

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	29 August 2017
REPORT TITLE	U Decide - Participatory Budgeting 2017/18
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/212
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Carnegie

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to implement a Participatory Budgeting (PB) approach in support of Locality Planning and tenant participation during 2017/18.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Committee is requested to:

- a) Approve use of Aberdeen City Council £20,000 communities Devolved Educational Management (DEM) reserves and £75,000 Housing Revenue Account environmental improvement budgets for PB processes as set out below.
- b) Approve allocation and use of Community Choices Fund (£100,000 if the full funding request is agreed by the Scottish Government) as set out below or pro-rata allocations if the full funding applied for is not secured.
- c) Delegate authority to the Head of Communities and Housing to approve grants in accordance with the outcomes to the PB processes.

**3. MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 The committee meeting on 25 August 2016 approved a PB approach – U Decide – in support of Locality Planning in 2016/17. PB is intended to empower and engage communities. The basic approach is to allocate funding to a community, setting some parameters on its use, invite groups to submit proposals on its use and then a community vote is held to determine allocation of the funding.
- 3.2 The 2016/17 process enabled our priority communities to directly determine how £250,000 was used within their own communities. This funding was provided by a combination of the Council, the Scottish Government and

Community Planning Aberdeen. This PB process is considered to have been highly successful as can be demonstrated through the following results:

- 156 bids from local groups, individuals and organisations
- 93% of voters felt more empowered to make changes in their community
- 93% of voters think it is a good process and would participate again
- 3694 residents voted across the Localities (An average of 8% of the population of the Localities)
- 33% of voters were under twelve years old
- 40 bids were successful with an average grant size of £7,000 (lowest award £600 – highest award £15,000)

3.2 The Council has submitted a bid for £100,000 funding from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund for 2017/18. The fund aims to support PB activity which will significantly expand opportunities for more local people to make decisions on local spending priorities and contribute to local participatory democracy. Targeted particularly at work in deprived areas, the fund aims to support the broader agenda around democratic innovation and engaged citizenship. In total £750,000 is available for Scottish public bodies to bid for and £100,000 is the maximum that any public body may bid for. Bids must be match funded.

3.3 Match funding for the bid has been identified as follows:

Community Planning Aberdeen	£20,000
ACC – communities	£20,000
ACC – housing revenue account	£75,000
Fairer Aberdeen Fund	£20,000

The Community Planning Aberdeen and Fairer Aberdeen contributions have been agreed by the respective groups.

3.4 It is proposed that a successful funding bid would allow the following PB processes to be implemented:

**3.4.1 U Decide Localities** – for priority localities (Torry; Tillydrone, Woodside & Seaton; Middlefield, Northfield, Heathryfold, Cummings Park & Mastrick) to support the delivery of the three Locality Plans – total £85,000 (including identified match funding)

**3.4.2 U Decide – Fairer Aberdeen.** The Fairer Aberdeen Board has established a steering group to plan the PB process. The funding shall be allocated to neighbourhood(s) experiencing relatively lower social deprivation outcome outside the Priority Localities – £35,000 (including match funding) for the Fairer Aberdeen U Decide PB process.

**3.4.3 Wales Street** environmental improvements. The HRA has invested in significant improvement to the Council housing buildings on Wales Street and it is intended that the PB process funds environmental improvements - £90,000 (including match funding).

- 3.5 A further £25,000 will be required for the digital platform and marketing and engagement costs.
- 3.6 It is intended that the U Decide Localities PB processes shall provide an important means to support on-going community engagement regarding the expansion of early learning and childcare within our priority localities.
- 3.7 A further allocation of £750,000 Community Choices funding is also available for community groups to bid for. We are aware that local groups have submitted bids and depending on decisions made we will support and help coordinate all PB processes.
- 3.8 We anticipate being informed of the funding decision by 31 August 2017.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The main issues section provides financial details. Match funding identified to be provided by the Council is contained within 2017/18 base budgets. Disbursal of funding will be in compliance with Following the Public Pound requirements.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

##### Financial

- 6.1 Failing to approve the recommendations may result in loss of funding from the Scottish Government (should our funding bid be successful). Approval of the recommendations mitigates this risk. The risk of loss of funding would be high risk if recommendations aren't approved.

##### Reputational

- 6.2 Loss of funding would result in reputational damage. Approval of the recommendations mitigates this risk. Risk of reputation damage would be high if we are awarded the funding but decide not to proceed as recommended.
- 6.3 There is a risk to reputation if PB processes aren't seen to be fair, transparent and inclusive. Steering groups including community representation have/will be established to assist plan and oversee the processes. Locality Partnerships will also be critical in this regard. Risk is presently low on the basis that the mitigating factors are applied.

#### **7. IMPACT SECTION**

## **7.1 Economy**

- 7.1.1 PB processes may support progress towards our economy objectives with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans depending on the projects proposed and ultimately supported by voting communities.

## **7.2 People**

- 7.2.1 PB processes will be designed to be fair, transparent and inclusive and overseen by members of the communities. PB processes empower local people to decide on how funding will be used to improve their community, which provides further opportunity to reduce inequality.

## **7.3 Place**

- 7.3.1 Quality of place should be enhanced with the use of the funding being determined by local people familiar with the needs of the community. The Wales Street PB process is primarily aimed about enhancing environmental quality.

## **7.4 Technology**

- 7.4.1 A digital platform will be utilised to administer the U Decide PB processes. This should inform our future approaches to even greater public participation in funding decisions.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 Participatory Budgeting for Locality Planning (CHI/16/175), Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 25 August 2016

## **9. APPENDICES (if applicable)**

None

## **10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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