
PROPOSALS FOR LOCALITIES BID FUND PILOT – ROUND 2

Report by Service Director Customer & Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 June 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report sets out proposals for consideration in regards to the second round of the Localities Bid Fund pilot.**
- 1.2 The pilot model for the first round of participatory budgeting was agreed at Council on 28 September 2017, and set out the framework for the initial allocation of funding, with a carry forward of any underspend to 2018 being agreed.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 It has already been agreed at Council that full evaluation will be conducted at the end of the pilot, but interim feedback from Area Partnerships, social media and Project Leads has been captured. A public survey was also undertaken at the end of the first round in order to assist the development of these proposals– 181 responses were returned and the results are summarised at **Appendix A**.
- 1.5 Draft proposals have also been discussed with Elected Members over the last few weeks and the outcome of these discussions are reflected in the proposal detailed at **Appendix B**. The main changes with regards to the voting process and criteria are as follows:
 - Pre-registration will be required
 - A mandatory cast of votes to encourage spread voting
 - Only Borders residents (16yrs plus) can vote
 - The removal of ballot papers and ballot boxes out in the community with paper voting only taking place at planned voting events.

- 1.6 It is proposed that each Area Partnership will have the discretion to decide whether the funding for each Area Locality Bid Fund is to be allocated in a particular way (e.g. urban/rural split); if any themes are being applied to a particular release of funding; if there is to be any cap on the amount of grant for any project and whether a cash contribution will be required. Officers will be able to provide guidance to Members at Area Partnership meetings on any potential consequences of any proposed allocations, caps, etc.
- 1.7 The total allocation to this initial pilot was £500k. £208k was put forward for the 1st round with £204k awarded to community projects by the public. It was agreed that the balance of £296k could be carried forward to 2018 to fund the 2nd round. The breakdown of the fund and the financial alignment to the draft proposal is detailed at **Appendix B**.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Council :

(a) Notes:

- (i) the findings of the public survey as detailed at Appendix A;**
- (ii) the financial breakdown of the pilot Localities Bid Fund as detailed at Appendix B; and**
- (iii) the proposed timetable detailed at Appendix C**

(b) Agrees:

- (i) the proposals for Round 2 allocations and criteria as detailed at Appendix B; and**
- (ii) to amend the Scheme of Administration to include within the remit of Area Partnerships – “Decide whether the funding for each Area Locality Bid Fund is to be allocated in a particular way (e.g. urban/rural split); if any themes are being applied to a particular release of funding; if there is to be any cap on the amount of grant for any project and whether a cash contribution will be required.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The pilot model for the first round of participatory budgeting was agreed at Council on 28 September 2017, and set out the framework for the initial allocation of funding, with a carry forward of any underspend to 2018 being agreed. 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.
- 3.2 Feedback from the first round of the Localities Bid Fund (summarised in Appendix A) has been incorporated into a proposal for the second round of funding and offers further opportunities to pilot other participatory budgeting options (see Section 4).
- 3.3 There has been significant learning from the first round of this pilot, and this has contributed to more specific criteria for the next round of funding and a pre-registration requirement for the voting process being proposed.
- 3.4 The total allocation to this initial pilot was £500k. £208k was put forward for the 1st round with £204k awarded to community projects by the public. It was agreed that the balance of £296k would be carried forward to the current financial year and would fund the 2nd pilot round.
- 3.5 A financial breakdown of the £500k pilot is detailed at Appendix B, which shows the proposed financial allocation for each area.

4 EVALUATION AND KEY FINDINGS

- 4.1 Feedback has been gathered through Area Partnerships, partners, communities, The Democratic Society, online tool provider D21, Elected Members and an online survey which has received 181 responses (detailed at Appendix B).
- 4.2 The key findings from the evaluation are:
 - **Communication** needs to be more effective regarding publicising the fund, the voting process and the amount of funding that can be applied for needs to be more clearly set out
 - **Social media, e-mail and local press** were considered to be the best forms of communication but messages need to be clearer
 - Respondents were generally satisfied with the application process, although the guidance needs to be improved upon and set out more clearly
 - There is a **strong desire** for a funding cap to be set
 - There is a **wish** to see a more even distribution of votes to avoid a few projects obtaining most of the funds
 - Significant feeling that well known groups in larger communities stand more chance of getting votes than those in smaller communities
 - Respondents were fairly satisfied with the overall voting process but were dissatisfied with the paper voting form

- Concerns were raised regarding the possibility of multiple voting and the voting system being abused

The proposal for the second round of funding attempts to address these key findings and to provide a more robust voting mechanism.

5 PROPOSAL FOR LOCALITIES BID FUND – ROUND 2 (Appendix B)

5.1 The funding pot for each area will be as follows:

- Berwickshire - £48,374.30
- Cheviot - £50,568.20
- Eildon - £95,802.30
- Teviot & Liddesdale £40,080.30
- Tweeddale £61,416.20

5.2 It will be for each Area Partnership to determine if they would like a specific theme for their area. The projects must meet how they want to allocate the funding and the priorities and outcomes of the SBC Corporate Plan, the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Community Plan, and must benefit communities.

5.3 There were single, significant awards of up to £35k made in the last round of the Localities Bid Fund, which took up all of the allocation in some areas. Concerns have been raised at Area Partnership, within the survey feedback and directly to the Communities and Partnership team as to how equitable this was. It will be for each Area Partnership to determine if they would like to introduce a cap for the second round, and if this cap would be for constituted, non-constituted or all groups. Officers will provide advice and guidance to Area Partnerships on this.

5.4 The feedback and learning from the first round of voting means that in order to provide a more robust voting process, pre-registration will be required. In order to achieve a spread of votes, it is proposed that there should be a mandatory cast of votes i.e. if you have 3 votes, you must use these or your vote is void.

5.5 In round 2 Area Partnerships will consider whether to seek a cash contribution. This demonstrates commitment and engagement to the project and is something that features in other participatory budgeting models in Scotland.

5.6 The proposal for the public vote is both an online voting tool and ballot papers only available at a voting event (one per locality). There will be no ballot boxes out in the community due to the challenges experienced of the distribution and collection of 79 ballot boxes. Ballot papers can also be sent out to individuals on request if they cannot attend a voting event.

5.7 Only those who are over 16yrs of age and live in the Borders will be able to vote in the second round. This will streamline the postcode validation process.

- 5.8 The pre-assessment check will comprise the Communities & Partnership Team ensuring that the application forms have been completed satisfactorily, meet the priorities and outcomes of the SBC Corporate Plan and the CPP Community Plan and are appropriate for the Localities Bid Fund, or if there are other, more appropriate funding streams. All applications will be presented to the Borders Assessment Panel with a recommendation for the Panel's consideration.
- 5.9 The Borders Assessment Panel will be chaired by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services and include all Area Partnership Chairs and key SBC officers. Applications will be assessed by the Borders Assessment Panel against the following criteria:
- (i) Does the project meet the outcomes of the SBC Corporate Plan and/or the CPP Community Plan (including any locally agreed priority)
 - (ii) How will the project benefit the local community
 - (iii) How will the community be involved in delivering the project
 - (iv) Has sustainability been considered (if appropriate to the project)
 - (v) What will change in the community as a result of the project
 - (vi) Does the project disadvantage any parts of the community

The projects that do not meet the above criteria will not go forward to the public vote and appropriate feedback will be given by the Communities & Partnership's Team to applicants.

- 5.10 The same voting process from the first round (i.e. funding allocated to those projects with the most votes) will be used for those agreed projects going forward to a public vote, and funding will be awarded to the most successful bids and publicised on the SBC website, at Area Partnerships and through social media.

- 5.11 The Localities Bid Fund **will not** fund:

- Salary or staffing costs
- Upgrades to existing facilities or equipment
- Refurbishment of existing buildings or land
- Fund trips abroad or activities which only benefit individuals
- Feasibility studies or research

6 PROPOSED TIMETABLE

- 6.1 A proposed timetable is included at Appendix C. This timetable is for guidance only, and in order to allow for application support if required, the final timetable for each of the five areas will be decided by the members of each Area Partnership.
- 6.2 It is proposed that the fund opens for applications from July 2018 through to the end of September 2018. Assessment will take place in October 2018, and voting will take place in November 2018 with successful applicants being notified before Christmas.

- 6.3 A second public survey will be conducted at the end of round 2, along with feedback collated during the process, and this will be used in conjunction with the monitoring and evaluation from LBF Round 1 to bring a full evaluation for Members consideration in late Spring 2019.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

- (a) The funding allocation for the 2017 Localities Bid Fund Round 1 was £208,000. Funding being awarded for this round is £203,759 with £2,050 being rolled over for Berwickshire and £2,191 rolled over for Eildon. This leaves a balance of £296,241.30 to be allocated for Round 2 (Appendix B).
- (b) A further £250k has been allocated for participatory budgeting in the 2018/19 budget which may require to be carried forward to 2019/20 if unallocated by 31st March 2019.

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 should not expose the Council to any unfunded ongoing future financial commitment.

7.3 Equalities

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.
- (b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

7.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

7.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

7.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Administration will require to be changed to include within the remit of Area Partnerships - Decide whether the funding for each Area Locality Bid Fund is to be allocated in a particular way (e.g. urban/rural split); if any themes are being applied to a particular release of funding; if there is to be any cap on the amount of grant for any project and whether a cash contribution will be required.

8 CONSULTATION

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

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Service Director Customer & Communities Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenni Craig	Service Director, Customer and Communities
Shona Smith	Communities and Partnership Manager

Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 28 September 2017

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

Contact us at Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA. Tel: 01835-824000, Email: smsmith@scotborders.gov.uk