

Participation Requests Reporting Template 2021/22 for Public Service Authorities

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 2021 to 31 March 2022. 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 2022, whether using this template or not.

Please provide information in the sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2022 to community.empowerment@gov.scot.

Section One – Public Service Authority Information

Organisation: Midlothian Council

Completed by: Annette Lang Role: Group Service Manager (Community Planning Partnership and Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability)

Email: annette.lang@midlothian.gov.uk

Telephone: 07880279937

Date of completion: 29.06.22

Are you the Participation Request Lead Contact for the organisation: Yes

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

Section 2: Participation Request Data for 2021/22

Please complete following overview table:

Total new applications received in 2021/22	Total applications received prior to 1 April 2020 which were still to be determined at 1 April 2021	Number of accepted applications in 2021/22	Number of applications agreed in 2021/22	Number of applications refused in 2021/22
0	0	0	n/a	n/a

2.1 Please provide details of Participation Requests received using the legislation and outwith the legislation in 2021/22 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.
n/a					

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.

We currently have 2 live requests from previous years; a new secondary school which is still to be built and the other is to ensure reliable access to a park.

The Federation of Community Councils have good knowledge and skill levels with regards participation requests and promote this within their networks.

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.

For example has any new practices to support Participation Requests been developed from working with other bodies, or any learning gained?

We continue to follow the principles in the COMPACT that was agreed with the Third Sector in 202/21 which includes promotion of participation requests. There has been no additional promotion during this period however the information on the application process is available on the Midlothian Council website and our community learning and development staff are the first point of contact for any queries.

The new elected members have been briefed on the Community Empowerment Act and an elected member has been given portfolio responsibility for Community Empowerment and has received a more detailed email briefing.

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.

For example this could include: Support before making a request, such as to determine whether a participation request is the most appropriate route; - Support to make the request such as assist groups to complete forms, or identify appropriate outcomes; and/or Support to take part effectively in outcome improvement processes (whether or not they resulted from a formal participation request).

Wherever possible we try to support community groups to participate in our decision making without the need to pursue a formal Participation Request. Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) continue to encourage groups to initially discuss their request with a senior worker.

All information is available on our website and contact details for support are available.

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

For example, this could include accessible information and other support, which enable wider use of participation requests by all population groups including those with protected characteristics.

All information can be requested in different languages and formats and within our networks we have equality group representation through our Community Planning Partnership.

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).

Midlothian Council is creating a 5 year corporate council policy with the involvement of local people.

The Single Midlothian Plan for 22/23 has been co-designed by representatives of communities and approved by the Community Planning Partnership Board, each of the thematic groups has local representation and are responsible for the implementation of actions.

The community of Dalkeith are involved in the co-design of the Dalkeith Town Centre regeneration. In addition we have thematic groups of service users influencing service design, for example older people and people with disabilities.

The Third Sector bulletin is circulated weekly to over 500 people and organisations, this highlights key opportunities for people and organisations to influence the direction of policies and projects.

As part of grant funding in the local authority we provide opportunities for local people to be involved in the decision making process.

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.

We are reviewing our approach to participatory budgeting to meet the 1% target. Our first step in that process has been a seminar for the new elected members.

Section Four – Additional Information

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

For example, we are interested in your reflections about what has gone well and what has gone less well in relation to Participation Requests over the past year?

We have not received any new participation requests during this reporting period.

Is there any aspect of the process that you intend to adapt or change in the year ahead?

We will actively promote participation requests and offer a training information session for the community and community councils.

Have you identified any needs for guidance or support that would support the process?

Recognising other involvement opportunities which may result in less requests being submitted.

If you have developed any case study material or published new information about Participation Requests please share links to those with us here.

N/A

Any other information:

Section Five – Community Empowerment Act Review

The following questions relate to the Scottish Government review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. We would value your feedback as a public service authority concerned with part 3 (participation requests) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

5.1 Has the legislation made things easier or more difficult to access? Please provide some comments on your experiences as a public service authority engaging with this legislation.

The legislation provides a formal route for community groups to engage with the local authority when other informal routes have been exhausted.

5.2 Where can things be further improved, and what needs to change?

Increase awareness amongst staff, elected members and the public.

Through COSLA or Improvement Service highlight good practice from other local authorities and the resulting improvement in outcomes.

5.3 Are you aware of what support is available to you when engaging with this legislation, and how you can access this? Please provide comments where possible.

We engage with our own Legal Team and are not aware of any additional support similar to DTAS for participation requests.

5.4 What would you like to see now, to further empower Scotland's communities?

National profile of outcomes secured through participation request legislation.

Completed by: Annette Lang

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Tel: 07880279937

Date of completion: 29.06.22

Please email the completed template by 30 June 2022 to community.empowerment@gov.scot

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Participation Request Policy Manager at Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot

Thank you!

Community Empowerment Team, Scottish Government