

Participation Requests Annual Report 2020-21

Background

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 passed into law on 24 July 2015. The Act introduces a range of measures designed to support communities to engage with public bodies to improve outcomes. Part 3 of the Act, Participation Requests, came into effect on 1 April 2017. Under the legislation, public bodies are required to report annually at the end of June each year on participation requests and specifically:

- the number of requests received;
- the number of requests agreed and refused;
- the number of requests which resulted in changes to a public service provided by, or on behalf of, the public service authority; and
- action taken by the public service authority to promote and support the use of participation requests.

This report details participation requests received by the City of Edinburgh Council during the period 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2021 and a summary update on progress with the requests in line with the annual reporting requirement as at 31 March 2021. This report also updates on the position of an ongoing participation request.

Report

During the reporting period the Council received two new participation requests with one previous request still ongoing and no requests refused. Of the two new requests received, one was accepted and one awaiting a decision.

Cramond & Barnton Community Council

In January 2020 the Council received a request from Cramond and Barnton Community Council seeking to achieve solutions to local traffic management arrangements and junction designs serving the communities of Barnton, Cammo and Strathalmond and wider Edinburgh community.

This request was accepted by the Council and an outcome improvement process was agreed. The outcome process involved meaningful discussions to help agree a forward action plan and several meetings took place with community representatives.

Senior officers from transport, planning and locality-based road teams met with the community council representatives to examine and explore potential solutions for the

issues and concerns highlighted in the request. Information and feedback was provided on the current status of plans and the scope of influence available to the group was outlined.

At the end of the reporting period a forward action plan outlining ongoing engagement and contact is yet to be agreed.

North West Community Councils

In October 2020 the Council received a collective request from all five community councils serving the North West area of Edinburgh seeking an outcome where the Council reinstates Neighbourhood Partnerships or an equivalent forum to allow for meaningful engagement between community councils and the Council.

This request was accepted by the Council and is incorporated within the planned improvement process being taken forward by the Edinburgh Partnership Board in response to the Best Value Assurance Audit findings.

The outcome improvement process was still ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

Drumbrae Community Council

In October 2020 the Council received a request from Drumbrae Community Council seeking to improve outcomes relating to proposed changes in traffic management within the East Craigs Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) initiative. The LTN is proposed under the 'Spaces for People' initiative which includes ongoing consultation and engagement and includes input and representations from local community councils.

Informal dialogue took place to establish the scope of the request which covers issues across a wide range of Council strategies and plans and additionally, to examine whether there are existing outcome improvement processes available to the group to satisfactorily cover the desired outcomes.

As at the end of the reporting period a decision by the Council to formally accept this request had not yet been made.

Resources

Resources continue to be provided by the Corporate Services Communities Team. This ensures that participation requests are assessed in line with legislative requirements and services and staff are supported through each stage of the process.

An online webpage provides a direct mailbox for correspondence and enquiries and the application form and guidance.

Community groups are encouraged to participate in initial dialogue about their proposals and where necessary support is provided to help community groups through the process.