

Leith Chooses meeting 16 April 2025

Present: Bruce (Minutes), Don, Jack, Naomi, Sally, Abby (online), Susan (online)

Apologies: Tremaine

Definite actions are green-highlighted.

1 Boost Vote Discussion

Background and Questions

If changes are needed to the overall LC process, we have very little 'room for manoeuvre' as we are bound by CEC CGF rules and conditions (for the moment – changes MAY be possible to those in the longer term...?)

The only area we may have the freedom to make alterations is within the Boost Vote.

We don't particularly like 'engineering' the process – against the spirit of PB – but introducing the Boost Vote (in 2018?) was itself a major act of engineering (albeit recognised as much needed). The eligibility conditions were tweaked in 2019 to be 'tighter'.

How is the Boost Vote in itself working? Is change needed? What concerns?

- Not every boosted minority ethnic group has won, or won every time, so it all seemed quite balanced at first, but more recently fewer minority ethnic groups have applied (so less 'internal competition'), and the same few are winning regularly, every year.
- Are (these? or all?) boosted groups now **overly** advantaged?
- Is this an optics issue or is it real? (probably real) Is it just the Steering Group that is concerned about this (yes, probably) or have there been indications that wider community feels this? (nothing that has been said publicly)
- We should analyse more closely and consider which boosted groups consistently won, number of wins as %age of entries. **Bruce to do what-if calculations. How many would have won anyway without the boost vote?**
- Noted that the number of minority ethnic groups applying is a small percentage of the number of ethnic groups in Leith that don't apply (e.g. Shakti, Saheliya, even Sikh Sanjog and Feniks seem to have stopped applying (so have MILAN - moved out of the area). Several other groups that do apply are very diverse and inclusive, but don't apply /qualify for Boost Vote (e.g. Dr. Bells, YMCA etc. (- because their management is not ethnic minority?))_
- Noted that the majority of the groups that are winning regularly have a remit much wider than Leith (but they are eligible because operating projects in Leith).
- Noted that the pattern of applicants overall has been shifting – e.g. fewer applications and fewer 'wins' by schools in the past few years (whereas they used to 'sweep the board' regularly).
- Noted that the drive to encourage 'partnerships' between Boost and non Boost group (or any groups) doesn't seem to be working (but probably various reasons for this, lack of capacity etc.)
- Noted that big changes might result from upcoming stakeholder focus groups* – changes will be put to CEC committees. Concern about perhaps introducing new changes to /LC just when other changes may be imposed upon it by CEC. For example, disallowing applications from groups that won the previous year?
- Concern also that these * might omit LC/PB (See 2, below)_

1.1 Boost vote suggestions What changes might be possible?

- Can we bring another type of organisation (e.g. those who haven't applied before or haven't won before) into the boost, potentially reweighting boost votes?
- Whatever new process we propose, it must be very simple for voters and for vote-counters (no complicated maths/ percentages etc. One card = One vote)
- It's conceptually simple for the community to understand need to boost ethnic minorities. It's not so simple to understand the 'not applied' or 'not won before' boost.
- Boosting 'Not applied before' groups might be easier to understand. Boosting groups that have applied before but not won (possibly multiple times) could be problematical – community has already shown it does not want to vote for these...?)
- Maybe ask community earlier in the process where they think the gaps are in provision and therefore what boost-categories they'd want?
- Could have a different boost category each year (based on gaps identified by community?)
- Could use a much narrower and more specific theme each year?

1.2 **Improvement steps that could be taken without any fundamental changes to the overall process**

- Could badge each project summary in the gallery/voting mechanism with ‘new / first time applicant’ or ‘won in 2025,2024, 2022 ’ or similar.
- Could put in guidance notes, application form and correspondence with applicants ‘this must be a clearly brand-new project for your organisation’ (to try to discourage the ‘more of the same’ drift that has set in with some groups)
- Could we do more comms to net new applicants?

2.0 **Community Engagement and Empowerment / Community Grant Fund**

- Some confusion arising from the recent survey and call for focus group members for CGF Panels. Naomi confirmed that LC is included in all this (though some items sent to LC are different, eg. survey)
- Naomi to seek - and pass on - clarity about which emails are intended for LC steering group.
- All steering group members to apply to take part in focus groups, as individuals, via <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=-U4qSORmdk6fJG2gmnE-1KkKMqMF94IPs-LDffBgjppUQUxRNFRMVzI3N1IBTjIHR04yMks2RVVKOS4u&route=shorturl>
- Individuals will be selected, probably only one or two from the same area or interest group.(Not just for localities, SG and Panels, but focus groups will include applicants , and other interested parties.) Concern that if only one LC rep is included, they will automatically be in a minority of 1 against potentially numerous others who are against PB – is this a level playing field?
- LC Steering Group should write a collective position paper / statement that their 1 Rep can present.
- Noted that the TVL money is being directed through CGF and earmarked for PB - but people on ground haven’t been consulted, and many areas / CCs don’t like PB.
- Susan meeting next week with Paul Lawrence re TVL. Susan to request briefing on CEC and TVL ‘3% commitment to PB’ from officers.
- What consultation has been done about PB and CGF? Susan to ascertain, and look for any relevant report.
- There was a survey last year on CGF – asked panel members. (We didn’t get it) ND to circulate the report on this survey (dated August 2024). Report on TVL doesn’t specify CGF is the route for PB cash.
- Jack, Naomi, Tremaine to look into why this process was set up, and areas of apparent disconnect.