

Management Committee

Date: 17th June 2015

Public/Private: Public



Participatory Budgeting

1.0 Purpose

This report is to provide Management Committee members with information on the part government-funded consultancy package to explore Participatory Budgeting in more depth in Argyll and Bute.

2.0 Recommendations

Management Committee members are requested to

- a) Endorse the proposed way forward set out at 4.1
- b) Advise on whether a separate session on participatory budgeting for CPP Management Committee members is preferred or whether it can be incorporated into an existing meeting, as detailed in 4.3 and 4.4

3.0 Background

3.1 The Scottish Government is currently supporting the concept of Participatory Budgeting as a tool for organisations to engage communities in financial decision making. Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership has been awarded a part funded 4-day consultancy package to explore the concept further looking at how participatory budgeting could be used in practice.

3.2 Whilst not explicitly written into the upcoming Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, Participatory Budgeting is clearly flagged and will likely feature in the advice supporting the rollout of the legislation expected later this year. The Scottish Government also sees a clear link to the recommendations of the Christie Commission around reform of public service and preventative delivery.

3.3 A half day awareness raising session led by PB Partners, the consultancy firm appointed by the Scottish Government, was held in April 2015 for interested Argyll and Bute CPP partners and was attended by 17 representatives including NHS, Council, Argyll Voluntary Action and Lomond Community Partnership. A debrief meeting gave participants the opportunity to feed into the planning process on how best to utilise the remaining days.

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Following the awareness raising session and debrief thereafter, it was unanimously felt that awareness raising and leadership sessions were essential before a more detailed examination of any participatory budgeting approach. The buy-in of elected members, senior officers within the CPP and those who currently make financial decisions is essential for any future use of Participatory Budgeting in either a grants process or as part of a mainstream budget.

4.2 The content of the awareness raising and leadership sessions would include:

- What participatory budgeting is and its key principles
- How it links to the Community Empowerment Bill
- Existing case studies where there is existing participation in financial decision making– in Scotland and in Argyll and Bute
- The cost and resource implications
- The financial regulations that surround the use of public sector money and how this approach fits into these regulations
- The perceived risks of using a participatory budgeting approach and how to mitigate them

These capacity building sessions need to take place within the 2015-16.

4.3 The session with Management Committee members could take place as either

- a) part of a scheduled meeting however these agendas can be fairly full,
- b) as part of the Full Partnership event scheduled for the 25th August as a workshop, although it is delegate's choice which workshops they wish to attend.
- c) as a separate half day event

4.4 If Management Committee members would prefer a separate half day event, it would be sensible to try and arrange this to be held on the same day as the elected members' seminar, as a separate meeting, to make best use of the consultant's time with us. This has been scheduled for the 3rd August 2015.

4.5 It is envisaged that the remaining consultancy support would be used to work on a case study or other piece of work. This would be influenced from the conversation from the information sessions/workshops with senior decision makers.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Participatory budgeting continues to be a tool that the Scottish Government is promoting as useful to addressing community empowerment.

5.2 Awareness raising around the concept of participatory budgeting to senior decision makers is key before a more detailed approach into a potential case study.

6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	This approach could significantly change the way a proportion of Community Planning Partnership organisations budgets or grants are allocated in the future.
Consultations, Previous considerations	None – any change to an approach in budgeting would need to go to relevant committees
Resources	Officer time to facilitate workshops at this stage. If PB were to be piloted, a full project plan would be required.
Prevention	Not as a direct result from this report
Equalities	Not as a direct result from this report

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References

Further information on Participatory Budgeting can be found at
www.pbnetwork.org.uk

Appendices

N/A