

**Participation Requests Reporting Template 2020/21 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 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.

**Please provide information in the four sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2021 to** **community.empowerment@gov.scot** **.**

**Section One – Public Service Authority Information**

Organisation: Fife Council Address: Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT

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Date of completion: 28th June 2021

Are you the Participation Request Lead Contact for the organisation: **Yes**/No

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

**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** |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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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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.

No participation requests were received in the financial year 2020/2021.

**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?*

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).*

Fife Council has produced extensive guidance on consultation and engagement in order to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across the Council. The Council is currently developing an online Community Portal, which will highlight opportunities and tools available for undertaking effective engagement (e.g. participatory budgeting, charrettes, Place Standard, Consul, Sensemaker). All Council consultation and engagement programmes will be advertised in the Consultation Diary, which will be published on the Community Portal.

Guidance and an application form relating to participation requests is available online at fife.gov.uk. Where a participation request is received, the local Community Manager and their team will discuss options for alternative engagement / involvement where the participation request is likely to be refused.

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.*

The Council has an accessible information policy which ensures that people requiring information in alternative formats are provided with that information to enable them to participate in decision making etc. Work is currently under way to ensure that the policy covers all forms of information produced by the Council, including online and social media.

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).

Fife Council currently consults and engages with communities on a range of issues and initiatives using mixed methods, depending on the scale of the issue and the type of response required.

Fife Council strives to adhere to the National Standards for Community Engagement (NSfCE) - widely recognised as key principles to support and inform the process of community engagement and improve what happens as a result.

The National Standards are important in supporting organisations in putting the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 into practice by shaping the participation processes of public bodies.

The seven National Standards for Community Engagement are outlined below:

Inclusion: We will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement.

Support: We will identify and overcome any barriers to participation (e.g. supporting participants to contribute to the engagement process by providing questionnaires in different languages).

Planning: There is a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions (e.g. setting up a steering group of residents and public sector partners to agree on what meaningful engagement will look like).

Working Together: We will work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement (e.g. recognising and acknowledging different views and starting points).

Methods: We will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose (e.g. using a number of different ways to contact people including newsletters, individual letters and postal surveys, online surveys, email, social media, flyers/posters (with a QR code) and public meetings).

Communication: We will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement (e.g. providing feedback on the engagement process, the options which have been considered and the decisions/actions that have been agreed and the reasons why).

Impact: We will assess the impact of the engagement and use what has been learned to improve our future community engagement (e.g. learning and evaluating to help shape future engagement processes).

The Council has produced consultation and engagement guidance and is working on developing a consultation diary as part of the new Community Portal. These arrangements will ensure that people have a range of to be involved in outcome improvement and decision-making processes, reducing the need for the submission of formal participation Requests.

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.

As the Covid-19 pandemic developed and it became more difficult for people to take part in consultation and engagement activity, so it has never been more important to consider good quality community engagement and hear from communities about what they need to emerge from the crisis.

In September 2020 the Scottish Community Development Centre published a guide on the National Standards for Community Engagement which focuses on ‘Engaging with our Communities to Support Recovery and Renewal’.

Looking ahead, Services are required refer to the Council’s guidance when developing consultations during the Covid-19 pandemic, paying particular attention to the alternative consultation and engagement methods available where restrictions do not permit face-to-face engagement and where a solely digital approach will exclude many voices.

Inclusiveness is a key principle of community engagement and we have an obligation as a local authority to ensure our consultation and engagement processes are accessible to all, reflecting the diversity of Fife’s population. There are groups in the community who are traditionally more difficult to engage with, and it is important to ensure that these groups of people aren’t marginalised as a result of their involvement, or lack of involvement, in community activities. Measures should be taken to overcome the barriers that prevent these groups from participating and we must always consider accessibility in terms of the way in which we write, our language, the communication channels we opt to use, etc. to ensure we are inclusive to all, including citizens with hearing/visual impairments.

The following table lists possible engagement methods which may be adopted. At all times care should be taken to develop a mix of methods (across all three columns) appropriate for the target group to ensure that people who face additional barriers can give their views and feedback throughout the process. Whilst this may be more time intensive, it will ensure that less-heard voices are listened to as part of the community engagement process.



Some face-to-face engagement is still possible despite restrictions if, for example, it is built into existing service delivery or run with appropriate safety measures in place – outside, for example.

Where face-to-face methods are not possible during a time of increased restrictions, the engagement activity must offer a blend of digital and alternative methods – a recommended minimum of four methods in total should be offered with Services ‘topping up’ depending on the scale, impact and nature of the consultation.

Some flexibility may be required particularly in relation to statutory obligations where the Scottish Government has set out specific consultation and engagement standards in relation to, for example, new housing developments, schools, changes to catchment areas, planning etc. Services will need to consider their approach in relation to this, and the minimum standards set out here and assess whether additional measures need built into their service process.

Going forward, consultation and engagement work across the Council will be co-ordinated to ensure that:

• Consultation and engagement activities are considered in the wider context of strategic reforms and changes.

• Services have access to support and information on effective consultation tools and methods.

• Area team advice and guidance is sought to help inform the service approach

• Duplication of effort is avoided.

• Best practice is shared.

Coordination will be managed corporately by the Community Manager (Development) and the Communications and Engagement Manager.

All consultation and engagement work across the Council will flow through an updated process:



Through the support offered, Services will be signposted to consultation and engagement resources which will continue to be built up over time, including practical examples and learning (partly informed by the review form completed after each engagement exercise). This bank of resources will become a Consultation Toolkit, linked to a refreshed consultation diary and a clear statement of intent around consultation and engagement for residents.

By adopting a clear approach to consultation and engagement with support available at every stage for Services, we can make it easier for Fife’s communities to have their say in the decisions that affect them.

**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?*

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

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

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

*Any other information:*

**Subject to the pressures of responding to the Covid-19 emergency situation and recovery – if possible please email the completed template by 30 June 2021 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