

The Highland Council

**Nairnshire Committee
20 April 2016**

Agenda Item	10
Report No	N/14/16

Nurturing Nairnshire Participatory Budgeting Update and Next Steps

Report by Acting Head of Policy

Summary

This report updates Members on the recent Nurturing Nairnshire Participatory Budgeting process and asks Members to comment on the process and the partnership that delivered it. It asks Members to consider how the process is developed in the future in terms of the mechanism used, the services potentially in scope, the focus of future activity and the resource that could be utilised. Members are asked to note the feedback on the process and comment on potential future developments.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 requires public sector partners to engage with communities and support them to participate in decision-making including how resources are utilised.
- 1.2 Members previously agreed to work with partners to design and deliver a participatory budgeting event for Nairnshire in March 2016 utilising £20k from the Ward Discretionary budget and £5k of Scottish Government funding. The event would allow community groups to bid for a small grant with a public vote deciding how to allocate the available funding.
- 1.3 In addition to allocating funding Members were keen to explore the potential the process had for developing a network of community groups, building their capacity, broadening the range of people engaged in decision-making, and developing the partnership approach required to more effectively focus services and resources on improving outcomes.

2. Nurturing Nairnshire Event

- 2.1 The event design and planning was undertaken by a local partnership group. The group's membership was structured to ensure that the process reached key sectors in the community including youth, sport, the arts and access organisations.
- 2.2 The group felt that to give the event the best chance of success it was sensible to design a process that was straightforward to apply to and attend whilst passing as much decision-making to the community as possible.

2.3 In total the Nurturing Nairnshire fund received 42 applications from 40 organisations with projects totalling £70,509. Following a screening process to confirm eligibility, 32 organisations were invited to present their projects at the community event.

2.4 The event was held in Nairn Community and Arts Centre on Saturday 12th of March 2016. 124 residents from the Nairn Ward 19 area attended the event and registered to vote. On the day, there were 29 presentations from organisations requesting funding and 108 residents each cast five votes to decide which projects they thought should receive funding. Subsequently 13 projects were fully funded and 1 project received partial funding.(see appendix 1)

3 Evaluation and Feedback

3.1 To help develop future Participatory Budgeting processes, attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form. 91 responses were received. Key respondent information to note included:

- 86% found out about new projects in the local area
- 84% felt the Nurturing Nairnshire process was good for the area
- 81% indicated that they thought everything was done fairly
- 76% indicated that they would participate in a similar event in the future
- 69% thought that the process was a good way to distribute funding
- 51% made new connections and contacts

The feedback from the event is positive and encouraging.

3.2 There were also a small number of comments received at the event and through email about how the process could be improved to be more inclusive. These included feedback regarding:

- The timing of the event
- Criteria and objectives for funding
- The availability of information regarding bids prior to the event
- Suggestions about a weighted voting system

3.3 All this information, and Members views on future participatory processes, will be used by the partnership group to develop and improve the process.

4. Future Developments

4.1 In considering how to develop the process Members may want to consider and comment on a number of issues:

- How should we continue to develop a partnership to design and deliver participatory budgeting and other participatory activity?
- What areas of service might benefit from applying a participatory process to?
- Is there scope to develop a digital element to engagement whilst retaining the value created from a live deliberative process?

5. Implications

5.1 Resource Implications: There are no direct resource implications arising from the paper however there is future potential for Ward Budgets and Service Budgets to be committed for participatory activity.

Legal Implications: Participatory budgeting will assist us in meeting the requirements of the Community Empowerment Act.

Equalities Implications: The Participatory Budgeting process assists us to better engage with people with protected characteristics.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever; Gaelic, Risk and Rural implications: None identified

Recommendation

- i. Members are asked to note the feedback on the process and comment on potential future developments.

Designation: Community and Democratic Engagement Manager

Date: 11/4/16

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Background Papers:

Appendix 1

Successful Bidding Organisations

Organisation	Name of project	Amount £
Nairn Welfare Football Association	Riverside Refurbishment	2500
Friends of Nairn Duke of Edinburgh	Duke of Edinburgh Awards now and for the future	2500
Nairn Kayak club	Nairn Harbour training and coaching base	2417
Nairn Men's Shed	Acquisition of permanent premises	2500
Revolution Cycling Team	Nairn BMX Track Tidy Up/Provision of a safe environment for inexperienced cyclists	2500
Nairn Ceilidh Group	Ceilidh on the move	1000
Nairn Youth Café	Unicycle Achievement group	567
Nairn Sports Club	Rackets for all	2500
River Nairn Swan and Waterfowl Trust	Lower Riverside Enhancement	800
Lung at heart	Lung at heart	600
Nairn Sailing Club	Improving public access to Nairn West Beach	2500
Nairn Books and Arts Festival	Kids events for all	2253
Nairn Allotment Society	Growing fruit trees from grafts on rootstocks	700
Association of Nairn Businesses	Get to know Nairn	Part funded