

Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee

10am, Tuesday, 7 May 2013

Review of Neighbourhood Partnerships – Options

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P33
Council outcomes	CO23 , CO24
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO2 , SO3 , SO4

Mark Turley

Director Services for Communities

Contact: Natalie Hoy, West Neighbourhood and Local Community Planning Manager

Michele Mulvaney, Community Engagement Manager

E-mail: natalie.hoy@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 5198

E-mail: michele.mulvaney@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3541

Executive summary

Review of Neighbourhood Partnerships - Options

Summary

Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) provide the means for inclusive partnership working across the City. As Advisory Committees of the Council, NPs comprise part of the Council's neighbourhood approach and the City's community planning framework allowing service providers and communities to come together to shape and inform policy and service development and delivery to achieve better outcomes for local communities.

Whilst NPs have made significant progress since their establishment in 2007, as part of the Council governance review it was agreed to undertake a review to strengthen and develop their role in delivering better outcomes for communities. The scope of the review, agreed by Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee on 19 February 2013, identified key strands of work focused on developing and strengthening current practice, enhancing community participation and strengthening the strategic influence of NPs. To take this forward a range of activities were carried out including an audit of current practice, desk top research on engagement practice, dedicated meetings with stakeholders, themed workshops and an online survey. This report sets out the key findings and outcomes, together with a range of improvement options for NPs and the next steps in making this change happen.

Recommendations

To recommend that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee:

1. Notes the initial work carried out to review NPs.
2. Notes the significant contribution from partners to the review process.
3. Agrees the improvement options.
4. Agrees to refer the report to the 12 NPs in the city for further consideration and incorporation in future development activity.
5. Agrees to receive a further report detailing proposals for a strategic improvement plan for NPs in December 2013.

Measures of success

Key indicators of the overall success of the approach as measured in the Edinburgh People's survey are:

- Improved satisfaction with neighbourhoods as a place to live.
- Satisfaction that people from different backgrounds can get on well together.
- People feel they are able to have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area.
- Satisfaction with specific services e.g. community safety, environment and facilities.

Additional measures to demonstrate the benefits of the approach will be identified in line with the review options, with these to be the subject of a further report setting out proposals for a strategic improvement plan for NPs.

Financial impact

The costs associated with the review have been met within existing budgets.

Additional funding may be required to progress options detailed within this report and specifically the development of e-engagement.

Equalities impact

Local community planning activity and work of NPs contributes to the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 general duties of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. This is evidenced through the engagement strategies and plans which involve working with all partners and members of the community, detail how barriers to engagement will be removed and seek to promote buy in across communities to common goals. As an outcome of the review specific measures are proposed to improve the involvement of people from protected characteristics. It is intended once these options are agreed to hold a further focused workshop to carry out an equality impact assessment of the NP Strategic Improvement Plan.

Sustainability impact

There are no adverse environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

The review has taken a collaborative and co-operative approach with partners, including community representatives, having been fully involved through their participation in workshops and completion of the online survey.

Dedicated meetings have been held with a range of partners including Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, Volunteer Centre Edinburgh, Children and Families, Planning, Licensing, Parks and Green Space, Roads and Transport, and Corporate Governance. Written submissions have been received regarding Total Neighbourhood and from Health and Social Care. The Conveners of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee and NP Conveners' Group have also taken an active role through hosting the review workshops. Additionally the Convener and Vice Convener of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee have engaged directly with partners including attending the Edinburgh Partnership Board meeting in March 2013.

Background reading / external references

Hyperlinked throughout the report, hard copies are available from contact officers.

Review of Neighbourhood Partnerships - Options

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the Council governance review it was agreed to retain Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) as Advisory Committees of the Council but to review the approach to develop and strengthen their role in delivering better outcomes for communities.
- 1.2 In providing a framework by which service providers and communities come together to agree local outcomes and priority actions, NPs strengthen the democratic process, allowing local people to have a say about services and influence decision making. This focus on achieving more successful outcomes through the engagement of communities and joint working contributes directly to the Council's co-operative approach and the outcomes of the Council Strategic Plan.
- 1.3 As the local expression of community planning in the City, NPs also provide a vehicle for progressing the outcome based approach to public sector reform set out in the 'Statement of Ambition' agreed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities as an outcome of the National review of community planning. See Diagram 1 for further information.



* All text in blue indicates hyperlinks to the City of Edinburgh Council Committee Papers Online or Scottish Government websites where the documents can be downloaded in pdf format on screen.

Diagram 1

1.4 The drive for change at a city and National level provides additional momentum to develop NPs, with the review offering an opportunity to build on success and strengthen the approach. The options set out in this report are consistent with the improvement areas identified within the recent Audit Scotland [‘Improving Community Planning in Scotland’](#) report which are:



Diagram 2

2. Main report

2.1 The scope of the review of NPs identified a number of strands of work under the three key themes of:

- Enhancing community participation.
- Developing and strengthening current practice.
- Strengthening the strategic influence of NPs.

In addressing these themes a number of activities were carried out including an audit of current practice, desk top research on engagement practice, dedicated meetings with stakeholders, themed workshops and an online survey. Appendix 1 provides details of these activities and includes links to the supporting reports and partner submissions. The original scope of the review as agreed did not set out the requirement for structural change.

2.2 The range of activities informing the review involved all partners, with there being a strong representation of community views at both the workshop sessions and in response to the online survey. In total from all partners there were 313 responses to the review consultation, 221 as part of the online survey and 91 at the five workshop sessions. The findings from the consultation are detailed in the report [Neighbourhood Partnership Review – Results from Online Survey and Workshops 2013](#). This participation is welcomed and valued and demonstrates the ongoing interest of all partners and particularly the community in making change happen in Edinburgh. The range of partner contributors is shown below in Diagram 3.



Diagram 3

2.3 The key findings and outcomes from the review activities categorised by theme are set out below, together with a range of improvement options for NPs and next steps in making this change happen.

Review Activities – Findings and Outcomes

Enhance community participation

2.4 The involvement of local people is fundamental to community planning, with NPs developing a range of innovative ways to enable the community to participate which reflect local circumstances and need. Whilst a wealth of activity is carried out by NPs there is scope to develop and enhance this activity further and there was strong agreement by review respondents of the need to strengthen community participation in NPs.

2.5 When asked what good community engagement was, for most respondents this meant inclusivity, with local decision-making seeking the input of communities of interest as well as communities of place. The involvement of people of all backgrounds and circumstances was considered important, with a range of

methods needed to enable them to share their experiences and contribute their ideas.

- 2.6 The need to develop ways of engaging communities of interest was identified as a key area of the review. Activity to support development in this area is already underway across the Neighbourhoods with the creation of a database of equalities groups in each of the areas. Whilst this presents a good step forward, there is an opportunity to incorporate this local activity within the scope of the review of the Edinburgh Equalities Network being taken forward by Corporate Governance to develop enhanced local models of engagement.
- 2.7 The importance of supporting young people's involvement was recognised at the establishment of NPs with the development of youth forums. Whilst the audit identified that links from forums to NPs were variable across the city, there is extensive work being carried out to engage young people across the NPs with activity in Liberton and Gilmerton NP highlighted as a particular area of success. The need to find new ways of engaging young people in democratic processes is being addressed by the Community Learning and Development Service with the development of the [Young People's Participation in Edinburgh Action Plan](#) which aims to increase and support youth participation, with this including links to NPs.
- 2.8 There is also scope to develop engagement with older people through building on the existing strong links from A City for All Ages to the NPs and through activity such as the ['Live Well in Later Life'](#) initiative which is being piloted in Western NP. This partnership event aims to promote awareness of older people's services and builds on the successful city event held in 2012.
- 2.9 The voluntary sector has an important contribution to make in supporting community engagement in NPs, particularly through its capacity to reach sections of the community least accessible to public sector partners and those not heard through traditional routes. There is scope to strengthen and develop this role further through the renewal of the approach to the third sector involvement in NPs referenced later in the report.
- 2.10 For NPs to be effective, there is a need for all partners to work together to enable all sections of the community to participate and to do this in a consistent and co-ordinated way. A joint community engagement plan provides a way of achieving this. There is scope to develop these plans alongside the development of the new Local Community Plans, with work on the community plans due to begin in the summer. This activity could also be complemented by a joint workforce development programme.
- 2.11 Further work could also be carried out to promote the use of the [Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement](#) which is a planning and recording tool created to assist in the design and delivery of effective community engagement. A key benefit of the tool is in bridging the gap between the principles of best

practice set out in the [Standards for Community Engagement](#), adopted by all NPs, and systems for putting this into practice.

- 2.12 A key finding from the review was that participation should not be something that happens at a meeting, or to a timetable set by partners, but should be a regular dialogue that takes place in real places where people go, using creative approaches to engagement. Whilst there was acknowledgement by respondents that engagement may be different across the NPs depending on what works in each place, there was an expressed desire for a focus on less formal engagement such as in libraries, shops, community centres and on the streets.
- 2.13 The Libraries Service already plays a significant role in supporting community engagement in NPs. With their physical location in the heart of communities, familiarity and accessibility to local people and existing contribution to the social life of neighbourhoods, they provide a valuable potential resource to increase community involvement in NPs.
- 2.14 Volunteers make a significant contribution to the City and across the neighbourhoods with local organisations often entirely staffed by volunteers or dependent on high levels of volunteer involvement. There is also increasing involvement of volunteers within public services. In aiming to strengthen community participation, by engaging with volunteers and developing stronger links to organisations supported by volunteers, NPs have a direct route to improving community engagement and better understanding community priorities. Volunteering helps build community resilience, capacity and can reduce reliance on statutory services and has significant benefits on an individual level. In doing this it is a key enabling factor for both the preventative and co-production agendas. NPs could have a strengthened role in promoting and developing volunteering locally. There are a number of practical ways for achieving this including promoting recruitment opportunities, developing one off volunteering projects in response to local priorities, hosting local award and recognition events for volunteers and engaging directly with local volunteers as a potential pool of already active citizens to widen participation in community councils.
- 2.15 A key area of work, identified in the scope of the review, is to develop new approaches to engaging communities and promote these ideas across the NPs. An earlier example of success in doing this was participatory budgeting which as an approach assists in increasing levels of participation and improving services through providing individuals and communities with a greater say in shaping what happens in their neighbourhood by involving them in taking decisions on spending priorities. This approach was promoted through the NP Conference held in September 2009 and the commissioning of training by the Participatory Budgeting Unit for NPs. As an outcome, the approach is now being run in two NPs, Leith and South Central.

- 2.16 Findings from the review found that respondents identified the [Leith Decides](#) programme as a prominent example of successful engagement. This is supported by the programme evaluation which shows 897 people participated in voting this year, and that of the projects applying for funding 26% had not been given a community grants award in the previous two years, and 23% were making an application for the very first time. The event provides a wide range of benefits and particularly in bringing different people together and creating a sense of community spirit. The demonstrated value of this approach provides a strong basis for potential roll out across NPs. There is also scope for identifying further funding streams that could be allocated using this approach. Initial discussions with the Parks and Green Space Service indicate there may be an opportunity to do this in relation to the capital budget subject to the availability of funds. Planning is also underway for an approved You(th) Decides participatory budgeting event for Almond NP in September 2013.
- 2.17 The use of social media to engage and communicate with residents was viewed by respondents to the review as a significant area of achievement. Since 2010, Neighbourhood Teams have adopted social media as a channel for having ‘real time’ dialogue with local residents, gathering intelligence and providing opportunities for communities to comment online about services. Evaluations of this locally themed activity have demonstrated an increased interest in online participation.

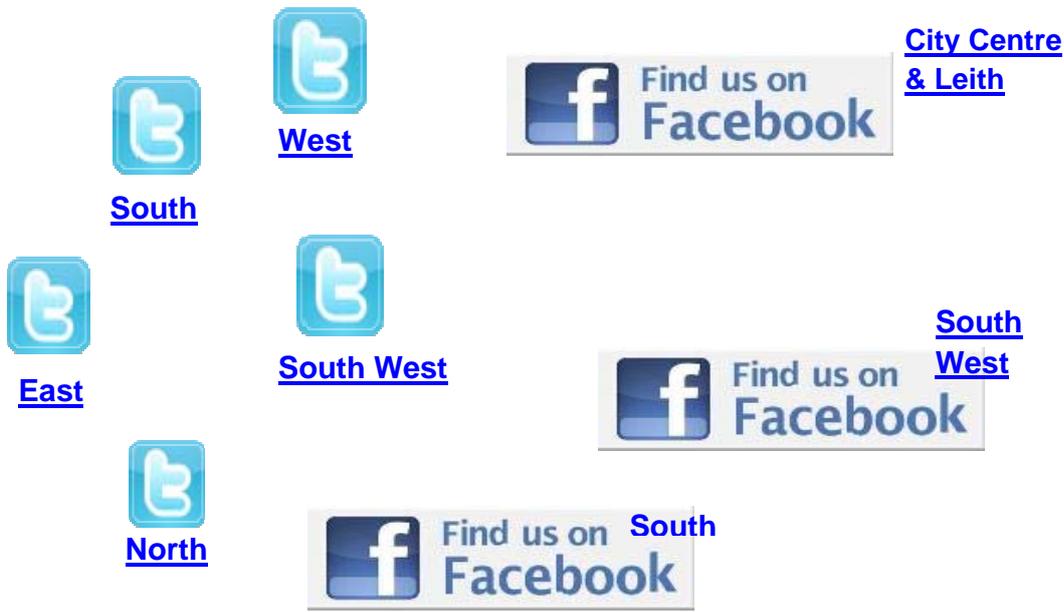


Diagram 4

- 2.18 Given this success, an important new area for development is the use of e-engagement. With increasing pressure on resources, it is recognised that the use of online tools represents a cost effective way of increasing awareness of NPs and increasing participation, together with engaging communities via

platforms they currently use. There is a wealth of scope to develop this form of engagement with options including the use of:

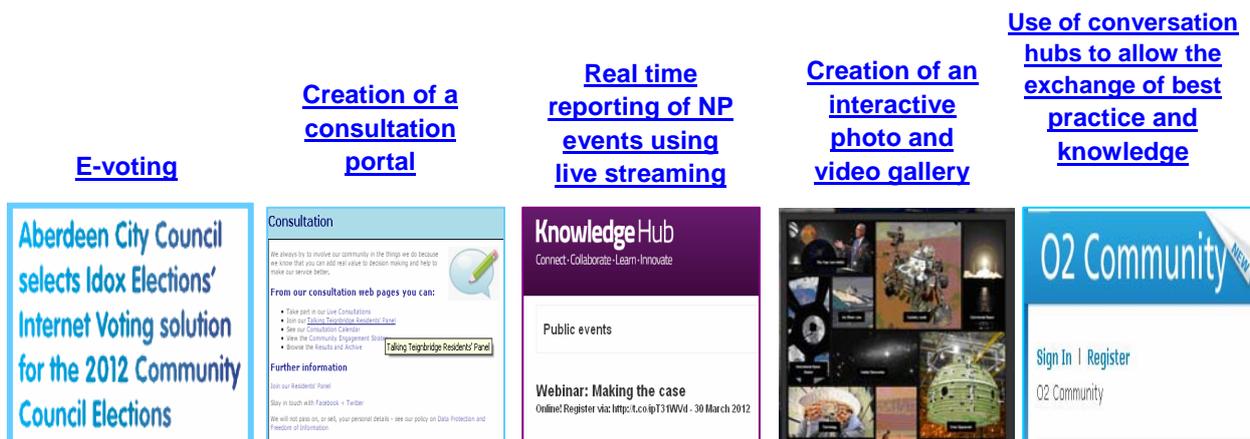


Diagram 5

These represent just a few examples of what might be developed to support engagement across NPs. The development of e-engagement is complementary and not a replacement for offline methods of engagement.

Develop and strengthen current practice

- 2.19 The survey and workshop consultation showed general support to the NP approach but acknowledged that the role of NPs needed to be strengthened with 70% of respondents agreeing to this statement.
- 2.20 Whilst it is acknowledged that one size does not fit all and NPs have different approaches they are all required to understand local needs, translate these into outcomes and carry out business in a way that enables these to be achieved. As Advisory Committees of the Council they are also required to operate within the Council governance framework.
- 2.21 The survey and workshop findings identified the need to reaffirm the remit of NPs and the role of individual partners (only 34% of respondents indicated that they understood this aspect of NPs). One way of addressing these issues is through the effective induction of partners. Whilst an induction programme was available when the NPs were first established there has not been a formalised method of providing this support on an ongoing basis although most NPs carry out some form of induction on an individual basis, with this ranging from informal briefings to the provision of structured handbooks. The re-introduction of a formal induction programme would assist in promoting a better understanding of NPs. Information on NPs is included within Services for Communities (SfC) staff induction and there is also scope to explore opportunities for expanding this provision across the Council and with partner agencies.

- 2.22 The audit of current practice identified differences in the way NPs were complying with operational governance requirements. For example, NP members are required to adhere to a code of conduct however the process for managing this is variable across the NPs. Similarly there is a requirement to maintain a register of interests and whilst elected members are already covered by the Council register there is no mechanism for recording this in relation to other members. With these issues in mind and to ensure a consistent approach across NPs, an Interim Charter for NPs has been produced, which refreshes the existing protocol and constitution, and this is attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.23 Specific comments were received as to whether NPs as part of the community planning framework in Edinburgh were an additional layer of bureaucracy and concerns were raised about the impact and transparency of decision making as a result.
- 2.24 The review found that there was a question regarding the extent to which the NPs represented the community both in terms of democratic accountability and the ability for residents to access the partnerships. Respondents to the survey felt that no one person could adequately speak for the entire voluntary sector or for all community groups in the area.
- 2.25 Voluntary sector representation on NPs is drawn from the local voluntary sector forums. The purpose of the forums is to enable voluntary sector issues and views to be considered as part of NP business, with this being done through the nomination of a forum representative to sit on the NP Board. The forums also provide a vehicle for local organisations to network, share information and identify opportunities for co-operative working. The audit showed the engagement of forums in the NPs varies across the city. This variation is acknowledged in the [position statement produced by Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council](#) as a contribution to the review. Participation is considered to be strongest where there has been a history of voluntary activity in an area. The value of the involvement of the third sector is recognised, bringing as it does, an understanding of local needs and experience of developing innovative and preventative services. Given this there is scope to work with EVOC and the Third Sector Strategy Group, which comprises members drawn from the forums across the city, to refresh and renew the approach to involving the third sector in NPs.
- 2.26 How local groups including community councils are involved in NPs was a contentious area in the review. Some respondents to the consultation objected to what they perceived as non-democratic representation on boards, others would like to expand board membership to include a broader range of organisations than currently attend and some felt the size of boards was already an issue, with other partners being able to crowd-out the priorities of communities.

- 2.27 Limiting community representation on NP Boards to community councils was also considered an issue by the Edinburgh Tenants' Federation (ETF), first raised with the NP Conveners' Group in 2011. In response the issues raised by ETF a review of tenant participation in NPs was carried out. This comprised a health check of tenant involvement carried out by SfC officers, together with focus groups to gather tenant perceptions. The [report](#) on the review findings identified the need to strengthen tenant involvement with suggestions for this including working jointly with ETF to better promote NPs and developing further the role of the Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) Contact Officer. These officers were put in place by SfC specifically to maintain links between the Council and RTOs with this including NP activity.
- 2.28 Membership of NP Boards is out with the scope of the review. However, there is an opportunity to do more to assist community councils fulfil their role as the main representation of community views on NP Boards with this forming a core element of the options for enhancing community participation in NPs.
- 2.29 Concern was also raised in the review of the possible overlap of areas of interest between NPs and community councils. Two areas where this may present difficulties are planning and licensing matters. Community councils are statutory consultees under planning legislation and through the local protocol agreement NPs have a role in commenting on local development plans. Activities relating to applications for Licence in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 currently sit within the remit of NPs, although these have not been actively promoted or facilitated, and this is traditionally a significant area of interest for community councils. As part of the review, meetings have been held with the Planning and Licensing Services to identify current issues and potential options for improvement to clarify and enhance the respective roles of NPs and community councils in relation to these matters.
- 2.30 The review found that there was some concern regarding the size and diversity of partnership areas, with there being a perception that a partnership covering a large area would have little time to devote to the issues of any one part of the area. However, a particular area of success identified was NP sub groups which respondents felt were able to devote time to particular issues. Sub groups have an important role in taking forward NP activity and in providing more opportunities for stakeholder participation in NPs. Whilst identified as an area of success, respondents to the review also indicated that the effectiveness of an NP as a whole could be improved by partners other than the Council taking a lead in sub group activities.
- 2.31 In addressing the diversity of community needs across areas, there are currently two approaches which could provide further learning opportunities for NPs. In Forth NP the sub group structure has been redesigned and is now geographically rather than thematically focused, providing the separate communities that comprise the NP area to be individually involved in priority

- setting. In the Portobello and Craigmillar and Craigentiny and Duddingston NPs, [Total Neighbourhood](#) is seeking to develop a fully integrated approach that delivers better outcomes for individuals and communities with a focus on prevention. The approach is being tested in two small geographical areas, Niddrie House and Lochend, selected on the basis of local knowledge of need and service demand, together with evidence from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 2.32 It is recognised that whilst there is already a wealth of good practice taking place across the NPs (with this providing the basis of previous reports to Policy and Strategy Committee on 28 February 2012 and Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee on 27 November 2012, there is currently not a systematic way for sharing this information across the city. To date activity has been reported on an ad hoc basis at city level or within each NP limiting the scope for promotion and dissemination.
- 2.33 The newly established Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee and the ongoing NP Conveners' Group provide a valuable resource for sharing practice more widely. The development of the new NP Communications Strategy and [NP Public Performance Framework](#) will also provide an effective mechanism for disseminating practice and reporting achievements. Other opportunities for sharing practice include the provision of networking events, joint partner information sessions, workforce development opportunities and an annual conference. There are already models of good practice to build on with the successful [Health Sub Group events](#) held in 2011 and 2012 and the joint Almond and Forth NP Summit meetings held to address local concerns about access routes and anti-social behaviour. These types of activities would also help address the lack of co-terminosity of partner boundaries, identified in the review as an area of concern, through enabling better joined up working and could be complemented by partner activity. Respondents to the consultation indicated a willingness to support the development of NPs through information-sharing and raising awareness of NPs amongst their own organisations and with communities.
- 2.34 In addition to city wide improvement activity, there is a requirement to support the development of individual NPs. The recent pilot of the PSIF Improvement Service Outcome Focused Self Assessment Checklist in the Western and Inverleith NPs provided the NPs with a tool to consider and evidence whether their governance, planning and performance and resource management are fit for purpose in delivering improved outcomes from their communities. The findings from the national pilot have been recently published in the [Self Assessment in Community Planning Partnerships Project Evaluation Report](#). The evaluation demonstrated the value of the approach in assessing the effectiveness of partnerships and assisting in the identification of improvement actions. There is scope to roll out this approach across the NPs and to create a complementary support programme to assist NPs in developing their role.

Strengthen the strategic influence of NPs

- 2.35 As part of the review respondents were asked to rate the current effectiveness of NPs in influencing partners' decision making, service design and delivery and budget allocation. The majority of respondents did not feel that NPs were effective in any of these aspects, with combined ratings ranging from 13% for influencing the decisions of partners, to 18% for influencing service design and delivery and 19% for influencing budget allocation.
- 2.36 In identifying what better influence would look like respondents felt that giving NPs a greater role in policy and decision making would increase the influence they have. It was felt that the views of and advice from NPs should be considered by partners such as the Council, Health and the Police to demonstrate joined up decision making.
- 2.37 While most consultation respondents felt that a lack of NP influence was an issue that should be addressed, this was not universally accepted. Some respondents thought it undesirable to increase the influence of unelected bodies not widely understood by the public. Others felt that the NPs current level of influence as advisory committees was appropriate.
- 2.38 Where there was an accepted need, suggestions for what might be done to increase influence included providing a clear remit for NPs and providing an increased consultative role for NPs in policy making for all partner organisations, with partnerships being given appropriate notice to allow them to seek community views.
- 2.39 In identifying current good practice, respondents acknowledged the success of the co-development of the neighbourhood management approach by SfC alongside the creation of NPs with this being considered to have resulted in the provision of more responsive services. A further area of success identified in Edinburgh has been the joint working with the Police, with the Tasking and Co-ordinating Groups and the use of NP community safety sub groups to identify key local priorities leading to an increased service responsiveness, and evidenced based reductions in anti-social behaviour and youth disorder.
- 2.40 Increasing responsiveness to community needs and priorities is a key driver of the Roads and Transport Service review. Initial engagement with NPs as part of the review process has been positive and there is a commitment to build on this early success through developing a sustainable relationship with NPs and communities in moving forward. In doing this recognition is given to the previously successful model of the Winter Weather Working Together initiative which led to service re-design in response to community needs and priorities.

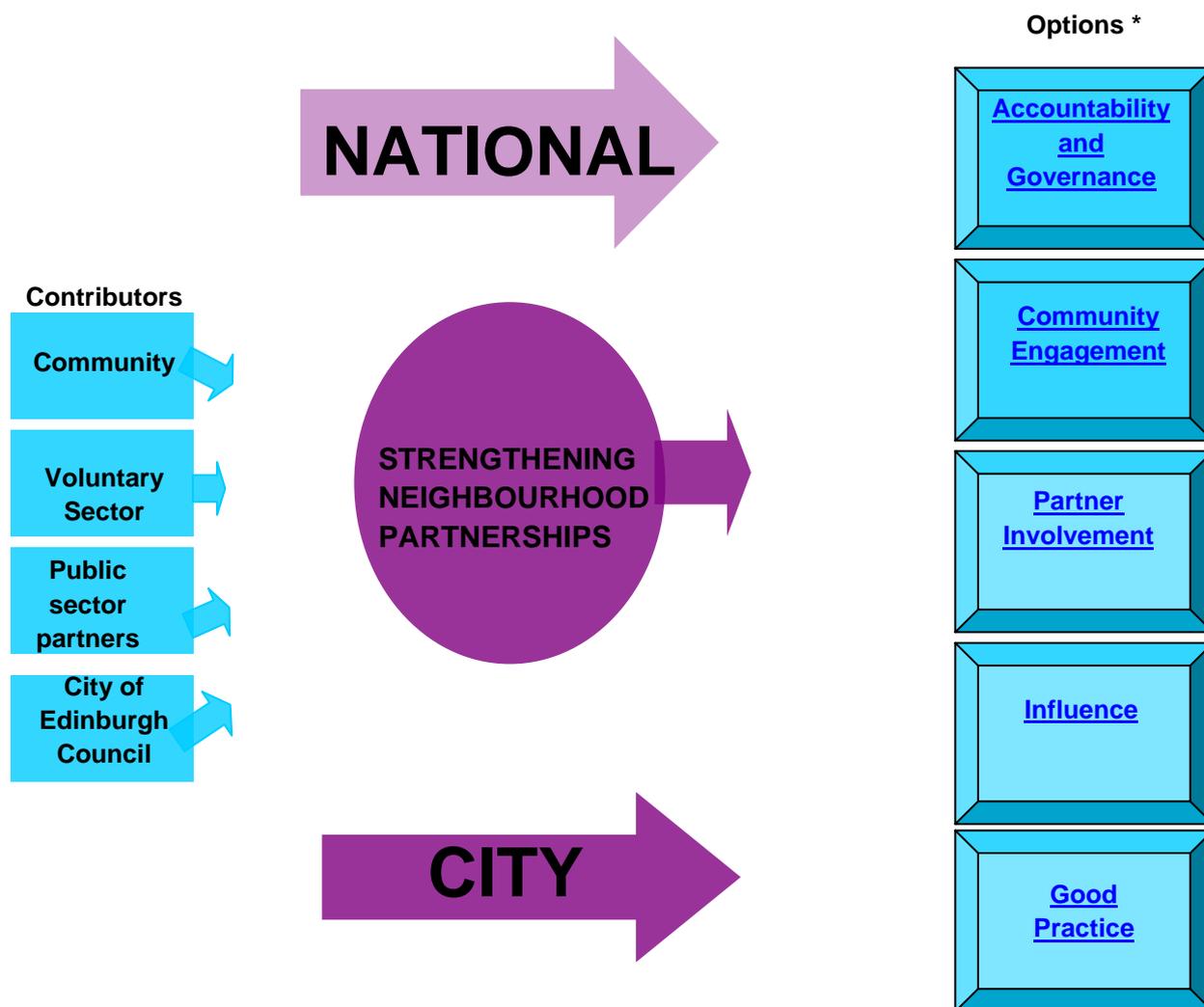
- 2.41 Respondents felt that NP Boards and networks should be seen as experts on local resources, service provision and able to sign post partners and agencies to local groups and people with the knowledge and expertise required to inform decisions. This is consistent with the existing 'intelligent client' model that forms the basis of the approach to the commissioning of employability services where local knowledge and the priorities identified in the Local Community Plans were used by the Commissioning Board to inform their decision making process.
- 2.42 As part of the review initial discussions have taken place with Children and Families to consider the relationship of NPs to the newly established neighbourhood based Children's Services Management Groups and the Children's and Edinburgh Community Learning and Development Partnerships, both of which form part of the community planning framework in the city. An initial [discussion paper](#) identifies a number of options for establishing effective links with the aim of adding value whilst avoiding duplication of planning and reporting.
- 2.43 Whilst there are currently links from NPs to the strategic partnership responsible for health inequality, with the integration of health and social care revised arrangements for a new Health and Social Care Partnership are being considered. This creates an opportunity to strengthen and renew this relationship. There is also scope to influence the city's approach to tackling poverty and inequality with this anticipated to be further considered at an Edinburgh Partnership summit in September. A key challenge identified in the [Health and Social Care response](#) to the review is for this future relationship to NPs to achieve good linkage with broader policy and resource decisions rather than in relation to the small direct partnership spends. The current priorities for preventative action through specific funding for health inequality are healthy eating, physical activity, social capital and healthy environments and green space. With the local focus of this action it is considered crucial that good links are maintained with NPs and the network of local agencies and groups in each of the areas, with the Local Community Plans identified as a key reference in defining local actions.
- 2.44 Also at the strategic level, work has been carried out to strengthen the links to the Edinburgh Partnership and specifically to ensure the contribution of Local Community Plans to the delivery of agreed City outcomes are reflected in the new City Community Plan.
- 2.45 A key element of the review was to identify measures to increase the influence of NPs on resources, including the scope for further devolvement of Council budgets to a neighbourhood level and strengthening the role of NPs in budget setting processes.
- 2.46 Whilst some respondents to the consultation suggested that increasing the budgets and accountability of NPs was an appropriate and logical step this was contentious with others not considering this an appropriate role, identifying that

budgets did not necessarily need to be held by NPs to be influenced by them, and that multiple small budgets might in some cases be spent less efficiently.

- 2.47 The review findings did identify that respondents felt NPs could be more successful with additional funding both for grants and environmental works. The existing spending through the Neighbourhood Environmental Programme was viewed as a significant achievement for NPs by allowing more local control and tailoring of projects to local priorities. Early proposals are being developed to allow increased community influence on the Parks and Green Space Service capital spend.
- 2.48 The Community Grants programme was also viewed as being successful, with the Pentlands Funding Panel being cited as an example of good practice in the operation of this fund. There was some concern that several years into the grant funding scheme applicants were 'the same groups' coming back for funding repeatedly, rather than new projects seeking funding and that information on funding was not known to the general community. As part of the Community Funding Support Programme for NPs initial consideration is being given to an online funding portal.
- 2.49 It was felt that measures aimed at improving awareness, engagement and participation in NPs would also increase influence.

Improvement Options

- 2.50 In moving the approach forward NPs can be strengthened in a number of key areas. These are set out in Diagram 6 below.



(* A further detailed description of each of the options under the five themes can be found by clicking the appropriate hyperlink. Copies of this information can be made available in hard copy.)

Diagram 6

- 2.51 Given the complexity of the NP role in relation to budgets initial work has focused on identifying potential areas for further exploration.
- 2.52 Together the options presented form a suite of improvement actions for NPs which are complementary to the national direction for community planning and provide a tangible opportunity for communities and partners to strengthen the role of NPs in a local context.
- 2.53 This suite of improvement actions is underpinned by the development of a new Communications Strategy which was identified in the review as a key area to partnership success. NPs need to ensure that their communication channels are clear, consistent and transparent and encourage participation by all sections of the community. The review identified the need to raise awareness of the role of NPs, focusing on the benefits achieved through their engagement with communities. The new strategy will directly address this need, whilst

contributing to the Council's ongoing approach to improving communication and engagement in the City.

- 2.54 Being able to measure performance and demonstrate success is also of critical importance to NPs. The current [NP Public Performance Framework](#) was produced in April 2011. This incorporated Local Community Plan performance reporting and a partnership scorecard. It was designed to provide NPs with the tools to monitor performance, evidence improvements and hold partners accountable for services delivered locally. The need for the continuous development of performance monitoring and reporting is recognised and the current framework is subject to ongoing development.
- 2.55 As part of the review consultation respondents were asked to identify measures of success. In addition, a dedicated session on performance was held as part of the programme of consultation workshops led by the Corporate Governance Business Intelligence Team. Initial suggestions for measures included awareness of NPs, feedback from those affected and an assessment of the impact of outcomes, though the difficulty in doing this last element was acknowledged. Ideas from the review will be used to inform the future approach with a performance sounding board set up to help drive this work forward.

Making Change Happen

- 2.56 To achieve the proposed change requires the continued contribution by all partners. The review has already demonstrated there is a broad willingness to support the strengthening of NPs with this based on feedback from the consultation, and from the wide range of contributions made by partners. This is illustrated in Diagram 7 below.



‘Community Planning in Action – Neighbourhood Partnership Review – an interactive model for change’

Diagram 7

2.57 The momentum for change within Edinburgh and the commitment by all partners to strengthen NPs provides an opportunity to deliver improved outcomes with communities and to realise the aspirations for public sector transformation expressed both nationally and at city level.

2.58 As we move from Local Community Plan priorities to an outcome based approach in developing the 2014-17 Local Community Plans there is a real

opportunity for the commitment of partners to be translated into local action that delivers significantly improved outcomes for communities.

2.59 In moving forward the next steps are:

- Consideration by NPs of review options – June to September 2013.
- Engagement activity for revised Local Community Plans – April to December 2013.
- Implementation of review options and production of NP Strategic Improvement Plan – June to October 2013.
- Progress report to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee – December 2013.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To recommend that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee:

1. Notes the initial work carried out to review NPs.
2. Notes the significant contribution from partners to the review process.
3. Agrees the improvement options.
4. Agrees to refer the report to the 12 NPs in the city for further consideration and incorporation in future development activity.
5. Agrees to receive a further report detailing proposals for a strategic improvement plan for NPs in December 2013.

Mark Turley

Director Services for Communities

Links

Coalition pledges	P33 – Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used
Council outcomes	CO23 – Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO24 – The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO2 – Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health SO3 – Edinburgh’s children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential SO4 – Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Review Work Activities Appendix 2 – Interim Charter for Neighbourhood Partnerships

REVIEW WORK ACTIVITIES

- 1 Audit of current practice based on a questionnaire survey of staff from Neighbourhood Teams.
- 2 Holding of 5 stakeholder sounding boards on the theme of 'Strengthening Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) and Enhancing Community Participation'. Participants comprised community representatives, voluntary and public sector partners, elected members and Council officers. Each session began with a presentation, followed by a Powerpoint voting exercise covering key questions related to the review before participants were divided into groups and asked to discuss questions relating to the themes of community participation and influence of NPs.
- 3 Online survey advertised widely on websites including NP, Council and partner websites.
- 4 Holding of the Inverleith NP outcome focused partnership self assessment workshop supported by the Improvement Service.
- 5 Production of position statement on the operational status of Voluntary Sector Forums by Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council.
- 6 Meetings with Children and Families to identify options for improving links between Children's Services Management Groups, Children's Partnership and Edinburgh Community Learning and Development Partnership and NPs. The integration of the action plan for 'Young People's Participation in Edinburgh' within review process.
- 7 Production of a report on the review of tenant participation in NPs which was based on the findings from a staff 'health check' and focus groups with 24 tenants from across the city.
- 8 Updating of constitution and protocol framework in line with Council new political management arrangements and production of new Interim Charter for NPs.
- 9 Meeting with Edinburgh Volunteer Centre to identify options for strengthening the role of volunteering within NPs.
- 10 Desk top research into engagement practice to inform the NP approach including opportunities for e-engagement.
- 11 Meetings with Corporate Governance to identify opportunities for strengthening the links to Strategic Partnerships and Edinburgh Partnership, linkages to future work relating to Third Party funding and strengthening the NP contribution to the City Community Plan.

- 12 Review of options for increasing the influence of NPs on resources.
- 13 Meetings with Planning, Licensing, Parks and Green Space and Roads and Transport Services to identify ways of strengthening links to NPs.
- 14 Audit of progress on implementing existing performance framework and holding of stakeholder sounding board to identify options for the further development of the performance framework for NPs.

NEIGHBOURHOOD
PARTNERSHIP



Interim Neighbourhood Partnership Charter

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Interim Neighbourhood Partnership Charter

Community planning is not a new concept in Edinburgh. It is, however, evolving. Recent changes to legislation have given community planning a statutory basis, empowering local authorities to initiate, facilitate and develop community planning.

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 contained a package of measures intended to support local determination and to deliver better, more responsive, public services. This Act was followed by the recent Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, which brings increased clarity to partnership arrangements.

These changes create the opportunity to increase the influence and impact of community planning with the Neighbourhood Partnerships being an integral part of the process. Partnership action builds upon the good practice of Lothian and Borders Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, Community Councils and NHS Lothian to influence, shape and drive forward improvement in local services.

1 Purpose and Position

1.1 Purpose

When the Neighbourhood Partnerships were established, their specific remit was to set the strategic direction and priorities for the area and help to build and co-ordinate effective partnership activity. Neighbourhood Partnerships also aimed to be the focus and forum for effective, inclusive partnerships working across the city. Partnership activities focus on issues which affect local quality of life including:

- The quality of local services.
- Longer-term policy and planning issues.
- The quality of community engagement and participation.

The twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships all produce Local Community Plans, which set out local priorities as agreed by all partners. Action plans are produced to monitor delivery of these priorities.

These plans are linked to the City's Community Plan and the City's Single Outcome Agreement.

1.2 Neighbourhood Partnerships as Advisory Committees

When the Council considered the creation of a model constitution for Neighbourhood Partnerships in 2007, two main options were explored in terms of s.57 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The first option was to establish Neighbourhood Partnerships as full Committees of the Council. In terms of the Act, full Committees of the Council require that at least two thirds of the Committee are elected members.

The second option was to establish the Neighbourhood Partnerships as Advisory Committees to the Council. An advisory committee can consist of any person appointed by the Authority. The role of an advisory committee is to advise the

appointing authority *on any matter relating to the discharge of its function*. This is clearly a wide remit and discretion is given to the local authority to define the committee's remit further. As an advisory committee, decision making is retained by the Authority with the NP taking on an advisory role.

This latter option was adopted as it was felt this approach met the aspirations of councillors, partners and community representatives by maximising the involvement of all partners whilst meeting the requirements of the current legislative framework governing Council decision making.

2. Membership

2.1 Membership of each Neighbourhood Partnership should comprise:

- Councillors from the ward or wards which make up the Neighbourhood Partnership area.
- A representative from the Scottish Police Authority.
- A representative from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- A representative from NHS Lothian.
- Representatives from Community Councils in the area of the Neighbourhood Partnership, or representatives from another properly constituted community organisation in the area should there be no Community Council.
- A representative of voluntary agencies in the area of the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- Representatives from other bodies able to make a specific contribution may be invited to participate by the Partnership.

Neighbourhood Partnerships may invite other individuals and/or representatives of other public, community or private organisations with expertise or interest in their area, either as regular participants or for a specific issue. These other individuals will not have voting rights.

There will be an equal number of councillors and Community Council Representatives.

2.2 The Edinburgh Partnership

The Edinburgh Partnership as the city's Community Planning Partnership provides leadership in the form of strategic policy direction for the city's partnerships through dialogue and actions identified in the city's Community Plan. The Edinburgh Partnership is charged to engage with communities of place, communities of interest and the city's statutory, voluntary and business sectors to meet the needs of the city.

2.3 Community Councils

Neighbourhood Partnerships rely upon the involvement of many stakeholders in their drive towards improved service. In terms of community representation, a general

principle is that community councils are at the heart of community planning. The input from Community Councils is crucial in the understanding of the needs of the community.

For selection of community representatives to the Partnership, the relevant Community Council or other community organisation should either call a special meeting or set aside a specific time in a normal meeting, for the nomination of representatives to the Board of the Neighbourhood Partnership. The selection meeting should be widely publicised.

Each Community Council will have one seat on a Neighbourhood Partnership for their designated representative. In addition to a designated substitute, Community Councils may also occasionally send a different representative with specialist knowledge (for example, planning) to represent their interests according to the agenda of the meeting.

3. Decision-Making & Accountability

3.1 Decision-making

As advisory committees, the Neighbourhood Partnerships may submit recommendations to the Council or other committee of the Council. In addition, recommendations can be made to a partner authority or organisation on the exercise of functions delegated to those service areas. Guidance can also be given to the Director of a service area or to an officer of a partner authority or organisation.

Where the Neighbourhood Manager holds the delegated power to make particular decisions, the Neighbourhood Manager is expected to comply with advice given by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

A Neighbourhood Partnership should aim for consensus. Where this is not possible, the matter may be determined by a simple majority of the members of the Partnership who are present.

3.2 Accountability

Neighbourhood Partnerships are accountable to the communities they serve for the development and delivery of meaningful, relevant and effective local community plans.

Some service providers will make a valuable contribution as core members of Neighbourhood Partnerships, but not all service providers will sit on all Partnerships, and some won't sit on any. However, all service providers have a responsibility to be accountable to the Partnerships, which can be seen as a statutory obligation under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003¹ and the new Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

Each Neighbourhood Partnership will report annually on the following:

¹ Which augments provisions for public oversight of decision making put forward in the Local Government (1973) Scotland Act.

- Outcomes measured against the objectives of the current Local Community Plan
- Specific objectives for the coming year and partner commitments towards achieving those objectives;
- Examples of good practice and local community engagement activity.

3.3 Requirements to grant public access to meetings and meeting papers

Access to Information legislation was enacted in 1985 to give members of the public greater access to Local Authority decisions. The provisions of this Act require that full details of, and access to all Council meetings are made available to the public. As an advisory committee, Neighbourhood Partnerships fall within the requirements of the Access to Information legislation.

Neighbourhood Partnerships are governed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and accordingly must comply with the requirement to hold meetings in public and the minimum standards in regard to the availability of information. This legislation aims to ensure that decisions taken at meetings are done so in public with full access for the press and public to the papers and the decision making process. Thus when Neighbourhood Partnerships are making a decision on what they formally recommend to the Neighbourhood Manager they should do so in a meeting open to the public and the papers published in accordance with the Act. This does not preclude meetings being held in private to discuss local or Neighbourhood Partnership matters.

When a Neighbourhood Partnership holds a meeting in public:

- The agenda must be collated, agreed and published 3 clear working days in advance.
- Notification of the meeting must be made to members of the public.
- Members of the public must be allowed access to the meeting.
- Minutes of the meeting must be produced and kept for 6 years.
- A copy of a minute of each meeting should be signed by the Convener of the NP that approved the minute and sent to archives at the end of the Council year.

3.4 Code of Conduct

The Scottish Parliament demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of high standards in public life by passing the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 as one of its earliest statutes. The Act introduced a new ethical framework which requires Scottish Ministers to issue a Code of Conduct for Councillors and a Model Code of Conduct for members of the devolved public bodies listed in Schedule 3 to the Act.

Whilst members of neighbourhood partnerships may be bound by their own code of conduct, as a minimum, all members are expected to comply with the Standards Commission for Scotland's Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct (where

applicable), notable excerpts of which are detailed in Appendix 1. It is each member's responsibility to ensure that they declare any interests. A copy of The Standards Commission for Scotland's Guidance on the Councillors' Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

3.5 Mediation and Dispute Resolution

The record of partnership working in Edinburgh is excellent, even with controversial issues almost always decided by consensus and compromise rather than having to go to a vote. It is expected that there will be few occasions within the local community planning programme where dispute resolution is necessary. Nevertheless, it is important to set out procedures should they be required.

If a dispute relates to a Council policy or budget decision, it should be referred in the first instance to the Council Executive for adjudication. For all disputes involving the internal working of Neighbourhood Partnerships, or the relationship of Neighbourhood Partnerships to other organisations, including the Council, application can be made by any aggrieved party, or by the Neighbourhood Partnership as a whole, to the Edinburgh Partnership through its Chair, for the establishment of a dispute resolution panel, to be selected by the Edinburgh Partnership Board.

Following consultation, the Edinburgh Partnership Board will determine if the complaint has substance. If so, the panel appointed will consist of two representatives of the Council, a representative from each of two other partner organisations and one community representative, currently sitting on a Neighbourhood Partnership Board, all from outwith the area in question. A Chair should be appointed from among the five by mutual consent. The dispute resolution panel should sit within 30 days of its appointment to consider all aspects of the issue and suggest a binding resolution.

The Chair of the Panel should authorise the preparation of a short report on the causes of the dispute and the means to avoid such disputes in future.

Appendix 1

Notable excerpts from the Councillors Code of Conduct:

SECTION 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

Conduct at Meetings

3.2 You must respect the chair, your colleagues, Council employees and any members of the public present during meetings of the Council, its committees or sub-committees or of any public bodies where you have been appointed by, and represent the Council. You must comply with rulings from the chair in the conduct of the business of these meetings.

Gifts and Hospitality

3.7 You must not accept any offer by way of gift or hospitality which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour or disadvantage to any individual or organisation. You should also consider whether there may be any reasonable perception that any gift received by your spouse or cohabitee or by any company in which you have a controlling interest, or by a partnership of which you are a partner, can or would influence your judgement. The term "gift" includes benefits such as relief from indebtedness, loan concessions, or provision of services at a cost below that generally charged to members of the public. You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance of gifts or hospitality offered to you.

Confidentiality Requirements

3.14 Council proceedings and printed material are generally open to the public. This should be the basis on which you normally work, but there may be times when you will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the Council in a confidential manner, in which case you must observe such requirements for confidentiality.

SECTION 5: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

5.1 The key principles of the Code, especially those which specify integrity, honesty and openness are given further practical effect by the requirement for you to declare interests at meetings which you attend. The rules on declaration of interest, along with the rules which require registration of interests, are intended to produce transparency in regard to interests which might influence, or be thought to influence, your actions.

5.2 It is your responsibility to make decisions about whether you have to declare an interest or make a judgement as to whether a declared interest prevents you from taking part in any discussions or voting. You are in the best position to assess your personal circumstances and to judge how these circumstances affect your role in regard to a particular matter. You can, of course, seek advice from appropriate Council officers or from other sources which may be available to you.

In making decisions for which you are personally responsible you are advised to err on the side of caution.

- 5.3 You may feel able to state truthfully that an interest would not influence your role in discussion or decision-making. You must, however, always comply with the *objective test* (“the objective test”) which is *whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role.*

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Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Partnership Terms of Reference

Constitution

- 1.1. Membership of each Neighbourhood Partnership should comprise:
 - 1.1.1 Councillors from the ward or wards which make up the Neighbourhood Partnership area;
 - 1.1.2 A representative from the Scottish Police Authority;
 - 1.1.3 A representative from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
 - 1.1.4 A representative from NHS Lothian;
 - 1.1.5 Representatives from Community Councils in the area of the Neighbourhood Partnership, or representatives from another properly constituted community organisation in the area should there be no Community Council;
 - 1.1.6 A representative from voluntary agencies in the area of the Neighbourhood Partnership;
 - 1.1.7 Representatives from other bodies able to make a specific contribution may be invited to participate by the Partnership;
 - 1.1.8 Neighbourhood Partnerships may invite other individuals and/or representatives of other public, private or voluntary organisations with expertise or interest in their area, either as regular participants or for a specific issue. These other individuals will not have voting rights.
- 1.1.8 There will be an equal number of Councillors and Community Council representatives.

Convener and Vice-Conveners

- 1.2. The Convener will be a member of the City of Edinburgh Council.

Quorum

- 1.3. Subject to law the quorum of a Neighbourhood Partnership will be one third of the number of voting members of the Neighbourhood Partnership. In no case will any business be transacted unless at least two voting members are present.

Substitution

- 1.4. Substitutes are permitted.

Delegated functions

- 1.5. Power is delegated to the Neighbourhood Partnerships:

- 1.5.1 To make recommendations to the relevant neighbourhood manager on the services planned and/or delivered within that neighbourhood partnership area.
- 1.5.2 To refer to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee for consideration any financial or performance issue which might have implications for the policy or programme development within the remit of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee.
- 1.5.3 To report, as required, on any matter within the Neighbourhood Partnership's remit to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee.
- 1.5.3 To create sub-groups as necessary to advise the neighbourhood partnership.
- 1.5.4 To refer back to Council, the appropriate Executive Committee, director, directorate, partner authority or organisation guidance or feedback on the exercise of functions delegated to them.
- 1.5.5 Each NP shall submit to the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee and the Edinburgh Partnership an annual report on progress that must include details of performance for the year past and a financial report covering the same period.