

Report

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Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 August 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Local Governance Review
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to

- ♦ to advise the Committee of the current position in relation to the Review of Local Governance

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. In December 2017, COSLA and the Scottish Government launched the Review of Local Governance aimed at making sure local communities have more say about how public services in their area are run. This is also a commitment under the Scottish Open Government Partnership. It will consider how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities. It is being progressed through two strands which will feed into discussions on a possible Local Democracy Bill which may be introduced later in this Parliament.

3.2. It has two strands

- Strand 1 relates to capturing the view of local communities on the governance of public services in their area; and
- Strand 2 relates to seeking proposals from the public sector – both individual bodies and from city regions, community planning partnerships, etc. – to possible reform of local governance arrangements related to place.

3.3. Strand 1 aims to capture the views of local communities through a community engagement process lasting to November 2018 with individuals and groups encouraged to organise local events.

3.4. The events will be encouraged to consider five questions

Q1. Tell us about your experiences of getting involved in decision-making processes that affect your local community or community of interest.

Q2. Would you like your local community or community of interest to have more control over some decisions? If yes, what sorts of issues would those decisions cover?

Q3. When thinking about decision-making, 'local' could mean a large town, a village, or a neighbourhood. What does 'local' mean to you and your community?

Q4. Are there existing forms of local level decision-making which could play a part in exercising new local powers? Are there new forms of local decision-making that could work well? What kinds of changes might be needed for this to work in practice?

Q5. Do you have any other comments, ideas or questions? Is there more you want to know?

- 3.5. The results from this activity will be used to help inform the Local Governance Review.
- 3.6. Elected members may obtain further information on the Local Governance Review from the Scottish Government website, a link is provided below. The webpage contains a short animation explaining the review, provides access to the consultation materials, an easy read guide as well as explaining how to get involved. Cosla and the Scottish Government have stated that responses may be made in whichever way makes the most sense to those engaging in the process accompanied by a completed respondent information form to democracymatters@gov.scot or 'freepost DEMOCRACY MATTERS'.

<https://beta.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/local-governance-review/>

- 3.7. Community Responses are also encouraged and a guide has been produced on facilitating a good community conversation. Funding of up to £300 is available to small voluntary organisations and community groups to help to cover the cost of organising a community conversation. Applications may be made to and further information obtained from the Voluntary Action Fund's Democracy Matters: Community Engagement Fund, accessible through the link below.

<https://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/funding-and-support/democracy-matters-community-engagement-fund>

4. Local Governance Review - Strand 2

- 4.1. Strand 2 of the Local Governance Review aims to encourage a dialogue across the public sector - involving the Scottish Government, city regions, regional groupings, local authorities, CPPs and other public-sector organisations - around possible place-specific alternative approaches to governance, powers, accountabilities and ways of working with the aim of changes to how Scotland is governed that can make the lives of Scotland's people better and no ideas are off the table.
- 4.2. The final date for sharing written proposals and evidence is 14 December 2018 but the desire is that from now to then there will be a process of exchanging ideas and proposals so they can be developed and informed by insight from across the public sector over this period, rather than just being simply accepted and rejected after the formal closing date.

- 4.3. On the 22 June 2018 a joint letter from the Scottish Government and the President of COSLA was issued to public sector leaders across Scotland to formally invite them to submit their views on possible place-specific alternative approaches to governance, powers, accountabilities and ways of working that would make the lives of people in Scotland better.
 - 4.4. It is anticipated that all public services will wish to offer proposals for improved governance arrangements at their level of place. This is based on an acceptance of increased variation in decision-making arrangements across the country: what is right for one place will not necessarily be right for another.
 - 4.5. The desire is to hear views as early in the process as possible in order – by at least the beginning of September 2018 - to understand the proposals, help them take shape and identify where other evidence or assurances might be required to deliver change, and consider how they might link with other ideas.
 - 4.6. COSLA has also established a separate a Special Interest Group to drive its strategic approach to the Review with the intention is to bring together key themes emanating from individual authorities' local 'asks', as well as national aspects of reform such as fiscal empowerment, powers and other issues in order to deliver a collective view of reform.
5. **Employee Implications**
 - 5.1. Employee implications will become clear once further information is available.
 6. **Financial Implications**
 - 6.1. Financial implications will become clear once further information is available.
 7. **Other implications**
 - 7.1. There are no issues in terms of sustainability associated with this report.
 8. **Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**
 - 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no equality impact assessment is required.
 - 8.2. In terms of consultation, there is no requirement at this stage to carry out any consultation on the contents of this report.

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

15 August 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Promote economic growth and tackle disadvantage

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you want further information, please contact:-

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