

The Highland Council

Caithness Committee
13 January 2016

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	CC/05/16

Participatory Budgeting – Caithness

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report seeks to review the recent participatory budgeting event held in Wick and agree the way forward for future events.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Head of Policy and Reform met with local members to discuss new localism and the Community Empowerment Bill in June 2015. At this meeting members were presented with the participatory budgeting process being trialled elsewhere in the UK.
- 1.2 Members agreed to set aside £30k for participatory budgeting from the ward discretionary budgets and that they would hold a community event. A steering group was to be set up to agree format, rules and vet applications.

The steering group was made of

- Ward Members.
- Community Councils.
- Caithness Voluntary Group (3rd Sector).
- Community Associations.
- HLH-Youth Worker.

- 1.3 The steering group agreed that the event would be held on Saturday 21st November in the Pulteney Centre, Wick.
It was also agreed to set maximum limit of funding at £3,000 per application and that those attending and voting would be required to pick 5 projects with no ranking applying, this was to avoid large numbers turning out for one project and skewing the voting process.

2. Experimental Event November 2015

- 2.1 20 projects were selected for inclusion in the event with £46k worth of applications competing for the £30k on offer.
- 2.2 Applicants were to give a 3 minute presentation followed up by 2 minutes of questions and answers from the audience.

2.3 Around 170 attended with 145 registering their details to vote. Post codes were recorded to ascertain the level of attendance across Caithness. A breakdown of attendance is provided below.

2.4

Attendance at Participatory Budgeting (PB) Event - 21st November 2015 by Post Code				
Total registered attendance			145	100%
KW1	Wick		45	31.03%
KW2/KW3	Lybster		9	6.20%
KW5	Latheron		13	8.97%
KW6	Dunbeath		6	4.14%
KW7	Berriedale		4	2.76%
KW12	Halkirk		9	6.22%
KW14	Thurso		59	40.68%

3. Successful Projects

3.1 Following the voting at the end of the event, 13 of the 20 applications were successful in attracting sufficient support to be awarded funding. The full list of projects in the order of award is listed below.




3.2

Group	Description	Amount Requested
Caithness Broch Project	Guide and Interpretive Panels	£2,070
No Limits	Running of Childrens Saturday Club	£3,000
Wick Open Duke of Edinburgh	Gold Expedition	£2,190
Latheronwheel Play Area	New Play park equipment	£3,000
Friends of Newton Hill Woodland	Outdoor Static Play Equipment	£3,000
ADHD Support Caithness	Support for Children with ADHD	£1,000
Laurandy Day Care Centre	Kitchen Renovation	£3,000
Wick Coastal Rowing Club	Purchase of essential safety equipment	£3,000
Caithness Biodiversity Group	Purchase of cold frames and equipment	£1,100
Wick Netball Club	Purchase of netball equipment	£375
Thurso Town Improvement Ass	Christmas Lights Display	£3,000
Caithness Horizon	Caithness Viking Festival 2016	£3,000
Berriedale Church & Cemetery Ass	Descriptive Panels for Telford Church	£3,000

4. Feedback

4.1 Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with constructive comments made by a

number of respondents. 100 feedback sheets were returned with the results tabulated below. The steering group reviewed these in detail in December 2015.

			
The day was well organised	94	5	1
I liked the venue	84	12	2
I could hear everything	79	9	12
I could see everything	93	7	0
The event was in a good location	81	18	1
I liked the presentations	93	7	0
Voting instructions were clear	93	6	1
I think everything was done fairly	87	11	1
I feel this is good for my area	95	5	0
I would do this again	93	6	1

4.2 When analysing the feedback areas that did less well the steering group noted the following trends.

- The venue was marked down due to those having to travel. This would be the case irrespective of where it was held.
- Some groups opted not to use microphones this affected both the audiences ability to here but also impacted on the number of votes that group obtained.
- A number of the audience found difficulty in making choices and felt every group deserved something. This highlighted difficult decisions encountered regularly by Highland Council.
- 6 of the categories scored 93% or higher and it was noted that 95% felt it was good for the area and 93% would do it again.

5.0 Participatory budgeting future arrangements

5.1 The event held in Wick in November was a pathfinder event to gauge success and trial a particular form of participatory budgeting for the Caithness Ward Discretionary Budgets. Members need to consider if they wish to go forward

with future events and in particular need to give consideration to the following.

- Frequency of event.
- Level of ward discretionary budget support.
- Locations of event.
- Improvements or variations from the pilot event.

6.0 **Implications**

6.1 Resource: Members will need to decide on frequency and level of financial contribution. Time and location are also a factor on resources.

Legal: Normal financial regulations apply.

Equalities: All venues to be fully accessible and consideration given to crèche facilities.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever: No known implications.

Risk: There are no known risks to Highland Council. All awards will be subject to normal financial regulations and guidance for discretionary and other grant awards.

Gaelic: There are no Gaelic implications.

Rural implications: Members to consider rural locations for future events.

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to discuss the Participatory Budgeting Event held in Wick in November.
2. Members are asked to decide on any future Caithness events and in particular those points listed in 5.1

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 29 December 2015

Report Author:

David Sutherland, Ward Manager, Thurso, Wick & Landward Caithness.