

# **Participation Requests**

## **Community Facing Process**

### **Who can submit a participation request?**

- Any group can submit a participation request as long as the membership is open to the community and whose work is for the benefit of the community.
- Community applies to both geographical communities and communities of interest.
- The group does not need to have a constitution and can be incorporated or unincorporated.
- Community Councils are included.

### **Who can a participation request be made to?**

- Any public body named in the Community Empowerment Act: Local Authorities, colleges and universities, health boards, Highlands and Islands enterprise, police, fire, Scottish Natural heritage, regional transport partnerships, national parks and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

### **What is a participation request?**

- A request from a community group to have a discussion with a public body around a particular issue or topic that would result in an improvement to that area of service.
- If the request is agreed to, a Community Participation Process will then take place involving the community group and public body. How this will be done will depend upon the nature of the request.

### **What is not a participation request?**

- It is not a replacement for consultation or other forms of engagement
- Not a complaints process for something a group is unhappy with

### **What a participation request should include?**

- Groups should complete the participation request form and submit it to the central point of contact for participation requests
- This will detail what service area the group wants to improve – the outcome – and what improvement they want to see
- This will detail why the group wants to have this discussion and what it thinks it can bring to the process

### **What do groups need to do?**

- Before submitting a request, speak to someone about what you are interested in. This may be your local Councillor or service contact.
- Complete a form to register your participation request
- Be willing to participate and positively engage in the process

## What we will do?

### Contact

- When a request is submitted it will be checked to make sure all the information is there – that you have approached the right organisation, whether your group is a Community Participation Group and whether any other organisations should also be involved.
- If it is a valid request, you will be sent an acknowledgement with a date from when the formal request has been received and also the details of a named contact within the service relevant to the request. This person will be your contact going forward.
- If it is not a valid request, you will be contacted and advised what the issue is.

### Assessment

- We will assess your request and respond to you within **30** days\* of the date provided.\* additional **15** days if another organisation needs to be involved.
- When assessing your request we will consider whether your request:
  1. Would be likely to promote or improve:
    - Economic development
    - Regeneration
    - Public health
    - Social wellbeing
    - Environment wellbeing
  2. Would reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
  3. Lead to an increase in participation
  4. Any other benefits that may arise

### Decision

- We will agree to your request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusing.
- If we do refuse your request we must explain why we are doing so.
- We can refuse a request if it is the same or essentially the same as a request received in the last 2 years. We can refuse a request on these grounds even if it was from a different community group.
- We will contact you and let you know of our decision. This will include how we propose to take forward the Community Participation Process, how we propose you be involved and who else might be involved.
- We will also publish this decision on the Council's website

## Community Participation Process

- You will have **28** days to suggest any changes to how we propose the Community Participation Process takes place.
- We will listen to your representation and consider the proposed change. A further notice will be published on the Council's website.
- The Community Participation Process will begin within **90** days of the decision being taken.
- There is no set timescale for how long a Community Participation Process this and will be agreed between the us.