

# Culture and Communities Committee

3.00pm, Thursday, 11 October 2018

## Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation of Governance Arrangements

Item number	5.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

### Executive Summary

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This report gives an update on the Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation of Governance arrangements.

The report summarises the consultation proposals, which were informed by the review process, together the feedback from elected members and officers to date. The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee considered a previous version of this report at its meeting on 2 October 2018. Details of their decision, together with an update of the next steps is also provided.

## Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation of Governance Arrangements

### 1. Recommendations

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It is recommended that Culture and Communities Committee:

- 1.1 notes the decision of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 2 October 2018; and
- 1.2 notes the next steps, as set out in paragraphs 3.22 and 3.23, including the proposals for the Council's future consideration of this matter.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The Edinburgh Partnership Board, at its meeting on 7 December 2017, agreed to carry out a review and consultation of community planning governance arrangements. This decision was informed by a proposal from the City of Edinburgh Council which identified an opportunity to enhance governance arrangements in the city and to develop a locality focused approach following the establishment of Locality Committees in 2017.
- 2.2 A Project Board was established to set out the scope and timescale for this programme of work which was agreed by the Edinburgh Partnership at its meeting on 8 March 2018. The approach encompasses all community planning arrangements in the city and has been carried out in two phases, an initial review followed by a formal period of consultation with key stakeholders.
- 2.3 The Edinburgh Partnership considered the review and consultation findings at its meeting on 24 September 2018. Further work was requested on proposed new governance arrangements, with a report to be produced for consideration at its meeting on 30 October 2018.
- 2.4 Consideration needs to be given to the complex legislative framework within which any new governance arrangements would currently sit. The Local Government Act 1973 and the support for community planning within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 are equally relevant. However, the review may highlight tensions between what is desirable into the future and what can legally be put in place at present. While this review must operate within the reality of current legislation, an opportunity to raise any issues exists as part of the Local Governance Review which Scottish Government have embarked upon jointly with

COSLA. Scottish Government is seeking submissions by December 2018 and officers will be engaging with elected members to develop a Council response.

- 2.5 In addition, it is important to note that the Council intends to undertake a number of associated reviews that may influence any future approach to community planning, namely:
  - 2.5.1 Planned review of the Scheme for Community Councils and future provisions under the Local Democracy Bill; and
  - 2.5.2 Planned review of the Council governance framework which will include Locality Committees and Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- 2.6 Clearly, how the Council configures its locality structures and community working must relate effectively and efficiently to the partnership arrangements.
- 2.7 The Corporate Strategy and Policy Committee considered a report on the review and consultation at its meeting on 2 October 2018. The Committee agreed the following:
  - 2.7.1 Noted that locality communities, including Neighbourhood Partnerships, Community Councils and residents, have been waiting for well over a year to have certainty over the governance arrangements for their participation in community planning and that continued uncertainty is not acceptable.
  - 2.7.2 Noted that the Edinburgh Partnership decided on September 24th to put in place locality partnership arrangements and requested that detailed recommendations be brought to its October meeting.
  - 2.7.3 Agreed that Locality Partnerships are best placed to set up and develop any locality sub structures, and to engage and consult with their communities for agreement by the Edinburgh Partnership, and request that the convener convey this to the Edinburgh Partnership.
- 2.8 This decision will be conveyed to the Edinburgh Partnership to inform its further consideration of the matter when it meets on 30 October 2018.

### **3. Main report**

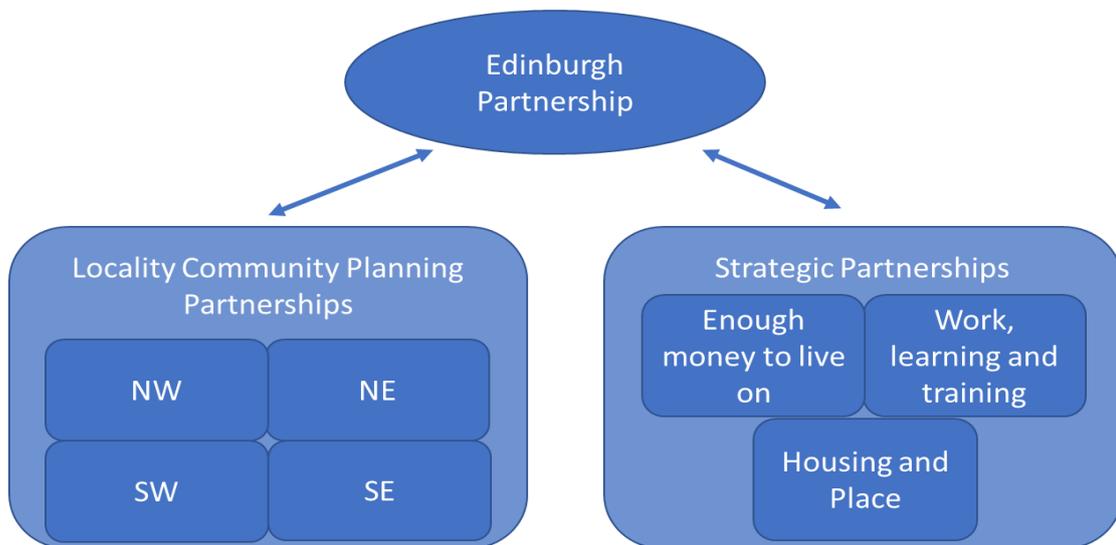
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- 3.1 The Edinburgh Partnership Board recognised that the existing community planning arrangements in the city, having evolved over time, are complex with the model comprising three levels: city, locality and neighbourhood. The Board identified that there was an opportunity to streamline and simplify these arrangements to:
  - 3.1.1 provide a new framework that is based on a shared understanding and clarity of purpose;
  - 3.1.2 strengthen the approach to partnership working;
  - 3.1.3 provide greater accountability and transparency; and
  - 3.1.4 strengthen community influence and participation.

- 3.2 The review phase assessed the effectiveness, strengths and challenges of the current arrangements and opportunities for change/improvement, together with different ideas for the future model. Stakeholders from across the community planning ‘family’ of partnerships were engaged, including elected members.
- 3.3 The findings from the review provided the basis of the formal consultation from 16 July to 9 September 2018.

**Consultation Proposal**

- 3.4 The consultation was framed around a proposed streamlined governance model based on
  - 3.4.1 retaining the Edinburgh Partnership but with a refreshed remit and membership;
  - 3.4.2 strategic/city partnership groups focused on the delivery of the priorities of the community plan; and
  - 3.4.3 four new Locality Community Planning Partnerships, replacing the existing arrangements at a locality/neighbourhood level.



- 3.5 This proposal acknowledged that there would need to be community and operational arrangements below the local community planning partnerships but did not determine what shape this should take as this may differ depending upon historic or previously successful ways of working which may exist in different localities.
- 3.6 The Locality Community Planning Partnerships would be responsible for the delivery of the Locality Improvement Plan priorities, as well as the ongoing identification of future priorities and working with communities to develop solutions.
- 3.7 Three elected member sessions and one officer session was held, in addition to the wider consultation and engagement which also involved elected members.

## **Relationship between Edinburgh Partnership decision and Council decisions**

- 3.8 The decision making powers the Edinburgh Partnership Board has and how this relates to Council's decision making powers is also an issue for consideration by elected members.
- 3.9 The Edinburgh Partnership Board has not been set up as a legally constituted body and so has no formal decision making powers. However, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Act makes it a legal requirement that the Council and all other public bodies (as defined in the Act) participate in community planning partnerships.
- 3.10 The Edinburgh Partnership is the forum by which community planning is considered across the partners at a citywide focus to fulfil their legislative duties. This means that the Board discusses and agrees how it wants to work together to resolve long standing issues within communities that cannot be resolved by a single agency.
- 3.11 The agreements reached by the Edinburgh Partnership should not be taken without cognisance of the Council's (and other partner) strategic aims. The Council's representatives have a key role to play in ensure this. Individual partners need to go through their own internal governance to ensure that these collective agreements become formal decisions. The partners on the Edinburgh Partnership Board also have an important role in holding each other to account to ensure agreed joint activity is completed and that partnership working is adhered to.
- 3.12 It is this evidencing of action, delivering outcomes agreed in the Community Plan and mutual accountability which are likely to be the focus of the Edinburgh Partnership review considerations.

### **Strategic/Citywide level arrangements**

- 3.13 Legislation currently places responsibility for a range of strategic plans, specifically the Children's Services Plan, Criminal Justice Outcome Improvement Plan and Community Learning and Development Plan, onto the Edinburgh Partnership. This would continue to report to the Edinburgh Partnership. Any additional strategic partnerships would be based on the community plan themes. There would nothing preventing current partnerships from continuing where that was felt to be an effective way of working but these would not be a part of the Edinburgh Partnership governance and would report directly to members as appropriate.
- 3.14 Elected members raised the following points about the strategic/city wide level:
  - 3.14.1 There are insufficient linkages between the current strategic groups and a concern about the duplication.
  - 3.14.2 Going forward each group requires a clear remit and there should be a process when the same issue is considered by different groups.
  - 3.14.3 The route by which community influence is involved at this level needs to be simplified.

3.14.4 Consideration was given to if it made sense to remit these roles into the locality structure at some point in the future.

### **Community Participation**

- 3.15 The need to ensure the community influences decision making was a key priority for elected members.
- 3.16 Initial feedback during the review phase showed that different stakeholders felt that community involvement at a local level was working well but how local discussions were being fed into strategic citywide decisions was not clear. There are community representatives on the Edinburgh Partnership Board, but it is difficult for a single person to be representative for all the communities in Edinburgh.
- 3.17 Currently communities are being asked to engage by different partners and for different purposes. This results in an increasing burden for community representatives, many of which are volunteers, and at worst, an unacceptable level of duplication and repetitive consultation by different statutory partners which is unconnected to outcomes and actions.

### **Locality level arrangements**

- 3.18 The complexity of the current arrangements and the need to simplify them has been clearly expressed at all discussions on the current arrangements and proposed model. However, there was not a consensus amongst elected members as to how this landscape might be reasonably simplified.
- 3.19 Core to the complexity at this level are the:
  - 3.19.1 Neighbourhood Partnerships, as both local community planning partnerships and Advisory Committees of the Council;
  - 3.19.2 involvement of community councils and the aspiration for wider community participation;
  - 3.19.3 relationship between community planning and Council governance arrangements, specifically Locality Committees; and
  - 3.19.4 resourcing of the existing arrangements currently met by the Council Locality Teams.
- 3.20 Feedback from the member discussion sessions highlighted a desire to continue to strengthen how community planning is done at local levels. There was also agreement that there needs to be a layer between the very local level (e.g. community councils) and the Edinburgh Partnership Board level. However, different views were expressed about what would be the most effective level to work at, ranging for community councils, to Neighbourhood Partnerships, to thematic groups, to locality levels.

#### **3.20.1 Localities**

Feedback indicated a concern over the size of locality areas, suggesting that they were too large for local communities to feel that they could focus on

community interests and issues. However, the grouping does allow decision making to be informed by multiple viewpoints, takes less resource to support and the budget is of a size to have a greater impact.

### 3.20.2 Neighbourhood Partnerships (NP)

This divides the city by twelve resulting in areas of significant size but on a much smaller scale than localities. The current intertwining of these meetings being part of EP governance and the Council's governance leads to a confused sense of place and purpose.

Feedback during the review stage gave a mixed response to how successful the current NPs are felt to be and if retained, a feeling that they would need to be refreshed and reenergised to ensure engagement with all of the community. This level would allow decision making at a more local level, budgets would still be of a size that is impactful but would require an increase in resource to support.

### 3.20.3 Community Councils

Community Councils exist at a very local geography but engagement with community groups within their area is mixed. Empowering this level would ensure close links between local knowledge on the issues and proposals for solutions and decision making. This would also result in smaller budgets which due to their small size could lack a meaningful impact. This level requires the most resources to support.

## **Resources**

- 3.21 It is worth noting that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a duty on all public bodies to contribute resources (staff and funds) as required and agree these resources with the community planning partnership. Any proposals for a renewed approach to partnership governance will also need to address the issue of resourcing. Currently the Edinburgh Partnership is only supported through Council staff although other partners resource the meetings by prioritising attendees. Consideration will be given to an equitable solution to this as part of the review.

## **Next steps**

- 3.22 The Edinburgh Partnership will consider a further report at its meeting on 30 October 2018.
- 3.23 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee decision on 2 October 2018 will be conveyed to the Edinburgh Partnership at its meeting on 30 October 2018. A further report will be produced for consideration by Full Council following this meeting.

## **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 The establishment of new governance and partnership working arrangements.

## **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 Delivery costs will be met from within existing resources with partners being expected to contribute. The resource implications of implementing a new model of governance and partnership working will require to be identified and considered as part of the development processes.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The key risks associated with the programmes of work relate to stakeholder involvement and expectations. These will be managed through taking a collaborative approach.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 Community planning activity contributes to the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 general duties of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the development processes.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 The work has been a collaborative process involving community planning stakeholders in the city. The governance and partnership working consultation is being carried out in accordance with the Council's agreed consultation framework. The framework is based on established best practice from across the UK and was developed with specialist advice and support from the Consultation Institute. Activity will also be informed by the National Standards for Community Engagement.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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10.1 None

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## 11. Appendices

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None