

**REVIEW OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PILOT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN
HUNTINGDONSHIRE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER
DEVELOPMENT**

(Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members about the nature and outcome of two participatory budgeting pilots run recently in Huntingdonshire; and to seek Members' views about the future contribution by Huntingdonshire District Council to any future participatory budgeting exercises within parts of the district.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government recently encouraged that all authorities should undertake some form of Participatory Budgeting (PB) by 2012. The essential uniqueness of PB is: it is about local people making the decisions about identified budgets (via public votes). This approach is believed to give people more of a direct 'stake' in local governance and increase levels of civic and community participation and action.
- 2.2 In order to test the approach Huntingdonshire District Council made £50,000 available, a similar amount was committed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Luminus Housing Association allocated £20,000 to provide funds for pilot exercises in both Huntingdon North and Eynesbury wards. The core amounts were increased by: a contribution from Youth Justice, who offered a further £5k to support projects related to young people; and the Children's Fund also provided £4k to assist with training costs for the residents working groups.
- 2.3 The Hunts North public decision-day took place on July 4th 2009 and the Eynesbury event took place on 3rd October 2009.

3. REVIEW OF THE PILOT IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

- 3.1 A detailed evaluation of the Huntingdon North pilot has been produced and is available, but the general perception and consensus from all parties (including residents) is that the Huntingdon North ward pilot (branded 'Voice Your Choice') was a great success.
- 3.2 In the Huntingdon North ward, previous surveys in the area had identified local priorities that aligned with key public sector objectives for that community – these included for example: Community Safety/ASB, and Environment/Open Spaces.
- 3.3 To test that the suggestions were inline with the community's views the priorities were examined through a doorstep survey in the ward; as part of the lead-in to Voice Your Choice. The survey was carried out by the residents' working group. Questions were included in the survey which directly related to National Indicators that will be assessed in the Place Survey. This was to enable 'before and after' comparisons against these key performance areas.

250 households took part and the responses determined the allocation of the funds to priority themes:-

Tackling ASB,
Community Involvement and Social Inclusion,
Jobs, Skills and Training, and
Parks and Open Spaces.

- 3.4 The funds were allocated at a public meeting. The attendees were confirmed to be local residents. The audience received presentations from community groups and other bidders then voted for their preferred scheme(s). Allocation continued until the nominated funds were exhausted. A DVD/video of the event is available and a shorter version was posted on youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_tvb-V2wm4.

Subject: Review of Participatory Budgeting pilot projects undertaken in Huntingdonshire and recommendations for further development across District and County

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government's recent Community Empowerment directions included a requirement that all authorities undertake some form of PB by 2012. The essential point to grasp re the uniqueness of PB is that it is about local people making the decisions about identified budgets (via public votes). Unlike many other forms of engagement, this is felt to give people more of a direct 'stake' in local governance and increase levels of civic and community participation and action.
- 1.2 In order to test this Huntingdonshire District Council made £50,000 a similar amount was committed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Luminus Housing Association made available £20,000 to undertake a pilot exercise in Huntingdon North and Eynesbury wards. The above amounts were added to by Youth Justice who allocated a further £5k to support projects related to young people (the Children's Fund also provided £4k to assist with training costs for the residents working groups).
- 1.3 The Hunts North pilot public decision day took place on July 4th and the Eynesbury pilot will take place on 3rd October. A detailed evaluation of the Huntingdon North pilot has been produced and is available, but the general perception and consensus from all parties (including residents) is that the Huntingdon North ward pilot (branded 'Voice Your Choice') was a great success. A DVD/video of the event is available and a shorter version was posted on youtube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_tvb-V2wm4.
- 1.4 A summary of the key results from the Huntingdon North ward PB pilot exercise is provided at appendix A, but the key points are:-
- Relatively high levels of public engagement re comparative 'public meetings' (over 100 local residents of all ages in attendance, with 83 voting – all those over eight years old)
 - Value for money in investment of public money (with 27 community projects aligned to public sector priorities supported in the area – Appendix B)
 - Gains in terms of 'community spirit' (building social capital and community cohesion in an area considered as deprived)
 - Positive engagement / atmosphere contributing to the management / enhancement of reputation for all agencies involved
 - Increased potential for local neighbourhood management objectives (e.g. Neighbourhood Agreements in Hunts North now moving forward)
 - Strong indications that follow up PB exercises can and will increase all the above outputs.
- 1.5 In the meantime PB has been included in Cambridgeshire County Council's consultative draft Community Engagement Strategy and has been agreed by the all authority Stronger Officer Theme Group as one of five key priorities of the Cambridgeshire Together/LAA NI4 (involvement in decision making) delivery plan.

3.5 A summary of the key results from the Huntingdon North ward PB pilot exercise is provided at appendix A, but the key points are:-

- Relatively high levels of public engagement -over 100 local residents of all ages in attendance, with 83 voting – all those eligible over eight years old.
- Value for money - 27 community projects aligned to public sector priorities supported in the area (Appendix B)
- Improved 'community spirit' -building social capital and community cohesion
- Positive engagement - contributing to the management & enhancement of reputation for all agencies involved.
- Increased potential for local neighbourhood management objectives.

3.6 The evaluation so far suggests increased feelings of engagement have been generated by the process. However, the 'evaluation' is not complete as it is too early to measure how far the investment in the specific projects has contributed to resolving/addressing previously identified issues in the four theme areas. Ongoing monitoring will seek, over the next twelve months, to identify impacts of the spending.

4. POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

4.1 PB has been included in Cambridgeshire County Council's consultative draft Community Engagement Strategy. (This consultation is the subject of a report due to go to Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet on 17 December 2009). It has also been adopted by the Cambridgeshire Together 'Stronger' Officer Theme Group as one of five key priorities in their delivery plan; for Cambridgeshire Together to address a local area agreement priority [LAA NI4: involvement in decision making].

4.2 The pilot approach was focused on providing the community with decision-making opportunities for one-off ring-fenced funds. The County Council has postulated the idea of developing this approach further and is promoting the notion of developing civic engagement and demonstrable value for money in future by enabling community decisions about mainstream funding. The County Council is desirous of seeing this approach rolled out across Cambridgeshire.

5. THE THEORY BEHIND –PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

5.1 'Empowering communities to influence local decision making' was published by CLG on 1st June 2009. The research found, that out of six different empowerment mechanisms (petitions, redress, e-participation, asset transfer, participatory budgeting and citizen governance) only participatory budgeting and citizen governance demonstrated wider community empowerment.

5.2 The research undertaken by De Montford and Southampton Universities also indicated that PB was the only mechanism found to have potential to redistribute resources to those most in need. The empowerment benefits of PB were deemed to be:

- Building capacity of individuals in the complexities of public budget setting and political skills more generally
 - Enhanced impact on local decision making
 - Providing a better focus on issues of social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal, bringing clear benefits to the poorest neighbourhoods
 - Improving relations between citizen and council
 - Bringing diverse people together
 - Cost efficient improvements in service delivery
- 5.3 The County Research dept's recent work from Mosaic¹ and the Place survey shows that the least engaged communities in Cambridgeshire are also those who are most likely to be disadvantaged and living in more deprived areas. Affluent mosaic groups are more satisfied with their local area and also tend to be most involved in local decision making. Some residents feel they cannot influence local decision-making; this is especially true for group G, and to a lesser extent A, B, C, D, H & K.
- 5.4 'Low income families living in estate based social housing' (Mosaic group G) are 'significantly less likely' to be involved in regular volunteering, most likely to disagree that the Council provides value for money, and are most likely to feel they cannot influence decisions in their local area, (with 60% feeling that local public services do not promote the interests of local residents). It is these communities that suffer most from social exclusion and deep seated structural inequalities. Research suggests that dealing effectively with such difficulties is related to ensuring greater engagement and ownership within and from these communities.
- 5.5 It is in tackling social exclusion, deprivation, community empowerment and cohesion that the next phase of PB may be considered to be most appropriate. To most effectively achieve these benefits PB should seek to target identified localities.
- 6. POTENTIAL FOR EXPANDING PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**
- 6.1 It has been suggested opportunities could exist to explore potential application of other funding such as LAA funds, or relevant mainstream funds (e.g. the Youth Justice contribution) as is happening in some other parts of Cambridgeshire.
- 6.2 With the assistance of further research using Mosaic it could be possible to identify further areas in Huntingdonshire that are most in need and least engaged and thus may benefit from PB. Members will recall that the neighbourhood-management areas in Huntingdonshire have already been specifically designed to address issues in three areas that were identified as

¹ Mosaic Groups

- A. Career professionals living in sought after locations
- B. Younger families living in newer homes
- C. Older families living in suburbia
- D. Close-knit, inner city and manufacturing town communities
- E. Educated, young, single people living in areas of transient populations
- F. People living in social housing with uncertain employment in deprived areas
- G. Low income families living in estate based social housing
- H. Upwardly mobile families living in homes bought from social landlords
- I. Older people living in social housing with high care needs
- J. Independent older people with relatively active lifestyles
- K. People living in rural areas far from urbanisation

experiencing significant challenges or inequalities: Huntingdon North, Eynesbury and Ramsey.

- 6.3 The Neighbourhood Management scheme is itself a pilot-scheme which is currently restricted to three designated neighbourhoods. This restriction in numbers was due to constraints in resources available to manage/support community representatives and relevant service providers in establishing Management Boards. The Neighbourhood 'management support' is currently provided through: Huntingdonshire District Council in Ramsey; Cambridgeshire County Council in Huntingdon North and Luminus in Eynesbury.
- 6.3 It has been suggested that PB could be achieved through the five Neighbourhood Forums/Panels if support were lent to further develop those Neighbourhood Forums/Panels in Huntingdonshire. It has also been suggested that it is possible these forums could be venues where PB could be used to give local people a direct stake in allocating some identified local budgets. However, as currently constituted the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire are not decision-making bodies.
- 6.4 The terms of reference for Neighbourhood Forums/Panels in Huntingdonshire have only recently been agreed. The first full-year programme of Neighbourhood Forum meetings will not start until January 2010. It was envisaged that the first review would be conducted at the end of 2010. It may be premature to consider expanding the role of these meetings prior to the review when the effectiveness of these meetings can be evaluated.

7. FUNDING

- 7.1 Funding would need to be identified both: to provide money for allocating in identified areas; and to fund community development workers to implement the process.
- 7.2 The pilot in the Huntingdon North ward revealed 'overheads'. However, this was the first pilot and it needed swift expedition. Some of the main costs: i.e. training and marketing may be addressed using existing resources but a full costing exercise would be required to ensure that Huntingdonshire District Council, as a partner, had sufficient available funds and a willingness to divert some funds to this purpose.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Two participatory pilots have been run in Huntingdonshire in 2009 and the preliminary indications are that the process increased community engagement and cohesion for those that participated. The County Council have included participatory budgeting as a technique in their draft engagement strategy and there are signs that they would like to see this technique used in identified areas across the County, including Huntingdonshire. There are funding implications to this; not only providing funds to be allocated but also the cost of administering the progress and monitoring progress and outcomes. There are no specific funds currently allocated. The most obvious source of funding may be the Council's Capital Grant Aid budget this is not a substantial budget and the 2010-11 allocation is expected to be in the region of £69,000. If members agree to support PB any future support should be at a reduced level from that provided in the present financial year £50,000.

- 8.2 Huntingdonshire has three existing Neighbourhood Management areas and the PB pilot projects were located in two of these areas and proved popular. There are no plans for any expansion of Neighbourhood Management initiatives in the near future. The five Neighbourhood Forums/Panels in Huntingdonshire are new and expected to evolve over the coming year; and the process is not due for its first review until the end of 2010. It would at present be premature to consider expanding the role of the forum meetings at this stage to incorporate PB. Any change of role would require a fundamental change to the terms of reference for the forums.
- 8.3 Before the end of 2009/10 it is likely that Huntingdonshire District Council will be asked to clarify the District Council's commitment to a next phase of PB and to consider the proposals for a further phase of targeted PB (as outlined in this report).

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

- 9.1 Note this report.
- 9.2 Indicate whether, in principle, they would wish to participate in participatory budgeting initiatives in one or more of the Neighbourhood Management areas in Huntingdonshire.
- 9.3 Indicate if they would wish officers to identify any potential areas from which to divert funding both for money to re-allocate locally and to support the allocation-process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cabinet Report: Neighbourhood Management 21-9-2006

Cabinet Report: Neighbourhood Management - Progress Report 1-2-2007

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

2000 Government White Paper- Communities in Control; real people, real power. (9 July 2008)

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APPENDIX A

Extract from Huntingdon North ward Voice Your Choice Evaluation (Key NI's)

Influencing decision-making

Before:

Doorstep Survey 39.3% of people definitely agreed or tended to agree they can influence decisions in their locality

After:

Decision Day 77.08% of people definitely agreed or tended to agree that they could influence decisions in their locality

94.44% of people definitely agreed or tended to agree that Voice Your Choice had given them more influence than before

66% said that they would like to be more involved in decisions affecting their local area (cf. National 26.6%)

87.93% of respondents said "I think Voice Your Choice should happen again"

Compare with:

Hunts Average 27.6% of people agree they can influence decisions in their locality

Cambs Average 31.2% of people agree they can influence decisions in their locality

National Average 28.9% of people agree they can influence decisions in their locality

Community Cohesion

Before:

Doorstep Survey 59.4% of people definitely agreed or tended to agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

After:

Decision Day 60.34% of respondents said "I see people in my community getting on well together"

Compare with:

Hunts Average 79.4% of people agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

Cambs Average 79.4% of people agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

National Average 76.4% of people agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

Evaluation Statistics

58 people took part (compared to 83 voters)

What have been the best things about today?

86% of respondents said "I know more about local groups" (50 people)

71% of respondents said "I feel I can influence decisions in my area" (41 people)

41% of respondents said "I have been inspired to get involved in my community more regularly" (24 people)

60% of respondents said "I see people in my community getting on well together" (35 people)

28% of respondents chose all four options (16 people)

Which of these statements do you agree with?

59% of respondents said "I'm enjoying this event" (34 people)

67% of respondents said "I think the process is fair" (39 people)

74% of respondents said "I would tell other people about it" (43 people)

81% of respondents said "This is a good way of deciding how public money is spent" (47 people)

88% of respondents said "I think Voice Your Choice should happen again" (51 people)

41% of respondents chose all five options (24 people)

To what extent do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

50.00% Definitely agree (24 people)

27.08% Tend to agree (13 people)

8.33% Tend to disagree (4 people)

6.25% Definitely disagree (3 people)

6.25% Don't know (3 people)

10 people did not answer this question. These were not counted as respondents for this question.

Generally speaking, would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect your local area?

66% said "Yes" (33 people)

2% said "No" (1 person)

3% said "Depends on the issue" (15 people)

2% said "Don't know" (1 person)

8 people did not answer this question. These were not counted as respondents for this question.

To what extent do you agree that Voice Your Choice has given you *MORE* influence than before?

70.37% Definitely agree (38 people)

24.07% Tend to agree (13 people)

1.85% Tend to disagree (1 person)

0.00% Definitely disagree

3.70% Don't know (2 people)

Voice Your Choice: The Winning Groups- Huntingdon North

Theme: Anti Social Behaviour

- ◆ **St John's Eagles £3,010** to set up an after school netball club for children from 7-11 years old, including equipment, rent, coaching and kit
- ◆ **Cambs Police Boxing Club £3,010** to replace equipment such as head guards and gloves
- ◆ **Kanazawa Budo Club £1,510** for rent, equipment, insurance and teaching costs for Judo classes for victims of bullying
- ◆ **Street Sports £4,810** to pay for 2 workers, a level 1 coaching certificate, balls, football kit and after school astro turf hire
- ◆ **Blue Vision Twirling £3,010** for training and competition fees to give members the opportunity to compete in the UK Federation of Majorettes National Championship
- ◆ **Wendy Burke School of Dance £2,010** for costumes and rehearsal space costs for dance classes for young people

Theme: Community involvement and activities to bring people together

- ◆ **Moor Special Time £1,000** for specialist toys and messy play equipment and resources for families with children who have special needs
- ◆ **Friends of Thongsley £2,500** to improve their community room and kitchen facilities for learning, including baby changing facilities and toys
- ◆ **Moor Play £750** for more toys to enhance children's development and to bring together people from different backgrounds
- ◆ **BRJ Club £4,000** for baby changing units and football strips to bring people of different backgrounds together
- ◆ **Community Newsletter Association £1,000** for paper, ink and equipment maintenance to give residents a voice
- ◆ **Oxmoor Community Action Group £1,390** for admin and accountants fees, advertising and hire of equipment and staff
- ◆ **Care Network Cambridgeshire £585** for a development worker, venue hire and refreshments to help adults with disabilities and those who are vulnerable.
- ◆ **Huntingdonshire Community Group £583** for office rent, telephone and internet costs and Unity in the Community to celebrate different cultures
- ◆ **Moor Community Café £583** to provide a lounge area in the cafe

Theme: Jobs, Skills and Training

- ◆ **Friends of Thongsley £2,500** for food and activities for their breakfast club which provides childcare for working parents
- ◆ **St Johns Breakfast Club £2,500** for food for their breakfast club which provides safe childcare for working parents
- ◆ **Huntingdon District Sea Cadets £1,880** to buy a new pulling boat and to provide training opportunities for young people
- ◆ **St Barnabas Learning Centre £4,500** to provide people with access to computers, a tutor and paper/ink etc to prepare CV's and build confidence
- ◆ **Oxmoor Learning Champions £600** to enable volunteers to access IT, meeting space and print facilities at St Barnabas Learning Centre
- ◆ **Home-Start £500** for advertising, training and expenses for volunteers who can support teenage and young mums
- ◆ **Medway Craft Group £870** to hire the Medway Centre and buy sewing machines and craft materials
- ◆ **The UGA Hunts Group £870** for training individuals for new skills

Theme: Parks and Open Space

- ◆ **Huntingdon Allotments Association £2,000** to develop the demonstration plots at Sallowbush Road allotments
- ◆ **Youth Advisory Committee £5,000** for outdoor gym equipment outside Huntingdon Youth Centre
- ◆ **MUGA Mania £5,000** to help with funding for a multi-use games area (MUGA) which would be a safe environment for people to play
- ◆ **Oxmoor Community Action Group £530** to continue to provide free Coneygear Park firework display and enhance area with plants and trees

Voice Your Choice: The Winning Groups- Eynesbury

Theme: Community Empowerment £12,500

- ◆ **Eynesbury Friendship Club £ 1,400**
- ◆ **Eynesbury Village Association £ 6,000**
- ◆ **Hunts Mind £ 4,600**
- ◆ **Church Walk Day-centre £ 83**
- ◆ **Life After Debt £ 83**
- ◆ **Cambridgeshire Community Services £ 83**
- ◆ **Eynesbury Regeneration project £ 83**
- ◆ **Homestart West Cambs £ 83**

Theme: Reducing Crime and ASB £24,000

- ◆ **St Neots Holidays@home £ 7,500**
- ◆ **Equilibrium Dance Troupe £ 2,000**
- ◆ **Riverside Theatre Company £ 2,650**
- ◆ **SNAP £ 4,500**
- ◆ **St Neots Hockey Club £ 2,570**
- ◆ **Eynesbury Rovers FC £ 3,780**
- ◆ **Natural High £ 333**
- ◆ **Diamonite Twirlers £ 333**
- ◆ **St Neots Sentinels £ 333**

Theme: Education, skills + employment £ 8,500

- ◆ **Eynesbury C of E school £ 4,750**
- ◆ **St Neots Community archive £ 500**
- ◆ **Cambs Search + Rescue £ 2,500**
- ◆ **St Neots U3A £ 250**
- ◆ **Women's Institute £ 250**
- ◆ **Eynesbury Learning Partnership £ 250**

Theme: Enhancing the environment £ 25,000

- ◆ **Eynesbury Heritage Partnership £ 3,750**
- ◆ **St John Ambulance £ 7,000**
- ◆ **Green fingers £ 900**
- ◆ **St Neots Eco School College £ 7,000**
- ◆ **Samuel Peypes School £ 5,000**
- ◆ **St Neots in Bloom £ 675**
- ◆ **St Neots Angling Society £ 675**