.26 One case study area, the **Manton Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder**, presented an exception to the above finding, where Participatory Budgeting operated below the ward level, i.e. at the level of the Pathfinder. The geography of the area was dictated by the fact that the Participatory Budgeting process was facilitated by the Pathfinder body. The Pathfinder was thought to be of a size that enabled residents to feel they had some level of influence over local decision-making processes.
- 2.27 Looking now at governance arrangements, the Participatory Budgeting process was typically governed by the relevant Area Board/Community Committee/Ward Committee/Area Assembly, which was made up from different mixes of local councillors, council officers and in some cases resident representatives. The main exception to this norm was illustrated in the **Southampton NDC** case study area, which facilitated a health-themed Participatory Budgeting process and as a result was governed by the local Community Health Group (CHG). The CHG was comprised of representatives from the Primary Care Trust, City Council and

community groups, residents and an NDC officer (and did not include councillor representation). However, councillors were invited to help facilitate the vote counting process at the event and therefore formed part of the process. Thus, there appears to be a strong link between the role of the councillor and Participatory Budgeting process in the majority of areas.

- 2.28 The case study consultations also found that Participatory Budgeting has tended to begin as a trial in a small, discrete part of a local authority. Furthermore, for those that had been facilitating Participatory Budgeting for over 2 to 3 years, the process had tended to grow over time. Often the roll out had been via the established ward/several ward level governance arrangements set out above.

Targeted user groups or universal approach?

- 2.29 In order to understand how case study areas approached engagement, the evaluation explored whether areas operate an open process for all residents, a modified form of open access where numbers were limited, or whether the process was targeted at particular groups or service users.
- 2.30 In most of the case study and self evaluation areas, decision making activities were open to all residents; however, sometimes attendance was limited or controlled in some way, e.g. to remove the risk of double counting where there was more than one voting event. Furthermore, some study areas targeted specific groups, e.g. the **Salisbury** case study area targeted disabled young people, as this group was perceived to be among the hardest to reach and most vulnerable groups; **Newcastle** facilitated theme-based events that targeted children and young people, as well as operating area-based approaches; and **Walsall NDC** sought to engage children aged 6-11 years of age, as they recognised that there was little or no engagement with this group and hence they had not been given the opportunity to influence NDC budget/projects.
- 2.31 Looking specifically at the means by which areas targeted particular groups/individuals, it was evident that the majority of areas worked through relevant intermediaries or used existing mechanisms to engage the relevant participants. For example, **Salisbury** worked with the Youth Development Service, who contacted key agencies across the city, including special schools working with disabled people, who were subsequently supported to prepare project applications and presentations for the event. Similarly, the **Walsall NDC** facilitated their activities through student councils within local schools.

Source of funds allocated for Participatory Budgeting

- 2.32 In order to understand Participatory Budgeting's relationship to mainstream services and core budgets, the evaluation sought to identify which funds were subject to Participatory Budgeting. Evaluation evidence showed that resources subject to Participatory Budgeting tended to be from delegated budgets or a local authority discretionary pot; or, in some instances a particular external source of funding. There was some use of mainstream funds, for example, **Salford** delegated a proportion of its highways budget to local areas, two of which have facilitated a Participatory Budgeting process. Similarly, **Southampton** (Thornhill Plus You) has allocated PCT funds through its health-themed Participatory Budgeting process.

2.33 Table 2-3 highlights the widespread devolution of parts of the Environmental Services and police or crime related funding, such as Home Office Community Safety Pilot funding, for Participatory Budgeting purposes. Looking specifically at the latter, this form of funding was often accessed as an ‘add-on’ to the main source of funding and could generally only be spent on crime-related projects. Therefore, consultees reported that on some occasions it had been problematic to ensure that this part of the Participatory Budgeting fund was allocated in the appropriate manner. Although, this may be a peculiarity of the case studies in this evaluation.

Scale of resources allocated by Participatory Budgeting

2.34 It is important to understand the scale of resources subject to Participatory Budgeting. First, to understand the relationship between the costs of the Participatory Budgeting process relative to the size of funding under its influence. And, second, because it may be a useful measure of Participatory Budgeting’s success over time, with the assumption more money will be subject to Participatory Budgeting the more successful it is seen to be. The e-survey carried out as part of the scoping work for the project indicated a range of resources currently subject to Participatory Budgeting, which is set out in the table below.

Table 2-6: Scale of resources					
	Description and scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
Dimension					
Scale of the budget	What is the scale of the funding which is to be allocated by Participatory Budgeting or which residents are able to influence?				
	Small scale	==>			Large scale
	£0-20,000	£20-50,000	£50-100,000k	£100-500,000	Over £500,000

2.35 As was found in the scoping and interim reports, most areas have accessed relatively small scale budgets to allocate via Participatory Budgeting, which have ranged from £30-100k a year. The main exception to this finding was exhibited in **Tower Hamlets**, which allocated £2.4 million of funding between its eight Local Area Partnerships and therefore facilitated a large scale Participatory Budgeting programme. This funding was sourced from the council’s General Fund, i.e. money set aside from the council budget before it had been allocated to a specific department.

2.36 The level of funding has been shown to have an impact on the subsequent scale of monitoring and evaluation that takes place post allocation of the Participatory Budgeting funds. This issue is covered in more detail in Chapter 4 of the report.

Mechanisms for allocation Participatory Budgeting resources

- 2.37 The evaluation aims to understand how decisions are arrived at, in order to identify both the variety of mechanisms in operation and to identify good practice. The evaluation evidence identified a mixture of techniques that were used, which included:
- a multi-stage process, where local concerns were prioritised via a consultation exercise (and indicative levels of resources were allocated to them by a steering group), before projects/solutions were called for and then selected
 - a call for projects, which were screened for suitability by officers prior to being put before the public
 - a 'pitch' by project sponsors at an event, where votes were then cast
 - proposals were summarised on a poster, attendees were given the opportunity to read the posters and were then invited to 'express their preferences', following which a panel made the final selection (taking into account the preferences of the residents)
 - a case where a selection of children were trained to consult their peers for project ideas; following which the ideas were filtered and fed back to the wider population of children, where the trained individuals asked their peers for their preferences and subsequently fed back the most favoured choices. Ultimately an event was held which presented the costed ideas that had been shortlisted, and the trained individuals were given the opportunity to vote on which activities were taken forward on behalf of the wider population.
- 2.38 The processes used in the different areas are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Direction of travel

- 2.39 Areas were asked to consider where they thought Participatory Budgeting in their areas might be in five years' time. Responses to this question highlighted a great deal of uncertainty, where a number of the areas stated that they were unable to predict their future position, given the current economic climate.
- 2.40 Looking specifically at the areas that felt able to predict their direction of travel, a number of areas voiced their concerns about the availability of funding in future years which in the worst case scenario could threaten the sustainability of the Participatory Budgeting process itself. On the other hand, a number of the areas stated that they were likely to either sustain their current Participatory Budgeting-related position or that they may begin to explore the possibility of extending their Participatory Budgeting process to include an increased level of resources and in some cases, more mainstream resources. For example, **Sefton**, which had only recently set up its Participatory Budgeting activities, reported that it intended to increase the resources allocated via Participatory Budgeting, and **St Helens**, one of the more established areas, stated that they were currently exploring options to expand the remit of their Participatory Budgeting funding, which may include the devolution of a proportion of the Community Safety and Youth Services budget.

- 2.41 Exploration of the control dimension identified that the more established areas, were likely to retain their position between responsible accountability and collective choice, which is where Participatory Budgeting should fit on the spectrum. For those areas that were perceived to be 'on the journey' towards facilitating a Participatory Budgeting approach, such as **Haringey**, it appeared likely that future activities will be accompanied by a move along the participation ladder from responsible accountability to collective choice.
- 2.42 Some of the areas also indicated they were likely to start to devolve funds to smaller geographies, as it was felt that residents were better placed to engage on issues relating to their immediate area. For example, **Mansfield** reported that their existing Participatory Budgeting process was targeted at areas which were too large for the level of funds available and that residents often did not 'recognise' the area and therefore the issues that were pertinent to the targeted geographies. Therefore, the area intends to move to allocating resources at lower geographical levels.

Conclusion

- 2.43 This chapter has provided a summary of the evidence gathered on how the participating areas were operating against the six dimensions of Participatory Budgeting identified as part of the National Evaluation. It shows that areas have tended to facilitate their Participatory Budgeting processes at lower level geographies, where funds from delegated budgets or a local authority discretionary pot were allocated via decision making activities that were open to all residents. Although a number of exceptions to this general pattern have been identified through the evaluation, including the allocation of small levels of mainstream budgets and the targeting of particular groups of the community in relation to participation in decision making activities. It is also important to note the range of approaches used to facilitate decision making activities, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
- 2.44 The evaluation evidence also showed that areas tended to trial or pilot small scale Participatory Budgeting processes in small areas, in order to learn more about: the ways in which Participatory Budgeting can be facilitated; the challenges associated with the approach; the outcomes which come about as a result of the process; and the means by which the process can be extended across an area. Once a successful pilot had occurred the process was extended to areas across the local authority district.
- 2.45 The next chapter presents an analysis of the inputs that have been used to both set up and deliver the Participatory Budgeting process in each of the participating study areas.

3. Costs of inputs to the Participatory Budgeting process

Introduction

- 3.1 A central part of the evaluation has been to establish the resources (both in-kind and financial) that went into the Participatory Budgeting process in each of the study areas. This is an important first step in developing a cost-benefit analysis for Participatory Budgeting. Cost benefit analysis issues will need to be explored in more detail within Phase 2 of the research, i.e. when there is more information on the benefits that have been generated from Participatory Budgeting. At this stage of the process, although case study areas sometimes found it hard to identify the costs involved, it appears that the first step on the way to a cost-benefit analysis has been achieved, i.e. areas have been able to provide evidence on the costs of setting up and then running the Participatory Budgeting process. This chapter provides a summary of the detailed findings.
- 3.2 In considering set-up costs respondents were asked to include any costs that were incurred whilst setting-up the process itself as distinct from the ongoing process. These one-off costs include the recruitment of Participatory Budgeting officers, the time involved in meetings to discuss the design of the Participatory Budgeting process and time spent in engaging all the relevant parties to support the introduction of the Participatory Budgeting process.
- 3.3 Ongoing costs included all items of expenditure that were incurred running the annual cycle of the Participatory Budgeting process and thus included venue hire for events, marketing, staff input to stage and facilitate events and also oversight of Participatory Budgeting funded projects. However, staff input to project *manage* and *deliver* individual projects was not included because resources on these activities would be incurred whatever the allocation process.
- 3.4 This section of the report summarises findings on the resource commitment as reported by the eight case study areas – the evidence on cost inputs from the self assessment reports lacked consistency and has been excluded from this section of the report. Moreover, the self assessment reports contained relatively little evidence on projects/service improvement outputs and outcomes which is the subject of Section 6 of this report. This was mainly because the Participatory Budgeting process in the areas concerned was at a quite early stage.
- 3.5 The section summarises the findings in relation to the financial and non-financial elements of set-up, decision-making and ongoing management costs. The case study areas were placed into two distinct groups according to whether the Participatory Budgeting scheme was operating in distinct neighbourhoods or whether it was being deployed more across the whole local authority.²⁵ The average resource commitment and the range of experience are considered. The

²⁵ Although it should be noted that in practice local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity has been delivered via neighbourhood structures, such as ward committees or community committees

resource inputs have been translated into monetary values where this has proved to be possible and public sector costs per capita and per participating resident have also been derived.

Non-financial inputs to the set-up phase

Time inputs to the set-up phase

- 3.6 Table 3-1 presents the evidence on the time inputs identified by the respondents as being necessary to set-up the Participatory Budgeting process. The inputs are considered by number of staff and whether they were provided by residents, local authority staff, councillors, Housing Association staff, NDC staff or by members from the voluntary sector or elsewhere. The inputs are *gross inputs* in the sense that they reflect no adjustment for whether the resources would have been incurred anyway in providing some form of community engagement in the absence of Participatory Budgeting. This adjustment is made later in this section. The total population contained in the area that was the subject of the Participatory Budgeting process is also provided. Where the Participatory Budgeting activity was at the specific neighbourhood level the average labour input was around 22 staff, with the average resident involvement at eight people (with wide variation around this). The average local authority input on set-up was eight at the neighbourhood level, but again with significant variation. The councillor input was around two. For the local authority-wide schemes the average total involvement of staff was around 42, again with large variation from a low of 20 to a high of 63 being identified. Resident and local authority input was much the same as at the neighbourhood level with an average of 11 and six respectively for residents and local authority staff suggesting relative economies of scale but, as would be expected, the number of councillors involved increased significantly to an average of 22 compared to an average of two at the neighbourhood level.

Table 3-1: Gross time input to the set-up phase – number of people involved

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	1	15	8	3	0	32	11
Local Authority staff	4	4	14	8	3	4	8	6
Councillors	4	0	4	2	3	2	59	22
Housing Association staff	4	0	1	0	3	0	2	1
NDC staff	4	0	5	2	3	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	2	1	3	0	1	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	0	0	3	0	4	1
Other	4	0	4	1	3	0	3	1
Total	4	6	31	22	3	20	63	42
Total population of areas with data:	60904				446275			

3.7 Table 3-2 adds a further dimension to the level of resources incurred at the set-up stage by considering the total number of hours expended. The evidence suggests that an average of around 253 hours of time across all those involved in setting-up Participatory Budgeting at the neighbourhood level. There were very large variations around this average though, from a low of 25 to a high of 640, suggestive of significant diversity in the approaches adopted, a finding reinforced by the evidence provided elsewhere in this report. Local authority staff and residents provided an average of 65 and 46 hours each. Councillors provided an average of 19 hours. Where they were involved, NDC staff averaged 95 hours and voluntary sector staff 25 hours.

3.8 For those Participatory Budgeting schemes that were district-wide the average set-up commitment was over twice that of the average neighbourhood level again suggestive of substantial economies in set-up if it is assumed that the average level of service delivery was the same but provided over a much more extensive geography. The overall average input from local authority officers and councillors was considerably higher, but the resident input was much the same on average.

Table 3-2: Gross time inputs to the set-up phase – estimated total time invested in hours

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	3	120	46	3	0	160	53
Local Authority staff	4	21	120	65	3	133	520	306
Councillors	4	0	64	19	3	14	536	193
Housing Association staff	4	0	8	2	3	0	4	1
NDC staff	4	0	320	95	3	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	96	25	3	0	7	2
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	0	0	3	0	21	7
Other	4	0	4	1	3	0	10	6
Total	4	25	640	253	3	186	1056	568
Total population of areas with data:	60904				446275			

3.9 The case study respondents were asked to consider how many of the people identified as contributing time to the set-up of the process would have been involved in other forms of community engagement activity and how much time would they otherwise have committed in that way if Participatory Budgeting had not existed. With this information in place it was possible to calculate the *additional* set-up time inputs due to Participatory Budgeting in terms of both the number of people involved and the hours of time committed. Table 3-3 and Table 3-4 present the results. The evidence is clear. Much of the resource commitment identified in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 would otherwise have been devoted to some form of community engagement so that the *additional resource* cost associated with Participatory Budgeting is relatively quite small. The average is around eight people at both the neighbourhood and local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting project level. The additional hours committed to set-up at the neighbourhood level is an average 52 and around 300 for a local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting.

Table 3-3: Additional set-up time inputs due to Participatory Budgeting - number of people involved

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	0	4	2	2	0	10	5
Local Authority staff	4	0	12	4	2	2	3	3
Councillors	4	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Housing Association staff	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
NDC staff	4	0	3	1	2	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other	4	0	3	1	2	0	0	0
Total	4	0	22	8	2	3	13	8
Total population of areas with data:	60904				268875			

Table 3-4: Additional set-up time inputs due to Participatory Budgeting – additional hours of input

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	0	38	15	2	0	48	24
Local Authority staff	4	0	70	23	2	79	240	160
Councillors	4	0	10	3	2	9	228	118
Housing Association staff	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
NDC staff	4	0	40	10	2	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	2	1	2	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Other	4	0	3	1	2	0	3	2
Total	4	0	131	52	2	139	468	303
Total population of areas with data:	60904				268875			

In-kind contributions to the set-up phase

3.10 The case study respondents were also asked to identify the in-kind resource inputs spent in setting-up the Participatory Budgeting operation. Table 3-5 shows that these inputs were very small for both categories of Participatory Budgeting.

Table 3-5: Gross set-up in kind expenditure on set-up phase

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£0	£0	£0	3	£0	£0	£0
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£40	£10	3	£0	£600	£250
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	3	£0	£0	£0
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	3	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	4	£0	£0	£0	3	£0	£300	£100
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	3	£0	£100	£33
Other	4	£0	£500	£125	3	£0	£0	£0
Total estimated equivalent cost of in-kind contributions	4	£0	£540	£135	3	£0	£1,000	£383
Total population of areas with data:	60904				446275			

3.11 The case study respondents were asked how much of the in-kind expenditure would otherwise have been in place providing some form of community engagement in the absence of Participatory Budgeting and this information was used to derive the additional set-up in kind expenditure due to Participatory Budgeting. The results are summarised in Table 3-6. The additional in kind set-up costs are small for both types of Participatory Budgeting activity.

Table 3-6: Additional set-up in-kind expenditure due to Participatory Budgeting

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£40	£10	2	£0	£0	£0
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other	4	£0	£500	£125	2	£0	£0	£0
Total	4	£0	£540	£135	2	£0	£0	£0
Total population of areas with data:	60904				268875			

Non-financial running costs

Time inputs at Participatory Budgeting decision-making events

3.12 This section considers the non-cash inputs (in terms of time and in-kind expenditure) spent in running a Participatory Budgeting scheme. The evaluation sought data on the non-cash inputs for the decision making part of the process separately from those made to the management/delivery of Participatory Budgeting on an ongoing basis. Table 3-7 shows the number of people involved by provider and Table 3.8 provides the identified time input. These inputs were all *additional* and thus were identified as being only those resource inputs that would not otherwise of been incurred in some other form of community engagement event if Participatory Budgeting had not existed.

Table 3-7: Time inputs at Participatory Budgeting decision making events – number of people involved (all additional)

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	57	814	367	4	23	3237	1354
Local Authority staff	4	4	15	7	4	1	39	21
Councillors	4	0	4	2	4	4	57	39
Housing Association staff	4	0	4	1	4	0	16	4
NDC staff	4	0	11	5	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	10	3	4	0	1	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	1	0	4	0	25	7
Other	4	0	7	2	4	0	16	5
Total	4	82	819	386	4	42	3287	1430
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

3.13 Table 3-7 shows that on average an additional 367 residents were involved in providing time inputs to decision making meetings than would otherwise have been the case for the neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting and an additional 1350 residents for Participatory Budgetings organised at the level of the local authority. There were significant variations around this average. The additional local authority officer input was 7 in the neighbourhood case and 21 for local authority wide Participatory Budgetings, but again there were large variations around this. The additional councillor input was clearly greatest in the local authority wide Participatory Budgeting cases but again with significant variation. Table 3-8 provides information on the additional estimated hours of time input. An additional average of just over 400 hours was estimated for the neighbourhood level Participatory Budgetings and 2,600 where it was local authority-wide. The time inputs were spread across a number of different officers including those from the voluntary sector in both cases. Again, there were significant variations.

Table 3-8: Time inputs at Participatory Budgeting decision-making events – estimated hours of input (all additional)

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	77	500	230	4	174	3069	1806
Local Authority staff	4	20	135	82	4	20	576	212
Councillors	4	0	30	10	4	14	864	322
Housing Association staff	4	0	36	10	4	0	288	72
NDC staff	4	0	150	60	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	120	30	4	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	5	2	4	0	450	113
Other	4	0	28	9	4	0	288	76
Total	4	217	971	433	4	304	5456	2601
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

Time spent managing the ongoing Participatory Budgeting process

3.14 Table 3-9 indicates the *gross* amount of time estimated to be spent in managing the ongoing-Participatory Budgeting process according to the number of people involved. The largest input obviously came from the residents. The reason that these inputs are so high is because a large number of residents are reported to have a legitimate input to the ongoing oversight of projects influenced through the Participatory Budgeting process, for example via a relatively small part of the agenda on regular ward or area committees. Although the number of people involved is clearly large, on average, as Table 3-10 shows the amount of time spent is not that great, particularly for residents (for example it is less than an hour per person for the neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting case studies). Not surprisingly, local authority officers provided a more significant proportion of the time inputs to the ongoing Participatory Budgeting process. There were considerable variations across the case studies.

Table 3-9: Gross time spent managing the ongoing Participatory Budgeting process – number of people involved

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	7	820	379	4	0	3237	877
Local Authority staff	4	2	15	7	4	6	37	18
Councillors	4	0	8	4	4	1	57	38
Housing Association staff	4	0	4	1	4	0	1	0
NDC staff	4	0	6	3	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	10	3	4	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	1	0	4	0	1	0
Other	4	0	1	0	4	0	4	1
Total	4	15	859	397	4	13	3295	935
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

Table 3-10: Gross time spent managing the ongoing Participatory Budgeting process- estimate total time invested in hours

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	56	700	245	4	0	4890	1397
Local Authority staff	4	21	175	95	4	67	8929	4552
Councillors	4	0	30	16	4	4	1128	566
Housing Association staff	4	0	36	9	4	0	17	4
NDC staff	4	0	255	103	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations – staff	4	0	120	32	4	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs – volunteers	4	0	8	2	4	0	17	4
Other	4	0	8	2	4	0	35	12
Total	4	146	1171	502	4	120	14448	6535
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

3.15 The case study respondents were asked to consider how many people, and how much time, they would have provided to other forms of community engagement activity if Participatory Budgeting had not been in place. This information was used to calculate the additional resource inputs associated with the Participatory Budgeting ongoing delivery. Table 3-11 indicates that average additional time inputs to the Participatory Budgeting process for the neighbourhood Participatory Budgeting areas was quite small and even less for the local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting areas. Furthermore, at the local authority level, some form of engagement would have happened so no additional resident activity was reported.

Table 3-11: Additional ongoing time inputs to the Participatory Budgeting process – number of people involved

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	0	820	306	4	0	0	0
Local Authority staff	4	0	15	4	4	0	2	1
Councillors	4	0	4	1	4	0	48	12
Housing Association staff	4	0	4	1	4	0	1	0
NDC staff	4	0	6	2	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations – staff	4	0	10	3	4	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs – volunteers	4	0	1	0	4	0	1	0
Other	4	0	1	0	4	0	4	1
Total	4	0	859	317	4	0	56	14
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

- 3.16 Table 3-12 shows the average additional number of hours invested in Participatory Budgeting, which when converted into days, illustrated an addition of 52 and 313 days for neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity and for the local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity respectively. Please note that these figures exhibited significant variation between the case study areas.

Table 3-12: Additional ongoing time inputs to the Participatory Budgeting process – number of hours invested

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Residents	4	24	700	223	4	0	2175	546
Local Authority staff	4	5	135	48	4	20	4255	1663
Councillors	4	0	30	11	4	0	832	240
Housing Association staff	4	0	36	9	4	0	17	4
NDC staff	4	0	205	89	4	0	0	0
Voluntary organisations - staff	4	0	120	32	4	0	0	0
Voluntary orgs - volunteers	4	0	4	1	4	0	17	4
Other	4	0	8	2	4	0	35	10
Total	4	36	1171	415	4	36	6430	2468
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

In-kind expenditure on Participatory Budgeting events and the ongoing process

- 3.17 The case study respondents sought to identify the amount of in-kind expenditure that was being incurred in delivering Participatory Budgeting. Table 3-13 shows that expenditure was quite small and none was identified at the local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity level.

Table 3-13: Gross in-kind expenditure on delivering the Participatory Budgeting process

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£0	£850	£213	4	£0	£0	£0
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£120	£35	4	£0	£0	£0
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Other	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Total	4	£0	£970	£248	4	£0	£0	£0
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

3.18 As with the other items of expenditure the respondents provided an estimate of the level of on-going in-kind expenditure that would have been committed to some form of community engagement activity in the absence of Participatory Budgeting in their area. This information enabled an estimate of the additional ongoing in-kind expenditure associated with the Participatory Budgeting process. Table 3-14 (which is identical to Table 3-13) indicates that all of the gross in-kind expenditure at the neighbourhood level (there was non for the LA-wide case studies) was additional as a result of Participatory Budgeting.

Table 3-14: Additional ongoing in-kind expenditure to the Participatory Budgeting process

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£0	£850	£213	4	£0	£0	£0
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£120	£35	4	£0	£0	£0
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Other	4	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Total	4	£0	£970	£248	4	£0	£0	£0
Total population of areas with data:	60904				639575			

Financial inputs to set-up Participatory Budgeting

3.19 The research across the Participatory Budgeting case study areas allowed an estimate of the gross financial inputs (excluding wage costs) to the set-up phase of Participatory Budgeting to be identified. *All financial costs are those incurred by the public sector.* Table 3-15 shows that the average gross financial input for neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity was just over £1,000 and nearly £15,000 for local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity.

Table 3-15: Gross financial inputs to the set-up phase

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	3	£0	£2,500	£833	4	£0	£8,000	£2,575
Venue hire and refreshments	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£190	£64
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Training support	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£1,500	£375
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	3	£0	£800	£267	4	£0	£11,000	£3,423
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£32,300	£8,075
Other	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Total	3	£0	£3,300	£1,100	4	£0	£51,300	£14,587
Total population of areas with data:	49747 (mean 16582)				717875 (mean 179,469)			

3.20 As with the other elements of resource input into the Participatory Budgeting setting-up process, the research probed for information on what would have been the level of finance committed to set-up costs of other forms of community engagement activity in the areas concerned in the absence of Participatory Budgeting. This information was used to produce an estimate of the additional financial costs associated with Participatory Budgeting set-up. Table 3-16 shows that most of the financial set-up costs were regarded as being additional for both neighbourhood and local authority-wide types of Participatory Budgeting.

Table 3-16: Additional financial set-up cost due to Participatory Budgeting

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	3	£0	£2,500	£833	4	£0	£8,000	£2,575
Venue hire and refreshments	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£190	£64
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Training support	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	3	£0	£800	£267	4	£0	£11,000	£3,423
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£32,300	£8,075
Other	3	£0	£0	£0	4	£0	£0	£0
Total	3	£0	£3,300	£1,100	4	£0	£51,300	£14,212
Total population of areas with data:	49747 (mean 16,582)				717875 (mean 179,469)			

Financial costs of running Participatory Budgeting

3.21 The financial costs of running Participatory Budgeting in the case study areas is summarised in Table 3-17 and again it is to be noted that all costs are public sector costs. The average financial cost of running Participatory Budgeting was nearly £3,000 for Neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity but varied from just around a £1,000 to over £7,000. These figures were per annum. The mean was just over £20,000 at the local authority level of Participatory Budgeting activity.

Table 3-17: Gross financial costs incurred in ongoing running of Participatory Budgeting (per annum) (all public sector)

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£782	£2,000	£1,150	2	£11,000	£14,560	£12,780
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£822	£253	2	£2,700	£4,500	£3,600
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£100	£50
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. for facilitation)	4	£0	£380	£95	2	£0	£0	£0
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other	4	£0	£5,544	£1,459	2	£3,000	£10,750	£6,875
Total	4	£925	£7,640	£2,957	2	£14,070	£29,810	£20,227
Total population of areas with data:	60904 (mean 15226)				237475 (mean 118738)			

3.22 Following the approach adopted for the other elements of Participatory Budgeting resource costs, the research sought to establish the additional financial costs of running Participatory Budgeting. Table 3-18 shows that for the neighbourhood Participatory Budgeting category the mean was nearly £3,000 additional running costs per annum. This rose to just over £12,000 for local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity. There were quite significant differences between case study partnerships in both cases.

Table 3-18: Additional financial cost of running Participatory Budgeting

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity				LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity			
	No. data observations	Range		Mean	No. data observations	Range		Mean
		Low	High			Low	High	
Advertising and promotion (including newsletter and leaflet printing, website development, production of DVDs)	4	£782	£2,000	£1,150	2	£0	£9,060	£4,530
Venue hire and refreshments	4	£0	£822	£253	2	£0	£3,375	£1,688
Translation costs (including Plain English support)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Training support	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other consultancy costs (e.g. facilitation)	4	£0	£380	£95	2	£0	£0	£0
Purchase of specialist equipment (e.g. electronic voting equipment)	4	£0	£0	£0	2	£0	£0	£0
Other	4	£0	£5,544	£1,459	2	£3,000	£7,250	£5,125
Total	4	£925	£7,640	£2,957	3	£3,000	£19,685	£12,252
Total population of areas with data:	60904 (mean 15226)				For two areas: 370700	For the three areas (total): 595400 (mean 198467)		

Towards public sector unit costs for Participatory Budgeting activity

Overview

- 3.23 The data gathered through the case study research allows estimates to be made of the total additional public sector costs associated with Participatory Budgeting activity and to scale these in ways which allows them to be applied to different contexts. This is useful for benchmarking across different types of existing Participatory Budgeting activity as well as informing development of business cases for new activity. This sub-section explores the approach taken to:
- place a monetary value on public sector time inputs;
 - derive the average public sector cost per head of population in areas covered by Participatory Budgeting;
 - derive the average public sector cost per resident participating;
 - put the public sector costs of Participatory Budgeting in the context of the level of public sector funding allocated through the process.
- 3.24 Each of these is discussed in turn below.

Placing a monetary value on public sector time inputs

- 3.25 Some of the evidence collected on the resource inputs described above was financial or in-kind expenditure, expressed in monetary terms. However, key time inputs were expressed in hours committed. To turn these inputs into a monetary value it is necessary to obtain information on how these time inputs are valued.
- 3.26 Local Government Analysis and Research provide useful data (updated annually) on local government earnings for more than 100 different job categories. The Local Government Earnings Survey²⁶ collects demographic and pay data relating to over 1,000,000 local authority posts. They estimate that this accounts for over 60% of the directly employed local government workforce (excluding teachers). In the Local Government Analysis and Research data gross total pay includes: pay before deductions for PAYE, National Insurance, pension schemes and voluntary deductions. All basic pay relates to the pay period.
- 3.27 We have used the Local Government Analysis and Research data as a starting point in translating the information on the time inputs associated with Participatory Budgeting in the case study areas into a monetary value. We have taken the average gross earnings levels for Administrative Officer/Assistant Community Support and Outreach Worker, Housing Officer and Planning Officer and then averaged them. The information suggests that in 2008 local authority employees earned £16,726, £26,834 and £29,730 respectively. The average gross pay is £21,609. This is the gross wage to the employee but to obtain an overall estimate of the wage cost to an employer requires us to take the gross wage costs and add on non-wage labour costs such as national

²⁶ The latest published survey was undertaken in October 2008 and was completed by 212 local authorities; a response rate of over 50%.

insurance, pensions and other relevant costs, a procedure consistent with HM Treasury Green Book Guidance. The Department for Transport (DfT) is a major source of evidence on the valuation of time since it often needs to value time savings for transport appraisals. DfT suggests using a 21.2% mark-up on gross earnings to reflect non-wage labour costs. Since the Local Government Analysis and Research data is gross earnings per category of worker per annum this has been translated into an hourly value by assuming that the average worker works 1,738 hours per year. The hourly value is estimated to be £15.07 per hour.

- 3.28 When this is applied to the average number of additional hours spent on different stages of the Participatory Budgeting process (set-up, decision-making events, ongoing management) the average value of time inputs per case study area for neighbourhood-level and LA-wide Participatory Budgeting are as shown in Table 3-19.

Table 3-19: Additional value of public sector set-up, decision-making and ongoing time inputs to the process – average per case study area		
Stage in the Participatory Budgeting process	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity Average value of public sector time inputs	LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity Average value of public sector time inputs
Value of additional time on set-up (one-off)	£777	£4,573
Value of additional time on ongoing process (per annum)	£6,252	£37,185
Value of additional time on ongoing process (per annum)	£6,252	£37,185

Deriving the average public sector cost per head of population

- 3.29 The case study averages presented so far in this Chapter help to illustrate the diversity of activity and the relative importance of different types of input. However, in order for the resource data to be capable of application in other areas it needs to be presented in a per capita form.
- 3.30 With this in mind, we brought the monetary value of the average public sector time inputs together with public sector in-kind expenditure and financial expenditure in order to present the average additional public sector spend per capita during the set-up, decision-making and ongoing management phases.

- 3.31 For this analysis the denominator was taken as the average population of the areas that were covered by the Participatory Budgeting approaches in the case studies. Thus, for neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity the four case studies were focused on areas with a total population of 60,904, i.e. an average population of 15,226. For the four local authority-wide approaches, the total population covered by the PB approaches was 717,875 (i.e. an average population of 179,469). Where a case study was unable to provide data on a particular observation, that area's population was excluded from the analysis and the mean populations (and thus denominators) were adjusted accordingly.
- 3.32 Table 3-20 provides additional per capita costs of Participatory Budgeting in the 8 case study areas, i.e. excluding those resources that would have been incurred anyway in providing some other form of community engagement.

Table 3-20: Gross and additional value of public sector inputs per head of population covered (time inputs exclude residents and voluntary sector)

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity	LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity
	Mean	Mean
Set-up (one-off), of which:	£0.13	£0.11
Time	£0.05	£0.03
In-kind	£0.01	£0.00
Financial (i.e. money spent as cash)	£0.07	£0.08
Inputs spent at the Decision-making event (p.a.), of which:	£0.64	£0.31
Time	£0.43	£0.25
In-kind	£0.02	£0.00
Financial	£0.19	£0.06
Ongoing management (p.a.)		
Time	£0.41	£0.23
Total: set-up plus one year's activity (all resources):	£1.18	£0.65
Total: set-up plus one year's activity (financial costs only)	£0.26	£0.14

- 3.33 For neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity the additional one-off set-up costs (including time, in-kind expenditure and financial costs) amount to 13 pence per head of population in the area including time spent, in-kind and financial. The equivalent figure is 11 pence for the local authority wide Participatory Budgeting activity.
- 3.34 The costs associated with staging the decision making process itself per annum amount to around 60 pence per head of population for the neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity and about half that (30 pence) for local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity.
- 3.35 The total cost to the public sector per head of population associated with on-going management time per annum is placed at just over 40 pence for neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting and 23 pence for local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting.
- 3.36 As Table 3-20 presents set-up costs per capita plus unit costs per capita per annum for decision-making events and for ongoing management, strictly speaking it is not possible to provide a straightforward “total” cost. However, at the bottom of Table 3.20 we show the costs of set-up plus one year’s worth of decision-making and ongoing management costs. Two such “totals” are provided: one representing all resource costs (including time inputs and in-kind expenditure as well as financial costs) and one which is just the financial cost (i.e. excluding the value of time inputs and in-kind expenditure). These metrics may be useful for those involved in business planning and case making for Participatory Budgeting.

Deriving the average public sector cost per resident participating

- 3.37 The case studies provided evidence on the additional number of residents who participated in the Participatory Budgeting schemes. For neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity the residents participating represented just over 2% of the respective population in the area concerned on average. The equivalent figure for the local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity was closer to 1%.
- 3.38 Table 3-21 shows the additional public sector resource costs of Participatory Budgeting expressed per *additional resident who actually participated* in Participatory Budgeting. This metric is clearly more meaningful in relation to the penetration of Participatory Budgeting – and the higher the level of participation the lower this unit cost will be. To some degree this makes it less useful for business planning (where forecast participation may be uncertain), but it is certainly useful for benchmarking once numbers of participants are known.
- 3.39 The additional public sector cost per effective participant for neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity is around £40. If the same exercise is undertaken at the local authority level the comparison would be of the order of £100 per additional participating resident. These headline figures include set-up costs plus one year’s worth of decision-making and ongoing management cost.

Table 3-21: Value (£) of additional public sector inputs per additional resident participating in PB

	Neighbourhood-level Participatory Budgeting activity	LA-wide Participatory Budgeting activity
	Mean	Mean
Set-up (one-off)		
Time	£1.79	£21.78
In-kind	£0.31	£0.00
Financial	£3.59	£18.99
Decision-making (p.a.)		
Time	£15.07	£28.95
In-kind	£0.57	£0.00
Financial	£6.83	£6.82
Ongoing management (p.a.)		
Time	£14.43	£27.46
Total: set-up plus one year's activity (all resources):	£42.59	£104.00
Total: set-up plus one year's activity (financial costs only)	£10.42	£25.81

Public sector costs vs. sums allocated through Participatory Budgeting

- 3.40 Across the eight case studies approximately £5 million has been allocated using Participatory Budgeting over a five year period. If we take set-up costs and five year's worth of decision-making and ongoing management resource costs and apply the average additional per capita public sector costs of Participatory Budgeting derived in Table 3 to the total populations of the 8 case study areas, this generates a total additional public sector resource cost of Participatory Budgeting over the five year period of £2.3m. In other words, based on the evidence from the eight case studies, the total resource cost per £1 allocated through Participatory Budgeting is around 47 pence. It is very important to recognise that in many cases Participatory Budgeting has been at a very early stage of development. Over time, and as the approaches mature, it would be expected that the resource cost per £1 allocated would fall.

Valuing resident participation

- 3.41** The previous section described the approach used to value the time inputs of public sector workers into the set-up and delivery of the Participatory Budgeting process. Clearly, as the evidence in the earlier part of this section showed, there was also a significant amount of time provided by residents in the Participatory Budgeting process and this can also be valued.
- 3.42** Valuing the time inputs of those who were not directly employed in competitive labour markets presents a number of issues of both a conceptual and measurement kind which we do not seek to review comprehensively here. Some commentators have suggested that one way forward is to value resident using a wage rate that reflects the Minimum Wage rate adopted in a country, if it has one. In the United Kingdom this would suggest a figure between a quarter and a third of the value we have adopted for the public sector input above. This is a relatively pragmatic approach and will not be without its critics – the estimates should thus be regarded as illustrative.
- 3.43** The estimated mean number of additional residents' participation-time in managing a neighbourhood-based Participatory Budgeting activity is 415 hours and 2,468 hours for local authority-wide activity. On the basis of the value of residents' time being worth approximately a third of the public sector input, the estimated mean value of this time is £2,075 for neighbourhood level Participatory Budgeting activity and £12,340 for a local authority-wide scheme.²⁷
- 3.44** This section has set out the findings in relation to in-kind and financial costs, providing estimates of costs per head of population and costs per participant. The next section provides insight into the Participatory Budgeting activities taken forward using these resources.

²⁷ More work to develop a method of estimating a monetary value of participants' time could be undertaken in Phase 2.

4. Participatory Budgeting process and activities

- 4.1 The evaluation sought to understand what was happening on the ground in both the case study and self evaluation areas, in order to identify good practice in engagement and in decision-making processes. This chapter presents the findings on how Participatory Budgeting was established and how the process operated in the areas that participated in the evaluation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the critical success factors and barriers to delivery that were identified through the research.

Set up process and activities

- 4.2 Each of the participating areas was asked to provide an account of both the origin of their Participatory Budgeting activity and the means by which they set up the process. Table 4-1 summarises the different origins of Participatory Budgeting in the participating areas, how long they have been running and the governance and management mechanisms through which they have operated. This illustrates that Participatory Budgeting processes have predominantly been instigated and driven by the relevant local authorities as a means of empowering local residents to ‘have a say’ about their local area. Similarly, evidence from the participating areas points to resources often being provided by teams responsible for Neighbourhood Management, Community Engagement, Social Policy or the management of an area based initiative, i.e. teams with an established presence in the communities concerned.
- 4.3 In terms of when Participatory Budgeting began in an area, the participating areas provided a range that ran from 1994/95 to 2008. For example, **York** has been operating Participatory Budgeting for approximately 15 years, and **Haringey** recently delivered its fifth authority-wide annual cycle of the relevant decision making programme; whereas other areas such as **Salisbury** and **Sefton** only started to set up their process in 2008/09. Therefore, the evaluation has been able to explore and compare the characteristics and differences between mature and relatively newer processes.
- 4.4 The evidence highlighted that it has generally taken between 6-12 months to set up the process and to subsequently hold the first decision-making event. This was found to be largely dependent on the scale of activities – both in terms of geography and budget – and the numbers of parties involved in the development of the process. Table 4-1 identifies a couple of cases where the time between setting up Participatory Budgeting and the first decision-making event ran over a period of years – which in the main was the product of local politics, e.g. disagreements among local councillors or changes in the political leadership of the authority.

Table 4-1: Process set up information

Area	Origin of Participatory Budgeting activity	Year of initial set up	Year of first decision making process	Mechanism through which Participatory Budgeting is facilitated
Case study areas				
Haringey	Introduced in response to both a Council and resident led initiative	2003	2004/05	Facilitated through the seven Area Assemblies by the Neighbourhood Management team
Manton	Introduced to support the general objectives of the Pathfinder	2006	2007	Facilitated through the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder
Newcastle	Council led initiative	2004	2006	Facilitated by the Social Policy Team at the Council
Salford	Council led initiative	2007	2007/08	Facilitated through the Neighbourhood Management team in two Community Committees
Southampton	Council ,PCT and NDC led initiative	2006	2008	Facilitated through the NDC and the Community Health Group, in conjunction with the Council and the PCT
St Helens	Council led initiative	2006	2007	Facilitated through Ward Committees
Salisbury	Council led initiative	2008	2009	Facilitated through the Area Board
York	Council led initiative	1994/95	1994/95	Facilitated through Ward Committees by the Neighbourhood Management Unit

Table 4-1: Process set up information *continued*

Area	Origin of Participatory Budgeting activity	Year of initial set up	Year of first decision making process	Mechanism through which Participatory Budgeting is facilitated
Self evaluation areas				
Buckinghamshire	CLG invited the Council to be a pilot in this initiative	2007/08	2008/09	Facilitated at the level of the local community area through the locality service team and youth participation
Hartlepool	Council and Local Strategic Partnership led initiative	2003	2003	Facilitated through priority neighbourhoods by the Neighbourhood Management team
Mansfield	Council led initiative – led by a Chief Officer	2008	2008/09	Facilitated through the Area Assemblies by the Community Engagement Team
Redcar and Cleveland	Housing association led initiative	2007/08	2008/09	Facilitated across the areas covered by the housing association by staff from the housing association
Sefton	Council led initiative	2008/09	2009/10	Facilitated through an area comprising of two wards by the Neighbourhoods Division
Tower Hamlets	Council led initiative	2008	2009	Facilitated through the Local Area Partnerships by the Neighbourhood Management teams
Walsall NDC	NDC led initiative	2008	2008	Facilitated through local schools by the NDC team

Source: National Evaluation research

4.5 Looking now at the detail of how the various processes were set up, it was clear that Participatory Budgeting was often developed to complement existing community engagement/empowerment initiatives, and for the most part that Participatory Budgeting was viewed as only one of a number of community empowerment tools that could help an area to make progress against NI 4 and the 'Duty to Involve'²⁸. For example, in **Manton**, Participatory Budgeting was introduced as part of the Manton Community Alliance's (MCA) broader approach to building the social capital of the community and therefore built on other community empowerment activities delivered by the MCA and various Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) projects that preceded it.

²⁸ On the first of April 2009 a new Duty to Involve came into force for all best value organisations across England, including all Local Authorities. The new duty requires local councils to 'embed a culture of engagement and empowerment'.

- 4.6 Having established a rationale for developing the relevant Participatory Budgeting processes, a number of areas set up working groups or nominated a group of lead officers to take the idea forward. For example, in **Newcastle**, an early working group was established consisting of relevant council officers, elected members, NDC officers and community and voluntary sector officers, who considered the relevant merits of Participatory Budgeting and possible options for a pilot scheme. And similarly, in **Haringey**, the Council sought to build upon previous experience by assigning a lead development role to an existing member of staff who had managed one of the SRB community chest projects and was therefore well placed to help support the development of the decision making process.

Building capacity

- 4.7 Table 4-2 sets out the capacity building or training exercises that were undertaken during the set up of the relevant Participatory Budgeting processes. This shows that most areas undertook some form of development work – although where a process of evolution has occurred, not unexpectedly, the degree of preparation has been muted.

Table 4-2: Capacity building/support provided during the set up of the Participatory Budgeting process

Area	Support and advice from the Participatory Budgeting Unit	Evolved organically from local area governance structures	Provided training to delivery staff	Provided training to local Councillors	Provided training to local Residents/ organisations
Case study areas					
Haringey		✓	✓		✓
Manton		✓			x
Newcastle	✓		✓		✓
Salford	✓	✓			
Southampton NDC	✓	✓	✓		
St Helens		✓		✓	
Salisbury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
York		✓			
Self evaluation areas*					
Buckinghamshire	✓		✓	✓	
Hartlepool			✓		
Mansfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Redcar and Cleveland	✓	✓	✓		
Sefton	✓				✓
Tower Hamlets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walsall NDC	✓	✓			✓

Source: National Evaluation study research

* Please note that blanks indicate that the information was not provided, rather than no activity

- 4.8 The advice and support provided by the Participatory Budgeting Unit in response to requests from areas has varied to meet local needs and circumstances: in several areas it provided early and subsequent advice to the development of the Participatory Budgeting process; in another area it helped to develop the process and acted as a member of the Participatory Budgeting planning group; in another it provided training for key members of staff and general mentoring support; in another it facilitated two introductory workshops; and in another it provided comments on the project initiation document that was developed as part of the set up process.
- 4.9 Areas also sourced advice and information from other support-based organisations or from areas that already facilitated a Participatory Budgeting process. For example: the two project leads in **Hartlepool** attended a two day training session run by Governance International, which subsequently influenced the set up of their Participatory Budgeting process; and the relevant members of the **Coast and Country Housing Association in Redcar and Cleveland** attended a Social Capital Conference, which showcased the Newcastle Participatory Budgeting process prior to them setting up their Participatory Budgeting process, following which they arranged a meeting with the officers facilitating the Participatory Budgeting process in Newcastle to discuss how to take the idea forward.
- 4.10 It would appear that training for councillors and residents has been limited and as a result of a desire at the local level to raise awareness and increase engagement as opposed to placing an emphasis on training. Furthermore, local delivery teams were usually on hand to provide support to potential bidders and to those projects awarded Participatory Budgeting funds (and therefore acted as a form of ongoing capacity building).
- 4.11 An interesting example of participant capacity building that was undertaken prior to the decision making process was undertaken by **Walsall NDC**, who targeted their event at school children aged 6-11. This involved children from the relevant school councils undertaking training delivered over a period of eight weeks, which included sessions on: team work and communication skills; understanding your community and the introduction of Participatory Budgeting; developing decision making and negotiating skills; budgeting and making decisions on allocating money; and consultation and decision making.
- 4.12 In terms of the roll out of Participatory Budgeting, it would appear that the availability of staff resources to support the development and running of Participatory Budgeting initiatives is the main constraint on the speed at which Participatory Budgeting gets rolled out.

Delivery process and activities

- 4.13 The evaluation worked with study areas to understand what processes and activities they used to facilitate Participatory Budgeting in order to find out what worked in terms of empowerment and effective allocation, distribution and use of resources. This involved exploring the following questions:
- Who is involved in decision making and how are they involved? And, are the people who attend the events representative of the relevant population?
 - How has the Participatory Budgeting process been facilitated, i.e. what steps are involved?
 - How is the quality of the decision making process assessed?
 - Who is responsible for monitoring and implementing the resultant projects or service changes?
 - Is the Participatory Budgeting process aligned with other engagement or decision-making processes?

Who is involved in decision making, how are they involved and are they representative?

- 4.14 The evaluation findings suggest that participation was generally open to all residents who lived in the relevant area, with the exception of some targeted events. Therefore the majority of the areas reported that all residents that lived within the area in which the process was taking place were eligible to participate in decision making. However, this universal approach often meant that the make up of participants did not reflect that of the local community (as some members of the community chose not to participate or were not sufficiently engaged) which in some areas was perceived as a problem and in others was viewed as inevitable in a process of this nature.
- 4.15 Areas that actively sought to engage a representative sample of their local population reported successful engagement of some of their hard-to-reach communities through promotional outreach work. Figure 4-1 provides examples of practice in this form of engagement.

Figure 4-1: Representation

Ensuring all groups are represented

Attendance at decision-making meetings has generally been voluntary and open to all, which often means that there were no formal mechanisms for ensuring those participating reflected the make up of the local population. However, in practice, a number of the study areas used a community development approach and outreach techniques to identify and engage individuals and community groups who were 'less engaged' or 'hard-to-reach'. This generally involved working through local teams e.g. Community Development Officers or Neighbourhood Management Officers, who established good relationships with residents in a particular locality, and therefore could introduce the concept of Participatory Budgeting and the particular process the study area had chosen to follow and as a result, encouraged 'less engaged' individuals and groups to participate.

For example, the **London Borough of Tower Hamlets** actively sought to ensure its decision making events were attended by a representative group of the population. This was facilitated through the event(s) registration process, which asked people to provide both contact details and equalities information, which produced information on both where people were coming from and the type of people who were registering and as a result enabled the team to specifically target those groups that were under-represented.

Similarly, **Haringey** had actively undertaken community outreach work to increase the participation of their less engaged communities and therefore to raise awareness of the process. For example, they facilitated the Meet the Neighbours Initiative, which provided an informal mechanism to engage hard-to-reach members of the local population by giving them an opportunity to share their experiences and to introduce other residents to their culture through discussion and the provision of food. The initiative was felt to have helped communities to integrate into their local area and had increased the numbers and types of people who then attended the Area Assembly meetings, which had in turn fed into improved representation at the decision making meetings.

A number of the study areas also sought to increase involvement and engagement by holding multiple decision making events – thereby not limiting decision-making to a single event. For example, **Manton** used (and **Newcastle** intends to use) a 'road-show' type approach to facilitate each of their decision-making events. This involves the relevant areas developing a filmed presentation of each proposal, which illustrates both the intended site for the project, as well as the sponsor's proposal. All presentations are then amalgamated onto a DVD, which is shown at a series of voting events in a number of community settings across an area. **Newcastle** also intends to make its DVD accessible on-line to ensure that those individuals who cannot attend an event can participate in the Participatory Budgeting exercises.

- 4.16 To ensure probity of the process, areas conducted checks on people's eligibility to participate in events/meetings e.g. checking the addresses/postcodes of participating individuals to ensure they lived within the relevant area; but these arrangements tended to be largely informal and were therefore not strictly enforced. Furthermore, there is anecdotal evidence from a number of areas that events have been 'packed' by certain interest groups to ensure funding was ascertained for their projects.²⁹ Some areas saw 'block voting' as a problem, which they addressed using a number of different mechanisms, whereas other areas, saw it as an inevitable part of the process, which could increase the buy-in or participation of particular communities/groups (see Figure 4-2)

Figure 4-2: Block voting

Potential methods of tackling block voting

The Participatory Budgeting process facilitated by **York** has evolved over time in response to barriers that have emerged or opportunities to refine and improve the process. For example, when block voting was encountered during the meetings, the authority took the decision to change from voting in person to a postal vote. This was thought to have been effective in reducing bias, e.g. resulting from face to face appeal at the meeting, and single-issue voting, as well as addressing accessibility concerns.

The Neighbourhood Management Team in **Salford** sought to minimise the potential for block voting to arise by placing a quota on the number of people from any one community group or organisation who could attend their first Participatory Budgeting decision making event.

The **Southampton NDC** allowed project applicants to encourage their supporters to attend the Participatory Budgeting decision making events, which was met with mixed reaction. For example, some residents felt that the act of rallying supporters may compromise the fairness of the Participatory Budgeting process, whereas others felt that it was a 'given' that groups would bring along supporters if they were eligible to vote at the decision making event.

²⁹ The Participatory Budgeting Unit provides advice on how to mitigate this – but in some areas this advice has not been heeded.

- 4.17 Looking at wider involvement in the decision making process, it was evident that in some areas councillors participated in the decision making/voting process in their capacity as residents; whilst in others they have provided advice and in others, e.g. where Participatory Budgeting operated as part of a ward committee, they used the Participatory Budgeting process to inform their own decisions. For example, in **St Helens, York and Hartlepool**, local councillors have a formal position within the local area governance structures which support the facilitation of local decision making and in the **Manton Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder**, local councillors are eligible to vote in the decision making process. Some areas reported involvement from senior officers of the local authority, which facilitated a useful feedback mechanism into wider decision making processes (see Figure 4-3).

Figure 4-3: Senior level involvement from the local council

Senior level involvement in the management and delivery of the decision making process

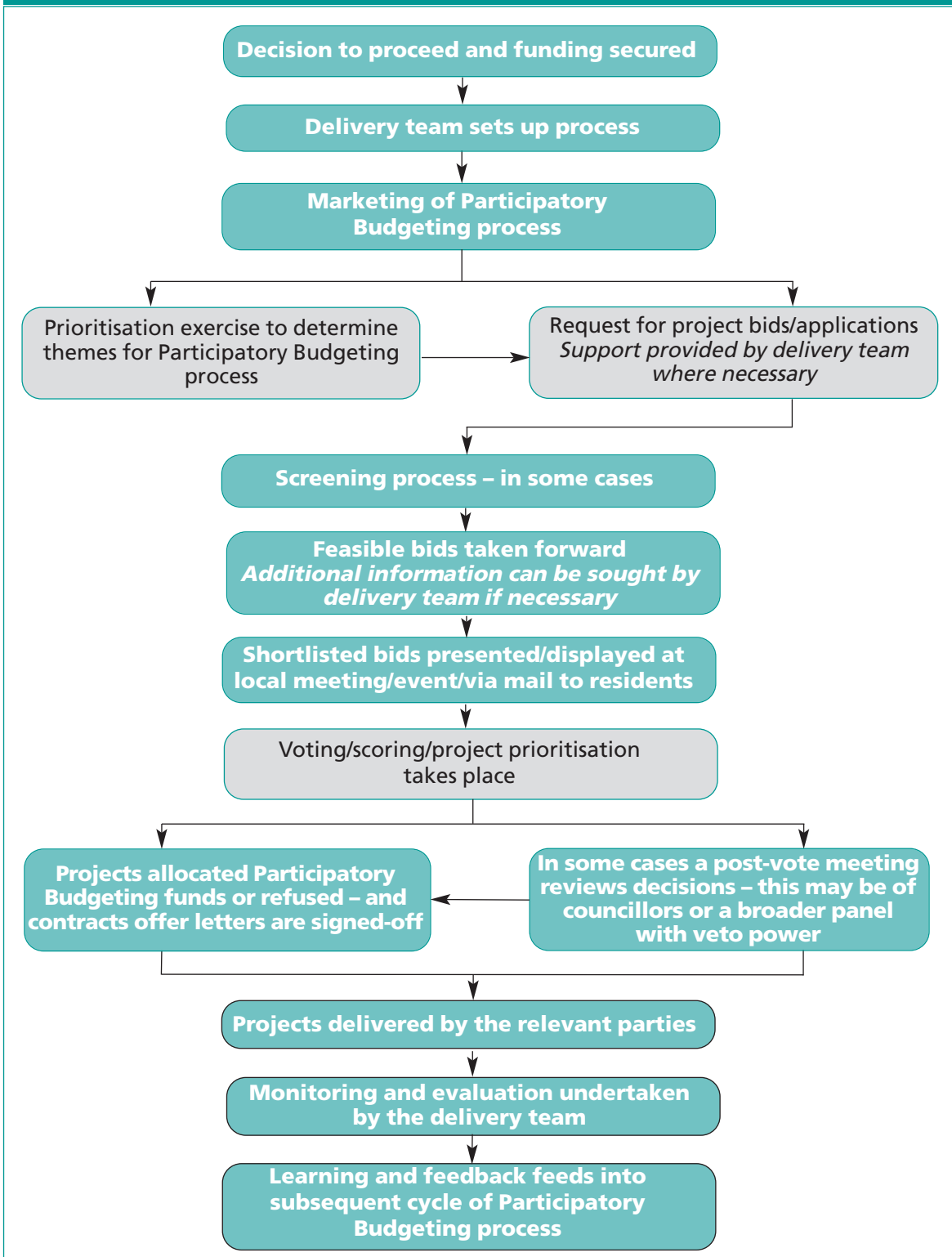
The decision making process in **Haringey**, which is facilitated through the authority's Area Assemblies, is governed by a set of Area Liaison Officers (who act as the budget holders in each area). These officers oversee the process and ensure that local priorities and messages are passed back to the relevant council departments, thereby providing a feedback loop for local residents.

St Helens has facilitated a process whereby senior officers at the council have responsibility to manage the decision making process for the individual Ward Committees through which Participatory Budgeting is delivered. Furthermore, the Council Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for signing off the budget allocation during each cycle of the Ward Committee process, which has resulted in a change to the Council's approach to decision making – it is now more flexible in what it funds to reflect the views of residents in relation to Environmental Services.

How has the Participatory Budgeting process been facilitated?

- 4.18 Although local delivery processes varied between the participating study areas, Figure 4-4 summarises what might be termed as a core process for area specific Participatory Budgeting processes with delegated budgets³⁰ (which is described in more detail below).

Figure 4-4: Summary of Participatory Budgeting core process for allocation of discretionary or small grants funding



³⁰ This is a generic approach; the Participatory Budgeting Unit advises local tailoring to take account of local circumstances and risks.

- 4.19 The steps in such a core process run from the decision to operate a Participatory Budgeting process, which may be triggered for a number of different reasons (Figure 4-5). This leads to the set up phase, which may contain a number of discrete preparatory steps (addressed in more detail below).

Figure 4-5: Gaining buy-in

Gaining buy-in to doing Participatory Budgeting

Salisbury conducted its first Participatory Budgeting decision-making event through its (new) Area Board. To prepare the ground prior to the event, Area Board members were given a presentation by the Participatory Budgeting Unit about Participatory Budgeting experiences elsewhere and were shown film footage of events in others areas, both of which proved to be persuasive in ensuring both the buy-in and support of the relevant individuals.

In **Salford**, the Claremont and Weaste Participatory Budgeting process was planned by a group consisting of the local Neighbourhood Management Team, a resident, a councillor, a member of Urban Vision (the private company that delivers highways services to the Council) and a member of the Participatory Budgeting Unit. This led to the initial design of the pilot involving the request for suggested schemes, the planning and advertising of a series of events, the resident scoring schemes and the use of the scores to priorities schemes for delivery by Urban Vision.

- 4.20 This is followed by marketing the Participatory Budgeting process, which can take a number of forms depending on local circumstances – popular approaches include leaflets, use of local media to make announcements, community outreach and direct invitations to people in the street (Figure 4-6).

Figure 4-6: Marketing Participatory Budgeting

Marketing Participatory Budgeting effectively

A number of the case study areas highlighted a need to undertake sufficient marketing prior to each set of events, to ensure that the majority of residents and community groups were aware that the relevant Participatory Budgeting process was taking place and to provide information on how local residents can participate.

For example, **Haringey** widely publicises its Participatory Budgeting events through advertisements in a local magazine (which is sent out to all households across the borough), a leafleting exercise, the issuing of invitations to residents on the Council's mailing lists, adverts on the Council website and informal marketing through the Neighbourhood Management team (who facilitate the Participatory Budgeting process), who undertake community outreach work.

In **Manton**, the Participatory Budgeting process was promoted widely to residents, which included marketing in local employer's canteens, pubs and bookmakers to ensure that the majority of residents were aware that the process was taking place.

York facilitates an annual marketing and publicity campaign to raise awareness of the process. This includes a large event held on the local school green, where the team runs 'fun activities' such as street art, to engage young children while their parents can engage with officers and members to learn more about the Participatory Budgeting process and activities.

Tower Hamlets used a number of communication techniques which included posters, banners, press adverts, articles in the council newspaper (which is circulated to all homes across the authority), radio adverts, TV adverts (on Bengali TV stations) and leaflets, as well as through work of mouth, councillor contacts in their wards, local social networks and community groups, Mosques, Churches etc.

- 4.21 Some areas run an event to prioritise issues before calling for projects/ideas; and in some cases indicative levels of funding may then be made on the basis of which issues were of most concern. Once ideas come in they are collected together; some areas run some form of screening or appraisal process at this point in order to make sure proposers and proposals meet some basic eligibility criteria (see Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-7: Eligibility criteria**Project eligibility or selection criteria**

The Neighbourhood Management team in **Haringey** developed a set of decision making criteria, which are used to sift the initial set of project applications. This criteria includes the following:

- Projects should be completed within the financial year
- Projects need to be sustainable
- Projects should not be approved if the costs can be met from other sources of funding
- Bids that cover the core costs of an existing voluntary sector project are not considered
- Bids must come from people resident in the borough, if an organisation's remit goes beyond the borough, then a local resident must submit the form etc.

Similarly, in **York**, the Neighbourhood Management team filters the initial list of project ideas to check the following:

- Suggestions aren't already covered by statutory duty of a service provider – in which case the issue is brought to that provider's attention
- Suggestions are broadly feasible and affordable
- Suggestions are legal.

The screening process in several areas also involved making a decision about which potential projects could be delivered through the provision of funding and which could be delivered through referral onto another department of the Council or agency, whose remit covers the relevant issue.

4.22 At this stage, projects are put to those attending events. Some areas run a single event in a given location; others run several events in different locations. The methods by which project information/ideas are communicated to participants varies: some have pitches/presentations which are either facilitated by the individual/group that suggested the idea or by a team of professionals who introduce all the prospective projects to remove selection bias, others use posters 'advertising' the proposal, some use DVDs so that different events get the same information, while others mail information to participants, and in other cases there is a simple if limited project description and amount of money requested provided at the event. The level of deliberation and discussion about the merits of proposals varies considerably between areas.

4.23 Voting arrangements also varied – for example in **York**, votes were conducted via postal ballot; in others, such as **Salford**, scoring criteria were applied; in some there was a show of hands; in some, such as **Sefton**, participants were able to take part in either an online or telephone vote over a 15 day period; and in others such as in **Haringey**, participants were given stickers, which they placed on their favoured projects/ideas. In some areas, subject to technical or feasibility issues participants' votes were then automatically enacted; in others the votes were subject to a final sign-off by councillors or wider panel (i.e. the budget holders). Figure 4-8, Figure 4-9 and Figure 4-10 present examples which illustrate the varied nature of the voting and final decision making process exhibited by the study areas.

Figure 4-8: Voting and project selection

What voting processes are used? And who has responsibility for the final project selection?

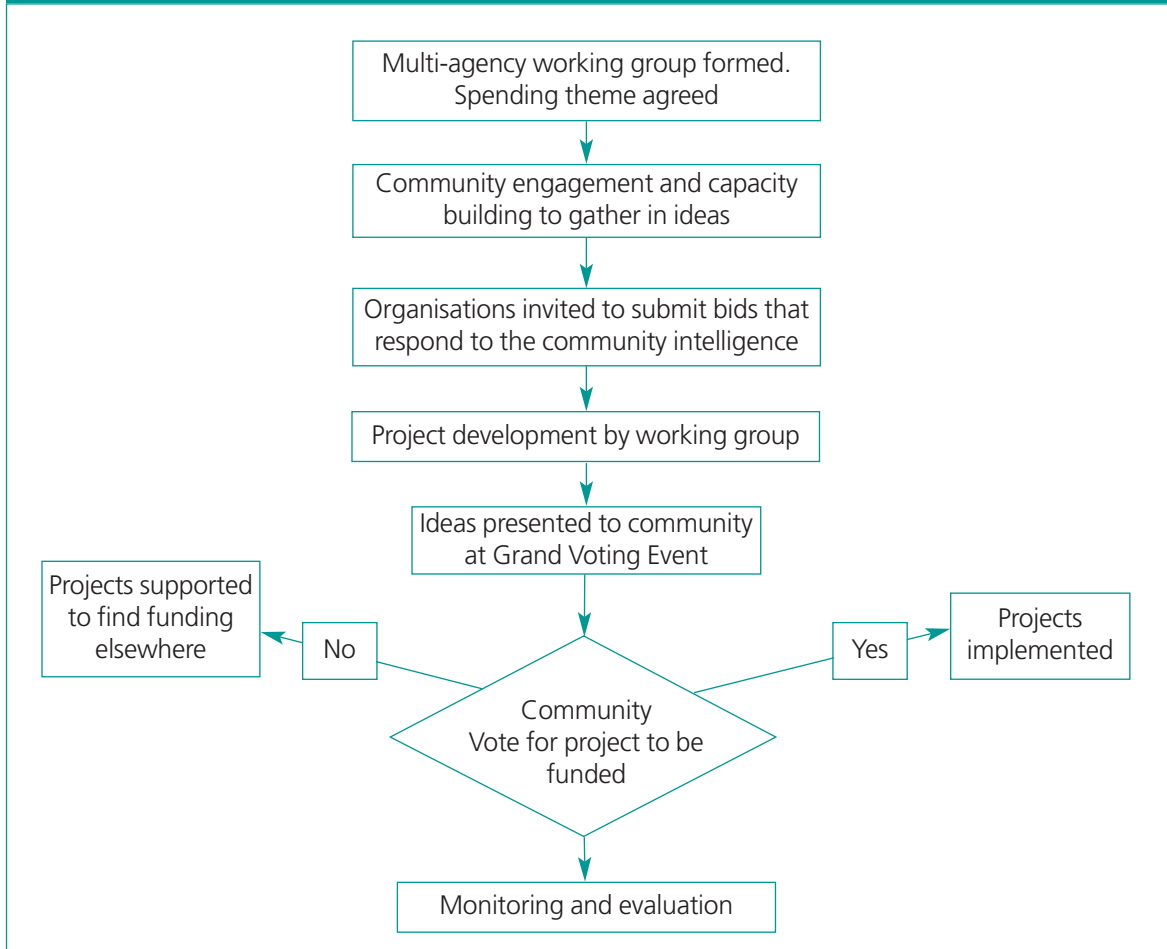
In the **Southampton NDC**, all projects were given three minutes to present their project pitch and residents then voted for each project on a scale of 1-5 (1 being last popular and 5 being most popular). All the results were then collated at the event and the 'winners' were announced along with the amounts of money they had been allocated. This process was transparent and allowed residents to make the connection between the event they had attended and the output, in terms of the resultant project activities that received funding.

In **St Helens**, the process operated as follows:

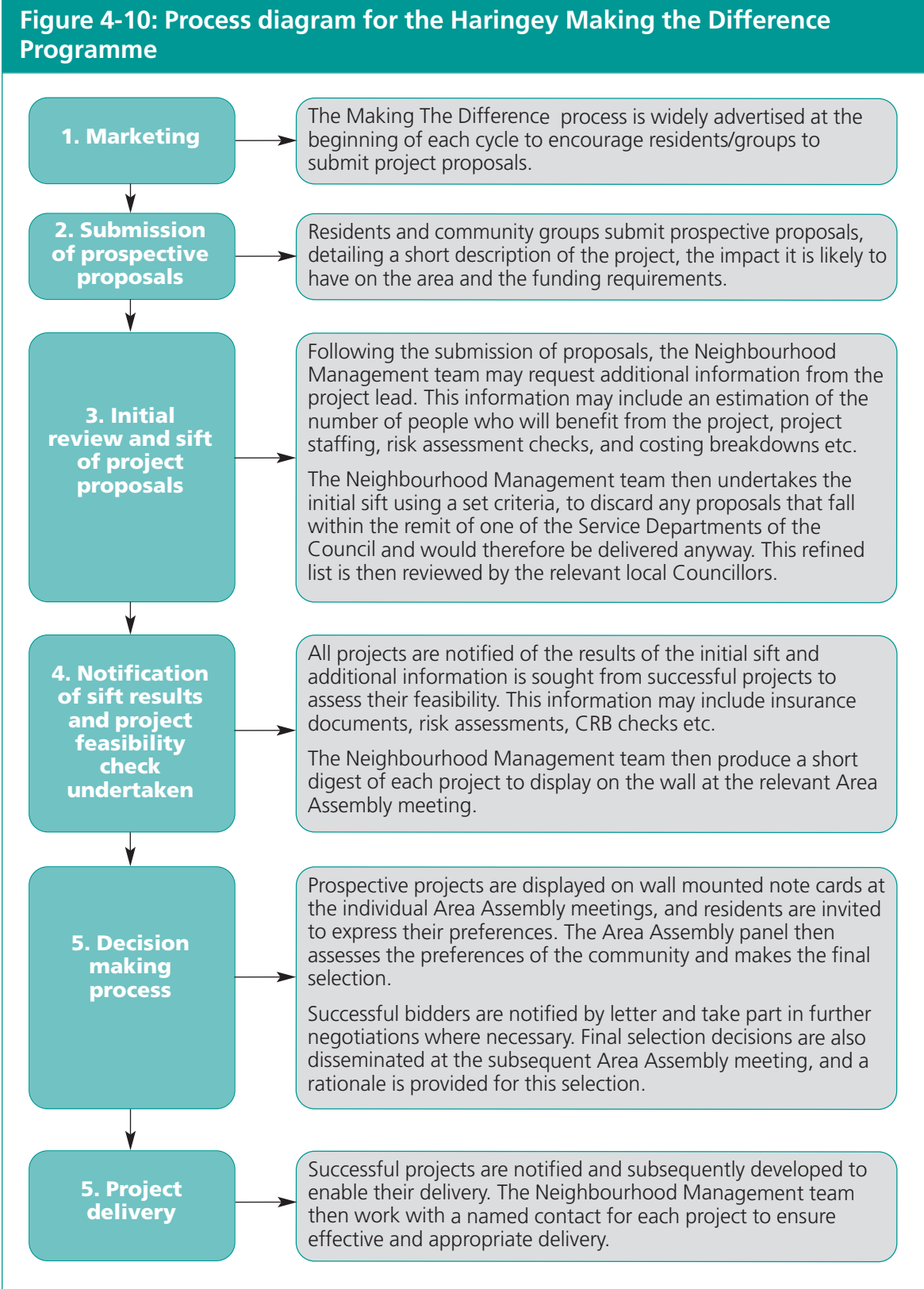
- All meetings were chaired by one of the three councillors in attendance (or the lead officer)
- Residents were presented with information on local conditions (e.g. environmental and crime stats for their ward compared to the borough average), an outline of what was happening/planned/pipeline in their area (e.g. other Council programmes/interventions), and progress reports on actions/projects from the previous meeting
- Residents were invited to come forward with ideas for projects or issues/problems they want to be addressed (or submit ideas electronically in advance if they were unable to attend)
- Discussion/debate around which project ideas should be appraised in more detail (there is no vote)
- The councillors decided (in agreement with the Ward Committee and attendees) which project ideas were taken forward
- After the meeting, each project idea was appraised by council officers (first by the Environmental Services officer to ensure alignment with the budget remit, and then by technical officers to ensure it was deliverable/legal etc) and costed. Project costs were then presented back to the Ward Committee at the next meeting for attendees to discuss whether they wanted to proceed

As can be seen this process does not adhere strictly to the principles of Participatory Budgeting, but it does provide a good example of open engagement between a local authority and residents in discussions over the allocation of resources locally.

Sefton used a combination of online and telephone voting to facilitate its decision making process. The 15 day voting period was publicised to applicants and the wider community via a poster campaign which provided a description of each of the projects. The online returns proved more popular than the telephone voting option, although it was also noted that the latter option was found to be popular with older members of the community and therefore helped to facilitate a more representative set of responses.

Figure 4-9: Newcastle Udecide Participatory Budgeting process

Source: Newcastle Social Policy Team



Source: National Evaluation Haringey Case Study

- 4.24 Once resources were allocated, the local delivery teams were generally responsible for monitoring and implementing the Participatory Budgeting process and ensuring the activities funded deliver as planned. This stage of the process was again viewed as resource intensive (see Chapter 3 for more detail on the inputs associated with the ongoing running costs associated with Participatory Budgeting), and study areas felt it was important to highlight that the process did not end after the decision making event/the voting process had been completed.
- 4.25 Local residents were involved to varying extents: some areas had developed feedback systems to ensure that local residents could monitor the progress of projects; other areas involved local residents in the delivery of their projects, whilst other areas lacked mechanisms to provide feedback. There may need to be greater transparency of monitoring processes, so that local people are informed about the projects that they supported; and to provide evidence of how resources were ultimately allocated and with what effect on distribution and efficiency.
- 4.26 Monitoring and contracting processes appeared to be relatively informal in the majority of the participating study areas, in part due to the limited/small scale budgets that were awarded to successful projects. However, this informality will become an issue if Participatory Budgeting is to be rolled out across wide areas and if it is applied to mainstream budgets. Thus, the evaluation has identified examples of effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms (Figure 4-11).

Figure 4-11: Good practice examples on the collation and dissemination of monitoring information

Monitoring and feedback to participants

The delivery team for **Newcastle** was about to introduce more formal approval, contracting and monitoring processes, to ensure that the process is more transparent and can generate information on the progress made by funded projects. This will entail all projects being subject to the city's standard procedures for allocating grant aid, irrespective of which organisation implements a project (council department, voluntary organisation, other agency etc.), which will be facilitated through the issuing of formal offer letters at the point at which funding is awarded, and all those participating signing up to the grant conditions and thereby producing quarterly monitoring information.

York provides ongoing feedback on a regular basis through their quarterly newsletter, which includes wider information, progress updates on project implementation and feedback on the annual Participatory Budgeting process.

St Helens facilitates a Participatory Budgeting process through its Ward Committee structure, which involves support officers producing briefing notes (for each of the 16 Ward Committees) on an eight-weekly cycle. These reports include local statistics, an overview of council activity in the area and a progress update on every project idea put forward at the previous meeting. The report therefore states whether each project idea (a) is viable or not, and the reasons to justify this, such as legal or technical issues, (b) has been appraised/costed, and therefore the Ward Committee needs to decide whether to take the project forward, (c) in the process of being delivered, or (d) complete. The council also provides an ongoing process for acquiring feedback, which is facilitated through local councillors, each of whom are given access to the council's electronic tracking system, and can therefore supply information on demand. The council was also considering developing online Ward Committees to enable residents to propose ideas or track projects between the meetings. Consultees in this area felt that transparency of the process and community involvement in monitoring progress had increased a sense of empowerment and satisfaction that 'something is being done'. It also led to greater overall satisfaction with the council, and an increased likelihood for residents to attend meetings regularly.

The Participatory Budgeting process in **Mansfield** undertakes its monitoring arrangements as per the terms of the specimen contract in the Participatory Budgeting toolkit issued by the Participatory Budgeting Unit, where the area pays additional attention to local circumstances relating to project delivery.

- 4.27 Looking specifically at the auditing procedures and release of funding to successful individuals/organisations, it was apparent that funding was often provided in the following variety of manners:
- in arrears paid on receipt of bills/evidence to illustrate how the money had been spent – which may discourage smaller organisations from applying, as they are unlikely to have sufficient resources to work in this manner
 - up-front bills or invoices are sent directly to the council which processes the payment on the organisation's behalf – this was cited by some as being the most appropriate approach to the provision of funding
 - payments made directly to the relevant council services who took forward the project on behalf of the community.
- 4.28 Figure 4-12 provides an example of an 'inclusive approach' to the transfer of Participatory Budgeting funds.

Figure 4-12: Good practice examples on the transferral of Participatory Budgeting funding to successful projects

Provision of Participatory Budgeting funds to local organisations

In **Sefton**, payments were made to the vast majority of groups upfront (payments were only made directly to the groups which held organisation-related bank accounts). Those without bank accounts were asked to submit invoices directly to the local delivery team who arranged payment. This arrangement was put in place to ensure small groups with limited capacity and good ideas were given the opportunity to apply for funding and could therefore take part in the process.

- 4.29 As the Participatory Budgeting process often forms part of an annual or time-associated cycle, it is also important to note that on completion of a particular cycle, the lessons learnt and feedback form part of the introduction of the subsequent cycle. Therefore the process can in some cases be viewed as cyclical.

How is the quality of the decision making process assessed?

- 4.30 Another area that was explored during the evaluation was the quality of decision making processes at the local level and the quality of information provided. This part of the evaluation highlighted that areas had not considered the quality of their processes to date and instead had assumed processes were sound as they generally involved a *'good representation of staff from the council, local councillors and residents'*³¹.

³¹ Quote taken from consultation with one of the case study areas.

- 4.31 In the small number of areas that provided views on the quality of their decision making processes, it was apparent that processes differed greatly not only between areas but also within areas. That is, three areas that facilitated Participatory Budgeting across the relevant authorities at ward/several ward level, commented that decision making was likely to be high quality in some sub-areas and relatively lower in quality in others as a result of inconsistencies in the management and policing of the process within the authorities. This was highlighted as a significant issue, which was being addressed in each of the areas.
- 4.32 A number of the lead Participatory Budgeting officers queried how they might undertake this form of assessment in the future, indicating a need for more guidance on how to ensure the transparency of the process e.g. If there are pre-selection criteria, how are they communicated? If there are scoring criteria, how were they drawn-up and applied? If proposals or projects are costed, how should this exercise be undertaken? (See Figure 4-13).

Figure 4-13: Good practice examples on costing prospective projects

Getting the right cost information about projects

The participating study areas used a variety of innovative methods to ensure that project applications were appropriately costed. For example, in **York**, the local authority team invited local residents to propose project ideas, which were then costed by the team on the basis of similar project costs known to the council – many projects related to common improvements to physical infrastructure, which were associated with standard unit costs, like the purchase of additional litter bins. Similarly, in **St Helens**, project ideas were appraised and costed by council and technical officers prior to them being presented to residents and in **Salford**, which sought to allocate part of the Highways budget through their Participatory Budgeting processes, Urban Vision (the private company that delivers highways services to the Council) developed short costed proposals for each viable prospective project.

Is the Participatory Budgeting process aligned with other engagement or decision making processes?

- 4.33 Anecdotally, it appears that in some cases the relatively small budgets have often limited links between local Participatory Budgeting activities and wider council decision making activities. For example, the majority of Participatory Budgeting processes and their resultant activities were not directly aligned with the activities of the relevant LSP, and some consultees believed that this was because funds were not of sufficient scale to influence mainstream budgets. This may not be an issue if Participatory Budgeting aims to address local issues that large mainstream services have ignored; but it will be an issue if Participatory Budgeting processes evolve to include the allocation of mainstream funds.

- 4.34 At the time of the fieldwork, some areas were considering how best to align future Participatory Budgeting activities with the wider decision making processes of either the council or relevant organisation. This included: aligning the Participatory Budgeting process with the overarching Community Strategy of a local authority, which may attract the attention of the LSP; or as areas move towards the allocation of mainstream as opposed to delegated budgets, tailoring the Participatory Budgeting process to address the strategic aims of the relevant funder and therefore to authority-wide issues.

Critical success factors for and barriers to delivering effective Participatory Budgeting

- 4.35 With regard to introducing and operating Participatory Budgeting, the participating study areas identified some critical success factors and barriers to the effective delivery of the process. Looking first at the critical success factors, the study areas identified a number of points which included the need to ensure the process had:
- high level buy-in linked to the hierarchy of the council or governing body
 - commitment to the provision of funding
 - sufficient planning and development time to ensure sufficient levels of training and capacity building is undertaken
 - a strong and effective delivery team
 - embedded itself within low level and easily recognisable geographies that are in line with the level of funding available for allocation via Participatory Budgeting
 - clear decision making/funding criteria
 - transparent decision making processes
 - sufficient levels of monitoring and evaluation post the decision making stage.
- 4.36 Table 4-3 sets out a list of the most commonly identified critical success factors and the implication or outcome associated with each factor.

Table 4-3: Critical success factors for the effective delivery of Participatory Budgeting

Category	Critical Success Factors	Outcome
Inception	Senior level buy-in and drive within the Council or governing body	Decision-making processes support Participatory Budgeting, removing obstacles to implementation and roll out of Participatory Budgeting
	Commitment to the provision of funding	Enables the process to be taken forward both in terms of money to allocate via Participatory Budgeting and resources to cover the cost of introducing a new form of decision making
Planning and set-up	Sufficient planning and development time – ensure training and capacity building undertaken	All parties are informed of the role they are to play in the process, which alleviates any anxieties or concerns – including councillors, officers and residents Development of more formal capacity building at the outset of a process
	Development of a vision which sets out what initial Participatory Budgeting events will lead to in terms of involvement in wider decision making	Clear objectives and goals are set for the process, which means people know what is to be achieved and can track progress over time
	Access to sufficient levels of external support to set up and plan the process	Independent support provides background on what's been learnt from elsewhere – so pitfalls can be avoided and brings a 'challenge' function to the set up process, making sure the process is rolled out effectively
Delivery	Embedding the process within low level and easily recognisable geographies that are in line with the level of funding available for allocation via Participatory Budgeting	Residents relate to and witness tangible benefits within their area, thereby securing higher levels of buy-in to the process and building local people's confidence that the process can make a difference
	Appropriate delivery team to facilitate the process – e.g. Neighbourhood Management team, who work closely with local residents and community organisations – as community development activities are key	Full range of community development techniques used to engage a wide range of residents and therefore increased participation – furthermore, increased levels of participation in other civic events or activities
	Technical expertise required to test the feasibility of ideas and to cost prospective projects	Introduces theoretical and practical knowledge of relevant policy areas Selection of appropriate/affordable shortlisted projects and presentation of accurate material to the wider community – reducing the possibility of dashed expectations, if proposals have to be withdrawn at a later date as they are not practical or have not been costed correctly

Table 4-3: Critical success factors for the effective delivery of Participatory Budgeting *continued*

Category	Critical Success Factors	Outcome
	Communication and transparency throughout the process – including successful marketing at the beginning of each process	High levels of attendance and participation at events Buy-in from the community Re-enforces the outcomes and impacts of the process raising awareness
	Clear decision making/funding criteria, which is disseminated to all potential bidders	Clarity of purpose and provision of clear and informed project applications
	'Pitching' at a level and in a form that the community can understand and respond to	Communities understand the purpose, the intentions of the process and each prospective project and therefore are actively engaged in the process – leading to more effective decision-making processes
	Transparent decision making process	Helps build confidence in the process and illustrates tangible results to those participating
	Effective monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure the benefits of the process and its subsequent activities are recorded and are fed back to local residents and funders	Maintains local engagement and enthusiasm for the process Funders understand what they got for their money and are therefore more willing to fund activity in the future
Representation	Ensure decision making is attended by a balanced representation from the relevant groups of interest in a local area without introducing bias into the process, particularly from specific well organised groups	Resultant projects are based on the pooled knowledge and views of the local community Increased community cohesion and social capital

Source: National Evaluation research

4.37 Looking now at the barriers to effective delivery of the Participatory Budgeting process identified by the study areas, it was clear the majority had been experienced as a result of the process being relatively new and therefore untested within the English context. For example, a number of areas highlighted:

- anxieties on the part of local councillors who were unsure of where they would fit within the process and in turn, what implications this would have on their role in the relevant local area
- the resource intensive nature of the set-up process for Participatory Budgeting (see Chapter 3 for more detail on the inputs associated with the set up and running costs associated with Participatory Budgeting)
- insufficient levels of monitoring and feedback during the decision making and subsequent stages of the process.

4.38 It was therefore clear that in the majority of cases the factors identified could be addressed over time and as the processes in question evolve and mature in their nature. Table 4-4 illustrates the most commonly cited barriers to the effective delivery of the process. It describes methods to address each of the identified factors and where possible, provides examples of mitigation activities.

Table 4-4: Barriers to delivery for the effective delivery of Participatory Budgeting

Category	Barriers to delivery	Methods to address the barrier	Examples of mitigation activities
Engagement	Lack of understanding of what Participatory Budgeting is and what it involves – i.e. service providers and communities struggle to grasp the Participatory Budgeting concept	Use community outreach and engagement work to raise awareness of the relevant process and to illustrate the potential influence residents could have on the outcomes of the process	See Figure 4-1 above, which illustrates examples of community engagement used by the study areas
	Lack of public interest	As above Keep the events/decision making process as simple as possible, to ensure that residents are not put off attending and participating	In Haringey , the simplicity of its one page project application form was cited to be one of the critical success factors of the process, as it encouraged residents to participate as they felt able to complete the form. This procedure was accompanied by a follow up process where the relevant members of the Neighbour Management Team gather additional information from the prospective bidders In the Manton Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder , decision making events have taken place in conjunction with key community events or venues (such as schools), which was felt to have significantly aided the engagement and participation process
	Councillors worried about where they fit within the process and what it means for their role in the local area	Ensuring that all councillors are offered the opportunity to take part in sufficient training to increase their understanding of their role in the Participatory Budgeting process	In Salisbury , Area Board members (which included Councillors) were given a presentation by the Participatory Budgeting Unit and were shown film footage of events in other areas. In addition, the Cabinet at the Council were provided with a project plan for the process, which set out the intended objectives and activities and therefore raised awareness
	Limited political support for the process, which could hinder a roll out of the process	Use examples to illustrate potential positive outcomes and increased community engagement as a result of a Participatory Budgeting process Demonstrate councils of all parties are operating Participatory Budgeting, suggesting it is not a party political issue	See Table 5-3 in Chapter 5

Table 4-4: Barriers to delivery for the effective delivery of Participatory Budgeting

Category	Barriers to delivery	Methods to address the barrier	Examples of mitigation activities
Availability of resources	<p>Limited level of funding available to allocate through the process often means that the process needs to be isolated to pilot activities or particular geographies</p>	<p>Seek buy-in from local authority departments and align the process with the strategic aims of the council to increase the potential funding avenues</p> <p>Make the process appealing to mainstream partners so that they can see the benefits of committing resources</p>	<p>A number of the study areas reported that links had been made with various departments at the relevant Councils to enhance both the project sift process (where ideas were passed onto the relevant departments for feasibility checks) and the project delivery process. For example, in Haringey, the process has helped to foster new relationships between the Neighbourhood Management team which facilitates the PB process and other Council departments, including Youth Services, Housing and Environmental Services</p>
	<p>Resource intensive during set up phase – needs significant level of resources to get the process off the ground</p>	<p>Participatory Budgeting process should align and tie into existing community engagement and empowerment activities and should not be viewed in isolation</p>	<p>All participating study areas stated that the Participatory Budgeting process had been designed and implemented to act as a supplementary activity to existing community engagement and empowerment activities</p> <p>A number of the areas facilitated the set up of the Participatory Budgeting process through staff teams which regularly worked with local communities and therefore whose job remit included community engagement/development activities</p>
	<p>Funding uncertainties mean it is not clear the Participatory Budgeting process will be maintained, a. as discretionary resources may not be available; and b. because of a reluctance to use Participatory Budgeting to determine budget priorities where savings are needed</p>	<p>Ensure sufficient senior level buy-in and drive within the Council or governing body</p>	<p>See Figure 4-5 above which sets out examples on how the study areas gained senior level buy-in to the Participatory Budgeting process</p>
Strategic alignment	<p>Lack of an overarching strategic plan which helps communities to prioritise issues/projects</p>	<p>Exploration of ways in which the relevant governance structures can become more strategic through the introduction of strategies/action plans at the local level, which are agreed by communities at the start of each cycle</p>	<p>In Tower Hamlets, a menu of services was presented at decision-making events. The menu was in line with the Cabinet's priorities and therefore projects supported as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process complemented the council's priorities</p>
Delivery weaknesses	<p>Lack of mechanisms to ensure consistency of delivery between areas within a local authority district</p>	<p>Development of minimum standards to facilitate the processes which are embedded across an area</p>	<p>Both barriers were cited by a number of the study areas, which were in the process of either considering or designing minimum standards to facilitate the Participatory Budgeting process. This is likely to include guidance on the minimum levels of support and feedback that are to be provided to project applicants and similarly, the embedding of consistent and clear monitoring and evaluation processes</p>
	<p>Insufficient levels of feedback and monitoring, which could leave project proposers feeling alienated and reluctant to engage in future processes</p>	<p>Development of clear monitoring and reporting procedures which are deployed across an area</p>	<p>See Figure 4-12 above illustrates good practice examples on the collation and dissemination of monitoring information</p>

Conclusion

- 4.39** This chapter has provided a summary of how Participatory Budgeting was established and how the process has operated in the areas that participated in the evaluation. It highlighted the variety of approaches that have been used to facilitate Participatory Budgeting processes and good practice examples of the methods by which individual steps of the process could be carried out. The next chapter provides initial findings on what the process has achieved to date.

5. Early findings on process outputs, outcomes and impacts

5.1 Chapter 2 set out case study areas' different aims and objectives. In practice most areas worked on the basis that the 'real value of Participatory Budgeting lies in the process, rather than the outcomes'. This approach was reflected in many of the stated objectives of local Participatory Budgeting activity (Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1: Summary case study objectives in operating Participatory Budgeting

Areas listed a number of process related objectives for introducing and operating Participatory Budgeting:

- facilitate meaningful participation by residents in local decision making with a view to improving local accountability, the quality of local services and the quality of life
- increase community pride and sense ownership
- increase community cohesion and bring different people together
- enhance the development of social capital
- enhancing the relationship between residents and councillors
- increase awareness of how the council works and constructs its budgets
- getting people to understand better how public money is spent
- develop effective support and project planning mechanisms
- establishing clear processes and accountability lines.

Source: Case Study Reports 2009

5.2 Few areas set 'service improvement' as an explicit aim or objective. Thus, in conducting the evaluation, it was anticipated that areas would have more information about the impact of Participatory Budgeting as a process, rather than evidence on what had been achieved by projects or services receiving some funding from a Participatory Budgeting process. This chapter focuses on the outputs, outcomes and (if appropriate) impacts of the Participatory Budgeting process. It follows the evaluation framework (Annex A), which provides a series of questions or indicators to help assess the process outputs, outcomes and impacts.

5.3 It should be noted that the findings in this chapter are based on limited, patchy and partial evidence. This limits the level of confidence in any particular finding. There are a number of reasons why evidence is limited at this stage. First, Participatory Budgeting is part of a dynamic process of local decision-making – and it takes time for evidence of impact on the way decisions are taken locally to become clear, not least as many decisions are taken on an annual basis, so the

opportunity to influence processes is limited. Second, different people have access to different parts of the picture, so stakeholders' views of what is to be done and what has been achieved may vary for all sorts of legitimate reasons. Third, while many areas set out to derive community benefit from the process – almost irrespective of the projects and activities that were funded – they have not necessarily collected systematic evidence of the impact of the Participatory Budgeting process on a local community. Thus, evidence of local impact is often anecdotal – irrespective of whether the source is from the community, local councillors, funders, or the staff who have facilitated the process.

- 5.4 A specific task in Phase 2 of the evaluation will be to pull together as many of the different pieces of the jigsaw as possible, in order to form a coherent picture of the impact Participatory Budgeting has had on decision-making processes in an area, as well as the impact of the Participatory Budgeting process on the local community.

Process outputs

- 5.5 The evaluation framework asks: 'What were the immediate and measurable results of the process?' It breaks down this question by asking:
- How many proposals/ideas were/are submitted for consideration? How has this changed over time? How is it different from previous arrangements?
 - How many different organisations apply to take part in the Participatory Budgeting process and what are their characteristics? How has this changed over time? Are these different from previous arrangements? If so how?
 - Which proposals/priorities were selected as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process? How have these changed over time? And how do they differ from previous arrangements?
 - Has participation increased as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process? And if so, by how much?
 - How were diversity issues addressed e.g. access, provision of childcare etc.
- 5.6 This chapter sets out what the evaluation has found out so far in relation to these questions. The findings are tentative at this stage, but point to areas that are likely to be fruitful in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

Proposals

Understanding the role of proposals in each Participatory Budgeting process

- 5.7 Chapter 2 noted the different approaches to Participatory Budgeting – with some areas using delegated budgets to call for proposals from a wide range of organisations, e.g. **Haringey** and **Southampton**; while others sought to identify issues and then commission projects to address them, e.g. York; and still others focused on prioritising council spending from a particular budget e.g. Lemington, in **Newcastle**, focused on prioritising revenue neutral improvements on public land.

- 5.8 Thus, in some cases the number of proposals received was a good indication of engagement with a range of different organisations; in other cases the issue was successfully identifying local priorities for a particular service or policy area and ensuring they were addressed, rather than soliciting proposals from a range of sources. Therefore any reference to the absolute volume of proposals as a measure of success should be viewed with caution.

No clear trend or pattern in the volume of proposals in areas calling for proposals

- 5.9 Most areas were able to provide evidence of the level of proposals they had received and any recent changes in the scale and content of those proposals – although the time periods over which data were available varied, as people had operated Participatory Budgeting for different lengths of time. Thus, it was not possible to produce a clear baseline and trend in terms of overall levels of proposals, as the areas introduced Participatory Budgeting at such varying times.
- 5.10 Where local level data was available for a number of years, there was no overall pattern or trend in the number of proposals received in Participatory Budgeting areas. In some cases there had been year-on-year increases, e.g. **Haringey** had a steady increase in proposals rising from 360 in 2007/08 to 500 in 2008/09 to over 600 in 2009/10). On the other hand, **York**, which has been running its scheme for some time, had a dip in the number of proposals received for the financial year 2010/11 (750, down from 988 for 2009/10 and 1,002 for 2008/09).

Comparisons of Participatory Budgeting and non-Participatory Budgeting areas

- 5.11 One way of understanding how Participatory Budgeting affected the flow of project proposals in those areas that called for proposals is to compare what was achieved in a Participatory Budgeting area with similar areas that operated some other decision-making process.
- 5.12 The **Salford** case study provided the opportunity to compare the impact of Participatory Budgeting between different areas of the same city in the same year because part of the highways budget was devolved to all areas of the city, but only some areas operated Participatory Budgeting. The areas that operated Participatory Budgeting generated a higher number of proposals than those that used some other form of community engagement and decision-making. It should be noted, however, that the numbers involved were relatively small (e.g. in **Claremont and Weaste**, which ran a Participatory Budgeting exercise, there were 19 proposals in 2007/08 and 22 in 2008/09, compared to **Swinton's** 13 in 2007/08 and eight in 2008/09) and, therefore, one should not read too much into them in isolation.

Summary

- 5.13 It was not possible to make a straightforward judgement about the changes in the volume of proposals put forward before and after the introduction of Participatory Budgeting. This was because:
- areas had been operating Participatory Budgeting (and other forms of devolved decision-making) for different periods of time, so there was no clear point of comparison across the group

- the level of funding available in a particular area varied from year to year, and this may well have affected bidders' incentives to put forward proposals
 - some areas did not run an annual process, e.g. Salford, so there is not an annual set of returns with which to compare the number of submitted proposals
 - some areas did not call for proposals, but asked for prioritisation within a local authority budget.
- 5.14 However, where a direct comparison could be made between the number of proposals generated by a Participatory Budgeting process and that generated via another processes, Participatory Budgeting appeared to generate more proposals.

Organisations

Some areas focus on prioritising public sector proposals while others focus on increasing the number of organisations involved

- 5.15 There was a wide range of approaches to generating projects and the engagement of different organisations, e.g. in **Tower Hamlets**, which was in the early stage of introducing Participatory Budgeting, there was no 'call' for proposals from other agencies, all projects were put forward by the council. While, on the other hand, **Haringey**, which had operated neighbourhood management and delegated budgets for some time, received hundreds of project proposals from many different organisations; and **York's** long-standing process engaged around 50 organisations, including parish councils and voluntary and community groups and organisations, in any given year.

Raising awareness and providing assistance to small grass roots groups can increase the number of organisations involved

- 5.16 Some consultees raised concerns about whether access to funding was limited by organisations' capacity to engage in the process, but others explained how such problems had been overcome. For example, in the first year of Participatory Budgeting in the **Southampton** case study, larger/better organised organisations were more successful in accessing funds than local grass roots groups. In the second year, community development workers helped local groups complete application forms, which improved their ability to access the funds. Other case study areas facing a limited number of responses sought to raise awareness and improve access to information, in order to increase the range of organisations involved.

Priorities

The structure of choices affected the variation in priorities

- 5.17 In order to see if the introduction of Participatory Budgeting led to different patterns of resources allocation, case studies explored whether the types of proposals put forward and the types of projects supported under Participatory Budgeting differed from those supported using other decision-making processes. The case studies illustrated a range of possible outcomes that were often related to the way that choices were structured, for example:

- the restrictions associated with a mainstream budget limited the range of projects that could be developed or delivered, which meant there was little difference in the types of projects funded, e.g. in **Salford** all proposals had to address highways issues of a certain scale, thus there was no discernible difference in the types of projects prioritised using Participatory Budgeting
- where a delegated 'pot' was linked to a specific theme, it limited the issues projects could address, but did provide an opportunity to commission different types of projects under that theme, e.g. in **Southampton** 100 per cent of the health related funds went to projects that focused on healthy lifestyle improvements – rather than primary care or mental health services.

Participatory Budgeting allows the flexibility to respond to changing local priorities

- 5.18 The case studies showed that where Participatory Budgeting had operated for some time, spending priorities changed. One example of this was in **York**, where traffic calming projects and community rangers were replaced by other types of projects as time went by. This pattern of change within the Participatory Budgeting process was also reported in **Haringey**, where small capital projects on youth and environment were favoured in the early years of Participatory Budgeting (2005/06 and 2006/07) to be supplemented by projects addressing social cohesion and involvement.
- 5.19 Thus, the case studies did not necessarily find that Participatory Budgeting led to different investment priorities when compared to other forms of devolved decision-making, but they did show that Participatory Budgeting offered the flexibility to respond to changing local concerns, especially where 'single pots' were delegated to the neighbourhood level.

Participation

There was no discernible trend in levels of participation

- 5.20 The case study areas were asked about levels of participation, i.e. numbers attending events or being engaged in the decision-making process. All case study areas collected figures on attendance at events/participation in the process. The evidence, however, is not as straightforward as might at first appear. This is because:
- in some areas the Participatory Budgeting process was part of wider ward or neighbourhood arrangements, which meant other issues affected the number of people attending meetings, e.g. in **St Helens** planning related issues brought a 'spike' in attendances (to 200); discounting such incidents, resident attendance at ward meetings fluctuated around an average of 16 people per ward meeting (there are 16 wards, so around 256 residents participated in each cycle of ward committees)
 - some areas operated a rolling programme of Participatory Budgeting, so different wards ran events in different years, making comparison potentially unhelpful
 - in some places, Participatory Budgeting had only operated for one or two years, e.g. **Salisbury** had only run one process, and **Southampton** had run two processes (it showed a slight increase from 52 to 62 participants).

- 5.21 Where records had been collected over a number of years, it was not clear that participation had grown, e.g. in **York**, which has used a postal ballot for a number of years, votes fluctuated between 3,000 and 7,000; but the most recent vote was at the lower end of the scale.

Methods of engagement and decision-making changed over time and affected levels of participation

- 5.22 Some case study areas changed the way they operated the Participatory Budgeting process, and this affected both the ability of people to engage with the process and therefore the numbers involved. For example, moving from a single event in one place to multiple events in different locations at different times, online voting and telephone voting. This adaptation of the process, not only changes the number engaged in the process but the nature of the engagement. Therefore, any comparison of numbers would need to be read with some caution.

In some areas, Participatory Budgeting expanded the number and range of people involved in local decision-making

- 5.23 Some case studies had clearly engaged local people who would not otherwise have got involved in local decision-making activity, e.g. the **Manton** case study, which operated Participatory Budgeting as part of a neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, reported that 35 per cent of those voting in the Participatory Budgeting process had never voted before in any capacity. This had been achieved by adding a Participatory Budgeting process to other events and operating the process in a number of different types of venues, e.g. schools, community centres, the miners' welfare etc.

Conclusions

- 5.24 While it was not possible to identify a trend in levels of participation due to a number of factors, such as the mix of start dates etc. The case studies showed Participatory Budgeting was not something that could be introduced and then be left to its own devices; it needs to be connected to local initiatives and processes and made relevant, as participation rates can go down as well as up.

Diversity

Collection of data on diversity was patchy

- 5.25 Case study areas were asked if they collected data on participants' gender, ethnicity, age, employment status and whether or not they had a disability. A number of different practices were operated in the case study areas (Table 5-1). Where diversity issues were monitored, gender and age were the most likely characteristics to be measured, and employment status was the least likely to be measured. Some areas reported either a reluctance of people to supply personal data or a fear among local authorities that a reluctance to supply personal data might reduce the response rate, so personal questions were not asked.

Outreach activity to engage ‘hard to reach groups’ was limited

- 5.26 In a number of cases, there was no or only limited outreach activity to engage ‘harder to reach groups’, although **Haringey’s** Neighbourhood Management team actively targeted excluded groups, and other areas, such as Tower Hamlets, did outreach work as a matter of course. There were also examples of specific Participatory Budgeting process to engage a particular group, e.g. the **Salisbury** Participatory Budgeting process worked with young people dealing with disabilities. Some case studies, e.g. **St Helens**, indicated that they were planning outreach work, but the main issue affecting areas’ ability to do outreach was developing the necessary capacity, e.g. the time and skills, to carry out the work.

Some Participatory Budgeting processes provided incentives that meant some groups were over represented at decision-making events

- 5.27 There was anecdotal evidence that there was ‘co-ordination’ among some participants, which meant some groups were ‘over-represented’ at events. A plausible explanation of this behaviour was offered by the **Newcastle** case study, which provided a direct comparison between a small grants Participatory Budgeting process that operated in one ward, and a Participatory Budgeting process to prioritise a mainstream environmental budget in the Lemington ward. A more representative sample of the population took part in the latter process, as there was no incentive for particular groups to attend the meeting, as no grants were going to be awarded.

Table 5-1 Summary of approaches to monitoring diversity

Area	Diversity data collected Yes/No	Comments
Haringey	No	<p>The case study said attendees were reluctant to complete diversity forms, so it was hard to collect data.</p> <p>Outreach work was carried out by the Neighbourhood Management Team.</p> <p>The case study noted that the age profile of participants tended to favour older residents, but when funding for projects affecting young people was on the agenda, younger people attended in greater numbers. Indicating a link between attendance and relevance.</p>
Lemington, Newcastle	Yes – partial	<p>Only data covering age and gender were collected.</p> <p>The case study highlighted the fact that incentives to participate affected the make up of participants.</p>
Manton, Bassetlaw	Yes – partial	<p>Only data on gender were collected, but efforts were made to ensure those taking part in the later stages of the process reflected the local population's characteristics.</p>
St Helens	Yes – but not regularly	<p>Diversity data were provided, based on responses to a participant survey conducted in October 2009 – employment status was not monitored.</p> <p>Monitoring data were not collected on a regular basis and to date outreach activity to encourage members of under-represented groups to attend has not been undertaken – however, work is planned to better engage young people, who are under-represented in ward meetings.</p>
Salford	Yes – partial	<p>Diversity data collected in Salford varied between areas/years: gender was consistently covered, but age and ethnicity were not.</p> <p>Events were promoted widely and were open to anyone. This did result in some groups being 'over-represented' at events, relative to their share of the local population. It appears – as with the Newcastle case study – this related to the incentives on offer, i.e. grants.</p>
Salisbury	Yes – partial	<p>The Participatory Budgeting process was focused on 'young people dealing with disability'. Data on employment status were not collected, as it was not relevant to the age range; but other data were collected.</p>
Thornhill, Southampton	Yes – partial	<p>Data were collected on gender, age and disability but not ethnicity or employment status.</p> <p>No particular steps were taken to ensure those taking part reflected the make up of the local population.</p>
York	No	<p>Personal data were not requested as part of the postal voting process in York, as it was feared such a request may reduce the response rate.</p> <p>There were no special measures to ensure 'harder to reach groups' are represented in the process, in part this was due to capacity constraints within the authority.</p>

Source: Case Study Reports 2009

Process outcomes

Initial findings

- 5.28 The evaluation framework covers a number of process outcomes, i.e. the intended and unintended consequences of operating a Participatory Budgeting process. As part of the fieldwork, stakeholders were asked for their view of process outcomes. As noted above, views within areas may differ depending on the level of exposure different stakeholders have had to the process and the areas where it may have had an impact. Table 5-2 provides a summary of the reported outcomes from the eight case study areas – it shows how many case studies said there was a positive impact on the outcome and provides some comment on the findings. At this stage of the evaluation, the findings are not systematic and they are based on a limited number sources and examples, therefore, they should be treated as tentative. They should be viewed as evaluator’s judgements, based on the limited evidence that has been elicited to date.
- 5.29 At this stage of the evaluation, local practitioners reported positive outcomes in relation to:
- the self-esteem and confidence of those who participated in the process – although areas have not conducted tests of participants’ self-esteem, third parties, such as parents or local authority staff, have reported improvements in self-esteem arising from involvement in Participatory Budgeting
 - people’s sense of their ability to influence local decision-making
 - people’s understanding of budget setting and the local democratic process – this is inevitably a difficult outcome to assess, and evaluators need to consider how best evidence of this can be captured in Phase 2
 - relations between councillors and their constituents – councillors were involved in Participatory Budgeting events in most of the areas and those that were involved reported improvements in relations with their constituents, although further work is required to gather the views of constituents themselves
 - community capacity in an area – especially when linked to wider community development work or neighbourhood management initiatives, the importance of the relationship between Participatory Budgeting and other forms of community empowerment, such as neighbourhood management, needs to be assessed in more detail in Phase 2 of the evaluation
 - better reflecting local people’s views on how to allocate resources – case study areas provided evidence that projects were more closely aligned to local needs, e.g. by using consultation processes to identify priorities, followed by calls for projects (this was discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 and the mix of projects is discussed in the next chapter)
 - an area’s ability to lever in additional resources – some areas provided evidence of the power of Participatory Budgeting to lever in resources, having made successful bids for lottery funding; however, the attraction of additional resources needs to be identified as an objective.

5.30 Local practitioners report limited progress in the following areas:

- understanding of issues surrounding resource allocation – in part this may be linked to the difficulty of assessing levels of understanding
- improvements in the political efficacy, social capital and social cohesiveness of the community
- increased engagement from hard-to-reach groups – some areas reported specific efforts to target some groups who might have been excluded from the process, but other areas did not make a specific effort to engage hard-to-reach groups, in part due to limited amounts of resources
- increased levels of community and voluntary sector involvement
- increased empowerment of councillors
- increased satisfaction with local services – evidence on this may prove difficult to produce at the level of the ward, as not all areas collect data at this level, equally it may take time for improvements to be made and there may be a further lag in local recognition of improvements
- increased community cohesion
- speed of decision making
- distributive efficiency
- costs of community engagement
- changes in the culture/attitude of the local authority (and other public sector bodies) to public engagement in decision-making
- changes in roles of councillors and officers.

5.31 Phase 2 of the evaluation needs to identify local evidence of progress and the factors leading to it. It also needs to explore why progress has not been made in some areas, e.g. Is more time required? Is Participatory Budgeting an inappropriate mechanism for making progress in a particular area? Are existing/other practices more effective? etc.

Table 5-2 Summary of reported process outcomes from case study areas

Indicator	Number saying yes	Comment and examples
Improvements in the self-esteem and confidence of participants	6	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this and a second thought it was too soon to say.</p> <p>However, it appears Participatory Budgeting is generally seen to be an effective means of improving individuals' self-esteem.</p> <p>For example, in Salisbury, feedback from some the parents of the disabled young people that took part in the decision making event reported an increase in the confidence of their child following their involvement in the process.</p>
Increased influence on local decisions (relates to NI 4)	8	<p>Participatory Budgeting can be said to make people feel they are more able to influence local decisions. However, where Participatory Budgeting is operated in a relatively small area this is not likely to effect local authority-wide measures. Furthermore, even in areas where Participatory Budgeting is used extensively, the proportion of the population that is actually engaged is relatively small, and therefore may not impact on local authority-wide measures, such as NI4.</p> <p>For example, a focus group with young people that was undertaken in Southampton (NDC) after the most recent Participatory Budgeting event showed that the young people felt their involvement had led them to feel an increased influence on local decisions.</p>
Increased understanding of the complexities of public budget setting and democratic structures	7	<p>Participatory Budgeting is reported as a relatively effective tool in helping improve understanding of the complexities of public budgets and democratic structures.</p> <p>For example, in St Helens, participants confirmed that they had no knowledge of local authority budget setting prior to engaging in Participatory Budgeting, but as a result of attending the Ward Committees, they now had a better understanding of the processes involved.</p>
Improved understanding of the issues surrounding resource allocation	4	<p>Two case studies did not provide evidence on this and two did not think Participatory Budgeting had improved understanding of resource allocation more generally.</p> <p>For example, the Participatory Budgeting process in Newcastle was reported to have provided an insight into the management and allocation of public funds.</p>
Improvements in the councillor-resident relationship	8	<p>Councillors were involved in most case study areas. They reported the process enabled them to connect more effectively with their constituents, and improved their understanding of local concerns.</p> <p>For example, consultees in the Southampton Participatory Budgeting area stated that the support provided by councillors to facilitate the Participatory Budgeting process had led to an increase in the numbers of local residents attending the local councillor and MP surgeries, as the residents now felt confident enough to approach them and having seen them at the decision making event were more aware of who they were and what they did.</p>

Table 5-2 Summary of reported process outcomes from case study areas

Indicator	Number saying yes	Comment and examples
Improvements in the political efficacy, social capital and social cohesiveness of the community	4	<p>Two case studies did not provide evidence on this and two said Participatory Budgeting had not led to improvements – although it should be noted, there was little hard data on these issues in the case study areas.</p> <p>For example, the Manton Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder reported that the Participatory Budgeting process had become an important 'tool in the box' for increasing levels of social capital in the area – a local priority.</p> <p>Similarly, in Newcastle, consultees reported that the Participatory Budgeting events brought different sections of the community together. One key stakeholder stated they were particularly impressed with the way that the process had enabled young and old people to work together. In addition, interviews with participants confirmed that exposure to ideas about facilities for young people had increased sympathy for them among older people who may previously have seen them as a nuisance or felt threatened by them.</p>
Increased engagement from hard-to-reach groups	3	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this.</p> <p>The majority of case studies did not specifically target hard to reach groups to attend or participate in events – and given the nature of the events, some found it hard to provide data on the diversity of participants. However, some areas specifically targeted the Participatory Budgeting process at hard to reach groups, e.g. Salisbury and Buckinghamshire, where the latter targeted hard to reach young people who did not normally engage with the Youth Council.</p> <p>Increased community outreach work undertaken in Haringey was felt to have led to successes in relation to engaging members of some of its less engaged communities (see Figure 4-1).</p>
Increased levels of community and voluntary sector involvement (relates to NI 3)	4	<p>One case did not provide evidence on this and another noted the difficulty in measuring the impact but provided anecdotal evidence of local improvement.</p> <p>As with NI4 case studies queried whether Participatory Budgeting was of sufficient scale to make a measureable impact at the local authority level.</p> <p>The case study areas reported that a number of the projects that had been allocated funding through the Participatory Budgeting process were delivered by community and voluntary sector organisation and therefore that the process had increased levels of involvement on a small scale.</p> <p>Another example of a small scale improvement in NI 3 was highlighted by Haringey, which stated that community engagement in their decision making programmes was felt to have increased the uptake of residents attending the Community Leadership Programme, which provides capacity building skills such as training in public speaking.</p>

Table 5-2 Summary of reported process outcomes from case study areas

Indicator	Number saying yes	Comment and examples
Increased empowerment of Councillors	4	<p>There was an even split between those that did and those that did not think Participatory Budgeting empowered councillors – in part related to whether councillors had previously had a delegated budget to fund local activity.</p> <p>For example, in Salisbury, councillors reported a general satisfaction with the process and were positive about their role, seeing it in terms of enabling and leadership.</p> <p>Similarly, in Haringey, a number of councillors were reported to have stated an enthusiasm to sustain the decision making programme, as they felt it increased their knowledge of local issues and needs, gave them a useful platform to effectively engage with residents and provided them with a form of autonomy to influence what happens in their area.</p>
Increased satisfaction with local services (relates to NI 5)	3	Two case studies did not provide evidence on this
Increased community cohesion (relates to NI 1)	4	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this.</p> <p>Evidence was limited on this in terms of building bridging social capital between ethnic and faith communities, in some cases due to a mono-cultural make of the population concerned.</p> <p>Where there were positive indications of community cohesion, they linked to inter-generational activity – with Participatory Budgeting processes either bringing older and younger people together to work on shared issues, or to bring them together to improve understanding of specific issues.</p>
Increased community capacity in an area	5	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this.</p> <p>In most cases, Participatory Budgeting was not operated in isolation, therefore it was difficult to pin down with any degree of accuracy how Participatory Budgeting had helped build community capacity; but support in developing projects and in dealing with mainstream service providers increased local capacity to influence changes in the area.</p>
Decisions are made in less time than in the past; more decisions taken using the same resources; better quality of decisions, such as fewer reversals of previous decisions	4	Two case studies did not provide evidence on this and two did not think the process had reduced the time or resources taken to make decisions.

Table 5-2 Summary of reported process outcomes from case study areas

Indicator	Number saying yes	Comment and examples
Allocative efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources to better reflect the wishes of citizens	6	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this, but for the most part case studies reported that Participatory Budgeting had led to an allocation of resources that more effectively reflected citizens' wishes.</p> <p>For example, in York, it was felt that the funds that had been spent to address local concerns about personal safety, e.g. on street lights, security lights, to commission additional PCSO patrols, had reduced people's fear of crime.</p>
Distributive efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources in favour of those in greatest need	3	<p>One case study did not provide evidence on this and four did not think Participatory Budgeting had led to a reallocation of resources in favour of those in greatest need. In part this can be explained by the limited amount of money involved in the Participatory Budgeting process. And while some areas did allocate resources with an eye to deprivation data, others allocated money on a per head basis.</p>
Have the costs of engaging local people in decision making decreased as a result of the process?	1	<p>Five case studies could not answer the question, in part because the costs of engagement prior to the introduction of Participatory Budgeting were not known.</p>
Has the Participatory Budgeting process helped to leverage additional funding into the area? And if so, was this output intended or unintended? And, do you feel that this output can be repeated or sustained over the longer term	5	<p>Two case studies could not provide evidence on this.</p> <p>Significant six figure sums were accessed from the Big Lottery, in part due to the operation of Participatory Budgeting, e.g. Manton.</p> <p>And it is clear that in some places, such as Newcastle, Participatory Budgeting was seen as a way of making the area more attractive to funders. However, in the long term, as more places introduce Participatory Budgeting, the less likely it is that an area will be able to leverage its use of Participatory Budgeting to attract additional funds.</p>
Has the culture/attitude of the local authority (and other public sector bodies) to public engagement in decision-making altered?	2	<p>It should be noted that in some cases 'no change' – was not seen as a negative outcome as the culture was already seen as positive towards devolution and community empowerment.</p> <p>However, more broadly, where there was a negative answer to this question it was because there had been no significant change to traditional approaches by mainstream providers.</p>

Table 5-2 Summary of reported process outcomes from case study areas

Indicator	Number saying yes	Comment and examples
Has the role of the councillor changed as a result of Participatory Budgeting?	3	<p>Only a minority of areas said Participatory Budgeting had changed councillors' roles.</p> <p>Some councillors viewed the changes in a positive light (as Participatory Budgeting had raised their profile and helped them engage with and understand their constituents). Others saw Participatory Budgeting in more negative terms (as it took away a degree of influence or control that they used to exercise and for some undermined the role of representative democracy).</p>
Has the role of officers changed as a result of Participatory Budgeting and if so how?	4	The limited nature of some of the pilots meant that although the role of officers changed in relation to their respective pilots, this has not resulted in a wider change in role.

Source: *Case Study Reports 2009*

5.32 Case studies also reported other outcomes from the process. **St Helens** noted that deliberation over local concerns had raised awareness over environmental issues and that relations between officers and members had improved as a result of the devolved arrangements. **Haringey** flagged up successes in 'bending mainstream resources' into local areas and the development of new and/or improved working relationships within the local authority and between the local authority and partners. Looking specifically at the bending resources example, consultees in Haringey reported that this had come about as a result of their project application process. That is, specific local needs had been highlighted through project proposals, which had in turn been addressed through the 'bending' of mainstream resources as opposed to being routed through the decision making process.

Conclusions

5.33 Some tentative conclusions on the outcomes from the process can be drawn from the (limited) evidence provided by the case studies. On the positive side of the balance sheet, Participatory Budgeting was reported to:

- have a positive impact on the self-esteem and confidence of those who participated in the process
- increase people's sense of their ability to influence local decision-making
- improve people's understanding of budget setting and the local democratic process

- improve relations between councillors and their constituents
- increase community capacity in an area – especially when linked to wider community development work or neighbourhood management initiatives
- better reflect local people’s views on how to allocate resources
- have a positive effect on an area’s ability to lever in additional resources.

5.34 The evidence is less clear with regard to Participatory Budgeting’s impact on:

- improved understanding of resource allocation – this could be a result of the limited number of case studies linking Participatory Budgeting to mainstream budgets
- improvements in political efficacy and social capital
- the ability to increase engagement from ‘hard to reach groups’ – as noted above, few case studies conducted specific outreach activity to address this issue, although some ran processes dedicated to particular groups
- increased levels of community and voluntary sector involvement – this may be because some processes focused on setting priorities within a mainstream service rather than soliciting proposals from third sector organisations, thereby limiting the potential aspects of engagement
- increased empowerment of councillors – councillors reported the Participatory Budgeting process improved their understanding of and links to local people, but there was still a sense that by taking decisions previously taken by councillors, Participatory Budgeting had disempowered councillors
- increased community cohesion
- reductions in the time taken to make decisions on how to allocate resources
- targeting resources on those in greatest need
- whether the costs of engagement had fallen – most areas were unable to answer the question due to lack of data.

5.35 There was also a group of outcomes for which Participatory Budgeting did not appear to be operating at a sufficiently large enough scale to influence them in a measurable way:

- increased satisfaction with local services – some case studies were concerned that Participatory Budgeting’s role in affecting services was limited and therefore any changes in levels of satisfaction could not be linked to Participatory Budgeting
- changing the roles and cultures of councillors and officers in public sector organisations – some areas were confident that mainstream providers’ attitudes to involving the public were changing; however, some case studies also highlighted that Participatory Budgeting’s role was often limited to particular areas or budgets, and that this meant in practice organisations were not required to make wholesale changes in roles and cultures.

Process impacts

- 5.36 The evaluation framework asks for evidence of impact in the following areas:
- (re-)engagement with local democratic processes e.g. increased turnout to local elections
 - governance processes
 - wider changes to the way public service providers work with local communities to take budgeting decisions
 - quality of life.
- 5.37 These headings are relatively broad. This gives the evaluation the flexibility to respond to local priorities, e.g. the use of Participatory Budgeting (perhaps along with other community development tools) as a means of building the ‘resilience’ of local communities, by building ‘social capital’. However, at this stage, the evaluation has not collected evidence on this particular type of impact. Furthermore, in order for the evaluation to collect this type of community impact, the evaluation would need to work closely with a case study area that a. set out to achieve such an impact and b. had the capacity to track evidence of changes in social capital and resilience. This issue will be factored in to the development of Phase 2.
- 5.38 Over time, it is possible that the Participatory Budgeting process will impact on ‘structural issues’ that affect the context in which Participatory Budgeting operates. These ‘second round’ impacts were not anticipated at this stage of the evaluation. Furthermore, some case studies raised concerns that, as relatively small pilots, it was not likely they would influence the wider structural issues. At this stage, this would appear to be a valid concern, because even if the Participatory Budgeting activity is successful in its own terms, it may not be of sufficient salience to local people to alter their situations or their attitudes to wider governance and service issues. This is a consideration for Phase 2 of the evaluation; and suggests that the impact of Participatory Budgeting in case study areas will be affected as much by external activity to promote Participatory Budgeting as by what is achieved by local Participatory Budgeting processes. However, some evidence of impact was found in some of the case study areas (Figure 5-2).

Figure 5-2: Early evidence of impact from case study areas

In Menton, which covers a small area that is part of a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder project, local residents surveys showed a majority of people thought the area had improved over the last two years; plus 35 per cent of those voting in the Participatory Budgeting process had never participated in a vote before – which could lead to improved turnouts at future elections.

In Salford, the minor highways improvements have led to improved quality of life, but on the other dimensions it was felt too early to form a judgement.

In Salisbury, which targeted children dealing with disability, parents have already indicated their increased satisfaction with services and improvements in their children's quality of life; and young people have been able to influence decisions in a way that they have not been able to before. Furthermore, Area Boards are expected to make some of their funding available to operate a Participatory Budgeting process.

Source: *Case Study Reports 2009*

Conclusions

- 5.39 This section has summarised information provided by case studies on the outcomes from the operation of the Participatory Budgeting process. The differences in the duration and types of activity carried out in the case study areas means that it is difficult to form firm judgements on issues such as levels of participation and empowerment. However, evidence provided by case studies suggests Participatory Budgeting has had a positive impact on the self-esteem of those involved in Participatory Budgeting processes, local capacity and the perceived ability to influence changes in an area and relations between councillors and residents. It is not surprising that at this stage of the development of the case studies, there is less evidence of Participatory Budgeting's ability to lead to significant changes in organisational culture.

6. Early findings on projects/service improvement outputs, outcomes and impacts

Introduction

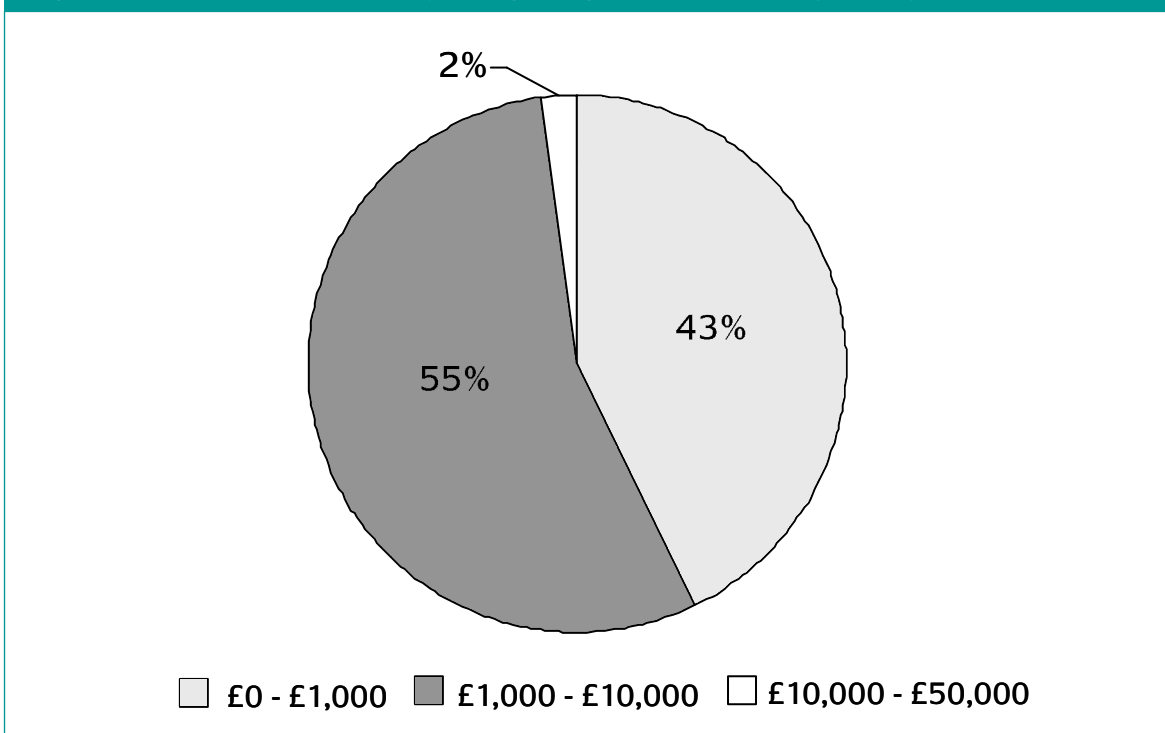
- 6.1 If Participatory Budgeting is to be seen as an effective means of allocating resources it needs to demonstrate what has been delivered by the projects and service activities that have been subject to the Participatory Budgeting allocation process.
- 6.2 This section provides an analysis of information from the eight case studies about the nature and scale of the projects supported and services influenced by the Participatory Budgeting process, what might have happened to those activities in the absence of the Participatory Budgeting process, and what impact they have had or are expected to have on the areas concerned.
- 6.3 Whereas Section 3 (inputs) made a clear distinction between case studies with neighbourhood-based Participatory Budgeting activity and those with local authority-wide activity such a distinction is less helpful when analysing how Participatory Budgeting-influenced resources have been used. This is because in practice local authority-wide Participatory Budgeting activity has been delivered via neighbourhood structures, such as ward committees or community committees. Thus, whether Participatory Budgeting was organised strategically at the local authority wide or neighbourhood level, in all eight cases the focus of the activity on the ground has been very much on the influence that local people have been able to bring to bear on resource allocation for projects in their neighbourhood.
- 6.4 The section begins with an analysis of the **projects** influenced by Participatory Budgeting (relevant to all eight case studies). Some of the same case studies were also able to point to a degree of **service change**, where portions of service budgets were allocated through Participatory Budgeting and spent on local projects. At this stage only limited evidence is available on the extent to which mainstream services have been influenced by Participatory Budgeting – a brief discussion is included at the end of the section.

Projects influenced by Participatory Budgeting

Size of projects influenced by Participatory Budgeting

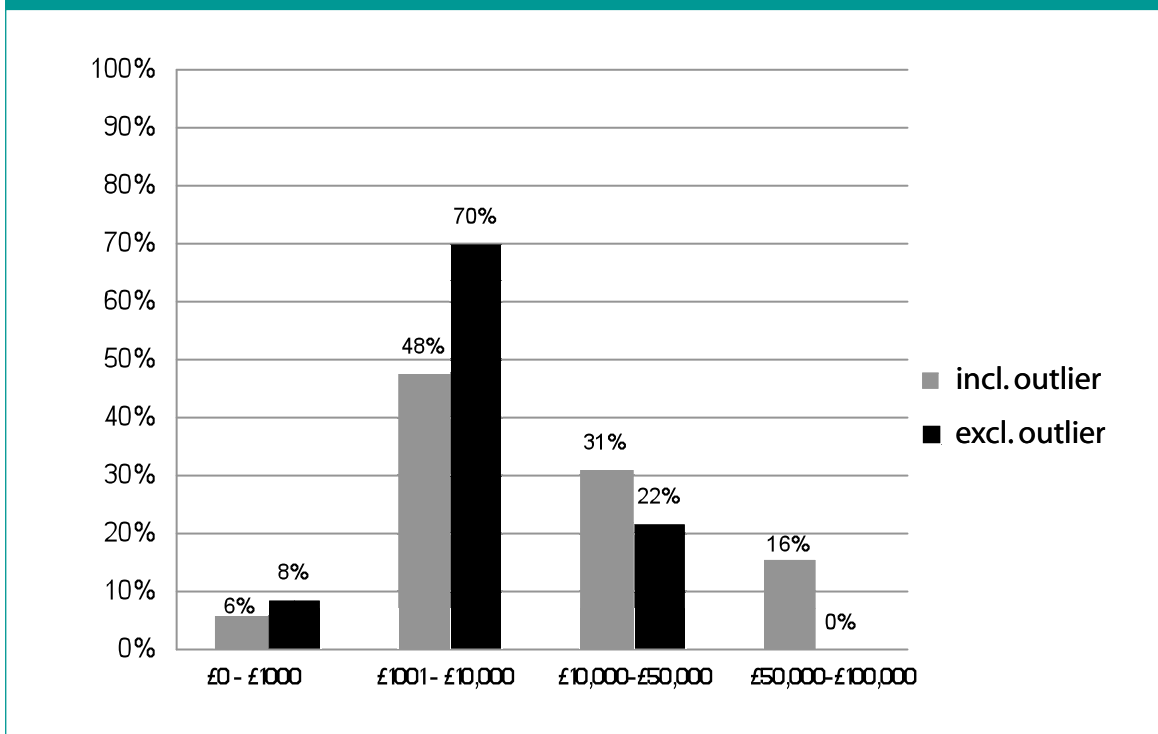
- 6.5 In the period 2005/6 to 2009/10, Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas has influenced the allocation of over £5 million of discretionary resources. As noted earlier in the report, a few areas have been implementing Participatory Budgeting for many years, while others are relative newcomers to the process. The annual average resource allocated through Participatory Budgeting across the eight case study areas was £211,000. Four of the areas allocated around £50,000 per annum in the years when Participatory Budgeting operated, two had allocated around a quarter of a million per annum on average, one allocated an average of £365,000 and the final area allocated an average of £620,000 per annum. These last two areas were both operating on a local authority-wide basis and had been running Participatory Budgeting for some time.
- 6.6 Participatory Budgeting-allocated resources have supported a total of 2366 projects over the same period (2005/6 to 2009/10). The case study reports provided a valuable insight into the size and characteristics of projects funded through Participatory Budgeting-allocated funds. Figure 6-1 shows that over two fifths (43%) of projects were very small indeed (costing between £1 and £1,000) while over half (55%) were in the £1001 to £10,000 size band. Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas has therefore been predominantly about allocating discretionary grants on small local projects. Overall, the average project size across all case study areas and the whole period has been £2,195.

Figure 6-1: % of Participatory Budgeting-influenced projects by size band



- 6.7 Figure 6-2 shows the share of project expenditure associated with each of these size bands. Across all eight case studies, on average 16% of Participatory Budgeting-influenced expenditure falls into the £50,000 to £100,000 size band and a further 31% into the £10,000 to £50,000 size band (Figure 6.2). However, one particular case study was dominated by capital spend on local highway works, where the average project size was significantly higher. When this outlier is excluded, Figure 6-2 shows that **70% of Participatory Budgeting-influenced project expenditure falls into the £1,000 to £10,000 project size band.**

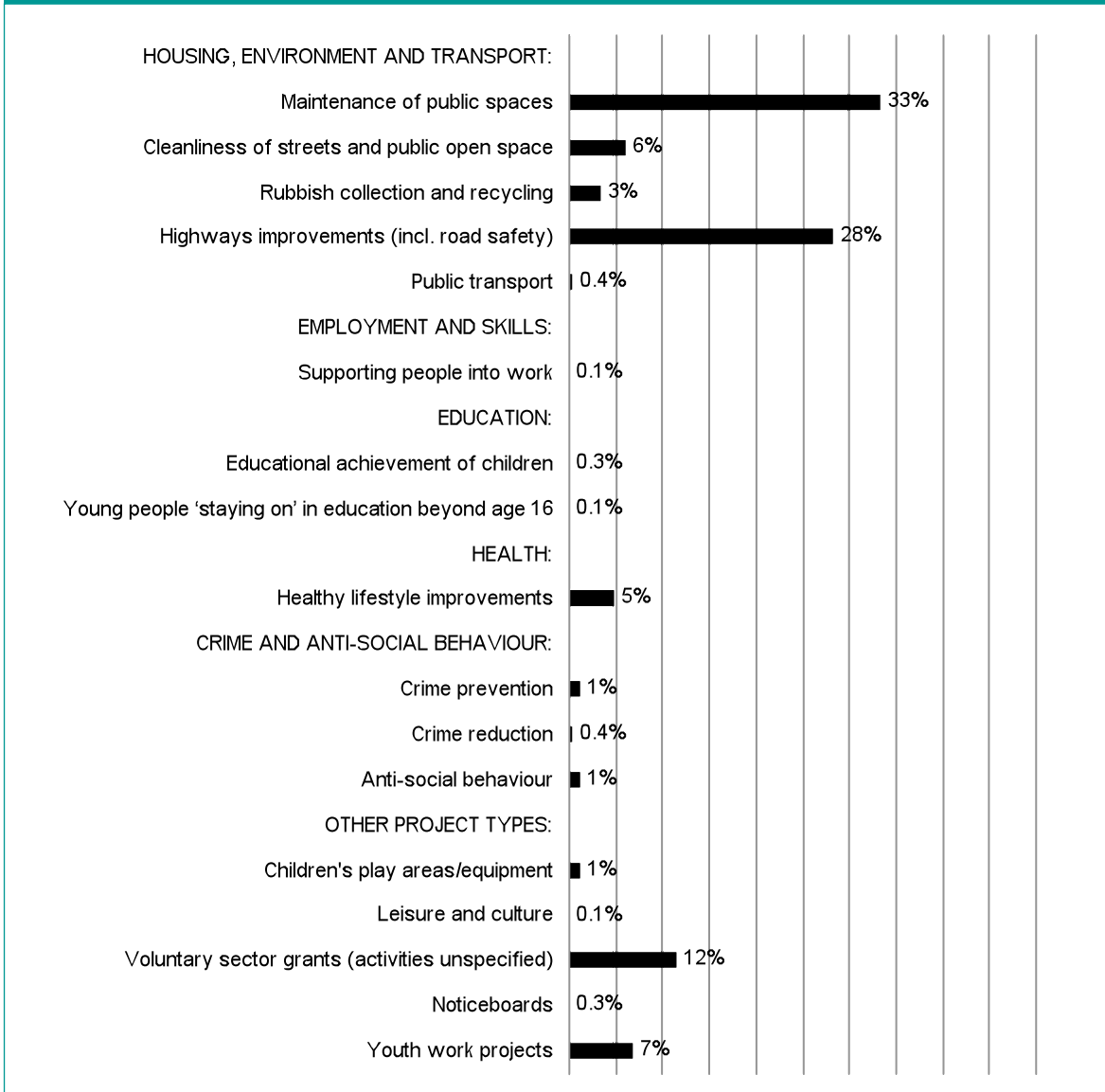
Figure 6-2: % of Participatory Budgeting-influenced expenditure by size band



Type of projects influenced by Participatory Budgeting

- 6.8 The case study research sought a detailed breakdown of Participatory Budgeting-influenced projects and expenditure by type of activity, and seven of the case study reports were able to provide this. Figure 6-3 shows that for the 692 projects covered by the analysis, **70% of project activity was concerned with environmental and highways improvements.**
- 6.9 A third of projects analysed (33%) were focused on the maintenance of public spaces and a further 28% were about highways improvements, including road safety. A further 9% have been focused on street cleaning and refuse collection activity. Of the remainder, dominant project activities have included grants for a wide range of voluntary and community based activity (12%) and expenditure on youth work projects (7%). Five per cent of projects were focused on public health activities.

Figure 6-3: % of Participatory Budgeting-influenced projects* by type



Source: * CEA analysis of case study reports, with data on 692 projects in 7 case study areas. One of the 8 case study areas was unable to provide the level of detail required

6.10 Because of the diversity of specific project activity and of output measures used, it was not possible to derive a consistent set of output indicators and quantify these, but Table 6-1 provides a qualitative illustration of a typical project undertaken in each of the key project types to indicate the range and scale of activity being funded.

Table 6-1: Examples of project activity influenced by Participatory Budgeting

Project type (% of projects analysed)	Example of typical project activity	Nature and scale (if known) of that project's outputs
Maintenance of public spaces (33%)	Patch of untidy and overgrown local eyesore that had been prone to flytipping. Area was cleaned up and monitored to keep levels of tipping down. Cost: £1,000-2000	Improvement to the local environment benefiting 100+ local people
Highways improvements (28%)	Driver feedback signs to alert drivers to their speed and encourage them to slow down. Cost: £10,000-15,000	Decrease in speeding vehicles benefiting all local pedestrians and motorists
Youth work projects (7%)	To provide training opportunities and work experience in a local café for young adults Cost: £3,000-6,000	Six young people have been referred and two youth workers are being trained to support the activity
Cleanliness of streets and open spaces (6%)	Placing 25 skips around an estate Cost: £4,000-5,000	Improved visual appearance for all residents of the estate and reduced fly tipping
Healthy lifestyle improvements (5%)	Programme of advice delivered at local youth venues focusing on alcohol consumption, binge drinking and its effects, staying safe, sexual health, etc. Also opportunities to participate in Duke of Edinburgh's Award Cost: £3,000-4000	Health benefits for up to 40 young people
Crime and anti-social behaviour (2%)	Event for young people to help older people input ICE (in case of emergency) numbers into mobile phones Cost: £500-1,000	Breaking down barriers between young people and the elderly
Educational achievement of children (0.3%)	Funding towards ground work needed for installation of greenhouse at primary school garden and for purchase of tools and plants Cost: £1,500-2,500	Educational and wider health benefits (e.g. healthy eating) for approx 400 pupils and their families

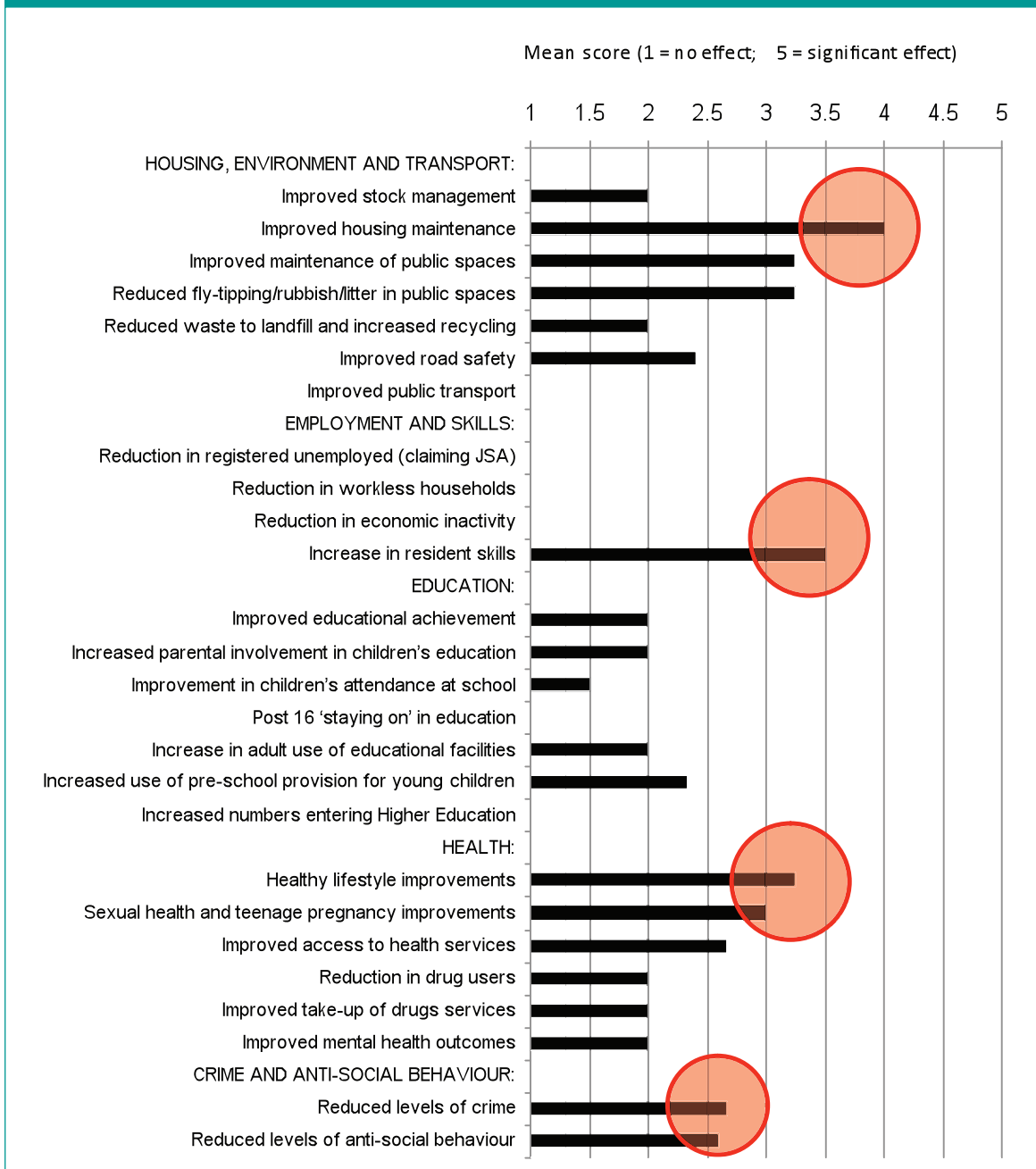
What would have happened to projects in the absence of Participatory Budgeting (additionality)?

- 6.11 The case study research explored what difference the Participatory Budgeting process made to the nature and scale of projects. Bound up in this **additionality** issue is, of course, the allocation mechanism that would have prevailed in the absence of Participatory Budgeting (the process counterfactual). As part of this analysis, the case study research was asked to sample 15 projects and provide an account of what would have happened to them in the absence of Participatory Budgeting along with a commentary on the reasons why. Areas found it hard to form this judgement – and development of the approach will form a challenge for Phase 2 of the evaluation.
- 6.12 Some subjective judgements were made. In one area Participatory Budgeting did not make a fundamental difference to the nature of the activities brought forward in comparison with the non-Participatory Budgeting situation. The devolved budget in question was relatively narrow in terms of the way it could be used. A comparator area sought resident input on priorities; the scope for much variation between the Participatory Budgeting and non-Participatory Budgeting project activities was always likely to be limited. In another area all of the funding allocated through Participatory Budgeting came from an existing neighbourhood management initiative, so it is highly likely that had Participatory Budgeting not existed a significant number of the projects would still have been funded, albeit possibly in a different form or function, as they all address important priorities for the neighbourhood. However, in another area stakeholders agreed that in the majority of cases projects would not have been undertaken in the absence of Participatory Budgeting. They also thought Participatory Budgeting had enabled the local authority to address a range of community-based issues not addressed through mainstream programmes. Another area stated most of the projects were unlikely to have been developed without Participatory Budgeting, with the exception of one project for which matched funding was needed (money which would eventually have been raised by the voluntary organisation in question).

What outcomes are expected from Participatory Budgeting projects?

- 6.13 The case study research probed for the extent to which Participatory Budgeting-influenced projects contributed or could be expected to contribute to outcome change. Given the activities of the projects, with the dominance of environmental and transport initiatives, it is not surprising that Figure 6-4 shows that these outcomes are those areas where Participatory Budgeting-influenced activity is expected to make the greatest difference. Similarly, the strong health dimension is to be expected given the range of activities focused on young people and the elderly and the fact that health benefits so often emerge through cross-cutting activities of these kinds. The case studies also pointed to the important role that Participatory Budgeting has had in increasing resident skills, by bringing about a greater appreciation of public sector expenditure issues and prioritisation.

Figure 6-4: Expected contribution of Participatory Budgeting projects to outcomes (where the outcomes were considered relevant)



Source: Case study reports

6.14 However, notwithstanding these positive results, case study reports emphasised that these outcomes could not be expected to be on a significant scale, given the relatively limited scale of expenditure in question. They also flagged up that these outcomes may take some time to emerge, particularly as many of the projects were undertaken only within the last two years.

6.15 From a policy perspective, it is useful to note that the outcomes from Participatory Budgeting activity are, for the most part, seen as relevant to local authority LAA targets. In six out of the eight case study areas the outcomes were reported to feature in LAA targets. Table 6-2 sets out the National

Indicators which were identified. Perhaps surprisingly NI 4 only featured in four out of the six case studies reporting a link between Participatory Budgeting outcomes and LAA targets. Nevertheless, it is reassuring to know that in these areas a direct link is being made between the role of Participatory Budgeting, NI 4 and thus Public Service Agreement (PSA) 21.³²

Table 6-2: Participatory Budgeting-influenced projects and LAA targets

	No. of case study areas (max 6) reporting that outcomes of Participatory Budgeting projects feature in LAA targets
4: % of people who feel they can influence decision in their locality	4
195: Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)	3
196: Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping	3
6: Participation in regular volunteering	2
17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	2
119: Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	2
1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	1
2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	1
5: Overall/general satisfaction with the area	1
19: Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	1
47: People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	1
50: Emotional health of children	1
69: Children who have experienced bullying	1
110: Young people's participation in positive activities	1
124: People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition	1
128: User reported measure of respect and dignity in their treatment	1
135: Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	1
142: Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	1
175: Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	1

³² Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities

Services influenced by Participatory Budgeting

- 6.16 As noted above, all eight case studies were using Participatory Budgeting to allocate discretionary funding on projects. Five of these were linked to service budgets (Table 6-3) and the case study research sought to probe what influence Participatory Budgeting has had, and might have in the future, on service delivery.
- 6.17 As Table 6.4 shows, in all five case studies with a service dimension there was felt to have been an explicit objective of increasing service responsiveness. Other objectives – relating to quality, frequency or the type of services – were mentioned by three of the five areas. In these areas, Participatory Budgeting was felt to be at such an early stage that it was difficult to speculate on the precise form that these service improvements might take.

Table 6-3: Case studies, Participatory Budgeting and service improvements

	No. of case studies
Number of case studies citing Participatory Budgeting as being linked to service improvements	5 out of 8
<i>Service improvement objectives of Participatory Budgeting for the 5 case studies where it was relevant</i>	
To increase responsiveness of public services	5 (100%)
Improve the quality of services	3 (60%)
Increase the frequency of services	2 (40%)
Change the way services are accessed	2 (40%)
Provide new facilities or services	3 (60%)

- 6.18 In two of the areas, where the focus was felt to be solely on responsiveness, Participatory Budgeting has already caused a significant increase in the direct exposure of local authority officials – particularly those involved in highways and environmental improvements – to local people and their priorities. Previously resource allocation decisions would have been made on a purely technical basis and using objective, priority-based systems. Participatory Budgeting has brought service providers and local people together to discuss and debate local priorities in a more rounded way. As discussed in the sub-section above on projects, this has already led to projects being brought forward that may not have been regarded as priorities.
- 6.19 Because of the small number of case studies involved, and the fact that the findings about other dimensions of service improvement were felt to be speculative, it has not been possible to pursue this dimension of the evaluation further in Phase 1 of the evaluation. However, with more time for Participatory Budgeting to bed in, there is scope to track service change as part of the Phase 2 work.

7. Summary and conclusions

- 7.1 The introduction posed a series of questions related to making the business case for Participatory Budgeting. The findings of Phase 1b provide some evidence on how to answer these questions.

Why should we do Participatory Budgeting?

- 7.2 Participatory Budgeting helps to improve relationships within communities and between communities and service providers. In addition, the process draws on local knowledge and opinions to ensure resources are spent on what matters to local people. Case study areas provided a range of reasons for introducing Participatory Budgeting, most of them related to issues associated with community empowerment, including:

- to facilitate meaningful participation by residents in local decision making with a view to improving local accountability, the quality of local services and the quality of life
- to increase community pride and sense ownership
- to increase community cohesion and bring different people together
- to enhance the development of social capital
- to enhance the relationship between residents and councillors
- to increase awareness of how the council works and constructs its budgets
- getting people to understand better how public money is spent
- to develop effective support and project planning mechanisms
- establishing clear processes and lines of accountability.

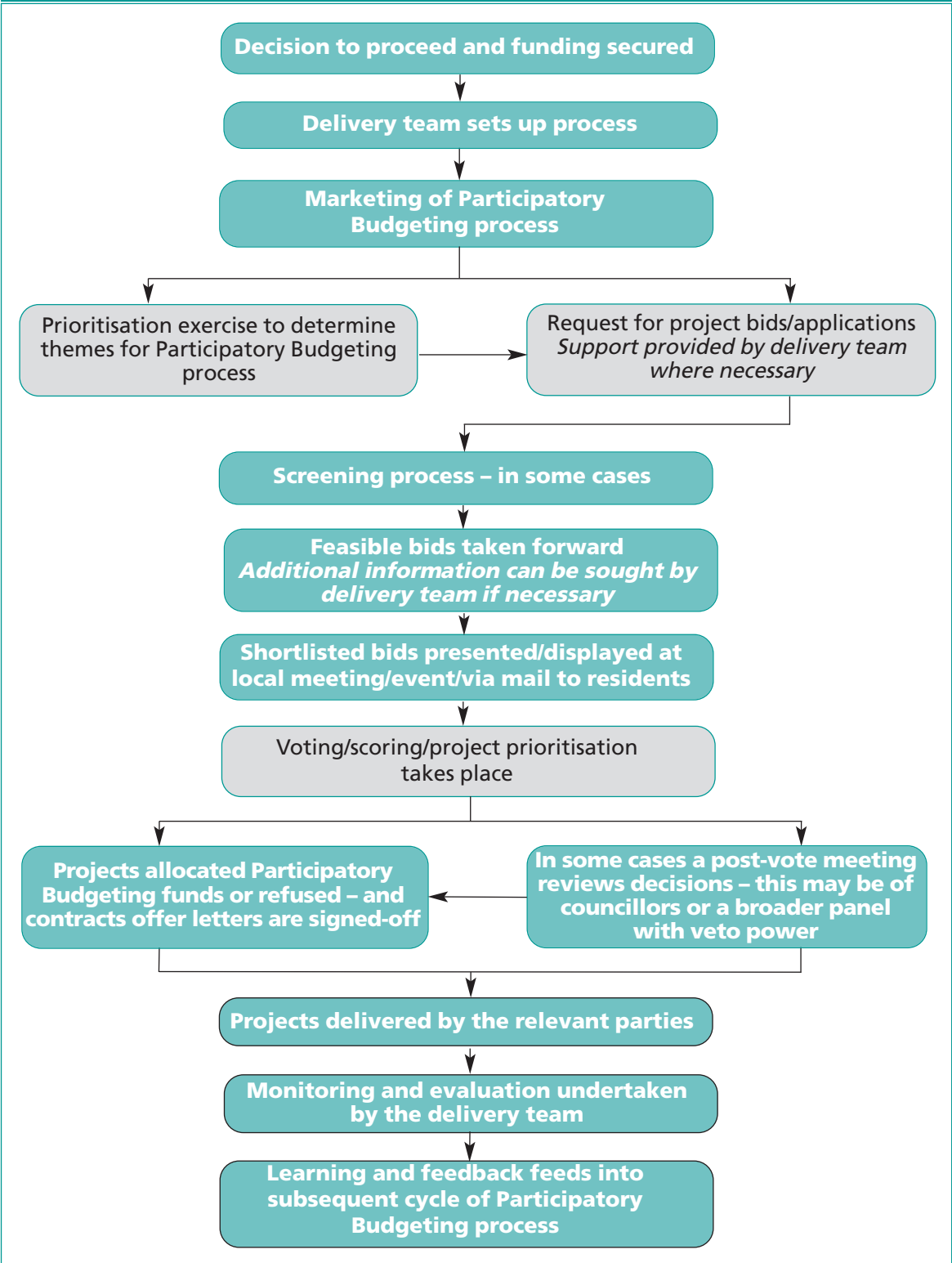
- 7.3 Where public sector agencies wish to engage more often, more meaningfully and effectively with the public than traditional approaches allow, Participatory Budgeting offers a workable option.

What does Participatory Budgeting involve?

- 7.4 The case study evidence indicated that Participatory Budgeting was often developed to complement existing community engagement/empowerment initiatives, and for the most part that Participatory Budgeting was viewed as one of a number of community empowerment tools. Even so, it generally took between 6 and 12 months to set up the process and hold the first decision-making event. Other evidence from the case studies suggests availability of staff resources to support the development and running of Participatory Budgeting initiatives is the main constraint on the speed at which Participatory Budgeting gets rolled out.

- 7.5 In terms of the involvement of elected members, there appears to be a strong link between the councillors and Participatory Budgeting process in the majority of areas – with councillors helping facilitate or advise at events.
- 7.6 The study showed that Participatory Budgeting operates in different ways in different places. The bulk of activity in case study areas focused on the allocation of small grants. In the period 2005/6 to 2009/10, Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas influenced the allocation of over £5 million of discretionary resources and supported 2,366 projects. Over two-fifths (43%) of projects were small (costing between £1 and £1,000); while over one-half (55%) were in the £1001 to £10,000 size band. Participatory Budgeting in the eight case study areas has therefore been predominantly about allocating discretionary grants to small local projects. Overall, the average project size across all case study areas and the whole period has been £2,195.
- 7.7 One-third of projects analysed (33%) focused on the maintenance of public spaces and a further 28% on highways improvements, including road safety. A further 9% were focused on street cleaning and refuse collection activity. Of the remainder, dominant project activities included grants for a wide range of voluntary and community based activity (12%) and expenditure on youth work projects (7%). Five per cent of projects were focused on public health activities.
- 7.8 The evaluation found some basic steps are likely to be required if Participatory Budgeting is going to work effectively in the allocation of small delegated budgets.

Summary of Participatory Budgeting core process for allocation of discretionary or small grants funding



How much will Participatory Budgeting cost?


- 7.9 The evaluation worked with case study areas to estimate the public sector costs of Participatory Budgeting. These were then analysed in terms of cost per resident and cost per participant in the process, where Participatory Budgeting was targeted in part of a district and where it was carried out in all areas across a district.
- 7.10 The total public sector cost per head of setting up and running Participatory Budgeting for a year in part of a local authority district was £1.18 (of which 26 pence per head was additional financial costs, i.e. excluding staff time). Where Participatory Budgeting operated throughout a district the public sector cost per head was 65 pence (of which 14 pence per head was additional financial costs). The total public sector cost per participant in Participatory Budgeting processes was £45 (of which £10 was additional financial costs) where the process ran in part of a district. The total public sector cost per participant where Participatory Budgeting operated across a whole district was £104 (of which £25 was additional financial costs).

What will we get for our money?

- 7.11 At this stage of the evaluation, local practitioners report improvement in terms of:
- the self-esteem and confidence of those who participated in the process
 - people's sense of their ability to influence local decision-making
 - people's understanding of budget setting and the local democratic process
 - relations between councillors and their constituents
 - community capacity in an area – especially when linked to wider community development work or neighbourhood management initiatives
 - better reflecting local people's views on how to allocate resources
 - an area's ability to lever in additional resources.
- 7.12 The case studies also reported improvements in relation to environmental and health outcomes – the areas where the bulk of funding has been concentrated. However, there is little hard data on this, as the costs of monitoring and evaluation would be disproportionate to the level of money allocated to projects.
- 7.13 In Phase 1, it was not possible to derive a consistent set of output indicators and quantify outputs and outcomes because of the diversity of project activity and output measures. Furthermore, case studies emphasised outcomes could not be expected on a significant scale, given the relatively limited scale of expenditure involved. They also flagged up that outcomes may take some time to emerge, particularly as many of the projects were undertaken only within the last two years. These are all issues to be considered in Phase 2 of the evaluation.


Annex A: Evaluation framework

Process evaluation framework


Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
	<p>Local area characteristics:</p> <p>What are the key contextual conditions in your area? e.g. total population, employment rates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline • E-Census 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data not available at the relevant geography • Frequency of data update e.g. Census data cannot be used to accurately track either impact or context as it is only updated every ten years
Content	<p>Pre-Participatory Budgeting position – what was the situation before Participatory Budgeting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What decision-making processes were used to set the priorities for spending or for service delivery before Participatory Budgeting was introduced in your area? • How were local people/Councillors/ LA officers involved in setting priorities for spending or for service delivery? • How many local people were involved in decision-making? • What sorts of decisions were local people/Councillors/LA officers involved in? • What were the outcomes/impacts of their involvement? • Were resources for decisions devolved to areas or groups prior to Participatory Budgeting? And if, so how much money was involved and what restrictions on its use were imposed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Cost tool ➢ Councillor/Officer feedback form • Case study stakeholder interviews • E-census 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation
			

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p>	<p>National objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the national objectives for introducing Participatory Budgeting? <p><i>Potential objectives/purposes to explore:</i></p> <p>Objectives for Citizens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased sense of influence over local decisions/issues • Enhanced skills and confidence • Increased understanding of complexities of public budget setting <p>Objectives for Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social capital (including trust in each other and service providers) • Increased community cohesion <p>Objectives for Decision-Making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Governance processes/ To increase the involvement (and influence) of local residents in wider-governance arrangements • Changes in who takes decisions on resource allocation • Improve the use of resources: • Productive Efficiency (increases in customer satisfaction, improvements in service quality, reduction in unit cost of services) • Allocative Efficiency (reallocation of resources to better reflect the wishes of citizens) • Distributive Efficiency (reallocation of resources in favour of those with greatest need, e.g. deprived neighbourhoods) <p>Improved Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the health and well-being of local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in evaluation

Objectives	<p>Local objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the rationale for introducing Participatory Budgeting? • What are the main purposes of the relevant Participatory Budgeting projects? • What is the relationship between Participatory Budgeting and the objectives of the lead organisation which has chosen to implement Participatory Budgeting? (see <i>list of potential objectives above</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • E-census • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental nature of Participatory Budgeting in majority of the study areas may lead objectives to change over time • Identification of purpose is likely to be subjective and therefore may be subject to bias • Capacity to participate in evaluation
	<p>Assessment of each area against the Participatory Budgeting typology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What position do you consider your area to be against the seven dimensions of Participatory Budgeting being explored by the evaluation? • What position do you consider your area will be in as the Participatory Budgeting activities in your area mature and evolve over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in evaluation
Inputs	<p>What were the main non-financial inputs in to the Participatory Budgeting process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many and which type of people were involved in setting up the process – residents, public sector officers, councillors, voluntary organisations? • How many people participated in the decision making process and what are the characteristics of this group? Were they different from previous arrangements? And if so, how? • How much did the set-up phase cost (in-kind) – residents, public sector officers, councillors, and voluntary organisations? • How much are the ongoing costs (in-kind) of the process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions ➢ Cost tool ➢ Participant feedback form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting event may not be held within the evaluation timescales, making it difficult for areas to collate relevant material • May be difficult to collect historical data if cost-related data has not been previously collated by an area • Response rate to resident/Councillor feedback survey may be low

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Inputs	<p>What were the main financial inputs in to the Participatory Budgeting process?</p> <p>Set up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much did the set-up phase cost (i.e. the overall cost in money terms) – whether incurred by residents, public sector officers, councillors, or voluntary organisations? This could include venue hire, marketing, refreshments etc. How have the set-up costs been used? How does this compare to previous arrangements? <p>Ongoing costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much per year does/will the Participatory Budgeting process cost to run, e.g. funds allocated for advertising, venue hire, capacity building and external facilitation and in-kind contributions of time? How will the ongoing costs be used? How does this compare to previous arrangements? <p>Funding to be allocated via Participatory Budgeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main sources of funding which are to be allocated by Participatory Budgeting and how much funding has each source supplied? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local area report self assessment questions Cost tool Participant feedback form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to participate in the evaluation Participatory Budgeting event may not be held within the evaluation timescales, making it difficult for areas to collate relevant material May be difficult to collect historical data if cost-related data has not been previously collated by an area May be difficult to assess ongoing costs in those areas who have only recently begun to deliver Participatory Budgeting and are therefore in their set-up phase Low response rate to resident/Councillor survey
			
Process/ activities	<p>How was the Participatory Budgeting process set up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the introduction of Participatory Budgeting build on other community empowerment initiatives? Was it a result of the local authority/lead organisation or from local, bottom-up pressure? Was the local authority supportive? Was external support provided? What was it? Who received it? How much did it cost? How long did it last? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local area report self assessment questions Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to participate in the evaluation

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Process/activities	<p>Governance arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved in the decision-making processes at the local level – was participation open to anyone? Were there restrictions? If so what were they? E.g. residence/post code, certain age range etc. How were they identified and did anyone question the process? How have elected members been involved in the delivery of the process? What evidence do you have to illustrate your view? Were other stakeholders like the third sector involved and if so how? Who is responsible for implementing the Participatory Budgeting process and its resultant activities? Has this changed overtime? Who is accountable for ensuring that results from the Participatory Budgeting process are taken forward? E.g. Ward Councillor What was the community's involvement in checking the progress in implementing its decisions? How frequent is this? And what effect does it have? How does this compare to previous approaches? How does the process align with wider decision making processes in the area? e.g. annual budget cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local area report self assessment questions Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to participate in the evaluation Low response rate to Councillor survey
	<p>How has the Participatory Budgeting activity been delivered? And has this changed over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What decision-making processes are/will be used? How frequently are decisions taken? What topics are subject to local decision making using Participatory Budgeting? How are priorities identified – via evidence, debate and discussion, another method? Are they the most important for local people? Has the process changed over time? If so, how? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local area report self assessment questions Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to participate in the evaluation


Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Process/ activities	<p>Barriers and critical success factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main barriers to the set-up and delivery of a Participatory Budgeting process? What evidence do you have to illustrate your view? • What critical success factors are necessary to ensure the effective delivery of a Participatory Budgeting process? What evidence do you have to illustrate your view? <p><i>Examples of potential barriers to be explored</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time commitments of those involved • Difficulties in engaging a representative selection of the local community <p><i>Examples of critical success factors to be explored:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to all citizens at the design/deliberation stage • Process extends beyond the neighbourhood level and links to higher level decisions • Participatory Budgeting is a repeated process • Strong political buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions ➢ Participant feedback form ➢ Councillor feedback form • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Low response rate to resident/Councillor survey
			
Results/ outputs	<p>What were the immediate and measurable results of the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many proposals/ideas were/are submitted for consideration? How has this changed over time? How is it different from previous arrangements? • How many different organisations apply to take part in the Participatory Budgeting process and what are their characteristics? How has this changed over time? Are these different from previous arrangements? If so how? • Which proposals/priorities were selected as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process? How have these changed over time? And how do they differ from previous arrangements? • Has participation increased as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process? And if so, by how much? • How were diversity issues addressed e.g. access, provision of childcare etc? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions ➢ Proposal monitoring tool ➢ Participant feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Poor proposal-related monitoring data • Participatory Budgeting event may not be held within the evaluation timescales • May be difficult to collect historical data if output-related data has not been previously collated • Low response rate to resident/Councillor survey

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>How has the process changed the behaviour and well-being of those directly and indirectly involved? <i>Consideration will be given to the effects on participants, the wider community and the decision-making process.</i> <i>Potential changes to be explored:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the self-esteem and confidence of participants • Increased influence on local decisions (relates to NI 4) • Increased understanding of the complexities of public budget setting and democratic structures • Improved understanding of the issues surrounding resource allocation • Improvements in the councillor-resident relationship • Improvements in the political efficacy, social capital and social cohesiveness of the community • Increased engagement from hard-to-reach groups • Increased levels of community and voluntary sector involvement (relates to NI 3) • Increased empowerment of Councillors • Increased satisfaction with local services (relates to NI 5) • Increased community cohesion (relates to NI 1) • Increased community capacity in an area • Decisions are made in less time than in the past; more decisions taken using the same resources; better quality of decisions, such as fewer reversals of previous decisions • Allocative efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources to better reflect the wishes of citizens • Distributive efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources in favour of those in greatest need • Have the costs of engaging local people in decision making increased or decreased as a result of the process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions ➢ Participant feedback ➢ Councillor feedback • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting event may not be held within the evaluation timescales • May be difficult to collect historical data if outcome-related data has not been previously collated • Low response rate to resident/Councillor survey


<p style="text-align: center;">Impacts</p>	<p>What are the possible long term changes that are likely to occur as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process?</p> <p><i>Study areas will be asked whether they expect the following to be achieved in either the short or the long-term and whether they intend to monitor these changes over the long-term:</i></p> <p><i>Potential changes to be explored:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Governance processes • Improved quality of life • Increased re-engagement with local democratic processes e.g. Increased turnout to local elections • Increased satisfaction with local services (relates to NI 5) • Increased community cohesion (relates to NI 1) • Increased influence on local decisions (relates to NI 4) • Wider changes to the way public service providers work with local communities to take budgeting decisions, e.g. greater use of Participatory Budgeting across a wider range of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting event may not be held within the evaluation timescales • May be difficult to collect historical data if impact-related data has not been previously collated • Low response rate to resident/Councillor survey • Availability of impact-related baseline indicators at the appropriate spatial levels and over the time period required
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'local project'/service evaluation framework

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Content	<p>What was the situation before the new 'local project'/specific intervention developed by the Participatory Budgeting process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues/problems was the 'local project' or change to services aimed at addressing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales
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Objectives	<p>What are the objectives of the individual 'local projects'/change in service provision which have come about as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process?</p> <p><i>Potential objectives to explore:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase resources coming into the area • Increased empowerment • Improve the efficiency of use of resources • To increase responsiveness of public services • Improve the quality of services • Increase the frequency of services • Change the way services are accessed • Provide new facilities or services • Improve sense of community • Other (please specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales
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Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Inputs	<p>What resources were required to deliver the 'local projects'/change in service provision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much money was allocated to individual project/change in services as a result of the Participatory Budgeting process? • What resources were used to deliver the individual projects/change in service – staff/volunteer time, capital equipment etc.? • How much money has been/is intended to be allocated by the Participatory Budgeting process on a project by project basis? • What resources were used to deliver the individual projects/change in service? • How much money has been/is intended to be allocated by the Participatory Budgeting process to the individual projects/services? • Over what time period was money allocated? • Over what time period does the activity require money? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions ➤ Cost tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • May be difficult to collect historical data if cost-related data has not been previously collated by an area
			
Process/ activities	<p>What was the process for developing and selecting proposals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the process for developing proposals for projects/changes to services? And to what extent were citizens involved? • Were organisations supported to develop their proposals? If so, how? <p>How were the resultant activities delivered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What indicators of performance were there for the 'local projects'/services? • How have the 'local projects'/change in service been delivered in the area of operation? • Over what timescale were projects expected to make a difference? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews • Local project data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • Lack of performance measurement data

Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
Process/ activities	<p>Barriers and critical success factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main barriers to the set-up and delivery of the Participatory Budgeting project/change in service delivery? • What critical success factors are necessary to ensure the effective delivery of the Participatory Budgeting project/change in service delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales
⇓			
Results/ outputs	<p>What were the immediate and measurable results of the projects/change to service provision?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type and how many beneficiaries benefited from the individual project activity/change in service provision? How was/is this different to what went before? • Was there an increased take-up of project activities/services? If so, how was/is this different to what went before? • Was there an increased level of satisfaction with the service/in the area covered by the Participatory Budgeting process? If so, how was/is this different to what went before? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local project outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • Timescale may mean it is too early to measure the outputs of the resultant Participatory Budgeting activities
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Theme	Research questions	Methods/tools	Issues/risks
<p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes</p>	<p>How have the projects/change in service provision changed the behaviour and well-being of beneficiaries and service performance? What changes to service provision were made as a result of the process, e.g. different frequencies, different access points etc.? <i>Consideration will be given to the effects on participants, the wider community and the decision-making process.</i> <i>Potential short term changes may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased resources into the area • Improved quality of services/project activities • Increased satisfaction in relation to services • Better tailored services • Increased community cohesion • Increased community engagement • More efficient service delivery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Productive efficiency e.g. increases in customer satisfaction, improvements in service quality at no (or minimal) additional cost, reduction in the unit cost of services ➢ Allocative efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources to better reflect the wishes of citizens ➢ Distributive efficiency e.g. reallocation of resources in favour of those in greatest need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews • Local project data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • Timescale may mean it is too early to measure the outcomes of the resultant Participatory Budgeting activities
			
<p style="text-align: center;">Impacts</p>	<p>What are the possible long term changes that are likely to occur as a result of the Participatory Budgeting activities? <i>Consideration will be given to the effects on participants, the wider community and the decision-making process.</i> <i>Potential long term changes to be explored:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better focus on issues of social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal, bringing clear benefits to the poorest neighbourhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local area report self assessment questions • Case study stakeholder interviews • Local project data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to participate in the evaluation • Participatory Budgeting activities may not be commissioned within the evaluation timescales • Timescale may mean it is too early to measure the impacts of the resultant Participatory Budgeting activities

Annex B:

Description of the National Indicators

NI Title of national indicator

1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
3	Civic participation in the local area
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
5	Overall / general satisfaction with local area
6	Participation in regular volunteering
7	Environment for a thriving third sector
8	Adult participation in sport and active recreation
9	Use of public libraries
10	Visits to museums and galleries
11	Engagement in the arts
12	Refused and deferred Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license applications leading to immigration enforcement activity
13	Migrants' English language skills and knowledge
14	Reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer
15	Serious violent crime
16	Serious acquisitive crime
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
18	Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision
19	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders
20	Assault with injury crime rate
21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police

-
- 22 Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
-
- 23 Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration
-
- 24 Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
-
- 25 Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour
-
- 26 Specialist support to victims of a serious sexual offence
-
- 27 Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police
-
- 28 Serious knife crime rate
-
- 29 Gun crime rate
-
- 30 Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders
-
- 31 Re-offending rate of registered sex offenders
-
- 32 Repeat incidents of domestic violence
-
- 33 Arson incidents
-
- 34 Domestic violence – murder
-
- 35 Building resilience to violent extremism
-
- 36 Protection against terrorist attack
-
- 37 Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area
-
- 38 Drug-related (Class A) offending rate
-
- 39 Rate of Hospital Admissions per 100,000 for Alcohol Related Harm
-
- 40 Number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment
-
- 41 Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
-
- 42 Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
-
- 43 Young people within the Youth Justice System receiving a conviction in court who are sentenced to custody
-
- 44 Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals
-
- 45 Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, training and employment

46	Young Offenders' access to suitable accommodation
47	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
48	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
49	Number of primary fires and related fatalities and non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks)
50	Emotional health of children
51	Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) services
52	Take up of school lunches
53	Prevalence of breast-feeding at six - eight wks from birth
54	Services for disabled children
55	Obesity in primary school age children in Reception
56	Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6
57	Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport
58	Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children
59	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within seven working days of referral
60	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement.
61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption
62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements
63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
64	Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more
65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales
68	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment
69	Children who have experienced bullying

70	Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
71	Children who have run away from home/care overnight
72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy
73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2
74	Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3
75	Achievement of five or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths
76	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 65% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2
77	Reduction of schools where fewer than 50% of pupils achieve level 5 or above in both English and Maths at KS3
78	Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths
79	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19
80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
81	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19
82	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19
83	Achievement at Level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3
84	Achievement of two or more A*- C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent
85	Post-16 participation in physical sciences (A Level Physics, Chemistry and Maths)
86	Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour
87	Secondary school persistent absence rate
88	Percentage of schools providing access to extended services
89	Reduction of number of schools judged as requiring special measures and improvement in time taken to come out of the category
90	Take up of 14-19 learning diplomas
91	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training
92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest

93	Progression by two levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
94	Progression by two levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
95	Progression by two levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
96	Progression by two levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
97	Progression by two levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
98	Progression by two levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
99	Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2
100	Looked after children reaching level 4 in mathematics at Key Stage 2
101	Looked after children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and mathematics)
102	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4
103	Special Educational Needs – statements issued within 26 weeks
104	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold
105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*- C GCSE including English and Maths
106	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education
107	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
108	Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups
109	Delivery of Sure Start Children’s Centres
110	Young people’s participation in positive activities
111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17
112	Under 18 conception rate
113	Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 25 year olds
114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school
115	Substance misuse by young people
116	Proportion of children in poverty
117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

118	Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families
119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing
120	All-age all cause mortality rate
121	Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75
122	Mortality rate from all cancers at ages under 75
123	Stopping smoking
124	People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition
125	Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care
126	Early Access for Women to Maternity Services
127	Self reported experience of social care users
128	User reported measure of respect and dignity in their treatment
129	End of life care – access to appropriate care enabling people to be able to choose to die at home
130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support per 100,000 population
131	Delayed transfers of care
132	Timeliness of social care assessment (all adults)
133	Timeliness of social care packages following assessment
134	The number of emergency bed days per head of weighted population
135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information
136	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)
137	Healthy life expectancy at age 65
138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood
139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home
140	Fair treatment by local services
141	Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living

142	Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
143	Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence
144	Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence
145	Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation
146	Adults with learning disabilities in employment
147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation
148	Care leavers in education, employment or training
149	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation
150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment
151	Overall Employment rate (working-age)
152	Working age people on out of work benefits
153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
154	Net additional homes provided
155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation
157	Processing of planning applications
158	% non-decent council homes
159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites
160	Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services
161	Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy
162	Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy
163	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
164	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 3 or higher

165	Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 4 or higher
166	Median earnings of employees in the area
167	Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
168	Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
169	Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered
170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years
171	New business registration rate
172	Percentage of small businesses in an area showing employment growth
173	Flows on to incapacity benefits from employment
174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers
175	Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
176	Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
177	Local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the authority area
178	Bus services running on time
179	Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-09 financial year
180	The number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' HB/CTB benefit entitlement within the year.
181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events
182	Satisfaction of business with local authority regulatory services
183	Impact of local authority trading standards services on the fair trading environment
184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law
185	CO2 reduction from local authority operations
186	Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area
187	Tackling fuel poverty – % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating

188 Planning to Adapt to Climate Change

189 Flood and coastal erosion risk management

190 Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health

191 Residual household waste per household

192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting

193 Percentage of municipal waste landfilled

194 Air quality – % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations

195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting)

196 Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping

197 Improved Local Biodiversity – proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

198 Children travelling to school – mode of transport usually used

199 Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas

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