

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00, Tuesday, 15 August 2017

Choose Youth Work: Youth Work Participatory Budgeting – Phase 1

Item number 8.6

Report number

Executive/routine

Wards

Executive Summary

This report outlines the first phase of the participatory budgeting allocation of funding for open-access, universal youth work as approved at Committee in December 2016. It sets out the process followed, the awards made, the lessons learnt from detailed evaluation and proposed actions to address these in phase two.

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Choose Youth Work: Youth Work Participatory Budgeting – Phase 1

Recommendations

- 1.1 Note the awards made in paragraph 3.7.
- 1.2 Note the lessons learnt from this exercise and to be implemented in phase two.

Background

- 2.1 The report 'Youth Work Funding 2017 – 2019' approved at Committee in December 2016 set out recommendations for future funding based on need in each locality (rather than historical allocation), and an incremental role for participatory budgeting (PB) that would give young people a greater say over how resources are allocated for services they use, or may use. For phase one, 2017-18, a total of £60k was available. The report detailed the locality allocations and the participatory budgeting process to be followed.

Main report

- 3.1 Immediately following approval at Committee in December, an initial action was to establish a Steering Group comprised of Communities and Families officers, officers from other Council service areas with experience of PB, and representatives from Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium and Lothian Association of Youth Clubs. This Steering Group will continue to meet throughout the PB work. The name Choose Youth Work was agreed for this project.
- 3.2 17 young people from Young Edinburgh Action and other youth projects were recruited to work with officers to prepare the questions on the application form, to ensure that they reflected the main priorities that young people had identified for youth work in the earlier consultation of more than 400 young people. These young people were then involved in assessing and scoring the applications received.
- 3.3 Assessing and scoring the applications took place on one afternoon and was carried out by teams of four, each comprised of officers and young people. A total of 21 applications were received, and five of these did not score sufficiently highly to progress to the voting stage.

- 3.4 Young people were encouraged to vote online through the 'Participare' PB website. Voters were required to cast three votes, and only permitted to vote once for the same organisation. A total of 708 votes were cast online.
- 3.5 A city-wide event held at the Festival Theatre attracted all applicant organisations and 31 young people. The purpose of this was for organisations to promote the work in their applications and for young people to vote for their three preferred projects. 93 votes were cast at the event.
- 3.6 The final score for each applicant following the vote was the combination of the assessment score and the number of votes received, in which the assessment score made up one third of the total. Funding was then allocated in line with the final combined assessment/vote ranking within the available budget. Successful applicants were funded with the full amount they had applied for.
- 3.7 The final awards were as follows:

Organisation	Project Summary	Locality	Award	Votes received
Spartans	Residential work to re-engage young people involved in antisocial behaviour and criminality into mainstream youth work in North Edinburgh.	NW	2,000	169
Granton Youth Centre	Six week summer holiday activity programme planned, implemented and evaluated by young people for young people 12+ in North Edinburgh	NW	8,275	143
FetLor	Drop In Youth Clubs for S1, S2 and S3+ at FetLor Youth Club	NW	5,000	132
The Yard	Run three youth clubs for disabled teenagers to socialise with their peers, gain independence and try new things	Citywide	6,000	74
Dunedin Canmore	DCYP aims to inspire more young people to become more active and more involved in their local Youth Café.	SW	5,482	52
Canongate Youth	A week long summer school for 60 budding young musicians featuring professional tuition on all aspects of stagecraft.	Citywide	8,000	37
North Edinburgh Arts	Developing outdoor cooking and food growing program with local young people, learning new skills and developing products with local food.	NW	6,095	34
Fabb Scotland	Fabb Spartans will bring disabled and non-disabled young people together in a fun, new youth group in partnership with Spartans FC.	NW	9,631	28
Broomhouse Centre	Weekend youth work opportunities in Broomhouse offers Street Art, or space to enjoy a meal they have prepared with friends	SW	9,517	26

3.8 This PB exercise was carried out successfully and a total of 267 young people voted on-line and in person, despite some serious constraints. The most significant of these was the short timescale. In order for awards to be released in time for the new financial year, the entire exercise from preparing the application form and eligibility criteria to producing a final ranked list of applicants had to be achieved in just over two months. Detailed evaluations of Phase 1 were carried out through on-line surveys with applicants and young people, and an event for the Steering Group, which was held on 19 May and, as a consequence of these, a number of changes or additions will be made to Phase 2. Six main areas to focus on were identified:

3.8.1 **Timescale.** As detailed above, the process was run on a tight timescale with all the key activity restricted to the first three months of 2017. The tight timescale was highlighted by applicants as an issue that affected their experience of the process. The timescale placed pressure on all involved and whilst the programme was delivered, there were impacts on other areas, as outlined below. For the 2018 – 19 programme, planning work is underway and there is a nine-month period identified to run the programme.

3.8.2 **Engagement with Young People and Schools.** The total number of young people voting in the process was 267, smaller than the original survey monkey questionnaire response at the start of the process. There was no real engagement with schools due to the clash with the elections for the Scottish Youth Parliament and the demands that an additional voting process would place on school staff's time. It is also difficult to ascertain the level of awareness-raising and support given to young people in youth work settings to encourage voting. Attendance by young people at the Big Vote Party held at the Festival Theatre in March was disappointing, generating a small number of new votes. A few applicant organisations commented on the low number of young people at the Party and the level of resources that they had used to attend. The general feeling was that this was not very effective. Members of the Steering Group will be meeting with young people from Young Edinburgh Action to identify opportunities and actions that will boost involvement from young people. The locality programmes for 2018 – 19 will work more closely with schools as this is a key space for engaging with young people. The more local dimensions of the grant programmes may also be more relevant for young people and the lengthened timescales should give organisations more time to involve young people in developing project ideas. In addition, Lifelong Learning staff from each locality will join the Steering Group.

3.8.3 **Voting Mechanism.** Comments were made about the difficulties with using the on-line voting platform and some questioned the need to have a registration process prior to voting. Further comments highlighted the issue of the availability of printed forms and the ease of using these, especially for young people with limited literacy skills. Work is underway with the

Corporate PB team to identify a new platform provider, and further dialogue will take place with specialist staff and organisations to support the participation of young people with literacy issues.

3.8.4 Engagement with the Youth Work Sector (Voluntary Organisations and Council Staff). Regular emails were sent out to voluntary sector organisations and two briefing sessions were held for potential applicants. The tight timescale made it difficult for Communities and Families staff to undertake more meaningful engagement with organisations. There was limited engagement with Communities and Families staff to support the process as it coincided with a major staffing review. The new locality structure will be ‘bedded in’ for the next round of grants and with the locality approach it is expected that more staff will support the process. This should mean more local organisations are aware of and involved in the process.

3.8.5 Definition of Open Access Youth Work. The type of activity proposed by applicants included a residential, a week-long music programme, youth clubs for young disabled people and mainstream youth club activity. There were also applications that covered other activity that could be construed as not fitting the assumed understanding of open access youth work (e.g., one to one work, work with parents). The longer run-in to the application process should allow for a clearer message about open access youth work to be made to potential applicants.

3.8.6 Participatory Budgeting. A few organisations highlighted the challenges facing applicants within a participatory budgeting process, namely the level of resources and time required, and the potential ‘beauty contest’ element that was perceived by some as making it difficult for small or specialist equalities organisations to succeed. In addition, the tension between a PB approach reflecting the views of young people and trying to target funding at areas of need/groups of young people in need has also been raised. As stated above, the 2017-18 assessment process used a 1/3 assessment:2/3 voting balance, and the Steering Group may wish to revisit this to address the concerns raised.

3.9 In Phase 2 (2018-19), £60k will be available for city-wide projects and 20% of each locality’s allocation for universal, open access youth work will be made available for distribution via PB. The following amounts will therefore be available in each locality:

North East	£23,758
North West	£24,035
South East	£27,555
South West	£30,652

Measures of success

- 4.1 Young people are involved in decision-making on funding for youth work across the city, from identifying priorities to co-assessing applications to voting for projects.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The allocation of the budget available (£60k) is set out in 3.7.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 This report is in line with the recommendations of the Review of Grants to Third Parties and complemented by the co-production process to redesign the Communities and Families approach to grants for 2016/17 onwards as approved at Committee in October 2016.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The funding of activity by third parties through grant aid contributes to the Council's delivery of its Equality Act 2010 duty to seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality and foster good relations. PB initiatives are designed to promote community cohesion and therefore contribute to good relations.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse impacts in relation to this report.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 This process involved extensive engagement with young people throughout.

Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Youth Work Funding 2017 – 2019, Education, Children and Families Committee December 2016](#)

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Links

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