

To: Cross Party Sounding Board

On: 16th August 2018

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Review of Community Level Governance - Introduction of Local Partnerships

1. **Summary**

1.1 This paper outlines proposals for the introduction of a new model of Local Partnerships into the Community Planning Structure. This would replace the current model of community level governance, known as Local Area Committees.

1.2 A review of Community Level Governance arrangements has been carried out which has assessed the Local Area Committees as a model of community level governance.

1.3 Proposals for the new model were developed and presented to Council in December 2017, and these proposals were consulted on over a 12 week period between January and April.

1.4 These proposals were:

1. Refresh the aims of community level governance
2. Move from 'committees' to partnerships
3. Extend voting rights to community-led organisations
4. Other public services play a greater role
5. Wider engagement with communities

6. Move from 5 areas based on ward boundaries to 7 based on community council boundaries
7. Meetings should become more accessible and participative
8. Local grants focussed on local priorities
9. Introduce participatory budgeting

1.5 In May 2018 a report was presented to Council outlining the key findings of the consultation, and it was agreed further development of proposals would be carried out, to be brought back to a future Council meeting.

1.6 Although the remit of Local Partnerships will assume most of the remit of Local Area Committees, Local Partnerships represent a departure from the existing Local Area Committee system. While key functions such as the administration and disbursements of grants to local organisations will be retained, the primary aim is to have a model of community level governance that reflects the views and requirements of local communities, and in turn, that this encourages more people to be more involved.

1.7 Due to the implications of the proposed changes for all elected members, the proposals are being brought to Cross Party Sounding Board for comments prior to submission to Council on 27th September 2018.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to consider the proposals and provide any comments prior to finalisation of the final report to Council on 27th September 2018.

3. **Background**

3.1 In 2016, Council agreed changes to the governance arrangements for the Community Planning Partnership, and as part of this work it was agreed that a review of the Local Area Committees (LACs) would be carried out.

3.2 The aim of the review was to assess the Local Area Committees as a model of community level governance, and make recommendations for

a future model. The review included the form and function of Local Area Committees, along with the Local Area Committee grant funding.

3.3 This review links closely to wider work underway to develop the Council's approach to supporting community empowerment. There are several emerging statutory requirements from the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, along with several new developments within the Council which require a consolidated approach, such as the introduction of the Community Empowerment Fund.

3.4 In December 2017 Council approved a set of proposals for consultation to take place early in 2018. The consultation was based on a set of nine proposals for a new model, which were developed following an engagement exercise around the existing model of Local Area Committees in late 2017. These proposals were:

1. Refresh the aims of community level governance
2. Move from 'committees' to partnerships
3. Extend voting rights to community-led organisations
4. Other public services play a greater role
5. Wider engagement with communities
6. Move from 5 areas based on ward boundaries to 7 based on community council boundaries
7. Meetings should become more accessible and participative
8. Local grants focussed on local priorities
9. Introduce participatory budgeting

3.5 The consultation took place over a 12 week period between 22 January and 15 April 2018. A range of opportunities were put in place inviting comment on the nine proposals, including:

- Paper consultation document
- Online survey
- Public events in Johnstone and Paisley
- Drop in events in Lochwinnoch, Bishopton, Erskine, Renfrew and Linwood.
- Facilitated sessions with STAR Project, Renfrewshire Effort To Empower Minorities, ROAR Connections For Life, Erskine Music and Media, CREATE Paisley, Street Stuff and Active Communities.
- Presentations at all five Local Area Committees
- Invited attendance at meetings of Renfrewshire Youth Voice, Hawkhead and Lochfield Community Council, Elderslie Community Council and Ralston Community Council.

- 3.6 173 survey responses were received, with 274 attendees at various events. This does not include stakeholders who were updated at formal Local Area Committee meetings.
- 3.7 In May 2018 a report was presented to Council outlining the key findings of the consultation, and it was agreed further development of proposals would be carried out, to be brought back to a future Council meeting. These are detailed in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.8 The findings of the consultation were supportive of the proposals presented, and as such the Local Partnerships model proposed in this paper is as presented during consultation, with some minor amendments to reflect the areas of key feedback.

4. **Local Partnerships**

- 4.1 The following sections set out the proposals that were consulted on in five key areas; function, membership, boundaries, meetings and grants. Each section gives an overview of the key consultation findings, along with the proposals for the new model.

Function

- 4.2 The proposals consulted on detailed a renewed set of aims, and a specific proposal for the primary aims of the new arrangements to be:

- Making connections and networks between community groups and the wider community
- Identifying, setting and sharing local community priorities
- Listening to, consulting and representing local communities
- Distributing grants to support local priorities

- 4.3 The consultation also sought views on ‘rebranding’ Local Area Committees, moving the focus from a committee function to a partnership function.

- 4.4 Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- The vast majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that aims of community level governance arrangements should be refreshed
- Supportive that new arrangements should promote better connections and networks
- Support for local priority setting

- More meaningful discussion between communities and public services and active encouragement of community participation identified as important to achieve better partnership working
- Identified potential for a more meaningful agenda across the year
- Broad support for moving to partnership model from committee model, but recognition there is a need for a sound structure for meetings
- Quality facilitation at meetings and conditions for genuine community participation identified as key to success of new model
- New model should not duplicate or diminish the role of community councils

Proposals

- 4.5 It is proposed that the new arrangements are named 'Local Partnerships' in order to reflect the changes to function and remit, emphasising the core purpose of the groups as working together and partnership, rather than a Council-led committee style function.
- 4.6 The proposed terms of reference for the new Local Partnerships are attached at Appendix A, and reflect these new aims and objectives.
- 4.7 In addition, there was a proposal to move from formal committees of the Council to partnerships within the Community Planning Partnership structure. This paper therefore seeks the relevant approvals for the Local Partnership arrangements to act as the Council's Scheme of Decentralisation, effectively removing the Local Area Committees from the Council's formal governance structures.
- 4.8 It is proposed that in order for their decisions to take effect that any decision made by the Partnership will either be implemented by the relevant officer attending the partnership or remitted as a recommendation to appropriate community planning partner for their consideration. In the case of grants, it is proposed that the Council Lead Officer allocated by the Council has delegated authority to approve grant decisions of the relevant partnership.

Membership

- 4.9 Proposals within the consultation paper included widening voting rights within the new partnership arrangements to community representatives, and a greater role for relevant partner organisations.

4.10 Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- Strong support for extending voting rights (77% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed)
- Areas without Community Councils should be effectively represented
- Clarity needed around roles and responsibilities from the outset
- There was broad consensus that partnerships should not be party political in nature when voting
- Strong support for an increased role for other public services playing a greater role (86% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed)
- Scope for more meaningful discussion about issues and developments, rather than presentation of statistical reports
- Quality of reports and presentations is key, rather than number of partners round the table
- Strong support for engagement with the wider community beyond those attending meetings (87% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed)
- Other communication channels should be used to support communication, including social media, with recognition that some people do not use digital channels
- Young people felt youth activities funded could be promoted through schools

Proposals

4.11 Membership of Local Partnerships will be open to all elected members who represent the local partnership area.

4.12 It is proposed that the Local Partnerships extend voting rights to other community representatives in addition to elected members, with the number of community representatives not exceeding the number of elected members. Community representatives would include the elected chairs of relevant Community Councils, with the remaining places filled by representatives of community organisations in the area and decided by the Local Partnership members. These membership arrangements are reflected in more detailed in the attached Terms of Reference, including the arrangements for appointing community representatives.

Boundaries

4.13 Proposals within the consultation paper detailed a proposal to move from using Ward boundaries to Community Council boundaries, and

sought views on a proposed model which moves to 7 areas instead of 5. Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that boundaries should be based on Community Council boundaries rather than Ward boundaries.
- Recognition of the villages and towns was seen as important, particularly the grouping of villages
- Support for the realignment of the Gallowhill area with Paisley, as opposed to Renfrew in the current arrangements
- Support for Linwood being aligned with Johnstone
- Some concerns about the practicality of resourcing seven areas
- A number of concerns raised by Elderslie residents, who had preference to be part of the village grouping due to common interests
- There were also some concerns raised from Paisley East residents about the grouping of Community Council areas in the east of the town and its relationship to the town centre

Proposals

4.14 It is proposed that seven Local Partnership areas are introduced. As per the original proposals, it is recommended that the boundaries used are community council boundaries in order to better represent physical communities and settlements. In addition, the proposed boundaries represent a more even spread of population in each of the Partnership areas, and are more closely aligned to the size of a 'locality' as defined by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and related Regulations, which describes a locality as having a population of less than 30,000 people.

4.15 The proposed Local Partnership areas are therefore groupings of Community Councils as follows:

- Renfrew (population c. 21,850)
- Inchinnan, Erskine, Bishopton and Langbank (population c. 23,760)
- Houston, Bridge of Weir, Brookfield, Kilbarchan, Lochwinnoch, Howwood and Elderslie (population c. 27,650)
- Johnstone and Linwood (population c. 25,410)
- Paisley North, Gallowhill, Ferguslie, Paisley West and Central (population c. 24,750)
- Paisley East, Ralston, Hawkhead / Lochfield, Hunterhill and Charleston (population c. 28,220)
- Foxbar / Brediland and Glenburn (population c. 23,260)

- 4.16 It should be noted that further to feedback received during the consultation regarding Elderslie's identity as a village, Elderslie has been moved into the grouping with other village communities.

Meetings

- 4.17 Proposals within the consultation paper focused on how meetings can become more accessible and participative, and the consultation sought views on how this could be best achieved. Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- 86% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed meetings should become more accessible and participative
- Broad support for changes in meeting style, with less formal meetings in surroundings more comfortable, and an emphasis on accessibility issues supporting a change of culture
- Greater opportunity for discussion and a reduction in paperwork would be a positive change
- Agenda still needs to be shaped and managed to ensure meaningful business is conducted
- Welcoming environment for new members raised as an important factor for positive partnership culture

Proposals

- 4.18 It is proposed that relevant changes are made to support Local Partnership meetings to become more accessible and participative spaces, with a number of practical measures identified through both the early engagement and consultation.
- 4.19 It is recognised that there were some concerns raised that a more informal meeting style or move away from Council committee structure might adversely impact on the professionalism of the meeting. Standing Orders for Local Partnership meetings will therefore be developed for approval by full Council.
- 4.20 It is intended there will be at least 3 meetings per annum of the Local Partnerships.

Grants

- 4.21 Local Area Committees are currently responsible for the disbursement of the LAC general grant fund, Youth Challenge Fund, and Common Good funds for Paisley and Renfrew.

4.22 Proposals within the consultation paper focused on refocusing locally distributed grants on local priorities and projects, and providing an alternative process administered by officers for Renfrewshire wide proposals (which is aligned to Community Planning priorities). The consultation also sought views on a proposal to carry out a participatory budgeting exercise with money allocated to the Youth Challenge Fund. Key themes emerging from the consultation included:

- Support for grants to be focussed on local projects rather than Renfrewshire-wide projects (84% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed funding should be focussed locally, with 67% strongly agreeing or agreeing with 'multi-LAC' applications being administered centrally)
- Recognition that removing a percentage of resource from the local budget for Renfrewshire-wide projects would naturally result in less to allocate at a local level
- Transparency and accountability should be guiding principles for grant allocations
- Eligibility criteria should be revised
- Organisations should be supported to become more sustainable, rather than relying on annual grant funding
- Support for participatory budgeting processes (81% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed new arrangements should give choice for participatory budgeting), with assurance on actual mechanisms selected and whether these are fair and transparent
- Considerable interest among young people about being involved in a participatory budgeting process (77% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed young people should decide on the allocation of the Youth Challenge Fund through a participatory budgeting exercise), recognising the method chosen would be key to encouraging participation

Proposals

4.23 It is recommended that the general grant fund continues to be allocated to Local Partnerships on a population basis, and that grant funding for Local Partnerships is aligned to the local priorities identified and set by each Partnership, and awarded for activities which are unique to that local area.

4.24 Grant applications for multiple Local Area Committee areas were a key issue raised throughout both the early engagement and consultation period, and it is proposed that £115k of the LAC general fund is

moved to a central grant process administered by Council officers in line with Community Planning priorities, and approved by elected members at a relevant policy board. The £115k is based on approximately 35% of the LAC general grant fund, after analysis of value of applications and awards for multi-area LAC grant applications. This central fund would allow more structure for grants spanning multiple areas in Renfrewshire, and would improve both the process itself, and the funding outcomes.

- 4.25 It is further proposed that the Youth Challenge Fund is administered through a Participatory Budgeting process, where young people would decide on which projects should be funded for young people. Local Partnerships would be closely involved in the Participatory Budgeting process, including the identification and shortlisting of appropriate options. As is currently the case with Local Area Committees, the Youth Challenge Fund would continue to be allocated to local areas using the population of children and young people resident in each Local Partnership area.

5. **Next Steps**

- 5.1 Council will consider the proposals for the new model on the 27th September 2018, along with the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders proposed for Local Partnerships. It is proposed that the arrangements would take immediate effect, and would disband the Local Area Committees.
- 5.2 A series of community events are being planned throughout October, where information could be shared with communities about the new Local Partnerships and how they will work. These events would also form an important first steps in identifying community priorities for the new Local Partnerships to consider in preparation for their first meetings.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the first meetings of the new Local Partnerships would take place in late 2018. The primary purpose of the first meeting would be to agree membership of the partnership moving forward, particularly the appointment of community representatives.
- 5.4 Local Partnerships will also be supported in their first meetings to consider local data, evidence and intelligence in order to identify 3-5 key local priorities for the partnership area. These priorities would then inform the Partnership's work, but also the allocation of local grants by the partnership later in 2019.

- 5.5 A new grant process will then be introduced from April 2019 for the 2019/20 financial year, including the allocation of the central grant fund, local allocations, and participatory budgeting exercises across Renfrewshire.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - The administration of new arrangements will be managed within existing resources. These will be developed and presented as part of any changed proposals presented to future Council meeting.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - There are no HR implications arising from this report. There may be organisational development implications for a future model, as it is possible that there will be training requirements for officers as part of the transition to any new model.
3. **Community/Council Planning –**

Community Plan - Our Renfrewshire is well – This priority of the Community Plan explicitly refers to the review of community level governance, and in particular that communities are best place to support themselves and articulate their own needs.

Council Plan - Building strong, safe and resilient communities – A key priority within the Council plan is to ‘Strengthen existing community networks and empowering local people to become more involved in their area and the services delivered there.’
4. **Legal** - Any future change to Local Area Committee arrangements would be likely to have governance implications for the Council. These will be developed and presented as part of any changed proposals presented to future Council meeting.
5. **Property/Assets** - Not applicable .
6. **Information Technology** - Not applicable
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The proposals discussed within the paper should improve participation and representation of communities and enable groups to have more voice and influence in the shaping and scrutiny of public services.

8. **Health & Safety** - Any health and safety implications would be considered in the delivery of the consultation, and moving forward in any new arrangements developed.
9. **Procurement** – Not applicable
10. **Risk** – Not applicable
11. **Privacy Impact** – Not applicable
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – The review of Community Level Governance has potential links to the review of Local Governance being taken forward by Scottish Government and COSLA jointly. It is anticipated that this will launch throughout 2018.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Not applicable

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Local Partnerships – Terms of Reference

1. Functions of Local Partnerships

- 1.1. Identify, set and share priorities and aspirations for the Local Partnership area, based on evidence and community engagement.
- 1.2. Facilitate networking and partnership working between local public, private, third and community sector organisations to address identified local priorities.
- 1.3. Listen to, consult with and represent local communities to provide a strong community voice to raise issues.
- 1.4. In particular, develop arrangements for engaging with local communities in order to better understand their needs and promote effective communication.
- 1.5. Distribute local grant to support local activities aligned to the local objectives.
- 1.6. Provide a forum for community planning partners to listen to and respond to issues raised by local communities.
- 1.7. Support the delivery of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 within the local area, including the ownership and usage of community assets.
- 1.8. Provide a forum to publicise and celebrate the contribution of community action to meeting community needs and aspirations.
- 1.9. Work with Community Councils to support them to align their work to community planning and Local Partnership Plan objectives.

2. Membership of Local Partnerships

2.1 Elected Member Representatives

- All Renfrewshire councillors representing the Local Partnership area

2.2 Community Representatives

- A number of community members equal in number to elected members from Renfrewshire Council.

- The Chair of each Community Council in the area (or a nominated representative) will have an automatic place as members of the Local Partnership.
- Where Community Councils are not currently active, representatives from other local organisations will take their place, on the understanding that if a Community Council becomes active, the Community Council representative will take the place of the representative of a non-community council organisation.
- Where there are fewer Community Council representatives than there are Elected member representatives, remaining places will be filled by community members representing local organisations. There should be properly constituted community organisations with a demonstrable local connection to the area.
- These community representatives will be appointed by the Local Partnership at the first meeting of the Partnership. Prior to such appointment there will be a public process to invite expression of interest in such membership.
- Reasonable endeavours shall be made to ensure such community representation includes at least one representative of young persons.

2.3 Officer Representatives

- The following organisations should be represented by officers at the meetings of the Local Partnership:
 - Renfrewshire Council
 - Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
 - Police Scotland
 - Engage Renfrewshire
- The following organisations would be requested to attend where relevant to work or expertise:
 - Scottish Fire & Rescue
 - Renfrewshire Leisure Limited
 - University of the West of Scotland
 - West College Scotland
 - Scottish Enterprise
 - Skills Development Scotland
 - Strathclyde Partnership For Transport
 - NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
 - Scottish Natural Heritage
 - Visitscotland
- A lead officer from Renfrewshire Council will be appointed to provide support to the chair/vice chair of each Local Partnership.

2.4 Term of office

- The term of office for members of the Local Partnership shall be until the day of the next ordinary elections for Local Government Councillors or Community Council in

Scotland, as appropriate. An Community Representative member of the Local Partnership will remain a member for three years.

2.5 Voting

- Every effort shall be made by members to ensure as many decisions as possible are made by consensus.
- In the event of the Local Partnership failing to reach a consensus on a decision and a vote having to be taken, all members (Elected members and community members) would have a vote. In the event of a tied vote, the chair would have the casting vote.

2.6 Chair

- Each Local Partnership will be chaired by an Elected Member representing that local area, and appointed by Renfrewshire Council. Each Local Partnership can appoint its own Vice-Chair.

2.7 Code of Conduct

- Members shall subscribe to and comply with the Standards in Public Life – Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.

2.8 Standing Orders

- Standing Orders will be prepared for meetings of the Local Partnerships, which will incorporate the relevant parts of the Terms of Reference.

2.9 Quorum

- Quorum will be at least one quarter of the members of the Locality Partnership

2.10 Delegated Powers

- The Local Partnership will normally make recommendations, which will be referred for consideration to the body responsible for exercising the function which is the subject of the recommendation. Alternatively, an officer of bodies attending the Locality Partnership may have authority delegated by their organisation to implement the recommendation without further decision by their organisation. In due course, Community Planning Partners may delegate specific powers to Local Partnerships.

2.11 Meetings

- There shall be at least three ordinary meetings of the Local Partnership each year.
- Meetings will be conducted at a time which best suits the membership and in the relevant Local Partnership area.
- Meetings will be held in public, but members of the public who wish to contribute should work with their elected members or community representatives to raise relevant community issues at the Partnership

3. Roles and remits

3.1 Community Representatives

Community Representatives will:

- Represent the interests of local residents.

- Promote partnership working and empowerment of communities within the Local Partnership area.
- Agree priorities and aspirations for the Local Partnership area, based on evidence and community engagement.
- Agree distribution of local grants to empower community organisations to deliver activity to support the Local Partnership priorities.
- Communicate with wider communities to seek views and inform communities of Partnership action.

3.2 Officer Representatives

Officers on Local Partnerships represent their organisation and act as advisers to the Local Partnership. They link the Partnership and the partner organisation.

- Co-ordinate a response to issues raised through the Local Partnerships.
- Bring forward relevant business for Partnership consideration.

3.3 Lead Officer

- Provide support and advice to the Partnership to manage their business

3.4 Secretariat

- Manage the business meetings of Partnerships.
- Support and advise Partnership members.
- Administer the grants process.
- Liaise with officers attending meetings.
- Support grant applicants.