

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: Argyll and Bute Council	Address: Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Completed by: Iain Jackson	Role: Governance, Risk and Safety Manager
Email: iain.jackson@argyll-bute.gov.uk	Telephone: 01546 604188
Date of completion: 27/05/2021	
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 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
1	0	0 – request was not valid.	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.
Islay Development Initiative	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.

The request was not written in a valid format. Support was offered to the group to reword the request in a valid format however, they had also submitted an Expression of Interest to the Asset Transfer Team and have decided to await the outcome of that engagement before deciding whether to pursue the Participation Request, which relates to the asset. The group have been informed that support is available from the Council's Community Development Team to help them submit a request if they wish to do that at a future date

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?

The council helped recruit participants to an Argyll and Bute Focus Group on Participation Requests resources for communities. This was held by Zoom on 25/08/2020 and followed on from the workshop they ran on the 25/02/2020.

The council received support from SCDC and the Community Empowerment Unit to discuss a request which had been submitted which we felt wasn't valid, before going back to the group to offer support to resubmit it.

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).

Participation Request Awareness raising workshops held on 24th March (daytime) and 25th March (evening) to raise awareness of the process, who can submit requests, who requests can be submitted to, and how to submit a request. Participants came from community and third sector organisations, community councils and CPP partners. Resources and guidance were sent out afterwards, including SCDC's summary guidance for Community Participation Bodies.

One group were offered support to develop a valid Participation Request but declined for the time being. The group had been supported by another national organisation to submit their request and one of the community development team also met with them to promote and discuss the process, and promote the council's commitment to supporting requests.

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.

Groups and organisations supporting people with protected characteristics were invited to attend the workshops, and organisations supporting people experiencing alcohol and drugs issues, and supporting mental health service users and carers participated.

A review of the website and information for communities was postponed due to the pandemic response and will be carried out in 2021/22.

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).

The Traffic and Parking department have reviewed their Traffic Regulation Order process and involved the Community Development Team in identifying a wider range of community groups and organisation to engage with at Stage 2 of the process when they are shaping the final order.

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 Council are currently engaging with Disability Equality Scotland to raise awareness of the work of Access Panels and try to increase the number and spread of Panels within Argyll and Bute – the current existing Access Panel covering Oban, Lorn and the Isles regularly engages with the Council and we would welcome the opportunity to engage with Panels in other areas.

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?

Awareness of the Participation Request process continues to be patchy and requires regular promotion. For example, at the last round of workshops, one group who have submitted two previous requests informed us that they have worked up a draft request this year (unsubmitted to date), but were unaware that the Council had a participation request page on our website, or where to find support other than the Scottish Government Community Empowerment Unit. Not all of the personnel within the group have changed - some have been in post during the two previous Participation Request processes and they were invited to participate in the SCDC workshops last year. Organisations are dealing with so many things that information can be forgotten and it is important that we continue to promote the process regularly and by multiple means to ensure that it stays fresh and relevant.

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

We are currently updating the Participation Request web pages and support materials on our website.

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

We would like to provide an easy read guide to Participation Requests. We have found the Easy Read guide to the CEA, but not one for Participation Requests. If there is one that we're not aware of then we would be delighted if we could be guided to it. Also, information for communities in other accessible formats is also something we are looking at, so to know what is already available that we can link to, would be great.

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:

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Date of completion: 28/06/2021

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