

## **Appendix 2 – Examples of Community Choices in Scotland, including West Lothian**

### **West Lothian Council – Let's Get it Right for Autism**

Let's Get it Right for Autism was the first Community Choices project in West Lothian and aimed to improve the quality of life of individuals with Autism living in West Lothian through supporting and encouraging greater participation in social activities and opportunities. The project was led by Social Policy and the Community Planning Team, with input from staff across the council and from third sector organisations. The project was allocated a £10,000 budget from the Autism Strategy, to allow members of the public to decide on which projects or proposals they think will make the most difference to people with Autism in West Lothian. The project was promoted via the council's Facebook page and website, by third sector organisations and was emailed to all Community planning partners.

The evaluation of Let's Get it Right for Autism involved assessing the impact of the successful projects on service users, ensuring they meet the objectives set out, and identifying learning to help shape future PB processes in West Lothian. More generally, the evaluation was carried out to determine if participatory budgeting is an effective way of engaging local people and allocating resources; and whether participatory budgeting increases the extent to which local people feel they can influence decisions.

A number of evaluation themes were identified, along with key recommendations that will be taken into account when planning future PB activity;

- The project was jointly led by Community Planning and Social Policy. This proved very beneficial to the running of the project; bringing together expertise from the social policy child disability team, and community planning who are leading on the development of PB.
- The establishment of the planning group was an important element in ensuring the effective development of the project bringing together a number of services and organisations with a responsibility for or interest in individuals with Autism. This brought together a range of skills and knowledge with access to a vast range of contacts and networks.
- Consultation carried out prior to the project helped shape the scope and aims, ensuring that the project was fit for purpose and based on the needs of this particular community. The high level of response to the survey demonstrated that this was a subject that mattered to people.
- A range of bids were received which related to individuals of all ages with Autism.
- Online voting was another vital element in ensuring that we increased voting numbers and made the project as inclusive as possible. Filming of the presentations allowed them to be shown online so those who couldn't attend could base their votes on exactly the same information.

### **North Ayrshire Council**

North Ayrshire Council has undertaken a number of PB events, this has included a PB process for grounds maintenance which has now been rolled out to all localities in the authority area as well as a number of green health initiatives. North Ayrshire is seen as a front runner in their approach to PB and utilising the CONSUL platform for consultation, engagement and PB.

### **Mid Lothian Council**

Mid Lothian Council have undertaken a cost of the school day PB initiative involving seven Primary Schools. This approach was then developed and undertaken by five schools in West Lothian in 2018/19. Examples of the solutions parents and pupils generated included:

- Provision of iron on badges for school jumpers
- Access to laundered PE kits
- Subsidised homework club
- Healthy breakfast club
- Free Fruit
- Subsidised school camp, theatre, school trips

#### East Ayrshire Council

East Ayrshire Council has undertaken 18 Community Choices events across the authority area, this has initially been based on a small grants model.

#### Glasgow City Council

Glasgow City Council has undertaken 44 Community Choices events across the council area, and in partnership with PB Scotland Network, North Ayrshire Council and third sector partners a short video has been prepared titled Moving Toward the Mainstream: Participatory Budgeting in Scotland.

As part of Glasgow City Council Participatory Budgeting Programme, in April 2019 a Community Development Trust, called SWAMP, successfully hosted an event which was attended by around 3,000 young people from the Greater Pollock area to vote on how £200,000 should be spent locally. A Greater Pollock Youth Forum has now been developed to give a greater voice to young people in the area, with many of those involved empowered to become more active members of their community.

#### Dundee City Council

Dundee Decides was a £1.2 million Community Choices initiative using capital expenditure budget for expenditure in 2018/19. It was based on previously gathered information from Dundee City Councils Regeneration Planning process and the Engage Dundee consultation. The data provided the foundation for the process, ensuring that the process linked to local priorities and needs; however it did not include the initial ideas generation stage of the Community Choices process.

Dundee City Council secured funding from the Scottish Government and purchased I-Pads and voting/engagement software, which helped facilitate their initial Community Choices process but will also be used for future processes. Council officers used the previously gathered data to develop project proposals which were worth £30,000 to £50,000 each. They used a purely digital approach to the engagement and voting (no paper voting). Events were still held with staff engaging with the public across the city (for example in shopping centres, sheltered housing and schools).

Dundee City Council have embraced the Community Choices process with each service area now required to deliver Community Choices and increasing community engagement. However there is acknowledgment that they need to consider how to further involve the third sector, partner organisations and consider how to involve the public in the ideas generation stage.

#### Fife Council

Fife Council is moving beyond small grants to explore opportunities for greater participation in decisions relating to mainstream investment. The first service area for mainstream PB is subsidised passenger transport services. The Let's Talk process aims to build a greater understanding of the Council's £22 million investment in School Transport, Subsidised Bus Services, Demand Responsive Transport and Concessionary Travel. To engage the public in dialogue about what is working well, and what might be needed in the future. Deliberation

will be built into a later stage of the engagement process to design the services that are needed in Fife, before putting design options to a public vote.

The initial stages of the public engagement process will be supported through the Debates functionality of the CONSUL participation platform. Dialogue will also take place through existing groups and networks. Design Workshops will provide space for deliberation from which a set of options will be developed. Online voting through CONSUL will be used to identify preferred options / policy choices.