



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY CHOICES

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To set out for Council Executive proposals on participatory budgeting, which is being developed under the heading West Lothian Community Choices.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the one percent target for West Lothian using the Community Choices Framework;
2. Agrees that the Scheme of Delegation should be updated to include responsibility for administering West Lothian Community Choices within the delegation for the Head of Finance and Property Services
3. Agrees that Community Choices should apply to the identified budgets as set out in sections D.3 and D.4 of the report;
4. Agrees that, following the development and design of the Community Choices approach, a report will be presented to the relevant PDSP for the service area to provide scrutiny and feedback on the proposed approach;
5. Agrees that an update report should be presented to the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP) in April 2020, with a further report presented to Council Executive in October 2020, highlighting areas of learning and best practice from the West Lothian Community Choices processes;

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, providing equality of opportunity, developing employees, making the best use of our resources, working with other organisations.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment.	The council is required to have transparent planning and governance. COSLA and the Scottish Government have agreed a Community Choices Framework, with targets that councils are required to meet.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	It is proposed to update the scheme of Delegation to include administration of Community Choices within the delegations for the Head of Finance and Property Services.
IV	Impact on performance and performance indicators	None at this stage.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Effective planning and prioritisation of resources will be essential to identify and achieve outcomes.

VI	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Potential budgets for West Lothian Community Choices have been identified and set out in sections D.3 and D.4.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Community Choices options were considered by Partnership and Resources PDSP on 19 January 2018
VIII	Other consultations	Meetings were held with Heads of Service to help identify potential budgets / services for community choices. An officer Community Choices working group has been established and has service representatives from across the council to review and develop the approach to Community Choices.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is usually referred to as 'Community Choices' in Scotland, and is a democratic process which empowers communities to have more say on how resources in their area are used. It is based on the view that communities (which can be a community of interest, a community of identity or community based on place) are best placed to be involved in or make decisions around their own needs. A report was presented to Partnership and Resources PDSP in January 2018 providing information on the joint COSLA / Scottish Government Community Choices Framework to deliver a target of having at least 1% of council budgets being subject to Community Choices by 2020/21. The report also covered West Lothian Community Choices and provided an outline for an approach in West Lothian. Following feedback from PDSP, West Lothian Community Choices was included within the general fund revenue and capital budget reports and the HRA capital budget report presented to Council in February 2018. Approval was given for a number of budget areas to be reviewed and for an update report to be presented to Council Executive in due course.

COSLA and the Scottish Government agreed a Community Choices framework, including the calculation and application of a 1% target. The framework was approved by COSLA Leaders in October 2017 and provides local authorities with discretion on how to achieve the 1% target. The framework allows each local authority to decide what is allocated to the local decision making process, capital or revenue budgets, the services and the budget themes. The 1% target is calculated as follows:

1% target = total estimated expenditure for revenue* - assumed council tax intake

*as per the local government finance circular

Whilst this is the basis of calculating individual targets, the Community Choices target is not about identifying separate and/or additional resources. It is about involving communities in decisions on allocation of current resources. The 1% target is to be achieved by the end of March 2021 with reporting to the Scottish Government being similar to the approach undertaken for the annual efficiency statements. The detailed framework is attached to this report in appendix 1 for information. A Charter for Participatory Budgeting in Scotland was launched in August 2019. The charter sets out seven key features demonstrating a fair and quality PB process, these are:

- Fair and inclusive
- Participatory
- Deliberative
- Empowering
- Creative and flexible
- Transparent
- Part of our democracy

The charter was developed in partnership by local authorities, COSLA the Scottish Government and the Community Development Centre. The charter is to assist in the development of PB processes and will be utilised in the development of Community Choices approaches in West Lothian.

D.3 Mainstream Community Choices in West Lothian

As a base for the calculation of the 1% target for West Lothian, the 2019/20 local government finance settlement has been used. Based on the calculation shown above, the West Lothian 1% target is:

$$1\% \text{ target} = £389.703\text{m} - £63.745\text{m} * 1\% = £3.260 \text{ million}$$

It is therefore assumed that the target to be achieved is £3.3 million. Proposals to achieve the target are set out for consideration below.

West Lothian Council already undertakes a number of consultation and engagement exercises with communities in West Lothian, this includes budget consultations, Place Based approaches to the implementation of Open Space capital projects, engaging with communities on the development of regeneration plans and liaising with housing tenants on approach to the rent strategy. The processes and practices that are already in place will help in the development of the approach to Community Choices in West Lothian, as the Community Choices process can be seen as enhancing existing practices and deepening and expanding existing conversations with communities.

A co-ordinated approach to developing Community Choices in West Lothian will link in with other strategic developments, to allow resources to be efficiently utilised. The aim is to maximise the positive impact on communities and service providers.

A Community Choices working group chaired by the Head of Finance and Property Services has reviewed service budgets and considered potential Community Choices approaches, as well as the timing of the process.

The service representatives are the Community Choices champion for their service area. Following approval for their particular service budget to be subject to Community Choices, the champion will then create a sub group with relevant staff, third sector representatives, service users and stakeholders as appropriate to develop the approach, consider application criteria and the engagement and voting processes. Following the development and design of the approach it is proposed that this is presented to the relevant PDSP for the service area to allow elected members to provide scrutiny and feedback on the proposed process.

The Community Choices working group will support the Community Choices service representative and sub-groups, providing advice on the National Standards for Community Engagement and ensuring that the process aligns with the principles of Following the Public Pound. The support provided to the sub-groups will ensure that the community representatives, service users and stakeholders involved in the sub-groups are fully aware of the relevant standards and principles and will ensure that value for money is achieved. The working group will undertake research and liaise with other local authorities to gain further learning and knowledge on Community Choices processes to ensure that the best and most practicable approaches are undertaken.

It is proposed that the budgets set out in sections D.3 and D.4 are approved for Community Choices in West Lothian and that officers develop detailed approaches for each budget which will be reported to relevant PDSPs for consideration.

D.3.1 Community Choices Proposals for the General Fund Revenue Budgets

Education – Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) - £167,000

The PEF national guidance for 2019 sets out information on how PB can be used as an innovative and effective mechanism to engage with parents and pupils, in particular those who face barriers to participation. With the national guidance encouraging the use of Community Choices as part of the process for the allocation of PEF monies. In 2018/19 five schools piloted Community Choices methods to allocate a total of £25,000. In 2019/20 all schools are being supported to allocate at least 3% of their PEF budget via Community Choices processes, with £167,268 being identified and allocated to Community Choices methods in 2019/20.

The test of change process was developed during 2018/19 and this has been provided to all schools to support the development of Community Choices. Schools can follow this or design their own process, however the test of change process is outlined below:

1. Schools host an Assembly to introduce Community Choices to the pupils involved – Bathgate Academy produced a ten minute video for schools to show pupils at the launch of the hidden Cost of the School day. The pupils would then be asked to look at the reflective questions and calculate costs linked to the different groupings. Then in groups they would put together an idea on how to spend the monies allocated to help alleviate these costs.
2. Schools host an event with pupils and parents where the pupils present their ideas to families and they vote on the idea they like best. They could host this at a parents evening. They could have a stall with the different ideas or the pupils could present them to the parents. They would need a system i.e. counters to collect the votes.
3. Some ideas may not have a cost it may mean removing existing costs i.e. entry to school events or looking at alternatives i.e. high school panto instead of using an external company. Some ideas will be linked to changing the culture of the school.
4. The school implement the ideas with the most votes using PEF monies to purchase resources.
5. Communicate the outcome with the rest of the school staff and the parent council.

At this time, it is assumed that PEF monies will continue to be provided by the Scottish Government and that Community Choices will continue to form part of the allocation process. Feedback from the 2019/20 process will be considered and a 2020/21 PB allocation will be discussed with all schools, for the basis of discussion a 3% allocation has been assumed.

Head Teachers have the authority to decide on the allocation of PEF monies for their school, with Head Teachers confirming that £167,268 of PEF in 2019/20 has been allocated to Community Choices. The process of Community Choices will continue to be undertaken individually by each school.

Social Policy – Children and Families £878,000

New models of accommodation and support for service users post 16 years of age have been identified as a suitable for Community Choices. A public social partnership approach has started within Social Policy with the appropriate voluntary sector organisations and council officers, with feedback being received from the voluntary sector to include service users from the start of the design process to support young people coming out of the looked after children process. The aim is to increase engagement with service users in designing suitable accommodation and support models empowering service users in participating in and developing new models for accommodation and support post 16 years of age or when ready to leave local authority care.

The Community Choices approach would be through engagement with a community of interest, which will be made up from current and previous service users as well as young people who are currently in care and may benefit from new models of delivery.

The young people will be involved in the full process including idea generation, designing the Community Choices process as well as being part of the bidding process. Consideration will be given to the type of engagement and voting process to ensure that the process is fair and inclusive, and could therefore be a mix of digital and face to face engagement, deliberation and decision making. The Community Choices process would commence during 2019/20 and would be undertaken every three years are part of the contractual process.

The award of Social Policy contracts is delegated to the Head of Social Policy who seeks advice from the Social Policy Contracts Advisory Group (CAG); therefore the design and award of contracts, following the Community Choices process, would require formal approval from the Head of Social Policy via the CAG.

Operational Services – Grounds Maintenance - £1.593 million

The council introduced new service standards for grounds maintenance on 1 April 2019 and the council has set out its priorities within these services standards. There is an opportunity to engage with stakeholders going forward, to enable members of the community to influence the service. The NETs, Land and Countryside budget totals £6.353 million in 2019/20, and it has been identified that there would be benefit in engaging with the public regarding the allocation of resources for an element of this budget for activities related to parks and woodland management and parks and open spaces. A key message and part of the Community Choices process will be to manage expectations by being open and transparent that there is a fixed level of budget but that, by listening to communities, the service could be potentially delivered with different priorities and outcomes. For example localities could decide to reduce grounds maintenance in certain underutilised park areas and redirect resources to the maintenance of entrance corridors (grass verges) into the locality.

As set out in appendix 2, this approach has been undertaken in North Ayrshire and has incorporated green health initiatives. Feedback from COSLA suggests that a number of local authorities are looking to use the grounds maintenance budget for mainstream Community Choices. A potential benefit of the Community Choices process could be to raise the number of volunteers involved in grounds maintenance and green health initiatives by raising public awareness and increasing community engagement in local areas.

The process would commence early in 2020 and would be undertaken on a phased ward by ward basis, which will allow for more detailed conversations to be held with communities to better meet the priorities of each ward and to direct resources to ensure that community needs were being achieved. Carrying out the process on a phased ward by ward basis would also acknowledge the different priorities and diversity of the wards to better meet the needs of the local area, with the potential that the wards could identify slightly different priorities and changes to the grounds maintenance needs in the ward area.

An internal working group would be established to ensure that all staff are engaged in the process. The budget would be allocated on a locality/ward basis and it would be proposed to hold a number of open sessions in community buildings at different times of the day to engage with local communities face to face. Staff would also attend Community council meetings and a digital questionnaire/engagement platform will be developed to engage with the wider community. The outcome of the Community Choices determinative process would be reported to Council Executive for formal approval.

Operational Services – Litter Bins - £300,000

The litter bin budget of £300,000 is for provision and servicing of litter bins. Presently the installation and provision of public litter bins throughout West Lothian is based on a demand driven service. This has led to a provision of bins that may not always be the most effective in dealing with the issue of littering. It is proposed that a review of all existing litter bins is undertaken to ensure that the type, size and location of our existing litter bins meets community needs and bins meet the criteria set out in the proposed Litter Bin Plan that will be presented to the Council Executive for approval in February 2020. All communities will be consulted on the review of litter bins.

Similar to the grounds maintenance approach, an internal steering group would be established and it would be proposed to hold a number of open sessions in community buildings at different times of the day to engage with local communities face to face. Staff would also attend Community council meetings and a digital questionnaire/engagement platform will be developed to engage with the wider community. The outcome of the Community Choices determinative process would be reported to Council Executive for formal approval. This process would be one-off until there was a requirement to review the Litter Bin Plan.

Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration - Voluntary Organisations Grants Budget £150,000

As part of the approval of the 2019/20 voluntary organisation budget by the Council Executive in October 2018, it was agreed that a pilot of £75,000 would be disbursed via Community Choices.

In addition to this a £200,000 time limited fund has been approved by Council Executive in September 2019 to support voluntary organisations to modernise their operations and support capacity building.

It is proposed that an additional £75,000 pilot is undertaken in 2020/21. The two £75,000 Community Choices pilots will be developed with Voluntary Organisations to test outcomes and engagement methods, with the second pilot being developed based on the learning from 2019/20. It should be noted that an officer potential savings option for a £75,000 budget saving for the voluntary organisation grants budget, which was reported to PDSP in September 2019, relates to 2021/22 and would have no impact on the proposals set out in this paper.

The outcome, evaluation and learning from the 2019/20 pilot will be reported to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP and Council Executive during 2020 to assist in developing the 2020/21 pilot. The two pilots will be used to maximise the potential learning for the use of Community Choices in the context of Voluntary Organisation grants, as well as facilitating the learning for all of the Community Choices processes proposed within the paper and the ongoing development of Community Choices processes.

As set out in the section above, it is proposed that two pilots are undertaken to build on learning within the council and to assist voluntary organisations in learning from Community Choices processes. The third sector have been involved in the design of the first pilot with the £75,000 being split into two activity streams:

- Health and Wellbeing (£50,000) – it is proposed that this will be carried out in two regeneration areas of similar population size and socio-economic characteristics: Blackburn and Craigshill, with the budget being split equally between the two localities. The scope of this stream of activity is around improving the health and wellbeing of the local community. More detailed criteria will be set based on local engagement findings carried out through the regeneration planning process. This will ensure that the money will be allocated to projects that address the needs of the community. Publicity and marketing for the community choices process will be carried out through social media, and more targeted activity at a local level; using local groups and services to help advertise the voting events. It is proposed that slightly different processes are carried out in each area to test out which methodology works best allowing future processes to gain effective learning.

- Equalities (£25,000) – it is proposed that the second activity stream will be undertaken on a West Lothian wide basis. The aim of the stream of activity will be to promote equalities in West Lothian, inviting projects that help empower local communities to promote inclusion and have a positive impact on equalities. Projects should demonstrate that they have a particular focus on groups defined by the Equality Act 2010; For example, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief. Groups and organisations will be invited to apply according to set criteria. Marketing and advertising will be carried out online, using the council and partner's websites and social media platforms to encourage involvement across the county. Targeted marketing will be carried out through equality groups, and third sector groups with an equalities focus. This pilot will be a digital only voting approach with no voting event. It is anticipated that this would be an opportunity to pilot the online platform CONSUL currently being rolled out by COSLA and the Scottish Government, and is considered in section D.9 of this report.

D.3.2 Community Choices Proposals for the General Fund Capital Budget

Open Space Related Assets

Open Space - Play Areas £266,000 in 2020/21

Based on learning from other local authorities and other PB processes internationally, it is recognised that it is suitable to utilise tangible budgets for community choices to allow the public to recognise and understand the process. Currently the planning and upgrading of play areas across West Lothian is done using a place making consultation tool. There is an opportunity to enhance this to include a more deliberative stage and therefore be allocated via community choices, without having to completely change processes or officer involvement. It is proposed that the future planned investment in play areas is undertaken using community choices. The play areas budget was approved by Council in February 2019 and is approximately £225,000 per annum and is reviewed each year as part of the budget roll forward process. The Community Choices process would be undertaken as part of the planning process for the allocation of the capital budget in line with the review of play area assets.

The operational implementation of the play areas budget is delegated to the Open Space Asset Lead Officer and the outcome of the Community Choices process would be approved by the lead officer.

Open Space – Public Art £55,000 average per annum

Currently place making and public engagement is undertaken to design and award the installation of public art, which is funded via developer contributions and grants. Similar to play areas it is proposed that this process is enhanced and expanded, incorporating community involvement and community choices processes including branding for future planned works within the capital programme. The public art programme budget as approved by Council in February 2019 is approximately £55,000 per annum from 2020/21.

The implementation of the public art budget is delegated to the Open Space Asset Lead Officer and the outcome of the Community Choices process would be approved by the lead officer.

Open Space Planned Improvements £480,000 average per annum

The place making tool is currently used by officers to engage/consult with communities on planned improvement projects. This process could be enhanced to include greater deliberation and decision making and it is therefore proposed that this budget is allocated via Community Choices. As approved by Council in February 2019 the planned improvement budget is approximately £480,000 per annum, and is reviewed each year as part of the budget roll forward process.

The implementation of the open space planned improvement budget is delegated to the Open Space Asset Lead Officer and the outcome of the Community Choices process would be approved by the lead officer.

D.3.3 Community Choices Proposals for Housing Revenue Account – Capital Budget

Tenants Environmental Improvement Project £150,000

HRA currently engage residents for ideas for projects that will improve areas within council housing estates. Initial discussions have been held with the Tenants Panel with encouraging feedback received.

The budget is an annual capital budget and was approved by Council in February 2019 as being £150,000 per annum for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. This is updated via the roll-forward process to take into account slippage and overspend. The current process and uptake can vary year on year and depends on the communities and officers involved. It is recommended that the process is expanded to incorporate the community choices approach, using the existing project criteria, as below:

- Must be on land owned by Housing, Building and Customer Services
- Must improve the environment and/or security in the proposed area
- Must be for the benefit of council tenants
- Must have agreement of other council services or external agencies where maintenance is or will be their responsibility at the end of the project.

The outcome of the Community Choices process would be approved by the Depute Chief Executive.

D.4 Summary of Proposed Budgets for Community Choices

The following table provides information on the budget value, based on the current 2019/20 budget, from the proposals:

Budget Area	2019/20 Budget Value £'000
Recurring Budget	
Education – Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)	167
Social Policy – Children and Families	878
Operational Services – Grounds Maintenance	1,593
Operational Services – Litter Bins	300
Open Space - Play Areas	266
Open Space – Public Art	55
Open Space Planned Improvements	480
Tenants Environmental Improvement Project	150
Total Recurring Budget	3,889
Pilot Budget	
Voluntary Organisation Two Pilots	150
Total Pilot Budget	150
TOTAL COMMUNITY CHOICES BUDGET	4,039

The proposed approach in West Lothian will assist in the allocation of resources to meet local needs. It is proposed that the approach to Community Choices is developed by community capacity building to enable informed decisions to be made on the mainstream budgets. Based on the budgets identified in section D.4, and taking into account the complexity of some of the areas a structured approach will be adopted.

It is proposed that reports are presented to Partnership and Resources PDSP and Council Executive during 2020 providing an update on the Community Choices processes, highlighting areas of learning and best practice.

D.5 Developing Community Choices Approaches

The approach to Community Choices will be a continuous process of development, building on learning from other local authorities, evaluating the processes within West Lothian Council as well as reviewing best practice and innovative technology. The experience and learning from Community Choices will be reflected upon to ensure that West Lothian utilises best practice to enhance its relationships with communities while also focussing on using Community Choices to reduce and remove barriers to participation and equality issues.

Officers will reflect on the experience and learning from the Community Choices processes, including the voluntary organisation pilots, and consider potential future areas for Community Choices and the potential scope for the Voluntary Organisations budget. This will be done in liaison with the third sector to identify priority outcomes to be achieved and identify the relevant communities, as it could be a mix of locality and community of interest depending on the approach undertaken as well as giving consideration to the potential for budget allocation on a longer term basis (two or three year award) could be considered.

D.5.1 Digital Platform

Digital tools are a significant element to any participatory budgeting process; allowing people to submit ideas for funding; host discussion and deliberation of ideas; allocate budgets to projects or areas; and vote for ideas and projects to receive funding.

Digital tools in participatory budgeting will;

- Involve more local people in decision making;
- Publicly demonstrate collaboration and partnership work;
- Enable all areas of a community to participate by overcoming barriers of place and time;
- Help to gather evidence and data about engagement work;
- Facilitate learning of new digital skills.

A digital pilot is currently being established by COSLA using the open source platform CONSUL created by Madrid City Council. The CONSUL tool has now been proactively used with seven local authorities to trial the voting element of the site with eighteen councils testing the site to see if it meets their needs. As part of this process COSLA is also working with international partners to trial the platform to develop coding that will enable future iterations of the site to be more responsive to local needs. Madrid City Council has used the tool extensively and utilised the deliberative element of CONSUL to actively involve communities in developing and designing projects. COSLA provided a demonstration of the CONSUL platform to service representatives from across the council in September 2019. The demonstration included the full functionality of the platform, not only the PB tool but also the deliberative and consultation and engagement tools. The platform will be provided to West Lothian Council free of charge to allow the council to develop the site to investigate options to use the platform for future West Lothian Community Choices processes with initial consideration given to piloting the platform as part of the digital only Community Choices process for equalities, set out in section D.6.1 of this report.

Currently the platform has a function limitation of not being able to restrict access based on ward/locality at the same time as council geographic area. However COSLA are working with the Improvement Service to develop the functionality to utilise data/login access via my account, it is felt that if this functionality was to be developed the platform could potentially help further facilitate Community Choices in West Lothian as well as a potential standard platform for consultation and engagement. Therefore by piloting the platform the council will be working in partnership with COSLA and other local authorities as part of the discussions and development of the platform to shape it to help meet the future needs of the council.

D.5.2 Crowd Funding

Crowdfunder' operate the UK's largest rewards crowdfunding platform and have supported over 80,000 individuals, charities, businesses and community projects to raise over £60 million for projects. They operate a digital portal that supports crowdfunding campaigns and they deliver support to organisations to assist them to run campaigns.

With the support of funding in November 2018 from nine Scottish LEADER areas (Forth Valley and Lomond, Fife, Scottish Borders, Rural Perth and Kinross, Tyne Esk, West Lothian, Kelvin Valley and Falkirk, Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and Lanarkshire) Crowdfunder established the Crowdfund Scotland programme. The Crowdfund Scotland programme is funded until November 2020 to provide a digital portal and online advice and support for any Scottish based crowdfunding campaigns. The Crowdfunding Scotland portal can be used by any organisation from the private, public and third sectors.

In addition to the general portal and online support which is available to any organisation in Scotland, they also provide more intensive one to one coaching, workshops and specialist support for projects based in the nine participating LEADER areas. Crowdfund Scotland is based in Stirling, however West Lothian has a designated adviser in their team to support any West Lothian based projects.

Crowdfunder have been working in partnership with local authorities across England for a number of years to support fundraising for a range of community/cultural/environmental projects, businesses, charities and social enterprises. which is match funded using public funds. With the establishment of Crowdfund Scotland they are now working with a number of local authorities in Scotland including Aberdeen, Angus, Stirling, Falkirk and Fife, to establish local crowdfunding portals which are being used to support local projects.

Crowdfunder has approached West Lothian Council with a proposal to establish a Crowdfund West Lothian portal that could be used to support local fundraising and distribute public match funding, which could in addition contribute to participatory budgeting targets. Early investigatory work has commenced with Crowdfund to establish the potential approaches for West Lothian and the outcome of this will be reported to Council Executive once an approach has been established.

D.6 Community Choices Examples and Learning Events

Examples of Community Choices

Community Choices events are now being held all over Scotland. The PB Scotland Network website indicates that most local authorities are engaging in Community Choices, as well as the Church of Scotland, Community Development Trusts, Community Councils and other organisations. The processes to date have been mainly small grant focussed, however some councils are now piloting mainstream budget processes. Examples of some of the innovative processes being undertaken by local authorities are provided in appendix 2.

Developing Participatory Budgeting in Scotland

A number of information sharing and learning events have been attended by officers to gain knowledge and expertise from other local authorities, other organisations and from PB process contributors. A Developing Participatory Budgeting in Scotland event, scrutinised lessons learnt from previous PB experiences in Scotland, as well as considering the key priorities for mainstreaming and scaling up of PB initiatives. This included the role of PB in the context of wider policies, for example local government reform, the national performance framework and community empowerment.

The event provided information on Community Choices initiatives, insight into links with wider and national policies, insight into the Scottish Government vision and the support that COSLA is making available. Key areas of learning and feedback are:

- Co-production of Community Choices should be the aim and will allow the process to work better by “doing PB with communities not to communities”.
- Consider equality and that a community does not only mean geographic, consider communities of interest and communities of place.
- A sustainable and appropriately resourced approach to PB is vital. PB has often been based on staff, community and volunteer goodwill instead of being an integral part of the delivery.
- The process of ‘voting’ is significant and provides a link between representative and democratic democracy.
- A key part of the PB process is the deliberation stage and this has to be robust to allow for informed and considered decisions.
- PB can be used as a tool to change thinking and approaches to existing services.
- Community Empowerment and PB need to have political support to enable the process to happen effectively.
- The small grants model of Community Choices is the key building block to developing mainstream Community Choice, both for the local authority and the community.
- More deliberative processes are required and would help tackle inequalities.

E. CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council Executive approval for a number of budget areas to be developed for Community Choices to improve outcomes and ensure that the Community Choices target is achieved.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Community Choices – report to Partnership and Resources PDSP January 2018

General Fund Revenue Budget Report – report to West Lothian Council February 2018

General Fund Capital Budget Report – report to West Lothian Council February 2018

Housing Revenue Account Capital Budget Report – report to West Lothian Council February 2018

Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (PED&R) Revenue Grants Budget - 2019/20 – report to Council Executive October 2018

Participatory Budgeting Charter for Scotland – Making Good PB Happen:

<https://pbscotland.scot/charter>

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1: COSLA Community Choices Framework Agreement
Appendix 2: Examples of Community Choices

Contact Person: Ailsa MacKerrow
E mail: ailsa.mackerrrow@westlothian.gov.uk
Phone 01506 281306

Donald Forrest
Head of Finance and Property Services
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