

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD, HOUSING & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 27 OCTOBER 2025

REPORT ON: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRESS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 297-2025

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update committee on the progress of Dundee's community empowerment work and the contribution of Local Community Planning towards reducing inequalities in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that committee:
- a) notes the progress in the implementation of Local Community Planning and the reduction in inequalities;
 - b) notes the associated areas of good practice including Dundee City Council being recognised as finalists for awards at the COSLA Excellence Awards 2025, Association of Public Sector Excellence 2025, Scottish Public Service Awards 2024 and Smarter Working Lives 2024; and
 - c) notes that Dundee City Council has exceeded the target set by COSLA for Participatory Budgeting for 2024/25.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the agreement of this report.

4. Background

- 4.1.1 Dundee City Council has a statutory responsibility to implement Locality Planning under Part 2 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Act sets out that Community Planning Partnerships must identify areas where residents are experiencing significantly poorer outcomes arising from socio-economic disadvantage and take action to reduce inequalities within and between those areas.
- 4.1.2 Having identified those localities experiencing poorer outcomes, the Community Planning Partnership must produce locality plans setting out the outcomes to be improved and the timescale by which this would be achieved. In Dundee these are our Local Community Plans overseen by the Local Community Planning Partnerships.
- 4.1.3 Each year the Community Planning Partnership must publish a report on the progress of locality planning in reducing inequalities for the period of 1st April to 31st March. Highlights of the Local Community Planning Progress Report 24/25 to be published are to be found in 4.2.
- 4.1.4 A Local Community Planning Partnership Alcohol & Drugs Partnership Report 2024/25 will also be published and is an example of the work being progressed through locality planning, which is contributing towards the City Plan priorities through empowering citizens to act on these strategic issues in their own community.

- 4.1.5 Dundee City Council's Participatory Budgeting Return 2024/25 in Appendix 1 demonstrates how Dundee City Council is empowering citizens, particularly young people and families. Dundee City Council have exceeded COSLA's Community Choices 1% Framework target for 2024/25.

4.2 Locality Community Planning Progress

- 4.2.1 Evidence indicates that Local Community Planning is delivering positive outcomes and reducing inequalities within Dundee's communities. The report to be published presents case studies demonstrating effective practices from locality planning over the past year, including initiatives addressing the cost of living, family empowerment, support for mental wellbeing, and environmental improvements within communities.
- 4.2.2 Particular work to highlight includes:
- 4.2.3 The Linlathen Fairness Initiative was a finalist in the Scottish Public Service Awards 2024 for Best Statutory & Voluntary Sector Partnership alongside Brooksbank Centre and in two categories at the Smarter Working Lives 2024 awards: Building Collaborative Communities and Customer Experience. Most recently the project has been shortlisted for a COSLA Excellence award in the category Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health and Wellbeing. The Local Fairness Initiative model in Linlathen and Stobswell West will continue to focus on taking a partnership approach to improving financial wellbeing in the identified areas. Key priorities in both areas will be addressing housing conditions including improving energy efficiency measures in Linlathen and engaging with the private sector and social landlords in Stobswell West.
- 4.2.4 Dundee's approach to devolved Alcohol and Drug Partnership funding, led by local communities, also earned national recognition as a finalist for Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative at the Association of Public Service Excellence awards in 2025. The devolved Alcohol and Drug Partnership funding continues to increase collaboration and partnership between communities, health and recovery services along with people with lived experience of substance use.
- 4.2.5 In 2024/25 there were 695 community members involved in the direct delivery of services contributing to local community plan outcomes, an increase of 18% on the previous year.
- 4.2.6 In 2024/25, 11,998 citizens participated in discussions regarding local issues, representing a 14% increase compared to the previous year. Engagement activities ranged from city-wide consultations, such as Neighbourhood Capital Fund, to more local involvement through organisations like community Local Management Groups, Neighbourhood Representative Structures, and other groups supported by the Communities Service.
- 4.2.7 A collaboration between Dundee City Council and What Matters to You and has resulted in new approaches to engaging and involving local people in developing opportunities in their own community. What Matters to You is an initiative focused on community-based systems change, collaborating with families to explore ways to address what truly matters to them.

Initiatives that have been developed through this collaboration include:

- The creation of new community led family activities
- The expansion of the "Make it Happen Fund" which has so far distributed £120,000 external funding to be allocated by community members

- The development of the “Cafe Conversation approaches to Local Community Planning Partnership meetings, which has significantly increased engagement in Local Community Planning Partnerships
- A city wide development day and celebration event hosted by Columba 1400 in the Regional Performance Centre showcasing family empowerment and young people’s empowerment practice from across the city – led by family and young people’s leaders who had taken part in Columba 1400 Values Based Leadership Experiences

4.2.8 Dundee City Councils’ family empowerment work developed in partnership with What Matters to You has been shortlisted for a COSLA Excellence Award in the category of Strengthening Communities and Local Democracy.

4.3 Participatory Budgeting

4.3.1 COSLA’s Community Choices 1% Framework is defined as 1% of ‘total estimated expenditure for revenue, as per the Local Government finance circular, less assumed council tax intake. For Dundee in 2024/25 this target figure was £3,831,700. Dundee City Council’s Participatory Budgeting return shows spend of £3,989,000 and is the second consecutive year that Dundee City Council has exceeded our Participatory Budgeting targets.

4.3.2 11,384 citizens took part in Participatory Budgeting exercises in 2024/25, an increase on the previous year. Participatory Budgeting is recognised as one of the key drivers of community empowerment giving citizens the power to decide on public sector budgets.

4.3.3 The key theme of the Participatory Budgeting activity for 2024/25 was the engagement of young people and families with over £1 million allocated through pupil/parents’ voice projects in schools and over 1700 young people taking part in the idea generation phase of the Neighbourhood Capital Fund.

4.4 Community Asset Transfer

4.4.1 In 2024/25 there was one Community Asset Transfer request under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This resulted in a lease to the applicant being agreed without the requirement to conclude through the legislative route.

4.4.2 Dundee City Council have a strong record of working with community groups to support them to use Dundee City Council Assets without groups having to enforce legal rights. Sixty Dundee City Council assets have been identified as having been sold or leased to community groups for community benefit, none of which have required community groups to conclude through the legislative route.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted on the preparation of this report and agree with its contents.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Local Community Planning Progress Report 24/25
- 7.2 Local Community Planning Partnership Alcohol & Drugs Partnership Report 2024/25

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Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

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10 October 2025



Participatory Budgeting Report

2024-25



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Participatory Budgeting Report 2024-25

Local authorities are required to ensure that at least 1% of their budgets are subject to participatory budgeting (PB) by the end of 2021, as agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government.

This involves communities in decisions about the allocation of existing resources, with the 1% target comprising both revenue and capital expenditure. The approach to achieving this target is flexible, allowing councils to choose their own methods and service areas, without prescription regarding the use of capital or revenue budgets.

The COSLA target for Local Authorities is defined as 1% of 'total estimated expenditure for revenue, as per the Local Government finance circular, less assumed council tax intake. For Dundee in 2024/25 this figure was £ 3,831,700.

The actual participatory budget expenditure was £3,989,000. This marks the second consecutive year that Dundee City Council has met its Participatory Budgeting targets.

Dundee City Council has implemented Participatory Budgeting (PB) as part of its approach to democratic processes and community involvement. PB is integrated across various council services, with departments identifying budget areas where citizens can contribute input.

PB activities in Dundee cover sectors such as education, housing, climate action, and health inequalities.

The Council facilitates participation from different groups, including mechanisms for youth engagement and the inclusion of individuals with lived experience, particularly in topics like substance use and poverty reduction.

In 2024-25, Dundee City Council saw 11,384 citizens take part in participatory budgeting activities, reflecting a modest increase from the prior year. The Council's approach actively engaged diverse groups, notably children, families, and individuals with lived experience, to ensure broad community representation in decision-making.

- Parents and pupils contributed to decisions regarding the allocation of over £1.1 million in Pupil Equity Funding, focused on narrowing educational and social outcome gaps.
- A new Neighbourhood Capital Fund was introduced, specifically encouraging youth participation in determining how funds are used to enhance local assets and environments, aiming to meet the needs of future residents.
- Individuals with lived experience of substance use were directly involved in the allocation of the Dundee Alcohol & Drugs Devolved Fund, a programme recognised with an award nomination through the Association of Public Service Excellence Awards for its innovative and positive impact on participants' recovery journeys.

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Breakdown of revenue and/or capital subject to participatory budgeting during 24/25		
Service Area	Revenue (£000,000)	Capital (£000,000)
Neighbourhood Capital Fund		358
Annual Rent Consultation	500	
Community Regeneration Fund	452	
Alcohol & Drugs Partnership Devolved Spend	80	
Dundee Climate Fund	280	
Housing Capital Projects		448
District Centre Funding		290
20mh Speed Limit Programme		124
Accessible Transport Improvement		89
Camperdown Park Improvements Phase 4		34
Improvement to Park Signage		8
Dudhope Park Path		11
Play Renewal		151
Baxter Park Fencing		40
Allotment Security		16
Community Cleanups	8	
Pupil Equity Fund Parent/Pupil Voice	1,100	
TOTAL	£2,420,000	£1,569,000

