

PROPOSED MODEL FOR PILOTING THE LOCALITIES BID FUND IN SCOTTISH BORDERS FOR 2017-2018

Report by Service Director Customer and Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

27 June 2017

1 PROPOSED MODEL AND BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL LOCALITIES BID FUND

- 1.1 It was agreed at Council on 9 February 2017 that £500k be allocated for the purpose of participatory budgeting to pilot the new Scottish Borders Council Localities Bid Fund.**
- 1.2 A number of models, learning and best practice have been considered by the Communities & Partnership Team, including the recent participatory budgeting project undertaken by Burnfoot Community Futures. The proposed model would be managed through Locality Committees, supported by SBC officers and could address a specific theme or priority within the Area Locality Plan. Bids would be invited from local communities and approved by the members of each Locality Committee with support from SBC officers.
- 1.3 This Fund will be split across the 5 Locality Committees and support projects and initiatives submitted by communities within each area. The proposed budget allocation is by per head of population, and is detailed at 6.4.
- 1.4 This initial allocation of funding to promote community participatory budgeting through a Localities Bid Fund is part of a wider response to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Scottish Government has indicated a wish to see 1% of the Council's budget subject to community consultation, and further reports will be brought back to Members for consideration as and when the Scottish Government's intentions are known.
- 1.5 Council officers through COSLA have met with Scottish Government officers to progress this matter.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 I recommend that Council:

- (a) Agree the funding allocation of the Localities Bid Fund is by per head of population as detailed at 6.4.**
- (b) Approve the proposed model as detailed in Appendix 1.**

3 BACKGROUND TO PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- 3.1 Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making, and a type of participatory democracy, in which ordinary people decide how to allocate part of a municipal or public budget.
- 3.2 Participatory Budgeting (PB) empowers communities, gets more people involved in democracy and improves local public services. It has a proven track record of increasing levels of participation and engagement in a range of community settings. PB has been evolving in the UK since 2000, and was first introduced in Brazil, when public funds were very restricted and demands for democratic reform were strong. Its tools and principles are now used in many places across the world and are internationally recognised as good practice.
- 3.3 PB directly involves local people in making decisions over how public money is spent in their community. This means engaging residents, community groups and representatives of all parts of the community to discuss spending priorities and make proposals, as well as giving local people a role in scrutiny and monitoring.
- 3.4 PB programmes in the UK have allocated spending improvements, activities for children and young people, health and wellbeing, community centres and improving assets such as sports facilities. They can be specific to certain neighbourhoods or areas, or local authority wide where they can be themed: for example, with a focus on children and young people, and health and wellbeing.
- 3.5 Community Action Plans are often used as a first phase to help identify a community's priorities and funding can then be allocated to areas within the plans. Although there is no set way to undertake PB, a number of common models are evolving in the UK. These include Community Grant Pots, devolved funds towards neighbourhoods and even funding for mainstream services.
- 3.6 There are opportunities for PB Funds to be topped up with other funds or used to match fund against other funding schemes - e.g. Community Choices Fund and Awards for All, and can have a specific focus on tackling issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour, the environment, roads, transport, young people and social inclusion for older people.
- 3.7 This proposed model also recognises the wider aspirations of participatory budgeting and the potential of significant funding being allocated to this type of funding model in future.

4 EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN SCOTTISH BORDERS

- 4.1 Burnfoot Community Futures (BCF) received £39k from Community Choices Fund last year to undertake a PB project within the Burnfoot community in Hawick. The BCF Board was supported by Communities & Partnership Team, Community Learning & Development (CLD) and the NHS

Healthy Living Network to submit an application in August, and was advised of the outcome in September 2016 - with the fund to be dispersed to communities by April 2017. BCF decided to adopt a Community PB model, and this has been since recognised as best practice by Scottish Government. The proposed Localities Bid Fund model detailed has been based on this, and is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

- 4.2 The community were invited to the BCF Hub in January 2017 to hear about the Project, to ask questions and to learn about what other communities were doing, and BCF invited members of the community to join a Steering Group. Supported by the CLD Team, this Steering Group has been a major key to the success of this project.
- 4.3 Members of the Steering Group then visited every household in Burnfoot and encouraged them to come up with ideas and projects that would benefit the Burnfoot community. There were over 33 ideas submitted (to the value of £76k) and the Steering Group then met to consider and filter these down to 26. They allocated £30k to the projects and £9k to support and build ongoing capacity around the PB project.
- 4.4 The Steering Group then invited the 26 projects to come along to Burnfoot Community School on a Sunday afternoon to give a 5 minute presentation of their idea to the community, and at the end of the presentations, the community then voted for the allocation of the £30k. For those who were unable to attend on the Sunday afternoon, there was a "postal" box for their votes. Each project also had a stall to demonstrate or explain the benefits of their idea to the community in a creative way.
- 4.5 The Steering Group organised the whole event, which included a band playing, face painting, games, food and drinks - and the sun was shining.
- 4.6 307 votes were received and 13 projects were successful. Each successful project was asked to come up and receive their "cheque" and have their picture taken. A short film was also made about the event.
- 4.7 BCF summary video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ple5NzPJPu0&feature=youtu.be>
- 4.8 Although the criteria set by the BCF Board for the projects was very loose (to be of benefit to the community), the successful ones fit broadly into themes of social capital, health & wellbeing, inclusion for older people and physical activity for all.
- 4.9 Significant support for this phase of the project was provided by SBC CLD services, (0.20 FTE since October 2016, plus further resources on the voting day).

5 BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- 5.1 The benefits of PB are well documented nationally and include:
 - (a) Undertaking the process of a PB event can ensure meaningful consultation and engagement is taking place

- (b) Determine the opinions of residents, communities and other stakeholders
- (c) Build community cohesion – diverse people come together to make decisions which can foster relationships
- (d) Ownership of projects which can increase community capacity and resilience

- (e) Better understanding of the complexities of setting budgets and choosing priorities
- (f) PB budget can be topped up by other funds or used for match funding e.g. Community Choices Fund and Awards for All
- (g) Can enable communities to target their resources and to be part of the solution to local issues
- (h) Improving services – Burnfoot residents wanted to be more active and healthy, and have a say in what services are being offered in their community
- (i) Services can be more responsive and targeted to what communities need
- (j) Public agencies build stronger relationships with communities

6 PROPOSED MODEL

- 6.1 There are a number of common models of PB evolving, which span various formats and methods of governance, accountability, the type of community groups and different ways of supporting these models with resources and budget. Current examples of PB programmes and events happening in other Local Authorities are listed at **Appendix 2**.
- 6.2 The Communities & Partnership Team considered a number of models and have spoken to and met with other local authorities in order to gather information and to hear about others experiences.
- 6.3 The proposed model has taken into account best practice, the experience and learning from previous PB programmes and Burnfoot Community Futures.
- 6.4 The recommendation is that the allocation of the Localities Bid Fund is per head of population as per Council agreement on 9 February 2017, and which also reflects and is in alignment to the Community Grant Scheme distribution methodology. Consideration has been given to allocating this funding per head of population, with a SIMD weighting, and also an average of both. These are shown for comparison purposes below. However, it is felt that for this initial pilot SIMD weighting could be constrictive, would not allow enough flexibility at locality level and may not reflect specific locality need.

Area	Population	£4.384 per head of population*	SIMD (Decile 1-5)	£10.92 per head of population*	Average
Berwickshire	20,827	£91,324.30	9,015	£98,494.53	£94,909.41
Cheviot	19,514	£85,568.20	6,138	£67,063.31	£76,615.75
Eildon	35,035	£153,611.30	14,967	£163,520.13	£158,565.71
Teviot & Liddesdale	17,806	£78,080.30	11,602	£126,751.51	£102,415.90
Tweeddale	20,848	£91,416.20	4,042	£44,164.51	£67,790.35
Total	114,030	£500,000	45,764	£500,000	£500,000

*National Records Scotland population estimates 2015

- 6.5 It is proposed that the outcomes of the Localities Bid Fund will be required to demonstrate general benefits to the community and could meet specific themes or priorities within area Locality Plans i.e. Skills Development, Developing the Young Workforce, Care for Older People, Social Inclusion, Mental Health etc.
- 6.6 The level of capacity within our communities in the Scottish Borders will vary, and therefore significant support will need to be given to Localities Committees and our communities from a range of officers across the organisation. This support will feature CLD, the Communities & Partnership Team, Democratic Services and other services, depending on the theme or priority.
- 6.7 The role of Elected Members, Community Councils and local Community Organisations play a vital part of the success of any PB fund. Extensive promotion and marketing of the Localities Bid Fund will need to be undertaken, along with support, monitoring and evaluation once the projects are underway. There are a number of ways of monitoring and evaluating PB projects and demonstrating the impact on communities. This could be through a community feedback event or by more formal reporting through Localities Committees. Evaluation will be undertaken in Autumn 2018 and reported back to Council.
- 6.8 This initial allocation of funding to promote community participatory budgeting through a Localities Bid Fund is part of a wider response to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Scottish Government has indicated a wish to see 1% of the Council's budget subject to community consultation, and further reports will be brought back to Members for consideration as and when the Scottish Government's intentions are known.
- 6.9 Council officers through COSLA have met with Scottish Government officers to progress this matter.
- 6.10 The use of the Localities Bid Funding must align with current Council policies, strategies and corporate priorities.
- 6.11 Consideration will also need to be given how other areas of existing grants and funding could be consolidated to support PB after the initial pilot year has concluded, and there may also be a requirement to separate service delivery into statutory and non-statutory functions so communities are

clear about what service delivery they could be involved in or deliver.

6.12 A proposed timetable is as follows. The funding could be released in two stages, October and January - but this decision and the final timetable will be agreed by the Chair and members of each Locality Committee.

- (a) 27 June 2017 – Approval by Council
- (b) July through to end of 2017:
 - i. Presentation of the Localities Bid Fund to Localities Committees.
 - ii. Promotion and marketing of the Fund across the Scottish Borders
 - iii. Submission of initiatives and projects
- (c) Late Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018 – Decision making by Locality Committees and commencement of projects
- (d) Autumn 2018 - Evaluation of the pilot Localities Bid Fund

6.13 There will be regular updates provided to the Localities Committees on the outcomes being achieved as the pilot progresses.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

A one off budget of £500k has been identified for the 2017 Localities Bid Fund. The continuation of the Localities Bid Fund beyond 2017/18 will require additional funding, possibly requiring savings elsewhere, to be identified as part of the budget process for 2018/19.

7.2 Risk and Mitigations

A risk management approach will be applied consistently and appropriately across the programme, based on existing grants & funding schemes and best practice. Decisions taken on the allocation of the Localities Bid Fund in 2017/18 should not expose the Council to any unfunded ongoing future financial commitment.

7.3 Equalities

Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out.

7.4 Acting Sustainably

The programme will support the approach of acting sustainably ensuring any effects are identified and the impact evaluated.

7.5 Carbon Management

The programme will actively promote a positive impact on the Council's carbon emissions where appropriate.

7.6 Rural Proofing

This will be undertaken within the programme.

7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig
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Signature

Author

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Shona Smith	Communities & Partnership Manager

Background Papers: none

Previous Minute Reference: none

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Clare Malster can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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