

Section 32 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public service authorities to produce an annual report on Participation Request activity and publish this no later than 30 June each year. This template has been created to gather participation request data for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Information provided will help inform policy and practice at local and national level as the data will be collated and shared by the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Team. However, it is for each public service authority to make their own annual report publicly available by 30 June 2021, whether using this template or not.

Section One – Public Service Authority Information

Organisation: Highland Council

Address: Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX

Completed by: Alison Clark Role: Head of Service (Community Support and Engagement)

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Date of completion: August 2021

Are you the Participation Request Lead Contact for the organisation: No

If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries:

Pablo Mascarenhas,

Communities & Democratic Engagement Manager,

Pablo.Mascarenhas@highland.gov.uk

Section 2: Participation Request Data for 2020/21

Please complete following overview table:

Total new applications received in 2020/21	Total applications received prior to 1 April 2020 which were still to be determined at 1 April 2020	Number of accepted applications in 2020/21	Number of applications agreed in 2020/21	Number of applications refused in 2020/21
3	0	2	2	1

2.1 Please provide details of Participation Requests received using the legislation and outwith the legislation in 2020/21 which resulted in changes to public services provided by or on behalf of your public service authority and tell us about those changes:

Name of Community Participation Body	Was the Participation Request successful? (Y/N)	Previous way of working	Way of working following changes	What difference did those changes make for the users of the service? Did they improve service user experiences or outcomes?	Details of any participation requests considered outwith the formal process e.g. agreements reached that resulted in changes to services.
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The outcome improvement process for the above two agreed PRs is still underway.

2.2 Please use this space to provide any further comments relating to the above data, such as describing the outcome improvement process (whether or not it resulted from a formal participation request) and how the community participation body was involved in it, or details of any wider benefits, such as improved community engagement and ongoing participation.

Participation request 1: Nairn West & Suburban Community Council

Summary of request: Management of Nairn Common Good Fund: proposed disposal of Common Good Fund land at Sandown, Nairn

Why it was not successful and alternative: no clear outcome as defined by the terms of the Community Empowerment Act. A direct opportunity to engage through the existing consultation in relation to the proposed disposal of Nairn Common Good Sandown Lands. The Community Council was encouraged to engage and respond.

Participation request 2: Plockton & District Community Council

Summary of request: improved management of vehicular traffic and car parking in Plockton, and traffic calming measures in Duirinish.

Actions Underway:

- Two structured online workshop sessions were held with representatives of the Community Council and other key community stakeholders, along with Council officers representing Ward Management and Policy, Roads and Traffic Management officers: firstly, scoping out issues from the perspective of those living in the area; secondly, looking at relevant information and regulatory and developmental approaches that could be used.
- Highland Council traffic management officers met with community representatives in Plockton and Duirinish to inspect numerous traffic and parking concerns and discuss potential interventions.
- Production of a traffic management report by HC Traffic Management, reflecting insights from the above local engagement. This summarises a variety of identified remedial actions, including enforcement, refreshed signage, lining and disabled parking; as well as longer-term options for community consideration of introduction of pay and display, enforceable parking charges, and potential location of short-term motorhome provision.

Participation request 3: Ferintosh Community Council

Summary of request: Community engagement on local priorities for maintenance and upkeep of roads, amenity and other outdoor spaces.

Actions underway:

- Structured online workshop session held with representatives of the Community Council, along with Council officers from Ward Management and Policy, Roads and Amenities and the Area Committee Chair (at the Community Council's request). This focused on sharing understanding of local concerns and the Council's approach to maintenance and upkeep of roads and outdoor spaces.
- The Community Council and Council Roads officers are now co-creating a framework for appropriately trained community representatives to monitor and report information on local pot-holes to the Council's Roads team through the Community Council. This is intended to support more efficient and timely batching of road repairs.
- The approach to collaborative inspection of roads builds upon an existing agreement with Council Amenities, where the Community Council undertakes some voluntary grass cutting.

The outcome improvement process for the above two agreed PRs is still underway.

Section Three – Partnership Working & Promotion of Participation Requests

3.1 Please provide details of any engagement with support organisations such as local Third Sector Interfaces and public sector Community Learning and Development staff or national organisations such as the Scottish Community Development Centre.

The Council works closely with the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) on a number of projects and activities, including community planning related work. During the pandemic, the Council and HTSI shared resources and intelligence to develop a mapping resource and database of key third sector groups. The Council's helpline included an option for recruiting volunteers which was linked through to HTSI who vetted and maintained a database of volunteers for local groups.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership has a network of 9 local Community Partnership bodies comprised of public, third and community sector partners that lead on locality planning at a local level. Our approach to community learning and development is embedded in this structure, with local CLD plans and locality plans being aligned. CLD networks sit alongside each Community Partnership and Community Partnership Work to support shared learning and development.

During the pandemic, Resilience Networks were established across Highland, some led by third sector partners and others, where there were gaps, facilitated by the Council. Over 300 community groups were involved. The Council and HTSI partners liaised closely on these networks to provide advice and support to groups. A weekly written and virtual briefing was established to go to all community resilience groups across Highland. The written briefing continues at present.

3.2 Please provide details of action taken to promote the use of Participation Requests or support Community Participation Bodies in making a Participation Request.

The Council currently promotes the opportunity of participation requests through its website and groups indicating they wish to engage in this process, are guided on what qualifies as an outcome through the central Community Support team. A single point of contact has been established for all requests to be considered.

The Council has taken a broader approach to participation and involvement and is seeking to encourage greater community involvement in service design, planning and delivery through local engagement through Area Committees, Community Partnerships and its developing Place Based Approach.

From August 2021, the Council has employed 10 temporary Community Support Co-ordinators whose role it is to engage and support communities to engage and get involved in service priority planning and delivery. CSCs will also support the increased promotion of Participation Requests as one method of engaging with the Council.

Going forward, the Council intends to build on the learning from other Local Authorities and intends to run annual workshops in order to promote awareness and understanding of participation requests but also the broader approach promoted by the Council which focuses on building involvement and participation into day-to-day processes.

3.3 Please let us know what actions you have been taking to ensure that your processes are inclusive.

The Council recognises the importance of building inclusive approaches to engagement into its service planning and engagement approaches. A newly agreed equality outcome is that:
Identified groups have improved experiences of access to services and greater involvement in service planning, design and decision making.

From August 2021, the Council has employed 10 temporary Community Support Co-ordinators whose role it is to engage and support communities to engage and get involved in service priority planning and delivery. CSCs have a key role in encouraging inclusive approaches to involvement and participation across communities through the course of their activity.

3.4 Please outline any plans you have to continue involving local people and local groups in outcome improvement processes as a result of your Participation Request policies (and also outwith formal participation requests).

Highland Council Framework for Participation and Involvement

One of the Council's key strategic priorities within its Corporate Plan is to:

Deliver meaningful engagement with Highland communities, listening and responding to what we hear and encourage more community activity and community run services (outcome 6.1).

The aim is to improve the Council's working with communities and encourage greater involvement in service design, priority setting and delivery. This is reflected in the Council's Recovery Plan, with Community Empowerment a key priority. As part of the Recovery Plan, a framework for engagement and involvement with our communities in August 2020. The aim was to help better understand the impact of covid on our communities and individual groups; to understand the learning from the response efforts; to understand need and actions required to mitigate impacts on specific groups and to serve as a basis for establishing priorities for communities moving forwards.

A Resilience Group Support Programme was developed to monitor the ongoing support to resilience groups through the January to April lockdown period. This included weekly written and virtual briefings to go to all community resilience groups across Highland. The written briefing continues at present. Resilience Networks were established across Highland, some led by third sector partners and others, where there were gaps, facilitated by the Council to support engagement, advice and learning with community resilience groups.

Updates on progress against this Participation and Involvement framework have been provided at each meeting of the Communities and Place Committee. As the pandemic moves into a new phase, and services and community work moves beyond the resilience focus, this provides an opportunity to build on the engagement and networks through the covid period to establish a stronger relationship with communities and community bodies. The move is towards embedding the Engagement Framework, with a particular focus on inclusive approaches to engagement and involvement. This will support the delivery of one of the Council's Equality Outcomes which includes a specific priority to improve engagement and involvement with individuals with protected characteristics.

Place Based Approach

The Council and its wider partners are currently developing a Place Based Approach to guide collaborative working with communities and identification of shared priorities and outcomes taking place and people into account. The underpinning principle of any place

based approach is the engagement and involvement of communities in the process and delivery.

A good example of this work already underway is the development of the Skye and Raasay Future Place Plan. Community participation was critical to the development of the priorities and vision contained within the Plan and Strengthening Communities is a core outcome. This includes a particular focus on building strong and resilient communities that directly contribute to the development and improvement of new services, core infrastructure and realisation of local priorities [Preparation of the new Skye and Raasay Investment Plan](#)

Community Partnerships

As noted at 3.1, the approach to community planning in Highland recognises the considerable geographical size of the area and has established 9 local Community Partnership to lead on local planning to address inequality. Each local partnership is comprised of public, third and community sector partners that lead on locality planning at a local level. The aim is to directly involve communities and community bodies in the planning and delivery of partnership priorities. Our approach to community learning and development is embedded in this structure, with local CLD plans and locality plans being aligned. CLD networks sit alongside each Community Partnership and Community Partnership Work to support shared learning and development.

3.5 Please provide details about any work undertaken to consider wider reviews of participation practice, and any such methods used to engage with communities.

The CPP has recently reviewed its approach to locality planning in response to several challenges which have been identified, including that of engagement and participation of communities and groups in local planning. This follows learning through the pandemic which highlighted the success of taking a broader approach to engagement and on a thematic basis which involves the wider community but still enables targeting within. It should be noted the positive practical partnership working that has taken place over the last year where there has been a clear focus and direction. A new approach is proposed that provides for the development of area priorities in order to encourage greater participation and buy-in from communities.

Section Four – Additional Information

4.1 Please use this space to provide any further feedback not covered in the above sections.