

Agenda Item	10.
Report No	COG 12/17

Participatory Budgeting- Update

Report by Community and Democratic Engagement Manager

Recommendation:

The Group are asked to consider the update on the development of participatory budgeting and the opportunities for enhanced partnership approaches.

1	Participatory Budgeting in Highland
1.1	<p>Participatory budgeting (PB), is recognised as a way for local people to have a direct say in how public funds are used to address local needs. It is a method which when used alongside other models of community engagement and empowerment forms a wider strategic approach to advancing participatory democracy in local decision making and strengthening local representative democracy.</p> <p>Highland PB is designed and led at a local level. It creates a partnership of local activists supported by public agencies to initiate and organise PB. The entire process including the scope, scale and method of decision-making are created and agreed by the partnership at a local level.</p> <p>This approach to community engagement and participation leads to the delivery of better, more responsive services and better outcomes for communities. The PB activity in Highland is a key mechanism to empower communities in Highland. By further developing PB in Highland the benefits will include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased local democratic participation • increased confidence and skills among local people • higher numbers of people volunteering in their communities • satisfaction with quality of life in a local neighbourhood • stronger community networks • better awareness of services available across all sectors • Increased awareness of areas of deprivation driving the delivery of more services in them which are more effectively targeted.
2	Progress So Far
2.1	<p>Our PB programme so far has taken place <i>in 8 of the community partnership areas</i>, this has included a mix of face to face events/processes and digital approaches. <i>In total 16 processes have taken place.</i></p> <p>In 16/17 the PB programme also trialled the Place Standard tool in two areas and</p>

	<p>introduced senior managers from Highland Councils Community Services to the process with communities in 3 events. These elements are with a view to linking the intelligence gather at events to community partnership activity and to inform how we apply the process to mainstream activity.</p> <p>A table illustrating PB processes since 2015 is attached as appendix 1</p> <p>The proposed programme for 17/18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes further progress on completing the geography of PB in Highland • utilises the Place Standard tool • engages citizens with local community planning arrangements • launches a digital tool (participare-funded by the Scottish Government and supported by Demsoc) in one established area • works with senior managers and partners to scope out applying the process to mainstream activity
3	Next Steps
3.1	<p>The PB activity in Highland has three main aims-</p> <p>Outcome 1: to empower individuals and communities by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use</p> <p>Outcome 2: increase inclusion and diversity in local community planning by supporting sections of the community to participate in the PB process, particularly in areas of deprivation, to open up new channels of communication between the public sector and 'hard-to-reach' community members</p> <p>Outcome 3: to facilitate a change in organisational behaviour around service design and delivery</p> <p>Highland Decides 17/18 will deliver-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 x PB events in three separate Multi Member Wards. These will be Wards that have not yet engaged in PB. • They will be areas of deprivation identified by the Highland Community Planning Partnership to target for partnership action and focused upon communities agreed for locality planning by local community partnerships. The agreed areas are Tain and East Ross, Kyle of Lochalsh and the Merkinch area. • 1xPB event with a pre event digital process supported by Demsoc and utilising the Participare system will take place in Caithness • Work at a strategic level with senior staff to design approaches to applying PB to mainstream resources-this will be supported by expert advice PB partners a social enterprise.
4	Mainstreaming?

4.1	<p>Up to this point PB has been applied to the distribution of discretionary grant aid. It has delivered strong results in terms of engaging communities, however in order to see the real benefits of greater public participation we require to move it toward the arena of mainstream services.</p> <p>There is a requirement under The Community Empowerment Act (Part 10) to engage the public in decision making including that around resources. In addition the Scottish Government has recently agreed with COSLA a target for local authorities to subject 1% of their budget to the a public decision making process .</p> <p>Applying the process to mainstream activity is challenging. It raises challenges around –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altering our priorities to reflect a public decision • Stopping current activity to follow this through • Inflexibility of budgets • Ensuring the community “voice” is varied and not just the loudest one • Balancing the need for universal versus targeted service delivery <p>There are opportunities though-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to “spend less, achieve more” through a better understanding of issues, what causes them and what might solve them • to take a partnership approach to activity • to enable other sectors better able to deliver <p>Some broad areas that could be subject to the process are-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transport commissioning • amenity activity e.g. grounds maintenance • community and leisure facility scheduling <p>Highland has agreed to host a regional cluster of Councils to look at PB. This and other national fora will inform our approach to mainstreaming the process.</p>
5	A Partnership Approach
5.1	<p>The approach so far has focussed on Council discretionary budgets. However, partners have contributed in terms of supporting events, notably Police Scotland utilised some events to engage with the public for their “Your View Counts” survey.</p> <p>A partnership approach could include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligning planned engagement activity to PB events • providing staff organisational support • providing venue or other in kind support • identifying budgets that could go in a PB pot • identifying activity suitable for a PB approach
5.2	<p>The group are asked to consider how The CPP might develop its activity in this area.</p>

Participatory Budgeting in Highland to date

Area	Area and amount distributed through PB			
	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2109
North, West and Central Sutherland		Sutherland £15K		
East Sutherland and Edderton				
Thurso and Northwest Caithness	Caithness £25k	Caithness £30k (May) & £30K (November)	Digital £15K	
Wick and East Caithness				
Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh				
Cromarty Firth				
Tain and Easter Ross				
Dingwall and Seaforth		Dingwall £24k		
Black Isle				
Eilean a Cheo		Skye £15k		
Aird and Loch Ness		Aird and Loch Ness £20k		
Inverness West		Inverness West £11K	£11k	
Inverness Central				
Inverness Millburn				
Inverness Ness-side		Hilton £7k		
Culloden and Ardersier				
Nairn and Cawdor	Nairnshire £25k	Nairnshire £13.5k		
Inverness South				
Badenoch and Strathspey		B&S £32K		
Fort William and Ardnamurchan	Lochaber £10k - Digital	Lochaber £30k - Digital		
Caol and Mallaig				