THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

Communications update

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the communications work programme, focussed on three areas of development – the joint communications approach for COVID-19 recovery planning, the Edinburgh Partnership communications strategy and the new Edinburgh Partnership web platform.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is recommended to:

i. Proactively endorse close collaboration of renewal communications aimed at citizens and city partners as described in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2;

ii. Note the progress to date to develop the communications strategy and agree to receive a further report at a future meeting to approve the strategy; and

iii. Agree to promote the Edinburgh Partnership website through partner networks and contribute to content for Phase 2 development.

3. Main Report

Adaption and renewal communications

3.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Edinburgh Partnership recognised the need to ensure that partner communications around recovery planning are reflective of their own organisational priorities as well as joined up across the partnership. Communication leads representing the partner members met in early September to share and discuss their individual recovery plans and the communications to support these. All present agreed to contribute to and support the use of shared key messages, a content plan for social media, and consider what approaches may be required should we be subjected to another lockdown, citywide or localised within Edinburgh.

3.2 The group also raised some challenges including digital exclusion which is an issue affecting all partners' service users, and suggestions around providing information in different languages and formats to support those with lower literacy understanding or where English is not their first language. Further discussion will need to take place on how we can respond to these needs. The group will

continue to work together digitally, share best practice and identify more ways to proactively promote and share the work of each of the partners.

Strategy development

3.3 When the Edinburgh Partnership reviewed its governance and community planning arrangements in 2018/19, feedback from the stakeholder consultation identified the need to improve the communications around community planning. Suggestions included promoting achievements and making it clear how communities can get involved in the work of the partnership.

3.4 In 2019, as part of the Edinburgh Partnership's work programme, a communications short life working group was established. Membership is officers from the Council's Strategy and Communications Division and Lifelong Learning, Police Scotland, Volunteer Edinburgh and lead officers of the Edinburgh Community Learning and Development, Children's and Community Safety Partnerships.

3.5 The working group has met three times and participated in two workshops to develop the communications strategy. The workshops looked at the vision, aims and key stakeholders that should be part of the strategy. The workshop feedback also identified the need to have different messages for the different parts of the community planning arrangements and this should be through a separate communications plan for the Edinburgh Partnership and its strategic partnerships, and the local partnerships and networks.

3.6 In addition to the officer working group, a community checkpoint group was established to ensure that there was meaningful community input to the development of the strategy. A workshop took place in early March with the checkpoint group and members of the officer working group. This was the first of two scheduled sessions, looking at the ideas that had been generated from the working group sessions, with suggestions made for changes. The second session scheduled for late April is yet to take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.7 The next steps for the strategy development are to revisit the draft strategy so far with the officer working group, identifying any changes that may need to be made in response to the pandemic. Following on from these changes, the group will need to agree a plan to engage with the checkpoint group to conclude the development, acknowledging that this will be through online means, and thought will have to be given as to how this can be achieved in a meaningful way. The intention is to then bring the final draft back to a future Edinburgh Partnership meeting (either late 2020 or early 2021) for approval, depending on the availability of the Checkpoint Group and the working group to meet to progress.

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Edinburgh Partnership website

3.8 The need for an independent platform to profile the Edinburgh Partnership was repeatedly mentioned during the strategy development workshops. Currently, information about community planning is promoted via a small number of pages hosted on the Council website, with some partners also promoting or linking to this information on their own websites. It was acknowledged that one of the challenges for people is understanding that the community planning is not solely the responsibility of the Council, and this is further conflated by using the Council website as the main way to promote the Edinburgh Partnership.

3.9 In May 2020, work began to identify options to build a standalone platform to promote the work of the Edinburgh Partnership. A project plan was drafted, and site design and build has been led by the Council's Web Services. The first phase of the site is complete, and the [website](#) is ready to be launched. Members are asked to promote the site via their own networks.

3.10 The second phase involves identifying news stories, examples of good practice and case studies on partnership initiatives that can be promoted on the site. This requires input from all Edinburgh Partnership members on a regular basis. The site will also have a section about performance, which will be live once the revised performance framework is approved by the Board, scheduled for December 2020 meeting.

3.11 The use of the website will be monitored through analytics. A dashboard of key indicators including visits to the site, time spent on the site, most visited pages and referral source has been set up.

4.   Contact

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