Participation Requests Annual Report 2019-20

Background

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 passed into law on 24 July 2015. The Act introduces a range of measures designed to support communities to engage with public bodies to improve outcomes. Part 3 of the Act, Participation Requests, came into effect on 1 April 2017. Under the legislation, public bodies are required to report annually at the end of June each year on participation requests and specifically:

- the number of requests received;

- the number of requests agreed and refused;

- the number of requests which resulted in changes to a public service provided by, or on behalf of, the public service authority; and

- action taken by the public service authority to promote and support the use of participation requests.

This report details the participation requests received by the City of Edinburgh Council during the period 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2020 and provides a summary update on progress with these requests in line with the annual reporting requirement as at March 31 2020. This report also updates on the position of the existing request at the end of the reporting period.

Report

During the reporting period the Council received one new participation request and one previous request was concluded during the period. One outcome improvement process (OIP) continued to completion (i.e. carried over from 2018-19) and one new participation request was received. No requests were refused.

Portobello Golf Course

Two separate requests were received in late September 2018 from Portobello Golf Course Action Group and from Portobello Community Council. Both groups seeking to respond to a request from Edinburgh Leisure to determine options for increasing the use of Portobello Golf Course. Both requests were accepted by the Council.

Following joint discussions with both groups together, it was agreed that the OIP would operate by organising consultation events at locations around Portobello to engage with

the local community. A maximum of five questions being asked to gauge views and opinions at different venues across Portobello.

A supplementary online survey was also organised and hosted on the Council's Consultation Hub and Edinburgh Leisure staff attended events with support from Portobello Community Council and Portobello Golf Club Action Group.

The original proposed completion date for the OIP was to be the end of March 2019, however, the groups agreed to extend this to allow for time to review the findings of the public survey.

The OIP process finally concluded in September 2019.

Cramond & Barnton Community Council

The Council has received a request in January 2020 from Cramond and Barnton Community Council seeking to engage by way of meaningful discussions on, and seek solutions to local traffic management arrangements and junction designs serving the communities of Barnton, Cammo and Strathalmond and wider Edinburgh community.

Further discussions with officers from transport, planning & locality-based road teams were pending at the end of this reporting period.

At the time of this reporting period no decision notice had yet been issued.

Resources

Dedicated resources continue to be provided by the Strategy and Communications Division to ensure participation requests are fully assessed in line with legislative requirements and services where possible are fully supported and promoted throughout each stage of the process.

Community groups are especially encouraged to participate in initial dialogue about their proposals and help is also made available to community groups. The Council takes every step it can to fully support the engagement process and provide the Community groups with direct assistance.

An example of the type of support which can be valuable to a community group is where officers from the Council's Strategy and Communication Division helped facilitate an independent public survey and final report on the future options for the use of the golf course at Portobello – providing the two community groups to gain insight into what the community wanted to see for the future of the course.