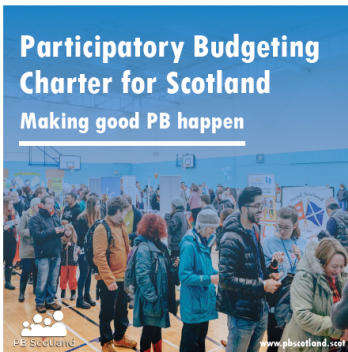


PB Charter Learning Event: Deliberation

Friday 16th August 2019



#PBCharter



Oliver Escobar

Edinburgh University



PB Scotland

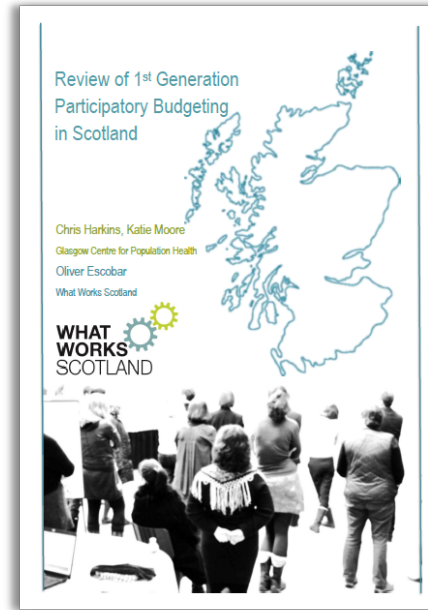
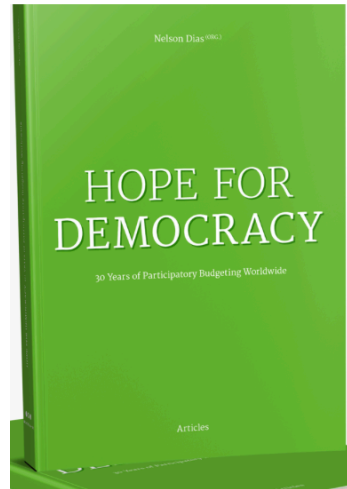
Why dialogue and deliberation matter in Participatory Budgeting?

Oliver Escobar, University of Edinburgh
PB Charter Event, August 2019, Glasgow



Political context for PB in Scotland

- PB has gained **momentum in response to challenges and aspirations** to improve governance, public services and local democracy
 - **Institutional factors**, e.g. disconnect between communities and institutions
 - **Civic factors**, e.g. growing civic activity and democratic aspiration
 - 2014 = pivotal year when civil society and government agendas coalesced
- **Increasing political, legislative and policy support** driven by a combination of grassroots proposals and top-down policy action
 - Christie Commission on the Future of Public Services; COSLA Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy; ERS Demo Max Inquiry; Open Government Partnership; Community Empowerment Act, etc



Policy Briefing

Mainstreaming participatory budgeting: What works in building foundations for a more participatory democracy?



Key points

- Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic innovation that has become central to advancing three policy agendas in Scotland: public service reform, community empowerment and social justice.
- The grassroots growth of PB within Scotland's communities has been accelerated by increasing political, legislative, policy and capacity-building support since 2014. This has expanded PB processes from a handful in 2010 to more than 200 to date.
- The Community Choices programme has generated an investment of £6.5 million by the Scottish Government, and local authorities have also allocated an estimated £5 million to PB processes so far.
- These developments have built some foundations for the 'mainstreaming' of PB, which goes beyond the community grant-making model that has been predominant and opens up space for more complex models that also involve mainstream public budgets and service design.
- For PB to make a substantial difference in the lives of citizens and communities, democratic innovators across Scotland will have to overcome a range of challenges related to culture (mindsets, attitudes, ways of working), capacity, politics, legitimacy and sustainability.
- What Works Scotland has highlighted several areas for improvement, including the need to increase the deliberative quality of PB processes and their focus on tackling inequalities. Realising the transformative potential of PB depends, to a great extent, on those two dimensions.
- Building effective digital infrastructure to complement face-to-face PB processes will be instrumental to the success of mainstreaming PB and enabling large-scale citizen participation.
- The mainstreaming of PB must be supported by properly resourced and trained teams of local authority staff, including engagement practitioners and community organisers who can develop strategies to remove barriers to participation and ensure diversity and inclusion. Involving a cross-section of the relevant population is essential for the legitimacy and effectiveness of PB processes.
- National and local support for the mainstreaming of PB should include the development of regional initiatives that create space for peer learning and support across neighbouring local authorities. This may include the creation of cross-authority PB delivery teams that can support each other in the design and facilitation of large-scale PB processes.
- Mainstreaming PB may require revising current local authority budgeting systems so that finance departments and procedures are retuned to accommodate new participatory and deliberative processes.
- PB organisers must be mindful that whatever systems are put in place in the early stages of mainstreaming PB are likely to create path-dependencies for all future processes. Therefore, building mechanisms to regularly review those systems is key for ongoing learning and adaptation.
- The success of PB depends on the buy-in and contribution by politicians and public service leaders who may not have been part of the PB journey in Scotland so far. As the foundations to mainstream PB are built over the next two years in each local authority, all relevant stakeholders, gatekeepers and powerholders must be involved in co-producing the new systems as well as fostering new mindsets and ways of working.

What is deliberative democracy?

- **Democracy should be more than counting heads:** “it must involve discussion on an equal and inclusive basis, which deepens participants’ knowledge of issues, awareness of the interests of others, and the confidence to play an active part in public affairs” (Saward 2000:5)
- deliberative democrats argue that **decision-making should be based on reasoned public dialogue and deliberation**, where no force other than that of the better argument should prevail (Habermas 1975)
- The goal of public deliberation is to **make democratic institutions responsive to reasons and evidence**, not just the power of numbers, money or interests

Placing dialogue and deliberation (D+D) at the heart of PB in Scotland

- **Predominance of ‘aggregative’ models** of PB, where voting takes place without prior dialogue and deliberation about evidence, issues, priorities, aspirations and trade-offs
- **‘deliberative’ models** can increase the democratic quality of PB by allowing **exploration, discovery, learning and scrutiny**, which in turn can generate more robust, informed and considered decision-making
- When PB provides spaces for D+D between citizens, elected representatives, civil society organisations and public authorities, it creates opportunities for **collective reflection, innovation and action**
- Deliberative quality is important regardless of the PB model, but arguably more so for mainstream budgets and services

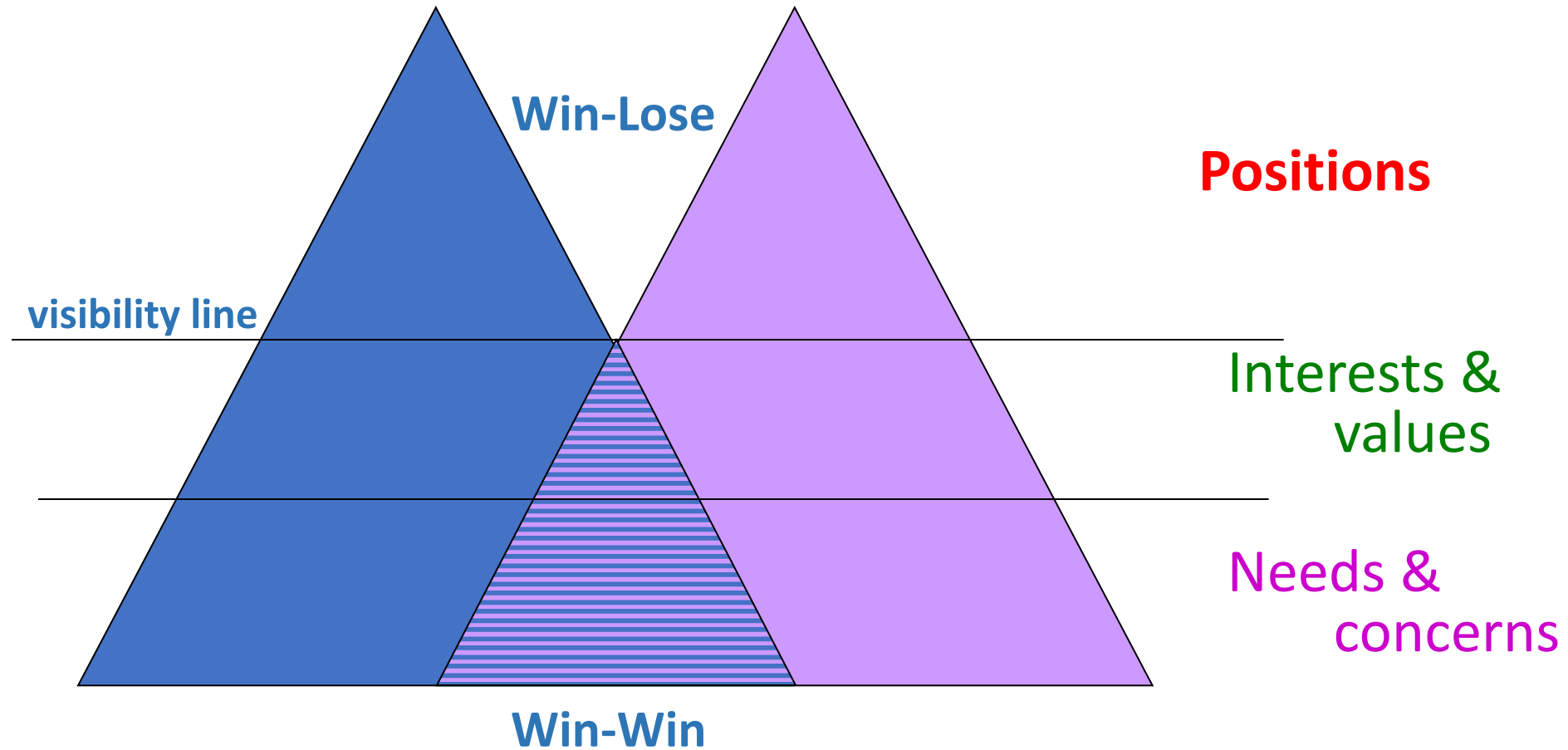
common rituals and pitfalls in public conversations

- ✧ Exchanging monologues and/or pre-packaged arguments
- ✧ Dominant voices
- ✧ Posturing / peacocking
- ✧ (Ab)using jargon
- ✧ Spiral of silence and avoidance (+ groupthink)
- ✧ Confrontational exchanges
- ✧ Polarisation and oversimplification



Debate	Dialogue	Deliberation
Seeks to promote opinions and gain majority support	Seeks to build understanding and relationships	Seeks common ground in order to solve problems
Participants argue, express, persuade and compete	Participants listen, exchange, reach across, reflect	Participants frame and weigh options, and make choices
Outcome: win/lose	Outcome: no decision	Outcome: decision – win/win

PIN diagram (Andrew Acland)



Dialogue

- A form of non-polarised conversation that focuses on building understanding and relationships
- Importance of safe spaces
- Suspension of assumptions and automatic response (assimilation/opposition)
- Finding common ground / exploring differences
- Co-creation of shared meanings and vocabularies
- Collaborative inquiry
- Storytelling
- Important contribution of emotions

Deliberation is “communication that induces reflection on preferences, values and interests in a non-coercive fashion” (Mansbridge et al., 2010: 65)

Key stages in a deliberative process



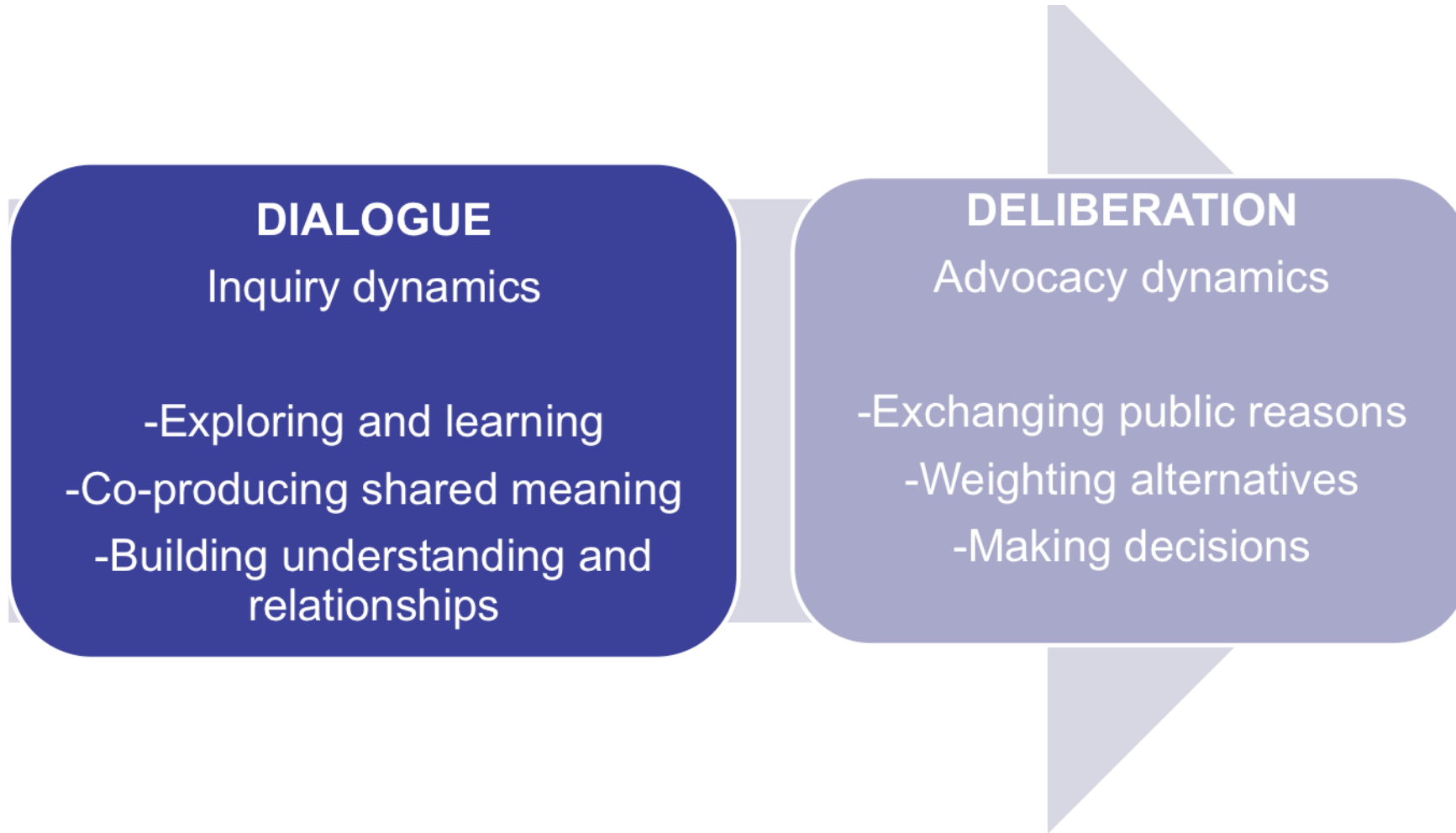
Why combine dialogue and deliberation?

Some critiques of deliberation:

- **Internal exclusion** (Young 2001): emphasis on reasoned/articulated exchanges privileges certain participants and excludes other forms of expression (eg testimony, storytelling)
- Often **dominated by 'debate'** – advocacy dynamics. Risk of not exploring issues and perspectives in depth
- Overly **'rationalistic'**: No room for emotions
- Overly centred on **verbal contributions**: facilitators must provide alternatives forms of participation that don't privilege the spoken word

When designing a participatory process, a dialogue phase before the deliberative phase can help to address these weaknesses

The D+D model



Two different styles of facilitation

Dialogue	Deliberation
Inviting exploration and understanding (no judgement)	Inviting scrutiny and judgement
Broadening or deepening stories/experiences	Sharpening/testing arguments
Centrality of experience	Centrality of evidence (which may include experience)
Ethics of care	Ethics of justification
Space for private and public reasons	Space for public reasons only
No pressure to reach conclusion/decision	Pressure to reach conclusion/decision

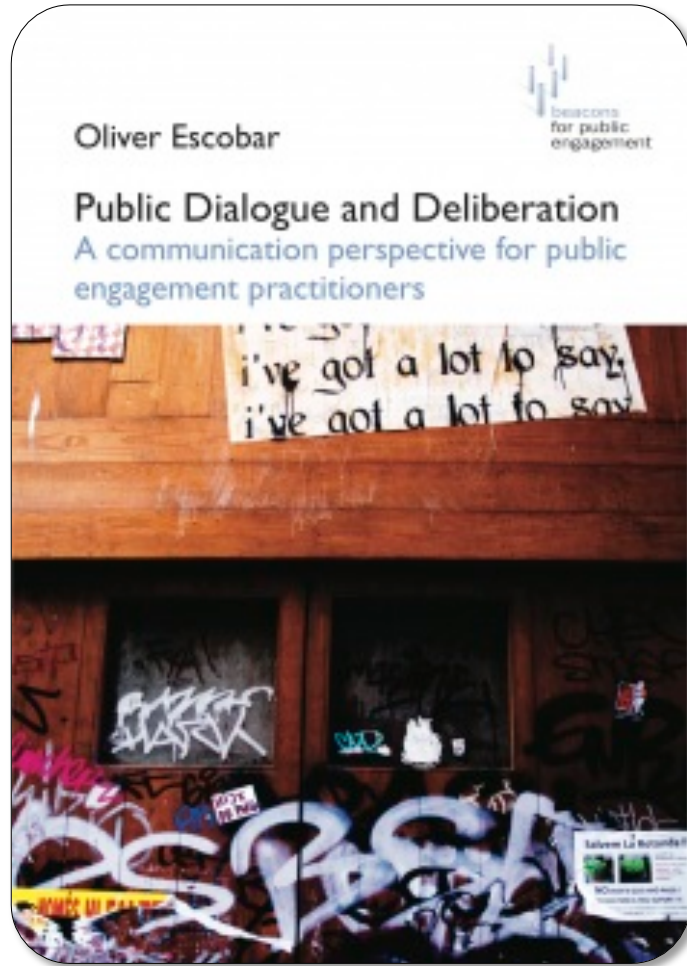
Why dialogue and deliberation matter in PB?

- It helps to reach decisions that are well justified
- It builds understanding and consent for decisions we may disagree on
- It can transform uninformed views and preferences through open and inclusive conversations
- It can avoid 'groupthink' and the 'echo chamber effect' (i.e. law of group polarisation)
- **Talk without action can be toothless but action without talk can be mindless**

Concluding ...

- **Where in the PB process** are dialogue and deliberation needed?
 - ideation and development of proposals
 - scrutiny of proposals before a vote
 - ongoing monitoring and evaluation of PB projects/services
 - ...
- Key role of **skilled facilitators** whose job is to address power inequalities through process design and careful facilitation





@OliverEscobar



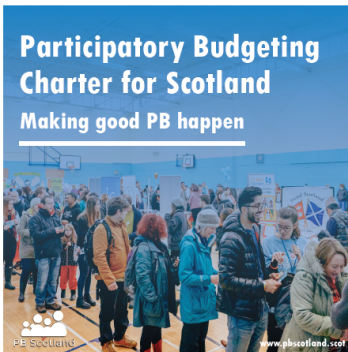
At your table:

1. Please introduce yourself briefly
2. Share quick questions/reactions to the presentation



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Community Learning and Development

Changing Lives - Strengthening Communities



3 approaches to PB in Aberdeenshire

- mini public - Marr
- Poster campaign - Garioch
- YVYC - Peterhead / Fraserburgh

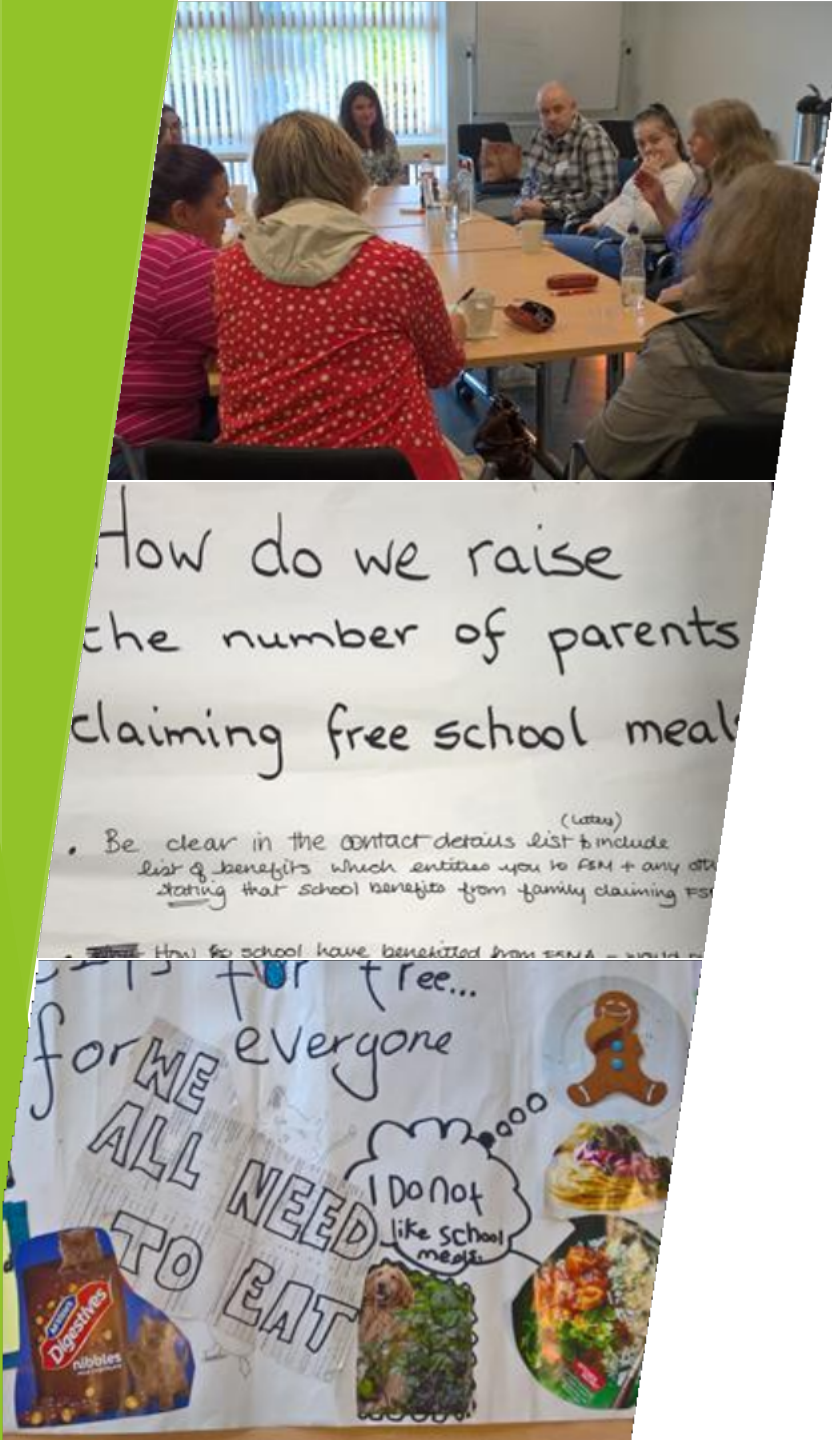
Aberdeenshire mini publics

- Fraserburgh - May 2017 JIC
- Peterhead - October 2017
- Fraserburgh - June 2019



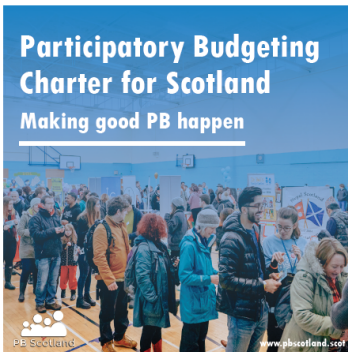
Key learning points

- Topic
- Timing
- Speakers
- Participants



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