

**Supporting Communities Fund – Participatory Budgeting Pilot approach
2018/19**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Supporting Communities Fund, previously the Third Sector Grants is to be distributed by a Participatory Budgeting (PB) method for 2018/19.
- 1.2 A participatory budgeting approach to distribution of the Supporting Communities Fund is a pilot for 2018/19.
- 1.3 The Area Committee will have a role in the process as projects to be put forward to public vote will be agreed by Area Committees in March 2018.
- 1.4 COSLA have produced a briefing on PB for elected members providing more information on the concept and the Government's ambition to have 1% of council budgets distributed through a PB approach by 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the role of the Area Committee in the PB approach to distributing the Supporting Communities Fund.

3. DETAILS

- 3.1 It was agreed by Council on 27 September 2017 that the Supporting Communities Fund be distributed by a PB approach for 2018/19 as a pilot. Recommendations from the pilot will support the council's considerations of how it could best implement the Scottish Government target of 1% of budget distributed through PB by 2020.
- 3.2 Council also agreed the following changes to the fund for the PB pilot:
 - Groups can bid for project costs up to a max of £2,500 per application.
 - Funding is 100%, no requirement for match funding
- 3.3 Using a Participatory Budgeting approach with the Supporting Communities Fund involves the following key stages:
 - The Ideas Stage – community groups have until 22 December 2017 to post their ideas of projects on a dedicated webpage (www.abpb.co.uk) where others can comment, share thoughts and help develop the idea.
 - Applications – the deadline for application to the fund is 22 January 2018.
 - Application assessment – applications will be scored and recommendations taken to Area Committee in March 2018 on projects to go forward to public vote.

- Public Vote – people aged 16 years and over who live in Argyll and Bute will be asked to vote for projects within their administrative area. The total funds available is expected to be a minimum of £24,500 per administrative area, and people will be able to vote for a number of projects to allocate the full fund available within their area. Voting will take place in April 2018.
- 3.4 A webpage has been set up with more information on how the fund will be managed, and how community groups can get involved: www.abpb.co.uk.
- 3.5 COSLA have produced a briefing on PB for elected members, we are currently waiting on the final version of this and will circulate when we have this.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Distributing the Supporting Communities Fund through a Participatory Budgeting approach as a pilot involves several changes to the process. It is important that these are communicated to community groups to support as many groups as possible to apply to the fund. The findings of the PB approach to the Fund will inform how best the council can approach this way of distribution of funds in the future. A cross council working group has been established to develop and deliver this project, and provide recommendations for similar projects in the future.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Project provides recommendations for similar projects in the future to help meet policy objective of 1% distributed by PB, by 2020.

Finance: Scottish Government provided funding to support this pilot.

Personnel: None

Legal: None

Equal Opportunities: The grant allocation is consistent with the Equal Opportunities policy of Argyll and Bute Council.

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