

Leith Chooses meeting 11 June 2025

Present: Abby, Bruce (minutes), Don, Douglas, Naomi, Sally, Susan, Tremaine, Andrew Field (CEC community empowerment and engagement), Jason Ran (Leith Harbour & Newhaven Community Council)

Apologies: Jack

Definite actions are green-highlighted.

1 Boost vote

- Sally explained principle of ‘people decide’, and how we realised that ‘ethnic groups’ were missing out due to being minorities. Hence we set up the boost vote in ~2017.
 - **Action: Bruce to share Jason’s email address with the group.**

2 Andrew Field

- A CEC motion asked officers to explore options etc for PB as part of the transient visitor levy (TVL). This should net several £million each year.
- CEC is now advertising for a dedicated project officer. There is also a steering group being created by CEC Governance (Gavin King), on which Douglas sits.
- From <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/35707/a-visitor-levy-for-edinburgh-draft-scheme>,
 - *After administration and contingency costs, a fixed annual amount will be assigned to:*
 - *Housing and tourism mitigation; and*
 - *Participatory budgeting.*
 - *The remaining funds will then be split into the following investment streams:*
 - *City Operations and Infrastructure (55%);*
 - *Culture, Heritage and Events (35%); and*
 - *Destination Management (10%).*
- Susan now has a role in CEC’s Economy folio, which TVL will sit under.
- Overall, it is ‘very likely’ (according to Andrew) that some of the TVL revenue will be disbursed via PB.

2.1 Community Grants Fund

- Andrew/CGF has been asked to explore how PB can be spread beyond Leith. So it will engage with existing CGF panels to ascertain interest.
 - **Andrew’s report on this will also argue for more resource** – see below. This is likely to go to the December C&C committee.
 - Andrew acknowledged that PB has costs, especially if it wants to be a successful community/democratic operation.
 - It was suggested that EACC could be asked whether CCs support PB, e.g. when Andrew speaks at a forthcoming EACC meeting.
 - It was noted that some CC/EACC members have been vehemently against PB.
- The overall CGF budget to be disbursed is £406,000 – this is unchanged since last year.
 - Andrew guarantees LC will get its allocation of CGF funding
 - But there is no extra resource for Andrew’s staff, so AF has to rethink/streamline staffing it offers to LC, and their activities.
 - It was pointed out that CEC/CGF has taken over more and more of the work. LC values this, but is wary about this support being taken away. Andrew/CGF is responsible for allocation of this bit of public money.
 - There may be a window for delegation of dealing with personal data. CEC would still take on much of the vetting and award process.
 - While it might be simpler for Andrew and a couple of staff make all decisions, Andrew and all of the steering group fully recognise this would not be democratic.
 - There was discussion of whether/when CEC staff need to attend LC meetings, and that CEC staff have been through a full year so know when the demands on their time are likely to be.
 - **Action: Andrew to write to LC about the staffing/resource.**
 - CEC can’t delegate running the consultation hub voting instance. LC is trying to get Consul into use but it won’t be ready for this cycle.
- LC’s opinion is that PB is not just about money: it’s also very much about community engagement. Edinburgh/CEC needs to put more into PB to avoid democratic deficit. (Andrew concurred – hence his first action in this section.)

- LC wishes the allocation to be based on the latest available (2021 census) population figures. So does Andrew/CGF, and this was approved by CEC.
 - Action: Naomi to share report with relevant population figures.
 - There was a brief discussion of whether LC folk could usefully talk to other CGF panel members.
- We don't yet know how the TVL revenue will be allocated via PB. CGF and TVL are completely separate.
- There was discussion of potential other sources of funding.
- CEC's direction of travel appears to be enhancing of PB.

3 Other

- CGF now has a way to cover volunteers' expenses.