

# **Harrow Open Budget Process**

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# Concept of the Open Budget Process

- **We learned from Participatory Budgeting in Brazil**



- **POWER Inquiry supported the Council to tailor the process specially for Harrow**

# The Process

- **Steering Group**
- **Management Board**
- **Open Budget Assembly**
- **Open Budget Panel**

# The Open Budget Assembly

- **First of its kind nationally and was at the heart of the process**
- **Based on five key principles:**
  - **Influence**
  - **Information**
  - **Deliberation**
  - **Feedback**
  - **Independence**

# The Open Budget Assembly

- **Assembly Discussion Guide:**
- **Population - 206,800**
- **£544 million (£260million) spending discretion**
- **Five main budgetary areas**
- **A pro-active recruitment campaign**
- **‘Tell the council where to stick its money’**

# The Open Budget Assembly



# Impact

- **Press**
- **Representation-diverse communities**
- **Decisions**

# Evaluation

- **90% regarded the event as good or very good**
- **43% stated they had an improved view of the Council**
- **80% stated they would be more interested in Council decisions**
- **Improved understanding of the Council's budget setting**
- **People of Harrow can be trusted to debate**
- **Raised profile in the national media**
- **Clear priorities**

# Lessons Learnt

- **The process should take place over the whole annual cycle**
- **Councillors should be encouraged to take a more active role**
- **More resources needed**
- **Discussion guide should include detail on revenue and capital costs**
- **Greater structured discussion**

# The Open Budget Panel

- **34 residents elected from the Assembly**
- **Open Budget Panel continue to meet and on reflection of the whole process we have implemented Open Cabinet events**
- **Conclusion**