

Application Form

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Experience data (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

Title of the experience: Grand Choice – Participatory Budgeting Initiative		
Name of the city or region: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council		
Inhabitants of the city or territory: approximately 146,452 (NISRA Population Estimates 2020)		
Country: Northern Ireland		
Institution presenting the candidacy (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council		
Website of the experience or institution: www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk		
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: New 'PB' for Lisburn Castlereagh Vote for Your Local Grand Choice (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) 'Grand Choice' set to reopen (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) 'Grand Choice' success in Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) 'Grand Choice' heads to Downshire this spring (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Facebook LCCC (@lisburnccc) / Twitter		
Start date of the experience: February 2020		
End date of the experience (if operational, indicate "ongoing"): ongoing		
Budget of the experience (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation): £105,000		
Type of candidacy (Mark with an X in the right column)	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	

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<p>Type of experience</p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)</p>	Participatory budgeting	X
	Participatory planning	
	Standing council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Public Hearing/Forum	
	Poll/referendum	
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces	
	E-government/Open government/Digital platforms	
	Citizen initiative	
Other (specify):		
<p>Objective of the experience</p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)</p>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation	X
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion	
	Community empowerment	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	X
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation	
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"	
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X	

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	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public		X
Territorial area (Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)	All the territory	Local	X
		Regional	
	District		X
	Neighbourhood		
Thematic area (Mark with an X in the right column) (you may choose more than one)	Governance		X
	Education		X
	Transport		
	Urban management		
	Health		X
	Security		X
	Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture		X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements.		X
	Culture		X
	Housing		
	Job creation		
	Decentralization		
Local development		X	

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	Training/learning	X
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	X
	All	
	Other (write the topic)	
<p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen) You can also add the specific target</p>	SDG 1 - No poverty	
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well- being	X
	SDG 4 - Quality education	
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	

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	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	
	SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

Context

In a **maximum of 300 words**, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.

Geographical Area

Lisburn and Castlereagh is a local government district in Northern Ireland. The district was created on 1 April 2015. It consists of the combined area of the City of Lisburn with the Borough of Castlereagh. The Council is made up of 40 Elected Members representing seven District Electoral Areas: (Killultagh, Lisburn North, Lisburn South, Downshire East, Downshire West, Castlereagh East, Castlereagh South).

Heritage & Culture

Lisburn and Castlereagh is surrounded by some of Northern Ireland's most beautiful countryside. Its welcoming towns and villages are renowned for their fascinating history and the area also hosts Ireland's only Royal residence in Royal Hillsborough. From the Lisburn Historic Quarter to Dundonald Motte, Lagan Valley Regional Park to Hillsborough Fort. Heritage sites include the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum Downshire Monument, Christ Church Cathedral and the Harry Ferguson Memorial Gardens.

Socioeconomic Context

Employment Rate

In 2018, 16-64 (working age) employment rate in Lisburn And Castlereagh was 76.8%. The overall 16-64 employment rate for Northern Ireland was 70.0%.

Economic Activity

In 2018, it was estimated that 78.9% of those aged 16-64 living in Lisburn And Castlereagh were economically active (either employed or unemployed) and 21.1% were economically inactive (people who are neither in employment nor unemployed). This group includes, for example, all those who were looking after a home or retired, long term sick or disabled.

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This compares with 72.8% economically active and 27.2% economically inactive for Northern Ireland.

Qualification Level

In 2018, of those persons aged 16-64 in Lisburn And Castlereagh 41.8% were qualified to Degree level or above (NI Average: 34.9%), whilst % had 'no qualifications' (NI Average: 14.7%).

Weekly Wage

At April 2019, the gross full-time median weekly wage for those working in Lisburn And Castlereagh was £541.60 compared with £534.60 for NI.

Precedents

Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (maximum 300 words)

Participatory budgeting is a relatively new concept in Northern Ireland, it empowers local communities to decide how funding is allocated within their area. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council used this innovative and democratic model with financial support from partner agencies to involve local people in deciding how public funds should be allocated to address local priorities. The partner agencies involved were Policing & Community Safety Partnership, Police Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Good Relations, South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust, Sport NI and Community Planning.

Based on a simple concept, it opens up local decision making and provides a real opportunity for public engagement and participation by all sections of the community. Importantly, it focuses on engaging people who may not have traditionally applied for public funds but do have ideas on how their areas can be improved as opposed to the very structured way public funds are normally allocated in Northern Ireland. Simply put, it gives people the opportunity to identify and discuss what matters to them in their communities and to vote on their priorities.

In line with Scottish guidance it is based on seven key features to ensure a fair and high quality process:

- Fairness and inclusivity
- Participatory
- Deliberative
- Empowering
- Creative and flexible
- Transparent
- Part of our democracy

The aim of the process is to enhance the capacity of local people and promote good relations across the Council area. The community will be to influence how available resources are allocated under 3 key themes:

- Policing and community safety;
- Mental health and well-being; and
- Engaging young people.

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Objectives of the experience

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (**maximum 100 words**)*

The main objective of the participatory budgeting experience is community empowerment. The ethos is to involve local people in deciding how public funds should be allocated to address local priorities. It opens up local decision making and provides a real opportunity for public engagement and participation by all sections of the community.

The process improves mechanisms applied by Councils in allocating funds to local communities. It engages people who may not normally apply for public funds but have ideas on how their areas can be improved as opposed to the structured way public funds are normally allocated in Northern Ireland.

Methodology

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (**maximum 300 words**)*

Phase 1 – Promotion

Please see attached promotional plan and information leaflet (**Appendices 1 and 2**)

Phase 2 – Application Process

The community are invited to submit proposals using the attached proposal form (**Appendix 3**)

Phase 3 – Selection Process

Proposals are assessed by a panel of representatives from partner organisations. Criteria considered:

- What benefits to the community will result from the project?
- Can the proposal be delivered within the timeframe of the available funding?

Phase 4 – The Pitch

Successful proposals are invited to participate in a community marketplace event to showcase their project - promotional flyer attached at **Appendix 4**. Members of the public in attendance are asked to vote for their top 10 projects.

Phase 5 - The Vote

The principles of voting are that everyone has an equal say and voters are asked to select their top 10 projects which are equally scored. The public must vote for 10 projects

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otherwise the voting paper is disqualified – please see sample voting paper at **Appendix 5**. The highest proposals with the highest number of votes are awarded funding up to £1,000.

Phase 6 – Payment and Award

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council issue successful proposals with an award letter and funding agreement. Recipients are expected to:

- Record activity – photographs etc.
- Fulfil any health and safety requirements

Payment is made as soon as possible following the public voting event.

Phase 7 – Delivery

Each successful group is responsible for the delivery of their project. A Council Officer will visit each project at least once during the delivery period to monitor progress and provide assistance if required.

Phase 8 – Evaluation

Groups are not asked to complete a post project evaluation. The Council Officer doing the site visit will assess the impact of the project and the user experience of the Participatory Budgeting process.

Innovation

*Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Participatory budgeting is an innovative practice which enables individuals to feel empowered, listened to and engaged with their local council. It has very real positive impacts on people who are involved in the process by increasing their connectedness and improving their understanding of public services within their community. The participatory budgeting experience in Lisburn & Castlereagh has led to improved public involvement and engagement. Community connection in the council area has increased as people involved in the practise are more aware of the process and, crucially, more confident that the council is really letting the community share control and power in allocating public funding.

Inclusion

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The participatory budgeting scheme was promoted widely across the Council's DEAs to attract a diverse range of applications from as many groups as possible. Funded projects have provided positive impacts for the following groups of people:

- Pre-school children
- Primary schools
- Youths
- People with a disability

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- Older people
- Cultural diversity groups
- People with mental health issues
- Food banks
- Young women (self-defence classes)

A diverse range of applications were submitted by local communities as a result of the targeted communications plan. Groups were contacted by email, tagged in social media posts, invited to information sessions and follow up telephone calls by Council Officers to encourage and support people who would not normally apply for public funding.

Communication

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Attached at **Appendix 1** is the communication strategy outlining how and the channels used by the Council to raise aware about the participatory budgeting concept. The plan also covers how local communities were encouraged to become involved in the process.

Articulation with other actors

*It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The participatory budgeting initiative adopted by the Council is a partnership approach involving agencies such as the Policing & Community Safety Partnership, Good Relations, South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust, Sport NI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Community Planning. A budget of £15,000 for each of the seven district electoral areas was made available to local groups through this scheme. Partner agencies also provided financial support as well as involvement in all aspects of the process.

The voting event provided wider engagement opportunities for the community with representation from the Mobile Police Station, Neighbourhood Police Officers, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Health & Social Care Trust. Bike Marking was offered, housing issues discussed, promotion of fostering and adoption services as well as general crime prevention advice. Other agencies offering services addressing general mental health and wellbeing, youth engagement and biodiversity advise also participated in the community event.

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Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

Groups that took part in the participatory budgeting scheme were not asked to complete a specific post project evaluation forms. A Council Officer visited each of the projects at least once during the delivery period to monitor progress and that visit was used to complete an evaluation to determine the impact of the project and the user experience of the participatory budgeting process. The learning from this initiative was shared with the partner agencies to further develop the model to be replicated across the entire Council area to effectively engage citizens with local decision making.

Attached at **Appendix 7** is a sample report card completed for the project.

One of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement was that project promoters would attend a community celebration event at the end of the programme. The objective of this event was to determine the impact and the user experience of the participatory budgeting process. Unfortunately due to the Coronavirus pandemic the community celebration event did not take place. However as we move out of restrictions and back to more normal times the community celebration event will be included in future rounds of this process.

Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and which are their profiles. What have been the impacts on public policies, on the functioning of the administration and on citizens. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

To date the Council has delivered participatory budgeting initiatives in four of its seven District Electoral Areas (DEA). The scheme will be implemented in the remaining three DEAs by the end of February 2023.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place in April 2021 the participatory budgeting schemes in Castlereagh East and Castlereagh South were delivered using an entirely online format. Each of the groups competing for funding were asked submit a two minute video outlining their project. The video clips were uploaded to the Council's website for a two week period during which time the communities in the DEAs were encouraged to view and vote for their top ten projects. Voters had to supply their postcode to verify that they lived in the DEA.

The impacts and results of the process are as follows:

Killultagh DEA (2020):	Castlereagh East DEA (2021):
23 groups submitted proposals	23 groups submitted proposals
Approximately 1000 people attended the community voting event	Online format used – so no in person voting event
758 votes were cast	934 votes were cast

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17 groups were awarded a total of £15,300	16 groups were awarded a total of £15,000
<p>Castlereagh South DEA (2021):</p> <p>16 groups submitted proposals</p> <p>Online format was used – so no in person voting event</p> <p>943 votes were cast</p> <p>16 groups were awarded a total of £15,000</p>	<p>Downshire West DEA (2022):</p> <p>23 groups submitted proposals</p> <p>Approximately 800 people attended the community voting event</p> <p>725 votes were cast</p> <p>16 groups were awarded a total of £15,744</p>

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)*

Participatory budgeting is a relatively new concept in Northern Ireland, it empowers local communities to decide how funding is allocated within their area. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council used this innovative and democratic model with financial support from partner agencies to involve local people in determining how public funds are allocated to address local priorities. The partner agencies involved were Policing & Community Safety Partnership, Police Service Northern Ireland, Good Relations, South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Sport NI and Community Planning.

Based on a simple concept, participatory budgeting opens up local decision making and provides a real opportunity for public engagement and participation by all sections of the community. Importantly, it focuses on engaging people who may not have traditionally applied for public funds but do have ideas on how their areas can be improved as opposed to the very structured way public funds are normally allocated in Northern Ireland. Simply put, it gives people the opportunity to identify and discuss what matters to them in their communities and to vote on their priorities.

In line with Scottish guidance it is based on seven key features to ensure a fair and high quality process:

- Fairness and inclusivity
- Participatory
- Deliberative
- Empowering
- Creative and flexible
- Transparent

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- Part of our democracy

The aim of the process is to enhance the capacity of local people and promote good relations across the Council area. The community will have the ability to influence how available resources are allocated using one or more of the “Take 5 Ways To Wellbeing” themes:

- Connect – with the people around you and keep in touch with each other
- Be Active – to help us feel good both physically and mentally
- Take Notice – to ensure the community is safe
- Keep Learning – new things that give us a sense of achievement, enjoyment and increased confidence
- Give – doing something that give back to our community and help each other

Using the participatory budgeting concept local residents in four District Electoral Areas of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council selected 85 project ideas to receive a total of £61,055 funding. The Council is extremely proud to champion this initiative to enable its citizens to decide how funding is allocated in their localities. Local communities have welcomed the opportunity to have “their say” with 3,435 individuals taking part in the voting process.

The variety of projects funded will see a healthier Lisburn & Castlereagh area both physically and mentally. The Grand Choice participatory budgeting has supported the development of sports and education programmes, investment in shared spaces and the learning of new skills and knowledge.

The council and its partners have committed to delivering further participatory budgeting schemes in its remaining three District Electoral Areas before the end of February 2023.