



Report by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability

Community Alliance

Thursday 29th August 2019

Subject: Community Budgeting

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to provide Alliance members with a summary of the most recent phase of Community Budgeting and plans for future forms of participatory budgeting (PB).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Community Alliance members are asked to note the content of the report and give consideration to the role of the Alliance in developing future PB models.

3. Background

- 3.1** Following three previous rounds of Community budgeting held between November 2016 and February 2018, a fourth phase was held from October 2018 to February 2019.
- 3.2.1** Learning from previous rounds has informed how this round was developed. This included opening the application process to groups with a constitution for amounts up to £5000 and for groups without a constitution for amounts up to £500 and also extending the timescales to apply. Similar to Phase 3, there was one main event in Clydebanks Town Hall organised in a marketplace style to allow opportunities for networking and finding out about projects. For this round online voting was supported by COSLA piloting new software which was less open to abuse, which had been noted from previous phases.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** In addition to the changes noted above, there was increased involvement in the design of phase four, including a survey held in September 2018 followed by focus groups. The survey was circulated to participants in previous phases

to allow input into the design of phase 4. Three focus groups were also held in early October 2018 and were attended by 12 residents. Attendees at the focus groups had input into the application form and guidance notes

- 4.2 Applications were opened to constituted groups for capital and revenue funding up to £5000. Groups without a constitution were also allowed to apply for capital and revenue funding up to £500 providing another organisation with a bank account and constitution sponsored them. Drop in sessions were held in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria to support the development of bids and staff from the Communities Team were also available for appointments for those who were unable to attend drop- ins.
- 4.3 The voting event was held on 23 February at Clydebank Town Hall in a marketplace style where each group was allowed networking. Transport was available for those who needed it on the day. Voting on the day was by ballot paper, projects were rated 1 to 10. Online voting was supported by COSLA, as part of a pilot for a new software package called CONSUL. Online voting was opened at the beginning of February ahead of the event on the 23rd February.
- 4.4 In previous phases and at focus groups for phase four, previous online voting methods were highlighted as possibly open to abuse. These concerns were addressed in phase four with the online voting system requiring pre-registration. Also, there was a weighting in place giving greater weight to votes cast at the event rather than online. This was to encourage as many people to come along on the day as possible. There were some teething problems with the online system which were fed back to the Improvement Service/ COSLA. There were also some concerns over the ease of the registration process and accessibility. Over 6000 people accessed the voting website.
- 4.5 Lessons learned from Phase 4 were:
 - online voting needs to be further refined
 - It would be beneficial to have more community involvement in designing the process for any future phases.
 - The location of Phase 3 & 4 events in Clydebank was an issue and also due to turnout levels for phase 4 it would worth considering having more than one event/ location in future.
- 4.6 West Dunbartonshire Council has committed to 1% of the overall budget to be decided by residents as part of the move towards mainstreaming. This would mean identifying sums within existing budgets and consulting communities on the potential spend on these. Further discussions will take place regarding developing this type of model.
- 4.7 Staff are currently contacting groups for evidence of what has been achieved from the funding distributed in Phase 3 and will do the same for Phase 4. From late 2019 onwards we will be developing a revised approach for any

future rounds of community budgeting once again taking account of feedback received . However this time involving local people in the design and planning based on a more co-productive approach. This builds on work with SCDC on the Community Empowerment Strategy and also links with the Improvement Service and national participatory budgeting networks.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no implications at this time.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 None, all activity is delivered through existing team and partner capacity

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is an increasing drive nationally for community planning partners to work at an increased pace to deliver outcomes for communities and opportunities for resident involvement. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets a clear direction for involvement of communities in the design and delivery of services.

7.2 Developing participatory budgeting methods provides opportunities to work with communities to build capacity and resilience allowing local groups to continue their positive contribution across West Dunbartonshire.

7.3 There is a risk of not delivering on the Community Empowerment Act and commitment to 1% mainstreaming.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An EIA is not required as this is a continuation of existing activities. An EIA will be carried out of any further rounds of community budgeting or PB mainstreaming.

9 Consultation

9.1 A survey and focus group were carried out in 2018 to inform the development of Community budgeting phase 4. A more co-productive approach will be developed for any future phases.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 Progressing work as outlined in this report ensures CPWD can deliver on the outcomes set in the Local Outcome improvement Plan.

Peter Barry
Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability

Person to Contact: **Suzanne Greer**
suzanne.greer@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All