

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Assistant Director - People
to Service and Performance Panel
of 23 August 2022**

Subject: Participatory Budgeting Activity in 2021/22

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Panel of the Participatory Budgeting (PB) Activity undertaken by Council Services in financial year 2021/22.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **It is recommended that the Panel considers the content of the PB Activity Report attached as [Appendix 1](#) and notes the value of budgetary spend influenced through the PB processes.**

3. Background

3.1 PB is a tool for community engagement and developing participatory democracy. The Council has implemented strategies which address the key issues contained within the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). The Council has also worked with the Community Choices programme, which supports and promotes PB nationally.

3.2 CoSLA has provided a definition of mainstreaming PB as follows:

Proactively involving and engaging local people in making decisions for how public money is spent in their community. This means engaging people in the design of policy and strategy that eliminates existing participation gaps.

3.3 It is recognised that PB has to be seen as a long term strategy that has to develop and be delivered over many repeated cycles.

3.4 Planned PB activity was hampered by the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and resulted in a revised [Community Choices 1% Framework Agreement](#) from COSLA and the Scottish Government.

3.5 The revised framework now:

- Recognises the impact of the pandemic on planned PB activity, and allocation of resources for developing a mainstream approach to PB across Councils;

- Outlines that whilst the 1% commitment remains, there is a degree of flexibility to Councils as to when they can practically meet it;
- Reaffirms local government's commitment to meeting and exceeding the 1% target in coming years;
- Asks Councils to complete the annual monitoring pro-forma to monitor progress towards the 1% target, with reporting commencing in 2020/21.

3.6 The Council has, over the past few years, evidenced greater participation in wider consultation and engagement with communities across a number of social media and mainstream communication platforms. For financial year 2021/22, the Council's PB activities generated a total of £5.922m of revenue and capital expenditure as influenced by South Ayrshire citizens.

3.7 The Council's 1% target for financial year 2021/22, as derived from the information contained in the 2021/22 [Finance Order FC5/2021](#), was £2.216m as defined by COSLA and Scottish Government as:

'The total estimated expenditure for revenue, as per the Local Government finance circular, less assumed Council tax intake.'

3.8 [Appendix 1](#) confirms that the Council exceeded the 1% PB activity target for financial year 2021/22.

3.9 In April 2022, an 'External Funding Group' was convened by senior Council officers. The purpose of the Group is to provide a more co-ordinated approach to identifying and utilising external funding that reflects Council and community priorities.

3.10 The group has representation from services across the Council from the Place and People directorates, HSCP and Legal and finance. The group will link in with community and funding forums including the Community Planning Partnership and share information on opportunities at local and national level

3.11 The Group is establishing principles of good practice and protocol in relation to relevant policies and legislation that should be adhered to including but not limited to: transparency and decision making, consultation, 'Following the Public Pound' and Participatory Budgeting.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel considers the recommendation as set out in Section 2.0 of this report.

4.2 It is intended to report to the Service and Performance Panel on a six-monthly basis with regards to the development of mainstreaming PB. This is to ensure members are sighted on the obligation to ensure citizens are encouraged to become more directly involved on influencing expenditure going forward.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 This participatory budgeting satisfies the legal obligations of the council under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to promote and facilitate public participation in its decisions and activities and to give communities more powers to achieve their own ambitions. It also complements the Council's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and delivers the public sector equality duty by advancing

equality of opportunities and fostering good relations between groups. Advice and guidance will be sought from Legal Services on an ongoing basis, where appropriate.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Although there is no direct budget for mainstreaming PB, its ethos is for communities to have a greater influence on spend. To that end, Leadership Panel agreed on 12 March 2019 to make £1.5m available over three years for the delivery of Placemaking and associated Place Plans and mainstreaming PB will assist in their delivery.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 The Council may not be able to deliver on its commitment to deliver the requirement of mainstreaming PB activity to a level of a minimum of 1% of local government block grant settlement (excluding Council tax income).

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report allow scrutiny of performance. The report does not involve proposals for policies, strategies, procedures, processes, financial decisions and activities (including service delivery), both new and at review, that affect the Council's communities and employees, therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 1 of the Council Plan: Fair and Effective Leadership/ Leadership that promotes fairness.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Martin Dowe, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic, and Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 11 June 2019 - [Moving Towards Mainstreaming Participatory Budgeting](#)**
[Community Choices 1% Framework Agreement](#)

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Date: 9 August 2022

Participatory Budgeting Activity In 2020/21

1% target defined as 'total estimated expenditure for revenue, as per the Local Government finance circular, less assumed Council tax intake.	£2.216
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Breakdown of revenue and/or capital subject to Participatory Budgeting during 2021/22		
Service Area	Revenue (£000,000)	Capital (£000,000)
Ayrshire Roads Alliance	0.130	0.330
Community Health and Care Services	0.066	0.000
Community Services and Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybole Town Hall Refurbishment 	0.000	0.140
Special Property Projects	0.000	0.869
Thriving Communities	0.000	0.690
Totals	0.196	5.726
Overall Total	5.922	