

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>RC/014/18</b>

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** Ross and Cromarty Committee

**Date:** 2 May 2018

**Report Title:** **Participatory Budgeting Toward Mainstreaming**

**Report By:** Acting Head of Policy

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

#### **1.1**

This report updates Members on progress with participatory budgeting (PB) in the Ross and Cromarty area. It sets out the Council's approach to PB - why we are doing it and what it delivers for communities and us as an organisation. It suggests some areas of service activity that might benefit from engaging communities with a PB approach to further develop participatory democracy within Highland.

### **2. Recommendations**

#### **2.1** Members are asked to:

- i. Note and comment on the PB events held in the area since March 2017
- ii. Consider and comment on how PB might be applied to mainstream service areas

### **3. Participatory Budgeting in Highland**

- 3.1 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, can form a wider strategic approach to advancing participatory democracy in local decision making and strengthening local representative democracy.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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-
  - increased local democratic participation
  - increased confidence and skills among local people
  - support people volunteering in their communities
  - satisfaction with quality of life in a local neighbourhood
  - stronger community networks
  - better understanding and awareness of services available across all sectors
  - increased awareness of areas of need, driving the delivery of more effectively targeted services.
  - increased awareness of the financial challenges Councils and partners

### **4. Ross and Cromarty Participatory Budgeting**

- 4.1 Since March 2017 three participatory budgeting processes have been conducted in the Ross and Cromarty area-
  - Dingwall and Seaforth Ward (“Your Community Your Cash”) - Saturday 11 March 2017
  - Tain and Easter Ross Ward (“Community Cash”) – Saturday 24 February 2018
  - Kyle Community Council Area (“Kyle – Let’s Decide”) – Saturday 17 March 2018

Each of these events was co-ordinated by Council staff but the partnership groups formed to design and deliver them drew staff and volunteers from a range of agencies and organisations in the community. This contribution was invaluable in taking forward the process.

4.2 At the three events evaluation forms were attached to the ballot papers. In total there were 175 surveys completed at PB events in Ross and Cromarty.

Event	Attendance	Voters	Completed surveys
Dingwall and Seaforth	<b>120</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>67</b>
Tain and Easter Ross	<b>120</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>68</b>
Kyle Community Council area	<b>60</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>40</b>
Total:	300	253	175

4.3 In the table below, the percentage of people who stated "YES" to the statements on surveys are detailed:

	STATEMENT	DINGWALL	TAIN	KYLE
1	The day was well organised	<b>98</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>95</b>
2	The event was in a good location	<b>100</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>97.5</b>
3	I liked the presentations	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>97.5</b>
4	I think everything was done fairly	<b>93</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>92.5</b>
5	I feel this was good for my area	<b>95</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>97.5</b>
6	I would do this again	<b>91</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>80</b>
7	I think this was a good way to distribute money	<b>86</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>85</b>
8	I have made new connections in my local area	<b>60</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47.5</b>
9	I have found out about new projects in my local area	<b>100</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>95</b>

Across the Ross and Cromarty area, this means that:

- **94%** thought the events were well organised
- **92%** thought the events were in good locations
- **92.5%** liked the presentations
- **87%** thought everything was done fairly
- **89%** felt PB was good for their area
- **80%** felt PB was a good way to distribute money
- **49%** made new connections in their local area
- **93%** found out about new projects in their local area

4.4 Members will see that the PB events were very successful in terms of being well organised, making people more aware of what other groups are doing etc. Where concerns were expressed this tended to be around-

- The balance between rural villages and the larger population centres.
- The large number of applications meant some events took longer than expected meaning members of the public had to commit significant time to the process
- The element of competing against other worthy projects made some groups feel uncomfortable.
- The age participants should be able to vote at caused debate.
- The cost of running PB events was queried.

## **5. Mainstreaming**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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 public decision making process by 2021.

- 5.3 Applying the process to mainstream activity is challenging. It raises challenges around:
- Altering our priorities to reflect a public decision
  - Changing activity to reflect new priorities
  - Inflexibility of budgets
  - Ensuring the community “voice” is varied and not just the loudest one
  - Balancing the need for universal versus targeted service delivery
  - Balancing urban versus rural needs
- 5.4 There are opportunities though:
- 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 or that can contribute to delivery
- 5.5 Some broad areas that could be subject to the process going forward are:
- transport commissioning
  - community service activity e.g. amenity and environmental works or activity around housing
  - community facility scheduling

## **6 A Partnership Approach**

- 6.1 The approach so far has focussed on Council discretionary budgets. However, community planning 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.

A partnership approach could include-

- 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

## 7. Implications

### 7.1 *Resource*

PB is about the way resources are allocated. There are no direct resource implications as the minimal costs that are associated with the running of PB events will be met from the budget which is the subject of the PB in question. The use of PB can also result in spin off benefits being gained from the process.

### 7.2 *Legal*

As noted in paragraph 5.1 there is a legal requirement to engage the public in decision making including that around resources and 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

### 7.3 *Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)*

The essential element of PB is community involvement and the local events had positive spin offs. The events have also provided areas for learning and a further roll out of PB will reflect this. The PB process has, and will continue to consider how best to ensure that people with protected characteristics are supported to be involved.

### 7.4 *Climate Change / Carbon Clever, Risk, Gaelic*

None identified

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Appendix 1: Ross and Cromarty Successfully Funded PB Applicants

**Ross and Cromarty Successfully Funded PB Applicants**

<b>Dingwall and Seaforth</b>			
Area	Group	Project	Funding
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Youth Forum	Fusion Cookwell	£1,815
Dingwall and Seaforth	Conon Bridge Lunch Club	Conon Bridge Lunch Club	£500
Dingwall and Seaforth	Rionnagan Rois	Rionnagan Rois Website/CD	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Wheeled Sports Group	Dingwall Wheeled Sports Park	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Men's Shed	Establishment of Workshop Facilities	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Primary Soccer 7s	Football in the Community	£1,360
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Volunteers	Tidy Up Dingwall	£1,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	RCAC	Long Jump Pit Runway	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall in Bloom	Dingwall in Bloom 2017	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	North Highland Radio	North Highland Radio	£2,000
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Gaelic Nursey	"Clann Fallain"	£1,518
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Museum Trust	Refurbishment of Eagle Court	£1,500
Dingwall and Seaforth	Maryburgh Community Council	Community Garden	£100
Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Primary Parent Council	Dingwall Primary School Garden	£2,000

Dingwall and Seaforth	Dingwall Community Council	Ferry Point Refurbishment	£2,000
<b>Dingwall and Seaforth total funding:</b>			<b>£23,793</b>

<b>Tain and Easter Ross</b>			
Tain and E Ross	Tain and District Development Trust	Community Market for Tain and District	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Tain Task Force	Tain Floral Displays	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Tain Amateur Swimming Club	Tain Amateur Swimming Club	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Tain and District Museum	Flyers and Signs	£1,097
Tain and E Ross	Tain Gala Association	Purchase and Renovation of Portacabins into Toilets	£1,070
Tain and E Ross	St Duthus Special School	Outdoor Improvement	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Tain and Easter Ross Civic Trust	Tain Picture House Regeneration Project	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	1 <sup>st</sup> Duthus Scout Group	Scout Hall Makeover	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Inver Toddler Group	Help Keep the Toddler Group Open!	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Seaboard Memorial Hall	Gopak Go	£1,500
Tain and E Ross	Tain and District Youth Café YMCA	Holiday Meals	£1,250
<b>Tain and Easter Ross total funding:</b>			<b>£15,847</b>

<b>Kyle</b>			
Kyle CC Area	Lochalsh Junior Pipe Band	LJPB Succession Band	£2,000
Kyle CC Area	Kyle Public Hall	A Hall Fit for All	£2,000
Kyle CC Area	Kyle Parent Council	Talking, Learning and Leisure Outside	£2,000
Kyle CC Area	Lochalsh Leisure Centre	Family Fun Hour	£2,000
Kyle CC Area	Lochalsh Youth Community Trust	Just a Habit?	£1,940
<b>Kyle Community Council Area total funding:</b>			<b>£9,940</b>

<b>Ross and Cromarty total PB funding:</b>			<b>£49,580</b>
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