



People Tackling Poverty – Participatory Budgeting (PB) 2017/18 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Venues

- **Why is there only one voting event in each of the four areas?**
 - The PB process is being lead and delivered by a volunteer group who felt that holding one event in each area would be more manageable for the first round of PB, and lead to 4 successful events being delivered.
- **Will the voting venue have Wi-Fi?**
 - Not all venues have Wi-Fi provision. However, this needs to be a consideration when we choose venues for the next round of PB.
- **Why are you holding a voting event at a venue that has a project going forward for public voting in Dumfries?**
 - Because we are only having one voting venue per area, the venue needed to be as centrally located as possible. We also needed to consider size, accessibility and availability.
 - Dumfries Academy was considered but not available on the day required. Loreburn Primary was also considered, but did not have the sufficient numbers of chairs and tables for the number of groups being voted on.
 - The Nithsdale venue provides a space which is large enough for 26 groups and very accessible for the public. The venue also has the provision of refreshments for groups and public.
 - The voting event itself is not simply project proposers voting for projects they prefer, we hope to attract a large presence from the general public, the majority of whom will have no connection to the venue or its services.
 - The method of voting will also ensure the fairest outcome to the voting process.

Voting & Scoring

- **Why has the voting / scoring system been set up so we have to vote 5 times?**
 - We are using a spread voting system that requires voters to score their favourite project 5, the next favourite 4 and so on down to 1.
 - This system is now being widely used for PB events across Scotland and enables a wider spread of projects to receive votes and avoids one group being overly dominant.
 - We are aware that some people may find this system confusing at first, but we have included instructions and guidance on the voting slip. We will also have volunteers and officers on hand to explain the voting system and support members of the public.
 - Each group putting projects forward was invited to a pre-voting event workshop where the scoring system was explained. At the event they are also asked to support members of the public by explaining the process.
- **What arrangements are in place to avoid people voting more than once?**
 - Voters are required to sign in to the event, at which point they will be given a uniquely numbered ballot slip. Should a member of the public attempt to sign in twice or sign in under another name they will be denied admission to the event.
 - As more PB processes are delivered across Scotland it is clear that this is an initial concern, but one which has not yet become an issue.
- **Is there a geographic area people need to live into make them eligible to vote?**
 - The overall PB process has been designed on a geographic basis to encourage local people to vote for local projects. When signing into the event members of the public are required to note their post code in order for us to be able to analyse post event where voters have originated from. This will give us an indication of what protocols we may need to put in place for future events.
 - We needed to design a PB process that considered geography, but also accounted for the community of interest, which is those with lived experience of poverty. Communities of interest are not always identified by geography.



- **Is there a minimum age for voters?**
 - The minimum age for voting for these events is 12, which is emerging as the norm across Scotland.
 - For future PB events this can be varied depending on the topic of the PB and the audience the process is looking to attract.

- **Do you have to be on the Electoral Role to be able to vote?**
 - Voters do not need to be on the electoral role. Not everyone in the region of (normal) voting age has registered to vote and therefore will not appear on the electoral role.
 - An aim of PB is to increase overall participation in democratic activity, by allowing people who are not currently on the electoral role to participate, this may then encourage them to register to vote.
 - For future events it may be an idea for me to invite the Electoral Awareness Officer along to encourage more people sign up to be on the Electoral role.
 - With the minimum age for voting for this PB being 12, we are giving the next generation of voters to opportunity to see democracy in action.

- **Can project proposers vote?**
 - Project proposer generally come from the area where their project will be delivered. Therefore they would form part of the community in relation to both geography and interest.
 - As with members of the general public voting, representatives from the groups will also need to vote for 5 projects, not just their own.

- **Why have you chosen the market place event and not a dragon's den event?**
 - A Dragon's Den type event, where group need to present, is a very pressured environment, one not suited to all, and particularly so for groups who may have less confident users.
 - A Dragon's Den event also restricts the number of people who can attend and therefore vote.
 - The marketplace type event was felt to be a safer environment for both groups proposing projects and members of the public attending.
 - The marketplace also reduces the pressure on time and allows members of the public to fully engage and interact with each of the projects being proposed.

- **Why is there no online voting?**
 - On-line and digital voting, this is something that we are activity investigating through on-going work and dialogue with the COSLA



Officers PB Working Group, The Democratic Society for Scotland and the national PB Champions Group.

- Several Local Authorities have explored and made use of digital and on-line voting with varying degrees of success and challenge. As more authorities explore digital and on-line voting we are creating a better picture and understanding of what systems work best and what systems we should explore further to ensure that we get the right system for what we would need it to do.
- The provision for on-line and digital technology was made within the successful Community Choices award from the Scottish Government last year and we are committed to providing this for future PB processes.
- **What data is gathered about the voters?**
 - At present the only data gathered is a signature and the first part of a postcode.
 - In future we may look to gather data which we can use to identify areas for improvement such as targeting specific communities or area etc. However, any data gathered must be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations that came into force in 2018.

Steering Group

- **Why do we need to have a Steering Group?**
 - One of the criteria within the Council's PB Framework is that the design and delivery of the PB process should be undertaken by a Steering Group that is reflective of the community at the heart of the PB process, (community of place or community of interest).
 - The Steering Group is supported by representation from the Council Committee who agreed to make available the funding to be distributed through PB. This will normally be the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.
 - The Steering Group will also be supported when required by Council Officers and representatives from the Third and Voluntary Sectors.

Publicity

- **Will Dumfries & Galloway Council be helping promote the events?**
 - The Council will ensure that there is a regular presence on it's website and social media platforms.
 - Promotion of PB and the voting events is very much a collective effort, with all partners and stakeholders contributing.



- We have also found that the direct marketing approach with stakeholders provides an effective and efficient method of sharing information and opportunities.

Funding

- **How has the total funding pot been allocated across the four areas?**
 - Each geographic area has received a percentage of the overall £240,000. The percentage received has been calculated using the current (2017/18) discretionary grant formula:
 - Annandale & Eskdale – 24.5% = £58,800
 - Nithsdale – 39.5% = £94,800
 - Stewartry – 15.9% = £38,160
 - Wigtown – 20.1% = 48,240
- **How will the funding be allocated after the vote?**
 - Once the vote has been completed the votes / scores for each project will be counted. The project that attracts the most votes will be allocated the full amount requested first, the second most popular project will be allocated next and so on until the funding pot has been exhausted.
- **If there is only enough money left in the funding pot to give a partial award to the last project funded, will this happen?**
 - The funding will continue to be allocated until the pot is exhausted. Should there not be the equivalent of a full award available to the last project, the sum left in the pot will be offered (partial award).
- **Is there any timescale by which the money needs to be spent?**
 - The mandate handed down by the Communities' Committee asks that the money spent by no later than March 2020. However, this project is about getting the money to the people who can make a difference to the lives of those in poverty, so getting the money spent quickly is advisable and encouraged.
 - Once we identify which projects will be funded I will begin developing a bespoke relationship with each project and we will develop individual methods and mechanisms for monitoring progress, spend etc.
- **Why is the funding one year only and for new projects?**
 - The fund is for new projects only because the funding is not from a normal revenue budget which recurs year on year. Therefore, we don't ask for projects which may require year on year funding.



- **Why is the funding handed out in one instalment and not in tranches?**
 - All the projects are different, and some require to make purchases of equipment to enable the project and outcomes to be delivered. Therefore, all allocated funding has been distributed in one instalment. However, the spending and use of the funding is closely monitored.

Continuous Improvement

- **What steps are being taken to ensure that we are learning from others across Scotland?**
 - Dumfries and Galloway Council has representation on a number of networking and information sharing groups. We regularly share our learning with other Councils across Scotland and gain learning from them.

