

Where now on participatory budgets and Citizen Engagement?

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Presentation outline

- Background & Definitions of PB
- The potential benefits of PB in developing strategies for citizen engagement
- Future trends
- Discussion



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Background

- Origins in Brazil -1980s
- Translated to the U.K context
- High expectations for PB to deliver a wide range of benefits



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What is PB? The View from the Ministry



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What is PB?

‘Participatory Budgeting--- is a tool which gives people a real and direct say about how funds are allocated, and helps them to take more ownership of their neighbourhood to feel able to say this is my street, my estate and I’m proud of it’.

Hazel Blears



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What is PB?

More concisely..

“ Local people decide how to allocate part of a public budget”



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What is PB?

- “If it feels like we have decided.....its PB. If it feels like someone else has decided, it isn’t”

Resident of Brazil asked to define PB

So – involves citizens making ‘decisions’ not just being consulted.



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For the benefit of



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Context

Building up a head of steam

- PB needs to be seen as one of a number of tools to engage communities
 - Local Government White Paper 2006
 - LG&PIH Act 2007
 - Partnership working LSPs LAAs
 - Best Value Duty to inform, consult & involve 2009



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Context

Building Up a Head of Steam

- Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009
- Community Empowerment Action Plan: promoting Charters, management and ownership of assets
- Empowerment White Paper: links with petitions, Councillors' ward budgets, Parish councils, wider government services



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The Potential benefits

- Emphasis on tackling poverty and exclusion
- Better targeted and cost effective services
- More mature debate about priorities
- Strong social cohesion benefits
- Local ownership of community assets



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The Potential benefits

- Reshapes relationship between elected members, officer, and residents
- Tackles deprivation and exclusion through better ways of engagement
- Rebuilds local democracy and trust
- Enhances representative and participatory democracy



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Four PB contexts:

1. Small grants
2. Devolved mainstream budgets
3. Annual budget consultation
4. LSPs and Local Area Agreements



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Areas for potential PB

Youth Services:

Funding from the Department for Children Schools and the family which enables “ young people to make decisions on the allocation of funding for facilities and activities in their area



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Areas for potential PB

- **Community policing**
Anti-Social behaviour – discussions continuing between CLG and the Home Office



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Areas for potential PB

Health

‘CLG are “at the early stages of engaging with the Department of Health on how PB could be applied to the commissioning of local health services’



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Current and Future Developments

- Twenty Two Pilots currently in operation
- By 2012 expectation that every local authority will have some form of PB in operation.



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A note of caution

- How does PB fit with existing democratic structures?
- Initiative overload – how to generate community enthusiasm
- Need for capacity building



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The tip of the Ice berg

‘In order to make informed choices – eg 5% of budget to be allocated by PB, residents need to know how the other 95% is spent’.



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Discussion

Is PB better suited to social democracy rather than a market democracy?



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Ralph: not David (or Ed)

In a capitalist society, local government is the 'Achilles heel of the British political system; because it is relatively open to political pressures from non-capitalist interests and it is orientated towards the provision of services based upon need'.

Capitalist Democracy, 1980
Ralph Miliband



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Ralph: not David (or Ed)

'Local Government is the only part of the state system beside the House of Commons, which is based on the elective principle; from the point of view of the Conservative forces; this is precisely why it must be controlled and contained'.

Ralph Miliband: Capitalist Democracy in Britain, 1980



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'Autonomous' Public Services

- '*Strong autonomous public service organisations are able to respond more directly to their local communities and are freer to develop creative solutions to their local situations*'

'Building on Progress: Public Services March 2007

The 'democracy' of the market

'In the light of their private sector experience the public want greater choice over the services provided to them by the state'.

*“Today’s Sermon: keeping the faith
in a so – so market”.*



Local Government: from control to
influence

‘Imagine this.....in 2020

‘Local authorities will move from being the
deliverer of public services and become
advocates of the interests of localities and
places’

Quirk Review on Asset Management



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A benign Capitalism?

Imagine this.....in 2020

Asset transfer = an end to poverty; an
explosion in social entrepreneurs and a
more socially responsible corporate
business sector

Quirk Review on Asset Management



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‘Mini Democracy’?



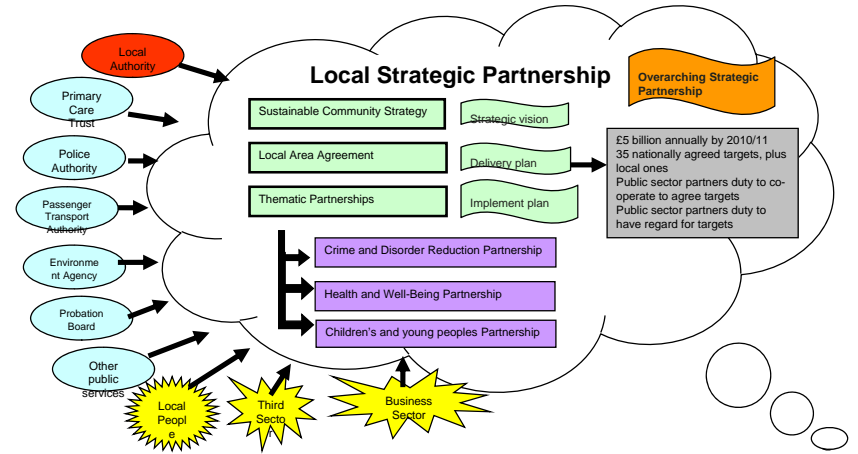
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Stoke-on-Trent Governance Commission
 Report to John Healey, Minister for Local Government and to
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council

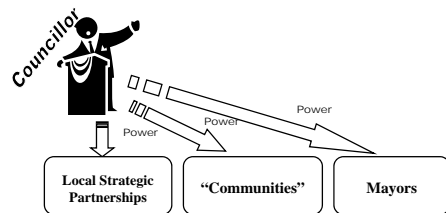


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The New Local Services Framework



The Disappearing Councillor?



A cautionary final thought....

