



Community Choices Fund Report Template 2017/18

The community choices fund (CCF) grant offer 2017/18 requires a report to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 30 April 2018 to include the following information:

- how the funding was spent, full details of the project, the number of participants (PB voters) for each event, the impact PB has had and plans to promote and support PB in the future. The report should include the views of participants on the process.
- Share any blogs, pictures and videos of the PB event on the PB Scotland website www.pbscotland.scot
- Participate, where possible, in PB learning networks and workshops to share knowledge, expertise and good practice.
- Provide an on-going contact point to speak to other groups in the area about the organisation's experience of PB.

Please provide information in the five sections below and email the completed template by 30 April 2018 to laura.cleary@gov.scot.

Section One – Organisation and Financial Information

Organisation: **Leith Links Community Council** Address: **c/o 9 Woodbine Terrace, Edinburgh**

Postcode: **EH6 8DA**

Project Title: **Making Local Democracy Work** Total Grant Amount: **£82,800**

Support Amount: **£10,300**

Project Amount: **£72,500**

If match funded how much? **NO**

What budget was used? (e.g. housing, environment, education, health & social care, etc):

Did you receive CCF in 2016/17? **Yes**

2016/17 Grant Amount: **£20,869**

Section Two – The Project

2.1 Please provide a brief overview of the project.

The project was designed to reflect a significant development and expansion of the previous year's ambitions. This was achieved in terms of the number of stakeholders involved, widening the geographic scope of the project, converging with a pre-existing City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) led project, engaging more groups and local people in the process and increasing the amounts of money to be decided upon. The original detail of the proposal for a 2-staged process transpired not to be practical due to time constraints and the precise allocation of funding across different pots varied somewhat from the original application but the broad intent as described in the application was achieved. The local name of the project was agreed as Leith Chooses - reference to the past (Leith Decides) and the source of the largest chunk of funding (Community Choices)

Key to the project's success was a successful Comms Strategy that relied on a combination of face to face meetings, social media, posters and fliers all of which was underpinned by an investment in high quality graphic design (locally sourced).

Three pots of funding for awards were agreed. Up to £500 (no formal constitution required), £500-£5000 and £5000 - £10,000.

Drawing on a locally produced masterplan – Leith Blueprint – and cross-referencing these priorities with those in the CEC Neighbourhood Plan, broad themes for the PB exercise were agreed.

Small grants (up to £500)

Encouraging neighbourliness eg organise a social event for a vulnerable or isolated group within the community ; organise for a garden clean up, redecoration of an older person's living room ; take an elderly person out to a concert or for a meal in a restaurant ;

Medium (£501 - £5000) / Large grants £5k - £10k)

Improving the quality of our environment e.g. improving the quality of local green spaces; tackling littering and flytipping, dog fouling ; enhancing the quality of public spaces through creativity.

Celebrating our cultural and artistic livese.g. putting on an arts or cultural activity or event; raising awareness of your group's cultural activities; supporting cultural integration across Leith ;

Making connections across Leith e.g. reaching out to those who may be socially or physically isolated in the community ; increasing understanding and cooperation between different sections of the community

Creating a healthier community eg organising an activity which improves the health & well-being for any section of the community, activities aimed at reducing levels of anti-social behaviour, developing new skills, building levels of confidence etc

2.2 Please include a list of names of any partnership working with key stakeholders.

City of Edinburgh Council

Leith Central Community Council and Leith Harbour & Newhaven Community Council

These three stakeholder groups and ourselves formed a Project Steering Group which had effective oversight of the work and was where all key strategic decisions were taken. Tasks were delegated to sub –groups and individuals during the course of planning and delivery of the project.

2.3 Did any of the above stakeholders provide funding and if so how much? Also indicate any significant in-kind resource offered.

A key aspect of the project design was to shift from the previously Council led PB exercise (which had been the case for the preceding 6 years) to one which was bottom up and community led. To this end, the Community Choices application alluded to a proposed negotiation with CEC that would hopefully conclude with an agreement that the resources it had previously committed to Leith Decides PB project would be conflated with this larger and ultimately more ambitious exercise. This agreement was reached and £44k of CEC Community Grants money was added to the pot. CEC also committed very significant in-kind staff resources to support the process both in the planning and delivery of the project.

The other Community Councils contributed significant volunteer effort to the Steering Group meetings and in the period leading up to the event.

2.4 Please provide a summary of the level of participation and buy-in from the local community. For example who participated, what was the level of diversity amongst applicants and participants. Please provide a summary of the views of participants on the process.

72 applications were received across the three pots, 5 of which were ultimately withdrawn or disallowed for various reasons, leaving 67 valid applications going forward. This is a much higher number than in any previous years.

On the day of the vote, over 1000 people came to Leith Community Centre to learn about the projects on offer, and to vote. The eligibility criteria to vote was that a person had to be over 8 years old and live, work or study within the geographic area of ‘Greater Leith’. The estimated population of Leith is 26,000 (in 2013), so that indicates very roughly, a participation level of about 4% of the local population. Many children attended, both over and under voter age.

The card votes were counted later by election-trained CEC staff. The total number of votes cast (8,174) indicated that the number of votes received was less than the total possible (each voter could have voted for 12 projects in all), indicating that some registered voters either failed to vote at all, ran out of time or energy, chose only to vote for one or two ‘pet’ projects, misunderstood the system, or for some other unknown reason voted for fewer than they were allowed.

Online voting (using the Participare platform) attracted 3,000 votes (representing, very approximately, 11.5% of the local population), of which, disappointingly only 2,339 were valid. This suggests that the online voting process may need improvement.

Inclusion

Efforts were made to ensure the whole process was as inclusive as possible. In the early stages, organisers contacted and visited locations around the community to help people to put together applications. Later, at the voting stage, in order to support hard to reach groups who might not typically come to the local community centre or manage to vote online by themselves, members of the organising team made visits to groups to encourage and support digital participation. This support was open to all, but the process relied on groups making contact to ask for help.

Diversity

While there was a high level of diversity in terms of participants (project applicants, and registered voters (on the day)) there remains a major problem that BME groups do not attract sufficient votes to be successful in winning any cash. Whether this is because they are small groups, and often with hard to reach service users, who cannot easily activate a large 'constituency' of voters or whether it is directly related to issues surrounding ethnicity is unclear.

There is no useful or representative equalities data available in numerical form about the voters on the day. Forms were given out, but filling out equalities forms does not seem to appeal to people and few were returned.

We do not have data that allows us to analyse the diversity of online voters because CEC regulations made it impossible for us to collect and store personal data

2.5 What support was provided e.g. childcare, travel costs, translators, hearing loops, accessibility.

Support was offered before and after the event to help prospective applicants. The Community Centre is fully accessible. The event coincided with the 'Beast from East' cold snap and serious consideration was given as to whether the event should proceed at all, or whether too many people would be dissuaded from attending because of the weather conditions. It transpired that the community relished the opportunity to get out of their houses and engage with the process, with higher numbers attending than ever before (e.g. at earlier Leith Decides events). Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that the poor weather did reduce access significantly. It prevented two applicant groups from attending at all, and reduced the scale of the contribution of others groups (who couldn't access office to get materials, or team members unable to attend etc.). It also no doubt affected numerous individuals, presumably older and disabled people amongst them. This issue was flagged up in evaluation feedback.

Support with childcare was not offered, specifically, but the voting day was a highly child-friendly event, and free face-painting and balloon modelling provided, to entertain younger children. Free refreshments were also provided, throughout the day.

2.6 Please provide information about any national support received from PB Partners, the Scottish Community Development Centre or the Democratic Society (digital tools).

Both SCDC and Dem Soc were very supportive throughout. A member of SCDC staff attended the day and ran an onsite evaluation process. DemSoc in particular was vital to the successful achievement of the voting process, providing both advice and significant practical / technical support with voting software.

2.7 Did the project include any form of evaluation? If so please describe it briefly and include it as an attachment and provide a contact person.

An evaluation of how participants had enjoyed/experienced the voting day was carried out as people exited the community centre. This was overwhelmingly positive!



MSP Ben MacPherson places his evaluation sticker

Subsequently a survey evaluation exercise has been carried out to gauge the views of applicants and voters. Two online surveys (Survey Monkey) have been carried out - one for project applicants (sent out by direct email) and one for the general public (sent out via social media). The data from these evaluations has yet to be analysed.

Applicants and any interested local people were invited to a face to face feedback discussion session in mid May but only small numbers chose to attend (though those few were helpful and enthusiastic contributors).

A further face to face meeting has been held between members of the Steering Group representatives from project applicants from the BME community (who had also previously sent in written feedback). This was to gather their feedback and have an in-depth discussion of the experiences of these groups. In spite of the fact that members of the BME community participated actively, with several project applications put forward, none of these small groups received sufficient votes to win any award. They feel that this takes them backwards (as they used to regularly receive funding through the CEC Community Grants Panel) and makes the whole PB experience a largely negative one as it underlines a perceived failure of community integration.

These discussions have yet to be reported back to the Steering Group for further reflection, but will definitely be followed up. The situation of small and BME groups consistently losing out in PB exercises is an important issue that needs to be addressed with some potentially radical changes to the PB model used.

2.8 How will the successful projects be monitored? e.g. What difference will the funded projects make to communities or citizens, and how will you know?

Monitoring

As stated above, early evaluative feedback on the applicant’s experience of the process is sought.

Subsequently, each successful applicant signs an acceptance of grant letter in which they agree to a six monthly informal contact from LLCC to keep abreast of progress and a 12 month report to formally report on progress achieved and impact made.

Section Three – Project Data

3.1 Please provide the following information. If more than one voting event is held for the project, please include all dates with total for each column (where applicable). Please indicate clearly the number of people who voted digitally as well as, or instead of, manual voting.

Event Date	Total Applications Received	Applications put forward for voting	Total applied for (£)	Number at Event/s	Number of people voted	Number of Successful applications	Total for projects (£)
3.3.18	(17 small, 28 medium, 27 large)	40 (15 small, 27 medium 25 large)	£82,800 (CEC £44,000 Community Grants +	1,015	963 in person (manually) + 3,000 valid online votes (+ a significant	17 (+ two partially funded) (28 + three partially funded including	£74,000 (£44,000 from CEC)

			<i>staff time + some venue costs)</i>		number of unsuccessful online votes noted)	<i>CEC figures)</i>	
Total:	72	67	£126,800	1015	4,000+		£118,000

	No of staff involved	No of volunteers to help staff	What format was used e.g. presentation/discussion/stall	Event Location and Postcode
	No members of Leith Links Community Council (or our sister councils) are paid. <i>(CEC – 1FTE + 7staff contributed time over the course of the project)</i>	30+	stalls	Leith Community Centre, EH6 6AD
Total:	<i>1 fte</i>	30		

Please use this space to provide any points of clarification relating to the above data

Section Four – Sustainability

4.1 Please provide details of any engagement with the PB Scotland website. For example have any pictures or information been uploaded (if so include link), joined the PB Network or populated the PB Scotland map.

A [collage of photographs](#) of participants was uploaded to the PB Scotland website. Members of the Steering Group attended the most recent National Conference and presented on the early progress of this project.

4.2 Please provide information about any opportunities to attend events to share your knowledge, expertise and good practice or any plans to do so in the future. [Particularly for local authorities who are aiming to reach the target of having at least 1% of budgets subject to community choices by 2020/21].

LLCC will be contributing to the DTAS annual conference in September at a workshop session focused on PB.

4.3 Please provide contact details for individuals willing to speak to other groups about their community choices experience. This could be local, regional or national.

[Sally Millar](#) (Leith Links Community Council), [Angus Hardie](#) (Leith Links Community Council), [Don Giles](#) (Leith Harbour & Newhaven Community Council), [Caroline Lamond](#) (City of Edinburgh Council)

Local/Regional/National/**All** (please highlight)

4.4 Please outline any plans you have to continue involving local citizens and local groups in decision making processes as a result of the community choices project.

The process of organising and running Leith Chooses has generated significant momentum and enthusiasm for closer collaboration both between the Community Councils of Leith and between the CCs and the Council. For instance, with the advent of the proposal for the tram extension down through Leith to Newhaven, the three CCs of Leith and one other neighbouring CC have agreed to work together under the auspices of a joint action group.

Discussions are ongoing as to the nature of the next iteration of the PB journey in Leith. There is a view that we now have enough experience and understanding of the issues to be ready to take a long hard look at the process as implemented to date, in Leith, and to take some hard decisions about whether it can continue with a few 'tweaks' or whether more radical reform may be indicated.

Section Five – Additional Information

5.1 Please use this space to provide any further feedback not covered in the above section

The biggest and as yet unresolved question for the organisers is how to convert all this activity into some form that gets closer to the mainstream budgets.

In the background, there are numerous concerns:

Do community volunteers and local authorities have enough capacity to sustain this form of activity? PB is an extremely time-consuming and labour intensive exercise that needs to roll on an ongoing basis throughout the year, every year, not just for a couple of months of peak activity. Investment in top quality IT development work and technical support is needed.

Has any system of online voting (in PB, in Scotland) yet achieved a satisfactory level of user-friendliness, efficiency and security?

In PB, how can equality be achieved for small groups and minorities, such as BME communities, within larger communities?

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