

Localities Bid Fund Round Two

Project Evaluation

The survey asked respondents for their views on aspects of the Localities Bid Fund (LBF) including publicity, the application process and the public voting process.

The survey was available on Scottish Borders Council's Consultation Hub from 27th November to the 12th January. Groups that had submitted applications to the LBF were sent an email link to the survey which was also made available to the wider public.

A total of 135 responses were received, of those that answered the question 57 were from those who had submitted an application to the LBF while 77 were from those that hadn't.

Results

How did you hear about the Localities Bid Fund?

Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they had heard about the fund. The most common way was via word of mouth (30%) followed by my local SBC Councillor (25%) and Email from the Council (20%). Other ways that people heard about the fund included, non-SBC social media, SBC Staff, Networking Events, Community Councils and Third Sector.

Did you, or your group, submit an application to the Localities Bid Fund 2 (2019)?

Of the 134 responses to this question 43%% were completed by those who had submitted an application to the LBF while 57% were completed by those that hadn't.

How satisfied were you with the application process?

Respondents that had submitted an application to the fund were generally satisfied with the application process with 70% satisfied with the availability of information about the fund and 62% were satisfied with the overall application process.

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No Opinion N/A
Availability of information about the fund	30%	40%	18%	7%	5%
Clarity of the guidelines	19%	47%	14%	12%	7%
Clarity of the application form	23%	47%	11%	14%	5%
Overall application process	18%	44%	12%	21%	5%
Communication with SBC staff throughout the application process	35%	28%	11%	7%	19%
Helpfulness of SBC staff throughout the application process	39%	23%	7%	9%	23%

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

How easy did you find it to complete the application form?

61% of applicants found the application form easy to complete while 28% found it difficult. 11% expressed no opinion.

Did you think the application period (8 weeks) was suitable?

12% of applicants, who expressed an opinion, thought the application period was too long while 9% thought it was too short. 67% of applicants, who expressed an opinion, thought it was about right.

Comments about the application process

Applicants were asked if they had any general comments to make about the application process. These were grouped into the following categories:

Comments by category	%
Allocation process	6%
Application form	23%
Communications	32%
Fairness	26%
Positive comment	19%
Project Size	3%
Timescales	6%
Voting Process	29%
Other	1%

NB: comments may fall into more than one category and totals will therefore exceed 100%

Most comments were made about communication, the voting process and fairness.

These included:

Communications (32%)

- publicity about the fund
- Lack of support from SBC
- amount of funding that could be applied for

Voting Process (29%)

- The online voting system was awful
- Voting favoured larger communities

Fairness (26%)

- The current system gives large towns an advantage
- Only those living in the Borders can vote
- Many older voters excluded due to online aspect

All comments received about the application process are available in appendix A

If you didn't submit an application please tell us why

Of those that answered the question, 77 respondents hadn't submitted an application. The reasons given for not doing so fell into the following the categories:

Comments by category	%
Capacity	3%
Clarity of criteria	5%
Communications	23%
Criteria (general)	3%
Fairness	8%
Individual	19%
No project in place	20%
Timescale/process time	10%
Voting abuse	1%
Other	6%

NB: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Comments may fall into more than one category

23% of comments included communications as a reason for not submitting an application. These included lack of awareness about the fund in good time to submit an application or prior to the deadline for applications.

All comments received to this question are available in appendix B.

How satisfied were you with the voting process?

All respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the voting process. The highest satisfaction levels were received in relation to the length of time allowed for the public vote (47%), while the highest levels of dissatisfaction were in relation to the online voting process (63%).

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No opinion/not applicable
Voting guidance	4%	34%	21%	21%	19%
The different methods in which people could vote	4%	30%	21%	29%	14%
Online voting Process	4%	19%	19%	44%	13%
Paper voting form	3%	25%	10%	20%	41%
Length of public voting period (4 weeks)	11%	36%	20%	17%	16%
Availability of voting forms	4%	13%	19%	33%	30%
Communication with the staff during the voting process	7%	20%	10%	15%	47%
Helpfulness of staff during the voting process	13%	16%	7%	11%	52%

NB: percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Comments about the voting process

Respondents were asked if they had any general comments to make about the voting process. These were grouped in the following categories:

Comments by category	%
Availability of voting forms	17%
Campaigning	2%
Communications	11%
Ease of use	54%
Fairness	38%
Funding cap	4%
Positive comment	2%
Timescales	5%
Voting abuse	2%
Other	8%

NB: comments may fall into more than one category

The category in which the largest number of votes fell was ease of use (54%). Comments in this category largely commented on the complicated online voting system.

Comments that fell into the fairness category (38%) included;

- Groups from Large towns have an advantage against groups from smaller rural communities
- Online voting discriminates against old members of the community and their interests.

Comments that fell into the availability of voting forms category (17%) included:

- lack of awareness about paper voting forms
- Ballot papers were not widely available
- unable to vote at nearest centre

All comments received are available in appendix C.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Localities Bid Fund?

Respondents were given the opportunity to make further comments, these were categorised as follows:

Comments by category	%
Administration	6%
Allocation of funds	6%
Communications	13%
Criteria	5%
Fairness	33%
Feedback	11%
Funding cap	2%
Negative comment (general)	8%
Positive comment (general)	8%
Voting	13%
Voting abuse	1%
Other	16%

NB: comments may fall into more than one category

The largest percentage of comments (33%) fell into the fairness category, these included comments on:

- Voting system favours large towns
- Voting events were held in the large town rather than the small rural communities

Comments made about communications (13%) included:

- Lack of feedback on successful projects
- Publicity of LBF2

Comments that fell into the voting category (13%) included:

- The issues with the online voting system
- The current voting system favours bigger communities

Comments that were categorised as other (8%) included:

- the need for transport in rural areas
- grants being used to undertake work that was the councils responsibility

All comments received are available in appendix D.

Appendix

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments that they had about the application process they would like to include. These are listed below:

Lack of clarity about whether one organisation could make more than one application - i.e. one in 2 different localities (which we couldn't but this was only clarified at the last minute and we had to choose which application to withdraw)

We were quizzed about the detail and justification of our costs including staff time etc and it was for a very small sum compared with others

Should have proportionate voting, e.g. a small sum under a certain figure should require fewer votes than a larger one. Also where the public event takes place influences - if in XX nobody votes for XX! Should have more local events? The event (XX) was like a cattle market, it felt very uncomfortable. XX was there but didn't come round and speak to individual stallholders (possibly only if she knew them anyway)

Yes, the model was flawed as it only gave those resident in the Borders Region a chance to vote. The Age demographic meant that many people, did not or could not access the online application and particularly the verification process.

I am involved in two of the groups that applied and one of them, the XX was disadvantaged as it caters for a high number of people from Northumbria who could vote in this process.

The other group from XX were in fact successful however they still had some issues around the perception, true or false that their application was altered to a lower figure. I have no comment on that at all. you get what you get

Staff were very helpful with any questions needing answered

No it was quite an easy process

The online system to vote was awful. It went from not working, allowing me to complete it then it not being sent as well as once it was sent not receiving any acknowledgement. Who knows if you actually received it? I certainly don't know. Also, no communication regarding being able to vote in XX in person. Bad all round and unfair.

Whilst the application process was straightforward enough I was extremely dissatisfied with the evaluation of our bid. We received a last minute phone call and were effectively given two options. One was agree to just over £XX being taken out of the bid for what we considered to be no good reason, or withdraw the entire bid. Under such pressure we agreed to the reduction. As eventual winners, we now face a shortfall in funding as we could have expected to receive the full award of £XX for the number of votes cast in our favour. . We remain of the view our bid was entirely within the rules and feel we have been discriminated against.

I was not part of the group applying, but I was a user of the service which got funding first time around (XX).

Voting was very clunky online. Difficult to negotiate website. Wouldn't take vote. When finally worked it didn't look like it had worked? Maybe it didn't.

I'd no idea there was a voting meeting in XX. Timing was not inclusive for those who work in any case. XX residents at a disadvantage through geography and lack of information.

The online registration process was deeply flawed as myself and many others found it impossible to register thus making it impossible to vote as we were not made aware of the ability to receive hardcopies of the application form.

Voting process was not user friendly. Unclear website and unclear instructions.

Pretty chaotic all round.

The advertised website link didn't work and then the online vote was delayed due to

Appendix A

<p>'technical issues'.</p>
<p>A summary of 250 characters was very restrictive.</p>
<p>I would like to add that after being awarded the Localities Bid money that we as a group had to jump through hoops to get the money paid in to our account. There was certain criteria that had to be fulfilled which we were not made aware of when applying. .</p>
<p>The application process was a shambles and dates for admission went out of the window due to various reasons. It was a mess from start to finish</p>
<p>too many barriers and requirements for a small claim - there was no allowance for the size of the claim or the time people have to give up to help their community</p>
<p>It was not made clear when I ticked a box if that tick had been accepted as when I ticked the next box the tick from the previous box disappeared. I know of a number of people who had the same complaint. With modern technology the form should have been made much easier to complete.</p>
<p>It was critical that all our votes were counted for the taxi service in XX so that we could have the service continued, I have a condition that affects both eyes which prevents me from driving in the dark. Due to the reduced bus service & now no taxi service it has created greater social isolation for me during the winter months.</p>
<p>Being required to reduce costing after submission especially for worker time when a lot of work had gone into the application and to find the match funding was unfair especially as it was done in a way that made you feel under pressure and put on the spot to reduce costs - it felt like a grilling!</p>
<p>The process needs more guidance around if one organisation can apply in 2 different localities, many organisations work locality wide so very difficult to choose just one locality to focus on.</p>
<p>The process seems to favour more tangible projects that can be summed up in a few sentences. Not so easy for community work</p>
<p>Eligibility of funding for key staff was an issue</p>
<p>As the total amount of votes which were cast for any application was the deciding factor, the system was pitched in favour of larger communities/organisations</p>
<p>Application process was fairly straightforward as I use similar processes previously.</p>
<p>The online voting process was awful. I spent hours trying to submit a vote for our local bid without success. From the information, it looked like the only way of voting was online which never worked for me. It wasn't until recently that I was informed that there was another way of voting, via a form, but I have no idea how we could have got hold of one. The whole process was extremely frustrating and I know of many others from our local area who had the same experience.</p>
<p>I feel that people who have previously won the fund should not be allowed to reapply for another project, I have seen previous winners reapply for very similar things, also people who run businesses through funding from these funding applications should be banned - it should be community groups who are run by volunteers who should be allowed to enter - these are the ones mostly going to benefit the public as no-one can apply for money for wages</p>
<p>The process was significantly better than the previous one</p>
<p>The application form was the exact same only a different colour from the community grants fund - so being familiar with this made in really quite straightforward.</p>
<p>Communications with the team was practically non existent</p>

Appendix A

"We learnt a lot from what you told us following the first round of the Localities Bid Fund. Your comments helped us develop the process for LBF2." - Did you really?. I would be interested to find out what these points were as this time it was even worse than round 1.

There was little support and guidance from the council and all confidentiality in regards to information sharing and inclusiveness was forgotten. The processes were stupid - think of how people were asked to get an application form and I am sure on your own reflection - you will realise this too

The guidelines changed, i.e. what the funds were allowed to be used for. This was not made clear, and we were unaware of this. Had this been made clear we would have changed our application, or even put in another application.

Some of the questions seemed to be asking the same thing, the guidance notes were essential.

I'm aware that not many groups know about or know how to apply for the grant. There are very few already overstretched people running voluntary groups and form filling takes time. Is there an option for a council member to help fill in forms?

It did seem a long time to know if we were going through.

It was the first time I had filled in a form of this type as I am a volunteer with XX. I am sure I would find the process easier next time.

Application 2nd time round was much easier than Locality Bid 1. The form was more user friendly.

Appendix B

Respondents that didn't submit an application were asked why that was the case. The responses are listed below:

Didn't have sufficient time to do application due to poor advertising of the fact another bid round was opened up
There was a group but I was not an active member of it
Group not ready to bid to this fund
Group not ready to prepare a bid to this fund
We live in a small village, there is no way we could outbid a larger community like Kelso, Gala etc.
There were no needs in our area
At the time our funding was ring fenced and we did not require any more money.
Didn't think it gave smaller communities a chance so felt it was a waste of time
No idea about the scheme, never heard of it until today
Didn't agree with the process, not transparent and unfairly weighted to larger communities
Although we did not ourselves submit an application, our group tried to get support for the application from XX for funding for XX. One reason for not submitting an application ourselves for support for a trial bus service locally was that we had been informed by SBC officials previously that this would not be allowed because it might result in a profit for the bus company. Another reason was that we did not consider it likely that voters right across XX would vote for our project, in view of its localised nature
We applied in round one. There was a lot of paperwork (we are used to applying for grants so we can achieve this) but as a smaller local charity, we found that we were competing against larger more popular ideas that meant we did not get sufficient votes. Competing with others for public votes is not something we would do again, all our participants that could vote but many have difficulties with mobility, literacy and could not achieve. This is not something we would do again, and we would prefer a much better way of spreading out the finances. It benefits the most populist ideas and is not worth the work it requires. We are better off approaching our usual methods of fund raising and working with trusted funding partners
Did not require any funding at the time.
No eligible project requiring funding
Not relevant
Unsure how!
I am new member & a recent import from England so have yet to learn more about the group
Successful in the first application
Not seeking funding
Unaware of the fund
Had been unsuccessful in the path. Didn't feel the bid would be supported by the public
At the moment we have no need for major funding
No relevant interest
When we looked into it the competitive element stopped us because we are a small group and knew we could not compete with larger groups where lots of family and friends could be encouraged to vote.
didn't know about it or what the criteria were
No project currently in mind.
Because the localities bid fund is a flawed process. 1. It is not proper participatory budgeting but a glorified beauty competition. 2. Since it depends on number of votes cast it unfairly benefits larger areas over smaller ones 3. LBF should proclude schools but in round one schools were given large amounts of

Appendix B

<p>money and schools groups were still allowed to put forward projects to round two. It is not good enough for SBC to pretend that bids from affiliated groups such as "PTA/Friends of a school" were for community benefit.</p> <p>4. SBC were fully aware that round one was a dreadful waste/misspending of public money but failed to make sufficient and useful change to the bid process for round two.</p>
<p>we were turned down previously</p>
<p>This is the first I have seen if it.</p>
<p>We still think the voting process goes against small rural communities, so feel that it would be time wasting for us.</p>
<p>We are a very small group in a very small village so we felt we didn't have a hope of getting enough support from across the wider community to get enough votes to be successful. In this way, PB doesn't work for us.</p>
<p>Because our very rural area would be competing with the large towns and felt we had no chance to win a penny, we would be wasting our time. Apart from that you changed the application process and criteria without consultation which really really annoyed us.</p>
<p>WE DID NOT APPLY BECAUSE IT WAS NOT EXPLAINED PROPERLY</p>
<p>As a small community council it was felt that public voting would naturally lead to larger populations being more successful.</p> <p>We only had small projects requiring funding and with a limit of one submission it was difficult to judge when we should bid.</p>
<p>We had no off-the-shelf project ready.</p> <p>The nature of the application process gives the strong impression that only new projects will be funded - what about all the well-established long running organisations/events that require funding to ensure they continue?</p> <p>Assuming success in the initial application, there is an awful lot of work to do to get the public to support the plan in terms of canvassing votes etc. - this can detract/distract from your main work, especially if you are a completely volunteer run body.</p> <p>Relatively complicated application form</p>
<p>I think the voting process is not fair or transparent, it becomes a popularity contest as opposed to the quality of individual projects and what would be best suited to the local area.</p>
<p>Small village, too complicated and the way the bidding is structured favours the bigger towns and projects with the largest number of voters. Anyway Community Councils (often <10 people) are hardly representative of a resident population. As a council we have a number of permanent yearly duties plus other temporary tasks and issues we undertake. Remember, a C.C. is an unpaid, voluntary, amateur body, and each Council has widely different capabilities, with as few as three or four active members, so bidding for and undertaking new, perhaps large complicated projects is not everyone's idea of a fun night out. I know many councillors who are interested in their Communities but feel they already devote enough time and effort without getting involved Localities Bid Funding. In my view the basic grants to Community Councils are ridiculously low and should be increased in value by at least inflation and provide enough funds to undertake small projects without the need for any form of bidding/begging process. If a C.C. does not wish to participate or has no need of any improvements then fine, don't take the money but if it accepts funding and the money is not used by the end of year (or it has no future plans to use it) , return it to central funds. SBC already audits Community Council's activities, so you can see at a glance which Councils are active and require funds and Councils that do very little and deserve the same, very little!!</p>
<p>No particular project in mind</p>
<p>It seemed clear from the outset that some groups would have an advantage. Those in towns with a large base would find it easier to raise votes than small rural groups.</p> <p>There was a feeling in our group that the awards would go to those popular groups rather than run of the mill groups such as village halls.</p>
<p>No appropriate project. Very little known about the fund</p>

Appendix B

Supporting another bid - "XX"
The applications were weighted in favour of the larger towns, our little village did not have enough people to out vote them.
Was voting for a group that had helped us.
Another group needing support.
Supporting a bid by XX
Supporting a bid by others.
Too small a group to get enough support
Supported bid by another. They helped set up our group.
XX helped establish our group and wanted to support them.
Small group unable to compete for funding against large organisations.
Group too small to stand a chance of getting enough votes.
Didn't know enough about application procedure
Didn't understand enough about application system
Didn't fully understand the importance of the development until it was too late.
We did not have an appropriate funding need in the timescale
Small group with limited time to promote. Other groups promote their applications and seek votes. Some groups have paid staff to do this.
Did not hear in time
As we represent a very small community in a dispersed rural setting it appeared difficult to see how we would get sufficient backing to vote for any project. Also getting matched funding or applying for alternative grants from elsewhere is time consuming and difficult to obtain. Most of the funding we require is for day to day maintenance and running costs.

Appendix C

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments that they had about the voting process they would like to include. These are listed below:

Online confusion - can't even remember what it was but it wasn't straightforward. Online or paper - what about older people who are not mobile and don't use computer??
A shambles!
The on line process didn't work at the beginning and people were unsure if their vote had counted or not and it was difficult to navigate on a phone. Initially we were told that you could only apply for a paper vote online. This made it difficult to recruit from members of the community without internet access. Laterally we were informed that we could collect names to register people to vote and this worked fine but would have been helpful earlier in the process.
You are between a rock and a hard place. Discount any applications from Schools or PTA's or any application from a council employee and you may get a public sense there is fairness and parity involved. Paper voting at local voting stations is the way forward. You may indirectly discriminate against older people by insisting on a postcode online lottery, where many people are excluded because they stay south of the Border.
You are between a rock and a hard place. Discount any applications from Schools or PTA's or any application from a council employee and you may get a public sense there is fairness and parity involved. Paper voting at local voting stations is the way forward. You may indirectly discriminate against older people by insisting on a postcode online lottery, where many people are excluded because they stay south of the Border.
Quite a lengthy process to vote online through having to register etc, than site went down and had to re activate
Yes, it was very difficult to find the project and then I wasn't able to register my vote at all - I tried several times and it was funding to help replace our lost bus service with a subsidised taxi, a really important issue that has left many of us cut off from jobs/Edinburgh.
We didn't receive funding but probably because there were so many of us having the same issues with the website and unable to register our votes
I feel the online voting was very cumbersome and difficult, if memory serves there was also a technical issue at the beginning
No thank you
The on line voting process was widely felt to be 'not fit for purpose' and we would agree. The voting event was not well enough publicised and very poorly attended as a result.
This was mainly focussed on online voting and the system didn't work initially. Unless someone was very keen to vote, which I was, they would have given up. Paper forms should be available at key places, such as the Post Office, so as to widen accessibility to vote. In general, many older people, are not online. This makes it discriminatory. Also, was it merely a 1st past the post system? If so, this favours larger populations such as XX. More people should have voted in XX though. I don't believe many XX people would vote for a XX bid. Maybe you need to split the fund across areas first, then bid within the area for a fairer approach
Took a few goes to get vote counted but worked ok in the end. Would have been better if it had worked first time
I'd no idea about voting guidance, different methods of voting, voting period, voting forms or that any staff were available. Lack of information.
The on-line vote system was delayed due to technical issues. We tax our cars, renew passports, etc by computer but try and register a vote on the local council website... aargh! The whole system favoured the many (200+ votes) and not the deserving few from rural areas (88 votes).

Appendix C

Many of the older voters felt at a disadvantage because they, in general, do not have smart phones, Facebook and other modern communication systems
Confusing. Software either was not user friendly or didn't seem to work. after several attempts I had no idea if I had voted or not so gave up. I suspect my vote hadn't been registered.
No
the online voting process was firstly not available and then very unclear on the voting process with glitches and unclear notification of the completion of voting
The online voting process was not straightforward at all. When it went live it immediately crashed - it needs to be tested better before going live. Use words that the public are familiar with - participatory budget is not a user friendly term
Awful
The process is most unfair with large communities, eg Gala, Jedburgh competing with small villages.
allowing 4 weeks for the public to vote is not long enough and only have the paper voting held on one day in a town is unfair to those living in the villages (some of whom do not have the internet or their own transport)
I think the voting process is hugely biased towards larger groups and organisations. It will be very difficult for tiny villages and organisations to ever get the votes required for their projects. In addition, many people don't seem to know about Locality Bids, one would have to be very keen to vote to bother to get a paper form, and with so many elderly people in the Borders, who are almost certainly less likely to undertake this online, it's simply not a fair way to providing funding. On one hand, it feels like the council are trying to expand public involvement but on the other it feels like they are trying to absolve themselves of responsibility for decisions about this sort of funding.
I was totally unaware that there was a paper voting option
Delays and changes to dates were not helpful.
Access to paper forms not as easy as it might be.
Online process hard to navigate if not VERY computer acquainted
The online voting was difficult and put a lot of people off. also the rules for voting were not clear
too long, overly complicated, too much expected of voluntary groups without resources to 'present' at an open day in a place where they are unknown to an audience who don't benefit from the project
It is basically unfair, because it does not give adequate weight to smaller communities.
The money available in XX should be divided beforehand into three pots (not necessarily of equal size). Pot (a) would be available for projects located in Western rural areas, pot (b) for projects located in Eastern rural areas, and pot (c) for projects located in XX. Only people living in the location concerned would be able to vote for awards from each pot.
For simplicity, every voter should be able to cast just one vote for their favoured project.
Having to register and create an account was annoying
yes, it does not benefit the under privileged who are not confident to vote, who do not have mobility to go to council offices or shops and do not use online because they are poor. The ideas most likely to succeed will have mobile, online, and public opinion.
The voting system makes it difficult for groups who work with older people as it was geared towards the online voting and many issues around not knowing if vote had been cast or not?
Paper voting not straightforward to phone up and get papers sent out for every member of the group as you needed to have a note of everyone's postcode - very time consuming!

<p>Biased towards bigger town projects as the voting events were all held in the bigger towns so people vote for projects they have heard of rather than smaller outlying projects that are not so well known in the larger towns.</p>
<p>The locality events felt like a cattle market/popularity contest, which was very uncomfortable plus a lot of the people who came along had already voted!</p>
<p>The number of steps in the process was very bad, and I had a confirmation I'd voted successfully then several weeks later had a confirmation that I didn't vote. It was a shambolic example of a simple process.</p>
<p>Was disappointed that there were issues with online voting.</p>
<p>On line voting system was not available on go live date and was very cumbersome and difficult due to pre-registering process. Elderly voters found it very time consuming and frustrating.</p>
<p>Voting should be in Person at a project presentation meeting.</p>
<p>Total Shambles</p>
<p>Please could you review your online voting process? It was awful and we couldn't vote on it, therefore losing out on our bid.</p>
<p>If I wanted to support any one of the projects I was forced the vote for 5. There was no mechanism to restrict vote to project I actually wanted to support. In effect being forced to vote for projects out of my area in an area of large population had the effect of cancelling out my vote for local area projects</p>
<p>Stop giving it to people who have won it before - look at what the applicants have applied for previous and whether they have received funding from any other people or funders before, if they receive funding all the time from multiple sources then I think they shouldn't have the chance to apply - lots of organisations get no funding as the "regular funding people know how to fill out the forms better" and the little people always seem to lose out.</p>
<p>I think there is a risk that this fund increases inequalities since it's likely that people and groups most in need will be less able to submit applications.</p>
<p>I think the funding should be split across areas based on deprivation as well as population size.</p>
<p>I think that it's inevitable that great bids from small communities e.g. XX will fail because the potential number of people likely to vote will be lower. This will increase inequalities.</p>
<p>In summary this approach as it stands is fundamentally flawed based on the above.</p>
<p>It was very disorganised - it was laughable. Also the voting was in XX - that was a waste of time</p>
<p>Yes, I would like to see a fairer process for smaller villages to get a chance, as with smaller populations these projects will not have the same amount of votes as larger projects in larger towns.</p>
<p>The set-up of voting for more than one option diluted the vote considerably. From feedback it was clear that most had one preferred project and the other votes were cast as an afterthought. Meaning that not much thought or less time was taken on the other votes but each vote carried the same weight. Possibly less votes or a preference scale (1st choice etc) could be used?</p>
<p>I think the Council should decide who gets what. The voting system does not depend entirely upon the merits of each project but also on the size of the local community and their social networking skills in generating votes from other areas,, and possible informal reciprocal agreements between bidders ("our organisation members will all vote for your organisation's project if your organisation will all vote for our project") - which is possibly the only way for two projects from a smaller village to achieve success.</p>

If voters could only vote for one project , then this kind of collaboration would be avoided, but projects in small communities would have little chance of success due to their low numbers of potential supporters, with the majority probably tempted into voting for projects local to them.

This whole section of the process was a farce. it was certainly not exclusive in all forms. the advertising support from the council was practically non existant
 Applying on line was quite a mess and took several attempts and a certain level of computer savvy. this method excluded those without internet access, those not too good on the internet, literacy, the elderly, English as a second language....

Applying for a postal vote - a farce, the voter could not go in or pick up from one of the groups in the bidding process. instead they had to apply for a form - the form was then processed and sent out and then the voter had to complete and send back. even as I write this, and you read, you cannot deny it is a ridiculous way to do things. When I asked about the likelihood of getting organisations to take a note of peoples names and contact details. I was told to write them on a bit of paper! I mean I have to fill out a huge document to say I understood gdpr and confidentiality and this was the helpful advice. You may wish to get staff on some appropriate training . After involving a couple of councillor a form appeared on headed paper. however anyone could have run it off on their own computer. A panicked response...

The length of the voting would have been fine had you chosen appropriate and inclusive methods in which to encourage potential voters to participate. the voting process was extended to enable more votes to be collected as there was a noticeable lack of participation from voters. plus was it not true that not enough voting forms had been printed and this too caused a problem?

Our voting took place in Galashiels a couple of days prior to the closing date - reducing the time of voters being able to receive and return their voting forms. our project is not in xx so the local vote was missing, plus it was in xx a building not on the high street and only those who made the effort turned up... remind me how many people came through the door - was that about 20? waste of everyone's time - hence why a lot of organisations cleared up early . If you had however planned to hold a networking event you succeeded and should use the same or similar method for your Locality meetings to get numbers up the communications between ourselves as a project and the council was shocking – XX did not answer the majority of my emails or phone calls, so i start ed to include councillors in my conversations and communications - just to get an answer

Was a shame that the online voting process had technical issues

Complex and confusing with ballot papers not being widely available.

As applicant organisations work with residents of other Border towns, I would suggest the voting should be open across the region and not restricted to the immediate vicinity. I personally heard this raised by quite a few people who then used their vote for a local organisation ' just for the sake of it'.

Smaller communities do not have same weighted value as the larger communities and too much emphasis is placed on the very large applications that deplete the funding thus leaving smaller applications bereft of important projects to them. Perhaps consideration should be given to a financial ceiling being placed on applications thus spreading the available monies more evenly.

The local 'showcase' events were weighted towards the locality so there was active canvassing taking place for local projects. This left more remote projects at a disadvantage.
 I'm not sure how the voting worked in relation to size of community and I'm not the only one.

How are ordinary members of the public supposed to find out (a) that there is a voting process and (b) what the voting process is?

Appendix C

<p>It seems to me that the voting processes is flawed & weighted towards those organisations best able to raise support, mostly from people with the ability to & with access to IT. The online system was laborious and led to many giving up. It also rejected many votes so voters had to re-vote. I know many did not (though some may have voted in person at the local event).</p> <p>I understand the need for transparency & restriction to one vote per person but perhaps there is a better solution. We all get one vote only in political voting so is there not a solution that is similar?</p>
<p>As I didn't take part I can't comment on the process, except to say that 4 weeks is a good length of time for voting to take place.</p>
<p>It appeared to us to be completely unfair as it favoured the large towns.</p>
<p>Have to think more about elderly as not as technical i.e. electronics as most</p>
<p>There is a general lack of awareness among the wider population on the voting process to allocate funds. It is felt that a significant amount of time needs to be invested into marketing of a proposal which is difficult for smaller community councils to achieve as time commitments are limited.</p>
<p>I don't think it is the right process for investing in local projects</p>
<p>No. When we decided not to apply we lost interest.</p>
<p>Public voting not a fair process for projects from one end of the Borders to the other. A representative panel might be better</p>
<p>The whole process of Localities Bid Funding is still at an early level. I would guess that few in the general population either know about , understand it or are not interested in the least. For LBF to be a serious platform for involving Communities a way has to be found to bring the whole process to a much wider audience. How you get people's attention and get them interested in their Community and Community Councils in our modern busy world I would dearly like to know. Our Council recently lost our website (although god knows how many people used it) and are looking at ways of resurrecting it. I think there should be a Borders Website for Community Council where, if they wish to participate) C.C.'s can put their Agendas , Minutes, activities, forthcoming events, etc. For active Councils this would be a really useful platform (not all C.C's have members who can construct or run a website) and all the information could be found in one place. For C.C.'s that do little it wouldn't affect them at all.</p>
<p>Voting was unfair to small bids from small organisations compared to a primary school bid</p>
<p>Basically unfair for small (few people) bids compared to say a primary school bid</p>
<p>System unfair to small groups</p>
<p>Unable to vote at the nearest centre. Wrong papers sent out and new ones arrived close to the closing date.</p>
<p>Postal votes were slow to arrive. In some cases the wrong forms were sent out and then a delay in getting the correct ones. Online voting discriminates against old members of the community and their interests.</p>
<p>Not helpful to older people - not online, distance to travel to vote in person - not nearest centre!</p>
<p>Had trouble getting paper voting forms. Wrong forms sent out</p>
<p>Only paper votes of use to older people. Voting centres did not allow voting at the nearest one</p>
<p>Paper votes late in being issued. Voting centres/ dates inconvenient</p>
<p>System at present favours larger communities</p>
<p>I found the online system very challenging and the voting does not help support smaller rural communities where communication and promotion of the grant is difficult</p>
<p>Given my lack of awareness, it may be that only those who submit an application know what's going on and therefore may be the ones who vote. If this is the case, the model is seriously flawed and only pays lip service to community engagement</p>
<p>It was awful.</p>

Appendix C

I'm just a person who wanted to support a local cause.

You did not make it easy and accessible especially for people who are not good with the internet and/or have mobility issues and couldn't get out on the ONE single morning to vote in person.

Hate the idea of this 'hunger games' voting process too.

All causes surely deserve a share of the pot, it actually comes across as a really cruel and divisive process which is not fair on anyone, ultimately.

Don't like this thing at all, surely there has to be a nicer way to share out this much needed funding for local groups.

It's very sad and divides community.

The system should be based on the needs of a project, the worthiness of the project and not how many individuals an organisation can drum up to vote for it. In the instance of village halls they are run by unpaid volunteers who often cater for the isolated members of rural communities, i.e. Young mothers and the elderly.

There seemed to be some issues with online voting, I remember people saying they'd experienced difficulty accessing the relevant areas of the site.

The system is messy and confusing

No other comment on the process itself.

By the end of the process we understood how the system worked and could see the benefits to our charity and the community we serve. The opportunity to get our young members of 16+ to vote, encourage their friends and family to vote and see how the council could help their interests is excellent. The online voting system felt clunky and several of our supporters struggled to get the system to work at first attempt. Secondly, we struggled with the locality as XX is Border wide but running a project in XX, XX. Therefore, are members could only vote if they lived in the locality. That was something we didn't understand at the outset...our learning process. The day of the vote clashing with a political rally in Gala, that was unfortunate

The online voting system was unreliable, did not work for long periods and was beyond the comprehension of most people wishing to vote on line. I suspect many people gave up at this stage and never voted.

Appendix C

Appendix D

Respondents were asked if they had any general comments that they would like to include. These are listed below:

As far as I know it is being scrapped and all put into the Community fund? About which I've attended a Focus group but so far received no Minutes. I also think there must be a clear line drawn between for-profit and not for profit groups - at least one local business I know of obtained public funds (not localities) through having a voluntary/community 'arm'. It should be purely not for profit groups which benefit.
Scrap it as you've already indicated it happening.
Impossible for small communities, especially rural ones, See XX results!
The event in XX was a waste of time. There was no passing traffic at max arts and a rally taking part that day. It disadvantaged those not from XX to have it in the town so in future it would be better not to have it at all.
Yes, stop doling out money to vanity projects, like we need a new sound system for the school, but the whole community will benefit, Aye Right! Or the local Brass band for their personal instruments .In all fairness you almost got it right in the Bid Fund 2. Give it to groups that are actually making a difference in the community and are giving something back to the community, like the XX or the XX.
We were successful, it took a lot of work through promoting the cause, but we were successful which made it all worthwhile. I felt that maybe if monies were divided between all causes at least everyone would then have a foot on the ladder towards their fundraising.
The fund is a great idea but the online voting needs to be simplified to encourage more votes
Awful system.
we found the process easier than many public funding options - acceptable overall length and good clarity
Despite the negative feedback previously, we remain extremely grateful for the funds we did receive which will go a long way towards the provision of a much needed service within the Community
It is good to give local people a say in how their money is spent, however XX was bidding for a taxi service, when there should be a service bus. This is not a 'nice to have' but an essential service. Many of the other projects I would say were in the 'nice to have' category, to boost community projects. Ours was not and gave SBC a way to again duck out of its responsibilities.
There is a climate emergency. Ridiculous daily traffic queues on A702. No other way of getting to work for 9 am in XX or XX except by car. It would also be nice to be able to have a night out in Edinburgh and not have to pay a £60 taxi fare to get home. The buses we have are very infrequent, go at unsuitable times and breakdown frequently. XX needs a bus service!!!!
The public event was held in the town hall but there were very few people attending as there were no notices just outside the town hall to let people know it was on. One of the groups had not been informed about this so they were given the opportunity to hold a separate event in the local café. This had more people voting and so would be a better location for future events.
XX desperately needs additional public transport.
It's extremely unfair especially for rural communities who have quite a small vote capacity and are somewhat restricted in travel distance to XX to attend public advertising events.
Online voting process encountered errors. Was unsure if my vote was entering the system
No
No, I've said it all in the last section.
The old format was no perfect but better than this ,you need to realise smaller communities have little faith in sbc ,and believe most of the money will go to larger towns

<p>the day for meeting the prospective voters was great for meeting fellow applicants but not terribly well attended by the public</p>
<p>Apart from the inadequacy of the voting system, there was a lack of local publicity.</p> <p>The whole process seemed to favour larger communities leaving the smaller villages without a proportionate voice. I also now hear that further votes could be made at the public meeting which surely must sway the results in favour of larger communities and the town where the meeting is held, as travel from remote areas in the region is much more difficult - often there is no public transport.</p> <p>This whole process is confusing, unfair and I would suggest needs a complete revamp putting fairness and community needs at the heart of the outcomes.</p>
<p>it is completely bias to bids put in for the towns as they have more people who will vote for their bid - the bids by the villages never win regardless if their request if for much less it is obvious to me, who was representing our community bid on the voting day that nearly everyone who came into the town hall already knew the people behind the bids put in by the town and were voting for them regardless of the project.</p>
<p>I think that the application and voting process are weighed against small, rural communities, and it would be better to have a greater involvement in the choices approved from the elected local councillors.</p>
<p>The full budget assessment and appraisal process must be published so the public can make a full and considered decision. We should know if the sum requested is 100% or 10% of the total project costs AND if all the other funding is secured. We could vote for something the NEVER gets delivered.</p>
<p>The number of votes cast for each project should be publicised after the poll, so that applicants can decide whether to apply again or not.</p> <p>The Fund should be able to cover not just the capital costs in a project but also the running costs for the first year. This would facilitate pilot schemes.</p> <p>There should be no eligibility criteria disqualifying applications which might result in a profit accruing to contractors engaged to carry out the project.</p> <p>To enable voters to find out more about the projects for which they are considering voting, the application forms and supporting documents should be open for public inspection on-line.</p>
<p>Parent groups should be separate from community groups as parent groups bids have more people voting for them.</p>
<p>we do not plan to do this now or at any other time</p>
<p>I am pleased that you are looking at this as it was not an enjoyable experience applying for localities funding and there has to be a fairer way to distribute funds to communities especially if you are only asking for a small amount of money why not in those cases you only need to receive a certain proportion of the votes!</p>
<p>It was not a helpful or good experience, and is capable of significant improvement</p>
<p>The online voting system was very complicated as having to register then go to a completely separate part of the website to vote resulted in people just giving up on the process.</p>
<p>Being a community council, we were dismayed at the lack of information/communication received on the LBF 2.</p> <p>Having experienced the same type of voting format via The Lottery, I find it difficult to find the procedure for voting fair, Larger groups can obtain more votes, whereas smaller groups can lose out this way.</p>

Appendix D

<p>Was very well organised. Technical problems were unfortunate. Publicising/voting event was very poorly attended - unfortunate big demonstration on the same day which could have impacted on the attendance.</p>
<p>Needs fine tuning for future bidding</p>
<p>Still too restrictive in what can be funded.</p>
<p>The who We process needs wholesale review, including voting and allocation of funds.</p>
<p>Public voting on funding is an interesting idea and engages the public. The inevitable complexity of registering & casting votes is a problem.</p>
<p>At the moment, I do not know what it is</p>
<p>Whole process was very poorly thought out and very poorly implemented</p>
<p>Communication and voting could have been very much better.</p>
<p>The process seemed stacked against projects in areas without a large population</p>
<p>Don't do the things that are a one off event - do things that are going to benefit generations to come and have a lasting effect on their local communities</p>
<p>Personally, I'm not keen on the voting concept. If a strict remit is published for the disbursement of funds, then a permanent panel would be competent to adjudicate. It's not as though the people who do vote are truly representative of their communities (I would guess that the majority never even hear about the bidding process, let alone apply for voting sheets or go online.</p>
<p>Likewise, I'm not keen on splitting the available funds among Localities. Many projects run across Localities boundaries anyway; and in any given season there may be a need for nothing in Eildon but a crying demand in Cheviot.</p>
<p>I think it's a great attempt at being democratic; but it isn't really.</p>
<p>Energise Galashiels Trust are indebted to XX who has provided advice and guidance following the successful bid. He is a very personable young man and a credit to the council.</p>
<p>I think the process risks further marginalisation of those most in need and is therefore fundamentally flawed.</p>
<p>It was an absolute farce. This is a system which works well in small communities and hence the success in Burnfoot. To try and roll out this method across the whole of the borders is not a good idea. It then becomes a popularity contest and those projects where voting takes place are more likely to get chosen. The ways in which to vote were not inclusive Larger borders wide organisations should not be allowed to be involved or should have a separate fund. They are stopping the smaller projects from being in with a chance I mean the reason the street pastors got their money is not because people thought it was an amazing project (with respect) but they were one of projects asking for a small amount and because voters HAD to vote for 3 projects 'Oh look they are only asking for a couple hundred - give my vote to them' and enough people done it.</p>
<p>Hopefully the council will not try this again, some staff training and really good sit down to think about what went wrong and take on board the feedback you are given and hopefully conclude that the council are a service provider not a funder. Or you could just try and persuade others and yourself that you done your best and it was someone else's fault - a bit like what the remnants of the labour party are doing all over the news today</p>
<p>I probably would not apply again - but don't be spiteful and use this to make cost savings for next year</p>
<p>In my opinion it was not cost effective. The cost of administrating this must have been high and I feel it would be better to consult on what categories of application should be accepted and thereafter judged by an independent panel. This would cut out costly administration and make sure any money available goes to projects instead.</p>

Appendix D

An anomaly arose in Clovenfords which has a close affinity with Galashiels where residents not allowed to vote on projects in Gala which they were interested in.
Some after bid support for failed bids.
Fairly straight forward process, staff were very helpful and patient! Not sure that the information morning was a worthwhile event - could have been due to other events that were happening that day
A huge waste of public money
I think the whole system should be scrapped and bids for funding channelled through Community Councils and ward councillors for evaluation and approval. More of the money allocated to this should be devolved to those community councils which function efficiently so that they can fund projects of benefit to their communities as a whole.
I realise it is difficult to get this right and keep everyone happy but keep trying!
This still feels like a very tokenistic version of participatory budgeting. It is also too time restricted. Could SBC consider operating a continuous application process for this money, so that groups can apply at any time of year to suit their needs and projects?
Perhaps any future Bid could see the total sum allocated evenly between the bidders maybe as a percentage linked to the value of their bid and the value of the fund. For example taking the amount available in LBF2 each organisation would have been granted about 40% of the amount they requested. A more equitable solution, less cost in administration as no voting process. Instead they competed directly against other community members many of whom shared joint interests. I consider it unfair to make local communities compete from within & start challenging each other when the aim of a community is to work together.
There needs to be a way of making it a realistic option for very small communities.
Why mess with something that was working OK in the first instance? Why did you not consult with the people first? You are having to do it retrospectively because you made a mess of things and waste our money trying to put things right. I hope the SBC gets admonished for doing such a stupid thing.
There is still a significant lack of awareness of how the Localities Bid Fund operates. First past the post on a small number of public votes does not equate to level of need within the relative community. If a small number of projects request a large proportion of the available funds this has a detrimental effect on the remainder of the projects submitted. There is little feedback at community council level from SBC or Cllrs on successful projects. Requesting feedback on the LBF2 process over the Christmas period when some community councils don't meet is not perhaps an ideal way to communicate effectively.
On the surface it looks to me as if the SBC is trying to be populist. The Fund looks a bit like the talent and dancing programmes on TV but perhaps more like the programme where groups applied for huge sums to do up buildings. It also smacks of pitting groups against each other when we should be working together
Needs better publicity in order to make people throughout the Borders aware of the funds available
The competitive nature of the fund is very unfair and took up a huge amount of our time as we worked to secure votes. It was extremely uncomfortable to be competing against neighbours and other very worthwhile initiatives.
The process is very unfair, favouring larger towns.
I think I've said enough.
Perhaps have tiered groups Large, Middle, Small size or by the size of the bids so small organisations or bids are not overlooked.
Small organisations are important can there be tiered groups e.g. Large, Middle, Small size or by size of bid! Please ensure older small organisations are not overlooked
Small groups at a disadvantage from the beginning. Schools etc. were always going to get more votes

Appendix D

Voting was restricted to groups within your own district. People attending activities outwith their home postal area could not vote for their preferred bid.
Large groups will always be able to get more votes
Voting as it is set up favours larger communities
Voting system needs overhauled and more publicity regarding the grant system made to the general public and groups interested in applying for a grant.
I'm concerned that grants might be sought to undertake work which should or was the responsibility of the council
No.
See previous comments
I don't think that this is a kind or fair way to distribute the cash AND the territories are too large to be considered 'local communities' e.g. Clovenfords literally has nothing to do with Tweeddale so just stop it!
I think it's a very disappointing way to use this money. I have seen people out asking them for votes who have nothing to do with the area or project. Friends of friends and the most popular. It divides communities and leaves people dis engaged with the funding process. I find it to be of poor taste, counterproductive and causes more issues than it solves. I have been a community worker all over Britain.
Incorporating the money currently providing grants going to the federations of village halls and the grants and running costs of the community councils into the localities bid funds in the future as has been mooted by SBC is a travesty and should not go ahead. That money is a drop in the financial ocean and provides support to rural communities across the borders in a very worthwhile way. Loss of village halls and community councils will have major consequences in isolation of individuals in these rural areas
It felt a bit artificial, a lot of energy seemed to go in to trying to get votes for projects
The feedback from several who were successful is total frustration at the whole process and the ongoing hurdles with some still not accessing their funding.
The whole system needs to be streamlined and as simple as possible
Although the voting process was fine, there possibly remains an issue with the number of votes that a small rural community can attract, compared with a much larger town area. Granted, they may well receive a proportion of the 2nd and 3rd votes from individuals, but if there is a large field of applications then the probability of this significantly reduces.
Once a community group has been successful, if they are then using the grant fund to purchase a capital item, e.g. a marquee, for example, then this is relatively straightforward. However, if the grant is to be used to fund , say, landscape improvements within a community, then the process can be much more complicated, especially when various permissions need to be sought, risk assessments done etc.. SBC Officer advice is invaluable, but these are very busy people with many mainstream responsibilities for the Council and their time is finite. Consequently, the progress towards completion of a given grant award project will inevitably be slower and more problematic.
I hope this bid fund continues and I genuinely think it is a great opportunity for our charity us to get our young people to understand where the funding comes from and that they need to participate to get their project to happen. We would do a better job on a second attempt to spread the word among our friends in the community.