

Highland Community Planning Partnership

Chief Officers Group – 9 November 2018

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	COG 19/18

Local Governance Review

Report by: Alison Clark, Acting Head of Policy

Recommendations:

The Chief Officer's Group is asked to:

- Discuss the opportunities and scope to develop a proposal to submit to the Governance Review
- Agree the approach for any proposal
- Agree to participate in the COSLA workshop on the 4 December

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Governance Review is a joint review between COSLA and the Scottish Government. The focus of the review is not just on local government but on all public sector decision making. Its purpose is to review how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working with a view to local communities having a greater say about how public services in their area are run.
- 1.2 There are currently two phases of the review taking place; one which focuses on hearing from individuals and communities and the second on gathering proposals for change from the Government, Councils, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), city regions, regional groupings and other public sector bodies. This phase concludes on 14th December 2018. Proposals are to focus on governance, powers, accountabilities or ways of working that could improve outcomes, reduce inequalities and improve democracy locally.
- 1.3 The CPP Board agreed in October for a proposal to be developed on behalf of the CPP, for submission to the review. This would be considered at the Board meeting in December. A working group would be established to support this process and include representation from the Community Partnerships.

2. Update since the Board

2.1 Working Group

The working group has met once since the Board and has been drawn from the COG sub-group with additional representation from the Community Partnerships.

Discussions in the working group have suggested that any proposal should consider:

- The feedback received from communities during the development of the

Community Empowerment Act and HOIP engagement process about what communities regard as important in decision making at a local level.

- Focusing on the Community Partnership structure as the local delivery mechanism within communities across Highland
- An opportunity to formalise the Partnership structure and address some of the key challenges previously raised at COG:
 - Making community planning the day job – there is not equal prioritisation of community planning work across the partnership.
 - Accountability – ensuring equal accountability for community planning activity.
 - Enabling Resource allocation – partnerships report the need for resource to effectively function and take forward activity.

It was agreed that before progressing in discussions further, a full discussion was required with members of COG to agree an approach and direction that was comfortable with all partners.

2.2 ***COSLA Workshop***

COSLA are hosting a series of workshops across the country as an opportunity for Local Authorities to come together and discuss emerging issues, share ideas and identify common themes. In the case of the Highland event, it has been decided to take a Community Planning approach so that the wider intentions of the Local Governance Review can be explored more fully. It also provides an opportunity for COSLA to better identify the issues emerging within each area and understand some of the implications for our partners, to enable COSLA to provide a collective response to the Government on the Review. Each workshop will be facilitated by Professor James Mitchell from Strathclyde University. The date for the workshop in Highland is the afternoon of 4 December.

2.3 ***Government Support and Process***

Guidance from the Government and COSLA suggests that there is no expectation that proposals submitted will be full developed or costed. At this stage, it is the understanding and intended outcomes that is the priority.

An initial conversation with the Location Director suggests that there may be Government support to develop bids and take work forward.

Recommendations:

The Chief Officer's Group is asked to:

- Discuss the opportunities and scope to develop a proposal to submit to the Governance Review
- Agree the approach for any proposal
- Agree to participate in the COSLA workshop on the 4 December