

Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee

10am, Tuesday, 10 May 2016

Participatory Budgeting Progress

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive Summary

Participatory budgeting directly involves citizens in making decisions on the priorities and spending of public funds. It is not merely a consultative exercise but an expression of direct, deliberative democracy. The approach has been successfully implemented by Neighbourhood Partnerships and city-wide since 2010.

This report provides an update on the development and delivery of participatory budgeting in the city, with this work being supported by a multi-agency Participatory Budgeting Development Group.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P33
Council Priorities	CP4 , CP13
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO2 , SO3 , SO4

Participatory Budgeting Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee:
 - 1.1.1 notes this report;
 - 1.1.2 refers the report to the Finance and Resources Committee for information; and
 - 1.1.3 agrees to receive a further report on progress on participatory budgeting initiatives and development activity at a future meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 The use of participatory budgeting (PB), originally developed in Latin America in the 1980s, has grown dramatically across the world. The increased adoption by a wide range of public bodies in the UK and further afield, acknowledges the benefits of the approach in increasing levels of citizen participation, delivery of more responsive and effective services and greater community cohesion.
- 2.2 In Edinburgh, PB has been successfully implemented since 2010. The PB activity is diverse, involving a wide range of partners and targeted on increasing the participation of both communities of place and interest. The main programme of work to date has been delivered through the Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) using a small grants model to allocate devolved funding streams, strengthening their established role of involving communities in the identification of local priorities, mobilising local knowledge to shape service solutions and deciding on the allocation of resources to address local needs. There is evidence of a growing interest in, and understanding of, the benefits of the approach, and consequently a number of new activities are now planned and/or being explored at a strategic level by partners in relation to employability, community safety and health and social care.
- 2.3 This focus on co-operative engagement and partnership working is core to the Council's and community planning partners' approach for delivering better outcomes for Edinburgh's citizens. Within this, PB offers a significant opportunity to deliver the city's aspirations for co-operative service delivery and the approach to increasing citizen involvement in democratic processes.

- 2.4 At a national level, the Scottish Government recognises and supports the approach, the benefits of which find expression in the recently published Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. As part of this, the Scottish Government is providing a range of support to local authorities to promote and encourage its adoption.
- 2.5 Support for the approach in the city is provided by a Development Group comprising a range of partners and experienced practitioners from across the Local Community Planning network. The group is responsible for a programme of work for development and delivery collectively by partners aimed at building on the existing good practice of citizen participation locally and city-wide.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The current work programme in the city aims to build on established practice by developing both existing and new approaches to PB, together with raising awareness and understanding of the value of the approach in supporting community empowerment and delivering better outcomes for communities. Key activity delivered in relation to each of these themes is set out below.

Development of existing PB approaches

- 3.2 A key strand of work for the Development Group is to support the ongoing development of established initiatives, building on the findings from evaluation processes, with a view to improving effectiveness and identifying measures to achieve increased levels of participation, particularly from wider sections of the community.
- 3.3 A range of initiatives have taken place across the NPs since the last report to Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee on PB in September 2014. This includes youth themed initiatives in [Almond](#) and [Western](#) Edinburgh NPs and further initiatives in Leith and Liberton & Gilmerton.
- 3.4 The latest [Leith Decides](#) initiative ran from October 2015 to February 2016 with 50% of the Community Grants Fund budget (£22,092) being allocated through the approach. As in previous years, the initiative has proven successful with 1,365 local people voting on 37 projects, with 24 securing funding. The evaluation shows that six of the applicants had not received funding from Leith Decides or the Community Grants Fund in the previous two years. Feedback from participants showed the majority of respondents (89%) rated PB as an excellent or good way of allocating funds and continued to value the event as a way of voting over other methods (56% and 32% respectively). Equalities monitoring identified under-representation from the Asian community based on census data and this, together with the absence of applications from BME groups, has been identified as an area of development. This activity will be supported through the programme funding secured from the Scottish Government identified later in this report.
- 3.5 The second ['Youth Talk Lead the Change'](#) initiative in Liberton & Gilmerton NP provided young people aged 12 to 25 years old the opportunity to decide on how to

allocate £10,000 of Community Grants Fund budget. The initiative was part of the ongoing development of the successful Youth Talk model of engagement which is designed to involve young people in shaping and deciding on services in the area. The initiative ran from November 2015 to February 2016 and involved young people from the local high schools, youth organisations and libraries in generating and voting on ideas for new services and projects. Young people were able to submit ideas at local community centres, libraries and schools, as well as online using the Dialogue App. Bids were then invited to deliver the priorities with young people scoring the submissions during a voting period lasting two weeks in January 2016. The evaluation showed PB to be a meaningful way of exploring and meeting the needs and aspirations of young people in the community. Feedback from the young people and partners involved was positive, with comments including “exciting for the local area”, “helped to generate discussion about the local area” and a “great idea”.

Development of new PB approaches

- 3.6 Over the last year there have been a number of new PB initiatives delivered across the NPs, including 'You Decide' in Portobello & Craigmillar, a Neighbourhood Environment Programme focused initiative in [Liberton & Gilmerton](#), 'Grant a Grand' in South West and South Central NP 'South Centra£ Decides - Voice Your Choice'.
- 3.7 ['You Decide'](#) in Portobello & Craigmillar in May 2015 allocated the total Community Grants Fund budget for the area of £21,737 through PB. The initiative was widely promoted with information published in the Portobello Reporter and Party-online, sent across partner email distribution lists, posted on the NP website, displayed in libraries, community centres and Council offices and circulated using social media. A mix of voting opportunities was provided, resulting in a total of 494 votes cast. Of the 29 project applications submitted, 17 were successful in securing funding, including 8 new applicants. Analysis of the voter registration showed participation across all age groups, with those aged 26-45 years being the single largest group at 38.5%. Most participants had heard about the event through word of mouth (44%). Feedback from the initiative was positive with a few respondents identifying potential areas for improvement.
- 3.8 The initiative in [Liberton & Gilmerton NP](#) was the first example of using PB to allocate a proportion of the Neighbourhood Environment Programme budget. The new process aimed to increase participation in selecting projects from a published portfolio developed through the NP ongoing dialogue with the community. This included placing voting sheets in local libraries and the local Neighbourhood office, together with making them available online via the NP website. The voting process culminated in a voting evening event. This initial pilot resulted in over 50 people participating and provided the foundation for a further initiative this year.
- 3.9 The South West NP initiative ['Grant a Grand'](#) enabled young people aged between 10 and 19 years old to develop ideas and vote on projects designed to improve youth activity in the area. The NP set aside £10,000 from the Community Grants Fund to support the initiative, offering grants of £1,000 for each project. In total

over 600 votes were cast over a three week period in February 2016, with young people able to vote when checking out a book at local libraries, at community centres when attending a youth club and online through their school email account. The outcome of the process was announced at an event in Carrickvale Community Centre, which included staff from local community groups, live music and sports tasters. The ten projects awarded funding covered a range of activities including sports, environment, cookery, music and capacity building. Whilst the evaluation report is still to be produced, initial feedback shows that participants particularly valued the community spirit generated through the initiative and the opportunity to make decisions.

- 3.10 The South Central NP, building on earlier experience through the 'Students in the Community' initiative, used PB to allocate over £200,000 of Community Grants and Neighbourhood Environment Programme funding. The 'South Central Decides - Voice Your Choice' initiative on 30 April 2016 is the first example of different funding streams being decided on at a market stall event and is the largest amount of funding allocated using this approach to date.
- 3.11 In addition to this NP activity, initiatives are planned and/or being explored in relation to employability, community safety and health and social care.
- 3.12 Since 2010 the Council has been radically evolving the way it approaches Employability Services with a greater focus on prevention (Edinburgh Guarantee), co-production (Supported Employment contract and Project Search), and collaboration (NPs and Joined Up for Jobs) to deliver better and more sustained positive outcomes for citizens, businesses and communities. To build on this approach of identifying new ideas and approaches to accelerate the reduction of worklessness and poverty in the city, the Economic Development Service is leading on the delivery of a PB pilot focused on activity agreements. Activity agreements are for young people at risk of leaving school without a positive destination. It is an agreement with the young person to undertake a programme of learning and development aimed at improving their skills in preparation for entry into employment, training, education and/or volunteering. The pilot will enable young people to work with providers to develop ideas for the programme and then to choose the activities they want to see funded.
- 3.13 Police Scotland, in response to an increase in the frequency of hate crime incidents targeted on Muslim women and children in the city and growing fears in this community particularly of venturing out after dark and/or on their own, initiated a meeting of partners to consider how best collectively to address the issue. From this a tactical plan was developed which is being taken forward by a strategic Community Improvement Partnership, governed by the Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership. Actions are being progressed under the priorities of community engagement and reassurance, prevention, and intervention and enforcement. As part of this programme, a PB initiative is being developed, with £5,000 already committed by Police Scotland and a further bid of £8,000 is to be submitted to the Edinburgh Partnership Community Planning Partnership Enabling Fund.

3.14 Health and Social Care integration provides the opportunity for all stakeholders, including communities of interests and place, to influence the planning and delivery of social care services. With a focus on a collaborative approach, the potential for adopting PB approaches as part of the commissioning process has been identified and will be explored as part of the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Promoting awareness and developing co-operative working

- 3.15 An important workstream is to promote awareness and increase understanding across community planning partners at local and strategic levels, including community and third sector, of the benefits of PB with the aim of encouraging increased adoption of the approach as part of future service design and delivery processes. There is also a need to develop evaluation approaches to enable the cumulative impact of the city's approach on delivering improved outcomes for communities and citizens to be effectively measured.
- 3.16 To support this activity and the delivery of the other thematic priorities, funding has been secured from the Scottish Government. The funding comprises two discrete but complementary packages, a ten day programme of PB expert support and, most recently, a programme designed to provide additional support to develop and pilot PB processes. This includes match funding for budgets identified for allocation through PB initiatives and costs related to awareness raising, running PB initiatives and expert support to enable members of the community to engage with PB.
- 3.17 The use of the 10 day package of support reflects the range and type of support required to enable current plans for PB to be progressed and the approach to be embedded in the city, within the Council and the community planning framework. To date, the support has been used to deliver 7 workshop sessions designed to promote the approach to partners and to develop key areas of work.
- 3.18 Three awareness raising sessions were held covering the third sector, community planning partners and elected members. The third sector workshop, led by Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council, used a case study approach to raise awareness and promote discussion amongst participants of the value of PB to their sector. This complements existing activity, with PB regularly promoted across the sector by the Compact Partnership through the website and e-newsletters. Recognising the potential of PB as a vehicle to enhance community planning working across the city, a session was held targeting support officers and members of the Strategic Partnerships and Edinburgh Partnership. Following on from guidance provided to elected members on PB from the Improvement Service, a session was held to introduce and promote the approach to members, recognising that not all NPs are currently using the approach.
- 3.19 Of the development sessions, two were targeted on supporting specific initiatives. The employability workshop brought together providers that would potentially be involved in the planned PB pilot with a view to promoting and developing a shared understanding of the aims and objectives underpinning the approach. A dedicated

session was held for Leith Decides Steering Group members providing them with an opportunity to discuss the learning from previous events to inform future approaches. Recommendations from the session, together with an evaluation of the approach covering 2010 to 2016, formed the basis of a report considered by Leith NP in March 2016.

- 3.20 The two final sessions were held for Development Group members to support the work programme by focusing on approaches to evaluation and communication. The evaluation session, using examples from across the UK and further afield, focused on the development of a framework covering individual and city-wide processes. Whilst work on this is progressing, a complementary programme of work at a national level is being taken forward by Glasgow Caledonian University on behalf of the Scottish Government. The potential to link the two workstreams has been identified and joint working opportunities with the University are currently being explored.
- 3.21 The communications session focused on the development of approaches and measures of success. The session informed the production of an action plan which identifies key workstreams to be progressed over the coming year, including the development of a PB brand, production of a PB toolkit, development of a city-wide communications plan and production of a PB promotional video. As detailed later in the report, funding secured from the Scottish Government will support the delivery of key areas of work.
- 3.22 Levels of participation in each of the sessions has varied from 6 to 19 individuals and has involved all stakeholders, elected members, officers from the Council, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and Fire and Rescue Service, third sector organisations and community representatives. The remaining support available will be used to provide sessions for the Health and Social Care Partnership and members of the Integrated Joint Board as part of the exploration of approaches to future commissioning, Police Scotland to support the design of the Hate Crime initiative and, recognising the significant level of activity already having taken place, a session to explore the scope for developing and expanding youth themed approaches.
- 3.23 The second package of support comprises £77,500 to match fund planned PB activity and programme development. The match funding component will be used in relation to the Employability initiative (£20,000), Liberton & Gilmerton NP (£10,000), South Central NP (£12,000) and Inverleith NP Youth Talk (£3,000). The remaining funds are being used to support marketing and promotion, development of a PB video to showcase the work in the city, brand development being taken forward by the Development Group with the support of the Council Communications Service and specialist support to encourage participation from communities of interest.
- 3.24 A total of £15,000 has been set aside for the equalities workstream, recognising the needs and challenges of engaging with people with protected characteristics and the potential role PB can have in opening up communication channels with the most

excluded individuals and groups in the community. The funding will be used to support direct engagement in planned PB initiatives, such as Employability and Hate Crime, as well as work to develop new ideas and tools for ensuring socially excluded members of the community are supported and encouraged to participate.

- 3.25 As part of the joint working with the Scottish Government, the Development Group participated in the research carried out by the [Democratic Society](#) on the use of digital tools to support PB. The findings from this project have now been published and offer a number of recommendations in progressing e-engagement, recognising that whilst digital engagement is an important support for and complement to PB processes, it cannot replace offline engagement. To date e-engagement has been used by one initiative in the city and this is an area for further development. On this basis, work is underway to explore the potential for further support as part of a package available to local authorities.
- 3.26 Against a context of needing to use limited budgets more effectively, PB offers significant benefits in allowing communities to have a direct voice in the priority and decision-making processes. The approaches in the city and work of the Development Group provide a strong foundation for developing approaches more widely and real potential in informing future service design and the allocation of resources through the localities setting.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Each participatory budgeting initiative has defined measures to determine the success of the approach. Work is currently being progressed to develop a standardised evaluation framework which will allow aggregate measures of success to be established at a city-wide level.
- 4.2 All PB initiatives aim to increase citizen participation in governance and democratic decision making; increase community cohesion; and improve the quality of life. These objectives are core to the NP approach, and across the city these are measured based on key indicators drawn from the Edinburgh People's Survey of people feeling they are able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area; satisfaction that people from different backgrounds can get on well together; and improved satisfaction with neighbourhoods as a place to live.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The costs associated with this report are contained within existing budgets or met through external funding.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no adverse risks or policy impacts associated with this report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 Local community planning activity and the work of the NPs contributes to the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 general duties of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. The PB initiatives are designed to promote community cohesion.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts associated with this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 PB as an approach enables citizens to be actively engaged in decisions about their community and local area. A collaborative approach is taken to the design and delivery of initiatives, with agencies and the community working together at all stages of the process.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Hyperlinked throughout the report.

Alistair Gaw

Acting Director of Communities and Families

Contact: Michele Mulvaney, Community Engagement and Partnership Development Manager

E-mail: michele.mulvaney@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3541

11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P33 - Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used
Council Priorities	CP4 - Safe and empowered communities CP13 - Citizen and Partner engagement, Budget

Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO1 - Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all</p> <p>SO2 - Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health</p> <p>SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential</p> <p>SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric</p>
Appendices	None