

Fit for 2024 – Annex A

Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment

Further Context

Over a lengthy period of time the number of grants and funds that have been created within Scottish Borders Council has led to a cluttered and confusing internal landscape with inconsistent criteria and processes.

The funding landscape has also changed significantly over the past few years, with participatory budgeting being introduced in a number of formats, for example public voting, crowdfunding and co-operative schemes being created across the UK.

The capacity of communities to access funding varies across the Scottish Borders, from those requiring small scale budgets for low level projects, seed and feasibility funding, to those who are looking to fund medium sized projects within Community Action Plans, and more mature organisations such as Development Trusts which are seeking significant funding packages made up of a number of larger funds.

Different levels of support required to access funding ranges across the Borders from basic capacity building to specialist intensive support for large scale projects. This support comes from a number of sources: Community Learning and Development (CLD), Communities & Partnership's Team, capacity building teams both within SBC, Third Sector, project specialists and consultants.

Finally, there may be additional requirements in response to the funding allocations within The Edinburgh and South East City Region Deal, The Borderlands Initiative and the South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SoSEP) etc., the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and also in light of the outcome of the Local Governance Review.

In response to all of the above, we will be required to look forward and build community funds over the next 5 years that create more fluidity and flexibility, that support and facilitate communities to come up with creative solutions to local priorities and also builds community capacity which will require funding.

By consolidating the existing community funds, devolving these to Area Partnerships and building on the participatory budgeting pilot (Locality Bid Fund), these community funds could also provide flexibility to enable match funding opportunities to be maximised, and to support and facilitate delivery of local Community Action Plans. It is also hoped that by devolving these funds, that Area Partnerships will be strengthened, will be able to refocus community funds in supporting their local priorities, and will assist in empowering communities.

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Enhanced Community Engagement, Participation and Empowerment Year 1 – 2019/2020

In the short term we propose:

- **Creating a single Scottish Borders Council Community Fund**

This will be done by consolidating the existing community grants and funds (incl. Quality of Life but excluding Small Schemes) - see Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed Consolidation of 2019-20 available Budget for a Community Fund

Grant/Fund	Available Budget 2019/20
Community Grant Scheme	£137,465
Local Festival Grants	£82,545
Community Councils	£62,728
Federation of Village Halls	£50,025
Contribution to the Third Sector	£19,955
Quality of Life	£100,000
Localities Bid Fund (LBF)	£500,000
LBF earmarked balance from 2018/19	£250,000
Community Action Team*	(£281,285)
Permanent effect of Financial Plan Saving (2018/19)	(£200,000)
Sub Total	£721,433
Fit for 2024 – Communities Fund	£445,000
Total	£1,166,433

*It is proposed that the Police Scotland Community Action Team (which is tasked from local community and local Elected Member input), is funded from the 2019-20 available budget allocation for community grants and funding.

This Community Fund would then be split across the five Area Partnerships per head of population - see Table 2.

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Table 2: Proposed available budget 2019-20 for a Community Fund by Area Partnership

Locality (Area Partnership)	Population (NRS 2017)	Available Budget 2019/20	With Additional £445,000
Berwickshire	20,945	£131,372.06	£212,406.01
Cheviot	19,477	£122,164.41	£197,518.83
Eildon	35,330	£221,598.23	£358,286.19
Teviot & Liddesdale	17,942	£112,536.52	£181,952.19
Tweeddale	21,326	£133,761.78	£216,269.78
Total	115,020	£721,433	£1,166,433

By creating a Community Fund with a single point of entry this allows for a more effective and efficient processing of funding applications. Village halls, local festivals, community councils etc. would make applications to this new fund.

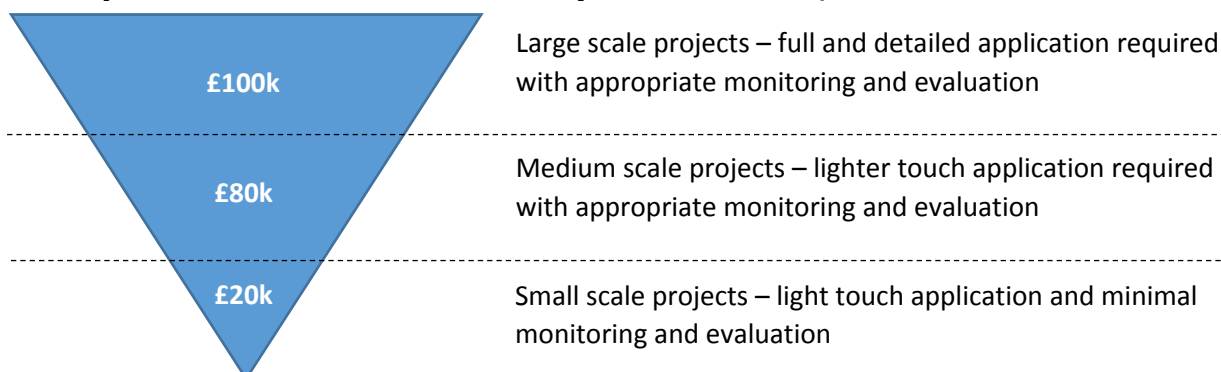
The current Scheme of Administration will be required to be amended to reflect these changes, and such amendments will be brought to Council for consideration and approval.

- **Strengthening Area Partnerships**

Devolving the respective Community Fund to each individual Area Partnership will allow flexibility for how it is allocated and used. It might be used for one-off community projects and events, organisations that require seed funding, feasibility studies and Community Development Trusts which wish to develop Community Action Plans. These funds/schemes could be open all year, or be allocated in phases. It will be for each Area Partnership to decide how they wish their budget to be allocated, with a number of options/tools available, for example – asking the local community to vote on a funding decision.

Below is an example of how potentially the Community Fund could be split:

Example allocation of a Community Fund of £200,000



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The Community Fund will support the evolution and strengthening of the Area Partnerships, in particular with regard to governance and accountability. Area Partnerships will offer a more open and transparent process and support the implementation of each Area's Locality Plan. A framework will be developed for each Area Partnership to work within which will be brought to Council for consideration and approval.

In addition it is noted that in the Area Partnerships Proposals paper that went to full Council on 2 November 2017, it was agreed that there would be a review of Area Partnerships after 18 months in operation (Area Partnerships were effective from 1 January 2018).

- **Piloting mainstream participatory budgeting**

We will continue to work towards the COSLA 1% of Council budget for 2020-21 by identifying the most appropriate services and teams, e.g. neighbourhood services, and piloting different approaches to how we can work with our communities in the Borders to enable them to influence mainstream spend.

The calculation for the COSLA 1% of Council budget is based on "total estimated expenditure for revenue, as per the local government finance circular, less assumed council tax intake". The 2020/21 assumed funding figure for Scottish Borders Council is £210.235m therefore 1% is £2.102m.

- **Continuing to support the Third Sector**

We continue to support the Third Sector by offering in kind accommodation in place of current financial contributions.

We will also continue to work with the Third Sector to further build community capacity in our local communities, including asset transfers, participation requests and future requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act.

- **Preparing for planned legislative and policy changes**

There are a number of reviews being undertaken which may bring significant legislative and policy changes - the Local Governance Review, the Planning Review and Community Planning Partnership Review etc. We need to build a flexible and fluid approach and funding proposition that will allow us to respond to this changing landscape.