

Leith Chooses meeting 17 April 2024

Present: Jack, Douglas, Bruce (minutes), Abi, Susan, Tremaine

Apologies: Jade, Sally

1 Transient visitors levy (TVL) and PB

- In a CEC meeting about how to allocate TVL funds, a CEC official stated that a 'LeithChooses board member' had said that it would be **unsuitable(?) / unworkable(?)** for PB to be used to allocate TVL funds.
 - Action: Susan to ascertain who this 'board member' was, and generally combat such misinformation.

2 Self-assessment of LC using the PB charter.

- Thanks to Sally, Jack and Abi for actually completing the spreadsheet. Those present discussed and allocated scores for each line of 'key features' 1 to 4, taking into account Sally's responses.
 - Currently, LC is at 13 out of a currently possible 16.5, i.e. 79%, so there is room for improvement.
 - Action: steering group to complete this collective assessment for the other key features.
 - Implicit action: steering group to look for ways to do better.
 - Action: from 'participatory' row 1, Bruce to add an invitation for people to join the steering group to LC's website.
- Here are the results so far:

Key features and descriptions	Value for each description	Reasons for value
Fair and inclusive		
The PB process meets all requirements in terms of accessibility.	Partially	difficulties reaching people - could we do targeted outreach?
Within a PB process everyone has a vote.	Yes	obviously true for LC
People who have experienced inequality are involved in designing PB processes.	Partially	SG could be much more representative, but does engage with ELREC etc. SG should seek to outreach more
The outcomes of a PB process help to reduce inequalities.	Yes	we are reducing (boost vote etc), but can never eliminate inequalities under current circumstances. Projects are often about social capital and camaraderie/joined-upness from public vote. NB EQUITY rather than equality 😊
Participatory		
Communities have an opportunity to help shape the PB process from the start.	Yes	opportunities are there - slight concern that steering group could be wider. Could put something on website
Priorities for the PB process are decided by communities.	Yes	We seek input on themes, also got input on themes from community conversation. Varied themes help reach different types of inequality.
Different and diverse communities discuss the issues and vote on priorities.	Partially	LC works on voting, but there is lack of deliberation in advance of that
A range of PB methods and events are used to make sure that different groups in the community can get involved.	Yes	but room for improvement
People from the communities involved say they are satisfied with the process and the outcomes.	Yes	the feedback we have is generally very positive
Training and support is available to help people be involved in planning and delivering the PB process.	Yes	Steering group members and CEC have set up visits and sessions for potential applicants, and a guide is available for voters.

The PB process is promoted widely and in a variety of ways to encourage people to take part.	Yes	within resources available! Lamppost wraps, social media etc is there. However weakness identified is it only springs up once a year. Work is underway to boost engagement all year round such as graphics showing the result of previous winners.
Deliberative		
The information people need to make informed choices is available and accessible at all points in the PB process.	Yes	but we could do more (e.g. translations), and rely on other orgs to spread the word. Could orgs report back how they reached out?
People involved report increased knowledge about the issues affecting groups and individuals in their own communities and other communities.	Not yet known	the voting day enables such discussions, but we only have anecdotal evidence
Methods are used which allow people to express their views and which encourage discussion.	Not our problem	It would be improper for us to encourage discussion of the pros and cons of each applicant. However we do give each applicant equal space to advertise their idea.
Ideas, priorities and the choices made about how money is spent are reached through public discussions and informed by wide-ranging views.	Not our problem	if we assume that CCs support such discussions. However secret ballot.
Empowering		
Communities decide how money is spent.	Yes	obviously true for LC
People feel they have more control over the issues that affect them.	Not yet known	We don't yet know what people feel.
Decisions taken through a PB process lead to improved outcomes and services.	Not yet known	LC has always been about things extra to what CEC does, but we don't know whether LC-funded trial projects are then made permanent. (We only fund 'seed' projects.) We can ask more questions
More people are involved in wider democratic processes.	Yes	obviously true for LC
More people become involved in community organisations and activities.	Partially	Anecdotally yes. (We lack hard evidence apart from vote-data.) A benefit of the voting day itself is organisations actually linking together and organisations being able to advertise what they do to members of the public, but we could ask more questions