

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10am, Tuesday, 2 October 2018

Edinburgh Partnership Review

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

This report gives an update on the Edinburgh Partnership Review and consultation of Governance arrangements to date. The review was instigated by the council following the council decision to progress with locality committees. There was collective agreement from the EP Board that Edinburgh's community planning arrangements could be simpler, more effective and more supportive of community participation.

This report summarises the proposals which have been consulted on and the feedback from elected members and officers to date, alongside some general reflections which have been heard over the lifetime of the review. Proposals for improving the strategic city-wide governance arrangements seem to be clearer and less contentious than proposals for improved local partnership arrangement. This report seeks feedback from elected members on two possible ways forward in respect of local arrangements.

1. To support the EP Board in seeking immediate proposals for local arrangements as part of the review
2. To recommend that the EP Board should take the review in two stages and only consider the local arrangements once the complementary council reviews of locality committees and community councils are complete.

The review consultation closed on 9 September and the Edinburgh Partnership Board will consider the conclusions when it meets on 24 September. Subject to the conclusions of this meeting, proposals for change will be put before full council in October, before The Edinburgh Partnership Board collectively agrees its position on the 30 October.

Edinburgh Partnership Review

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

- 1.1 Consider the options outlined in the 'Next steps' section of this report and
- 1.2 Give support for an option on the way forward either
 - 1.2.1 To support the EP Board in seeking immediate proposals for local arrangements as part of the review
 - 1.2.2 To recommend that the EP Board should take the review in two stages and only consider the local arrangements once the complementary council review of locality committees is complete.

2. Background

- 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 Board considered the findings of the consultation phase at its meeting on 24 September 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 and officers will be engaging with elected members to develop a council response.

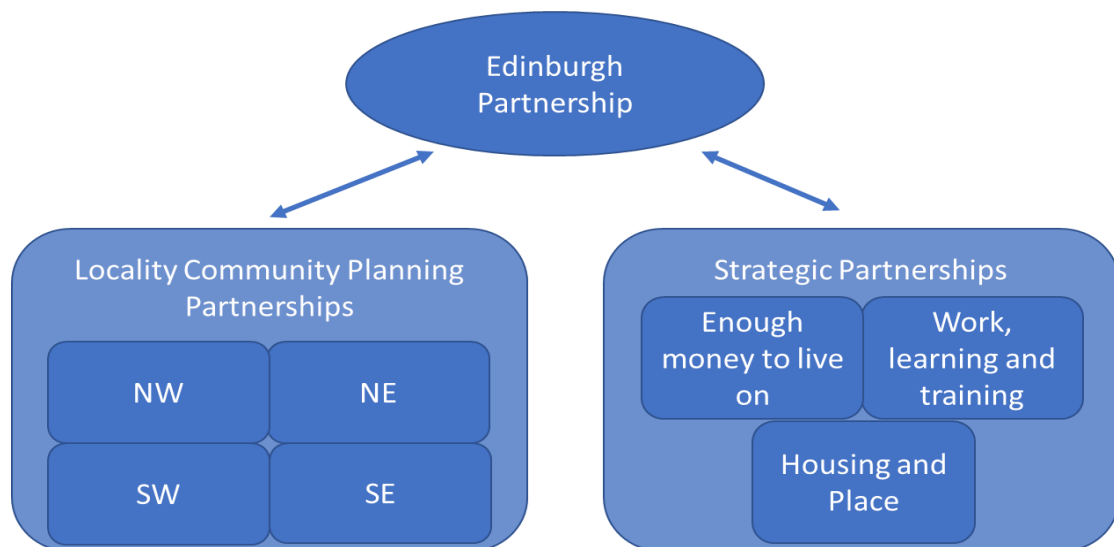
- 2.5 In addition, it is important to note that the council intends to undertake a number of associated reviews that may influence any future approach to community planning, namely:
- 2.5.1 Planned review of the Scheme for Community Councils and future provisions under the Local Democracy Bill; and
 - 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.

3. Main report

- 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 running from 16 July to 9 September 2018.

Consultation Proposal

- 3.4 The consultation is 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 acknowledges that there would need to be community and operational arrangements below the local community planning partnerships but does 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 EP 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 EP 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 EP review considerations.

Strategic/Citywide level arrangements

- 3.13 Legislative 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 EP. 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 EP 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 EP 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's 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;
- 3.19.1 involvement of community councils and the aspiration for wider community participation;
- 3.19.1 relationship between community planning and Council governance arrangements, specifically Locality Committees; and
- 3.19.1 resourcing of the existing arrangements currently met by the Council Locality Teams.

3.20 While the feedback from the consultation is not available at the point of writing this report, early 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 view points, 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 rationale for supporting the proposed approach, where form follows function, at a city level is clear and meets the Edinburgh Partnership's stated ambition for the review. However, there is not a clear consensus from member engagement so far, as to how best the review can resolve the complexity at a locality/neighbourhood level. As mentioned, the council is also undertaking its own reviews of locality committees and community councils which need to complement the wider partnership working arrangements.

- 3.23 There are two options for progressing the EP review:

- 3.23.1 Option 1: The EP Board pushes forward with the development of a new model for both locality/neighbourhood and city/strategic levels informed by the consultation findings to be implemented ahead of any of the Council reviews.

The main risk with this option is the implementation of a new model which might conflict with the outcomes of the Council reviews. However, this option ensures no delay in the delivery timescale; and manages any potential negative impacts on reputation and partnership working relationships.

- 3.23.2 Option 2: The EP Board takes a phased approach with the Edinburgh Partnership focusing on the implementation of the city/strategic arrangements in the initial 6 months with local arrangements being deferred subject to the outcome of the planned council led reviews of locality committees and community councils. This would ensure a more coherent and complementary approach from the point of the citizen.

There are several risks with this option including the continued resource implications for the Council Locality Teams in supporting the existing arrangements; potential resistance to delaying the delivery timescale; and potential negative impacts on reputation and partnership working relationships. CEC would bring forward the timing of the Locality committee review to take account of concerns around extended timescales.

3.24 Both these options would also include:

3.24.1 Support for meaningful community participation

3.24.2 Supporting the joint resourcing of EP governance arrangements and participation infrastructure across the city going forward.

4. Measures of success

4.1 Measures of success will be identified as part of the work programme development processes.

5. Financial impact

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 and the new community plan will require to be identified and considered as part of the development processes.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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

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 Integrated Impact Assessments will be carried out as part of the development processes.

8. Sustainability impact

8.1 There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

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

10.1 None

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11. Appendices
