

What is PB Works?

- The Participatory Budgeting Works Project (PB Works) in Northern Ireland is a collaborative effort to raise awareness and advocate for the use of PB processes across the region. It was funded by the Big Lottery Fund through Building Change Trust and delivered as part of the Trust's 'Creative Space for Civic Thinking' programme by Community Places.
- Participatory Budgeting represents a deliberative democratic process in which local people decide how to allocate all or part of a public budget. The scale of PB activity across the region to date has been modest. But already PB practitioners have praised its flexibility as well as its capacity to source innovative solutions to help tackle challenging local issues.



What support was provided by the PB Works project?

PB Works hosted 4 road show events to help raise awareness across Northern Ireland. It also delivered 4 PB training workshops based on different themes like outcomes and accountability, housing and digital engagement. A dedicated PB advisory group was also assembled to promote and develop PB at the strategic level across the region.

In partnership with PB partners, PB Works provided tailored support and guidance for 7 local PB projects hosted by 3 local government authorities and 4 community based organisations. This tailored support has helped groups explore the potential of PB, overcome operational challenges and has helped them move forward in terms of planning their own PB events.

PB Works launched its own dedicated website which helped to share materials that were relevant to local PB practice across the region. This included best practice examples, learning material from the training events as well as an opportunity to join Northern Ireland's very own local PB network.

How has PB Works support helped and what is the learning so far?

- PB Works has helped to build the capacity, confidence and competencies of both individuals and communities looking to implement PB processes across the region. It has also helped to grow the enabling environment by sharing relevant examples of PB practice and learning resources via its online website.
- By supporting the delivery of 4 successful local PB events in Rathlin, Lisnaskea, Newry Mourne and Down, Kilkeel and Newry, the PB Works project has helped to allocate money and resources to community groups or projects that had previously encountered difficulties accessing mainstream funding programmes.
- In lieu of recent concerns published by the NI Audit Office around how public money and resources are distributed across Northern Ireland, PB offers a practical way of engaging more meaningfully with localities and allocating resources in a more open, transparent and democratic way.
- It will be important to explore how PB processes could be aligned with other relevant policy and programme areas such as community planning, embedding peace and improving community relations and alliances, as well as planning agreements and developer contributions.

