

EX6. Participatory Budgeting – Proposed Framework

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services providing a framework of proposals to develop and implement participatory budgeting (PB) within Falkirk Council.

PB sought to mobilise, include and empower individuals and communities to manage public resources differently this went beyond deciding on small grants and stretched to directly involving communities in service redesign. The Council sought to:-

- Proactively involve and engage local people in making decisions on how resources were allocated and deployed in their community;
- Engage people in the design of policy and strategy that eliminated participation gaps;
- Pursue a process of deliberative dialogue that allocated resources in a way that delivered improved outcomes using direct community participation in the decision making process.

The Scottish Government and CoSLA agreed that at least 1% of local authority budgets would be subject to a Community Choices PB approach by the end of 2021. This could include budgets discharged by the Council to the Integration Joint Board in relation to adult social care. To achieve the 1% requirement would mean that circa £2.9m should be subject to some form of PB by the end of 2021.

It was proposed that the Council's framework comprise three distinct elements:-

- A grant funded approach designed to support community based projects, but subject to community voting, to decide which projects would be funded.
- A place based approach where geographic budgets were established for a defined range of services and local community representatives had a say on how resources should be prioritised and deployed.
- Taking a mainstream approach to redesigning services from the perspective of people who use them. This approach to co-production or service redesign would provide citizens with have a deeper influence on the services they receive.

The Local Governance Review policy development panel was established to develop and progress the Council's approach on local governance and to consider local decision making. It was proposed that the content of the report be considered by the PDP and that it develop proposals for:-

(1) The approach to a small grants PB scheme including:-

- How much should be allocated in the context of locality planning
- Potential for other sources of funding to be included
- The mechanism for decision making
- The criteria for decision making

- (2) Recommendations for applying PB to various council budgets including recommendations on:-
- What budgets will be subject to PB
 - How decisions will be taken and by whom
 - Accountability and responsibility
- (3) Proposals for taking forward a Wigan type deal if this was deemed appropriate in Falkirk. This would include assessing the feasibility of repurposing a number of existing community focused funds, and the potential of crowdfunding to generate additional monies for this purpose.

Decision

The Executive:-

- (1) agreed the proposed elements of a Council participatory budgeting framework, subject to more detailed development, and:-**
 - a. a community grant funded model targeted on areas for Community Action Planning, as set out in paragraphs 4.2 – 4.8 of the report;**
 - b. a place based model working with a grouping of services and the accompanying preparatory work needed to make this happen, as set out in paragraphs 4.9 – 4.13 of the report, and**
 - c. using co-production and service redesign to mainstream citizen influence on how resources are deployed to achieve outcomes.**
- (2) noted the initial steps being taken to progress the development of a community deal based on the concept developed by Wigan Council;**
- (3) requested that the Local Governance Review policy development panel hold a session on Participatory Budgeting, considering each element in turn and making recommendations to the Executive on how Participatory Budgeting would work in Falkirk, and**
- (4) requested that a further report on participatory budgeting was presented to the Executive in June providing further detail on how Participatory Budgeting would work in Falkirk, including service specific proposals on place based Participatory Budgeting, and incorporating recommendations from the policy development panel.**