

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING BOARD

COSLA Offices, Edinburgh

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017

Present

Cllr Kelly Parry (in the Chair)	COSLA
Tony Cain	ALACHO
Cllr Robin Currie	Argyll and Bute
Cllr Ian Campbell	City of Edinburgh
Cllr Andy Ferguson	Dumfries and Galloway
Cllr Elena Whitham	East Ayrshire
Cllr Jim Goodfellow	East Lothian
Cllr Colm Merrick	East Renfrewshire
Cllr Jim Flynn	Falkirk
Cllr Judy Hamilton	Fife
Cllr Jennifer Layden	Glasgow City
Cllr Lorna Creswell	Moray
Catherine Mackereth	NHS Health Scotland
Cllr Meghan Gallagher	North Lanarkshire
Cllr Andrew Drever	Orkney Islands
Cllr Peter Barrett	Perth and Kinross
Cllr Watson McAteer	Scottish Borders
Cllr Alastair Cooper	Shetland Islands
Cllr Maureen Chalmers	South Lanarkshire
Cllr Chris Kane	Stirling
Cllr Diane Docherty	West Dunbartonshire

Apologies

Cllr Lesley Dunbar	Aberdeen City
Cllr Iris Walker	Aberdeenshire
Cllr Colin Brown	Angus
Gary Fairley	CIPFA-Directors of Finance
Cllr Craig Holden	Clackmannanshire
Cllr Kenneth MacLeod	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Cllr Kevin Cordell	Dundee City

Cllr Margaret Paterson	Highland
Cllr Jim Clocherty	Inverclyde
Cllr Stephen Curran	Midlothian
Cllr Louise McPhater	North Ayrshire
Cllr Marie McGurk	Renfrewshire
Jane Martin	Social Work Scotland
Lilian Cringles	Social Work Scotland
Malcolm Burr	SOLACE
Sandra Black	SOLACE
Cllr Ian Davis	South Ayrshire
Cllr Dave King	West Lothian

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Cllr Kelly Parry welcomed those present to the meeting with roundtable introductions. Apologies received for absence were duly noted.

### **2. Introduction to COSLA and the Community Wellbeing Board**

The Board received a report which provided an overview of what COSLA did, outlined its political and corporate structures, and highlighted the high level vision and principles adopted by COSLA Convention within the COSLA Plan.

It was emphasised that substitutions were welcome to attend meetings if substantive members were ever unavailable.

The Board:

- i. noted the overview of COSLA's approach, structures, principles and vision set out in the report and explained further at the meeting; and
- ii. noted the role of the Board in this context.

### **3. Board Priorities and Draft Plan**

The Board was provided with a report which invited members to discuss the priorities of the Community Wellbeing Board and to agree the draft Board Plan.

The meeting was advised that there were still several issues, namely gypsy travellers, counter terrorism and food safety which could be incorporated into the Board Plan so a revised iteration would be brought to the next meeting of the Board. The expectation was that the plan would evolve over time as matters were dealt with and new ones emerged.

During discussion, it was queried whether a Sports, Arts and Culture Working Group would be set up along with a Homelessness Sub Group, as was done during the last term. It was also questioned whether the Islands Bill would be considered by this Board. In response, it was noted that the Board could request that any Special Interest Group that it deemed appropriate be created. However, as part of COSLA's new governance structures, a business case would have to be developed and COSLA's Leadership Sounding Board would have to agree it, as part of their consideration of COSLA's overall priorities and resource management within COSLA. In terms of the Islands Bill, it was clarified that this issue predominantly fell under the remit of the Environment and Economy Board and Leaders but specific issues relevant to the work of this Board within the Islands Bill could be brought to this Board in future.

The Board:

- i. discussed the priorities of the Community Wellbeing Board; and
- ii. agreed, with the changes discussed at the meeting, the draft Board Plan, recognising that this would evolve over the Board's meetings.

#### **4. Socio-economic Duty**

The Board considered a report which informed members of the publication of the consultation on the socio-economic duty and invited comment on COSLA's draft response.

During discussion, it was requested that the COSLA response include that statutory partners within Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) should be covered within this duty for it to be effective. This point was noted.

The Board:

- i. noted the publication of the consultation on the socio-economic duty; and
- ii. considered and provided comments on the draft COSLA response appended to the report at Annex A.

#### **5. Devolved Social Security**

The Board received a report which sought views on the draft Overarching Partnership Agreement (OPA) and agreement to recommend to COSLA Leaders that the COSLA President signed the OPA on behalf of local government.

The meeting was provided with an oral update on several developments on this area of work since the report had been distributed. Officers agreed to circulate details of these following the meeting.

The Board:

- i. noted the content of the oral update provided at the meeting;
- ii. agreed to recommend to COSLA Leaders that the COSLA President signed the OPA on behalf of local government; and
- iii. agreed COSLA Officers should continue to work with Scottish Government to develop local partnership agreements as appropriate.

#### **6. Two-child limit policy and exceptions**

The Board considered a report which sought direction from members in further developing COSLA's position on the UK Government's exceptions to the two-child limit for Child Tax Credit – specifically the exemption for “a child born as a result of non-consensual conception”.

During discussion, it was noted that a multi-agency approach was being taken to develop joint guidance and the third sector will be involved in this piece of work. COSLA's approach was clarified of objecting in principle to the policy while accepting the reality that practitioners had to be supported to apply the law.

The Board:

- i. noted the position taken by Leaders on 25 August 2017 and agreed to oversee further COSLA policy development in this area;
- ii. agreed that COSLA's immediate priority was to work with the Scottish Government and the NHS to develop guidance which protected survivors and their families and supported the workforce who were responsible for applying the policy; and
- iii. agreed that campaigns to withdraw the two-child policy would be focused on COSLA's commitment to Equally Safe and tackling violence against women and girls.

#### **7. Universal Credit Rollout**

The Board received a report which sought members approval that the Spokesperson write jointly with Scottish Government to David Gauke MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

highlighting the further evidence of adverse impacts from Universal Credit rollout in its current state of development and calling again for a pause to expansion until further developments were in place and were showing demonstrable improvements.

There was a wide ranging discussion with a number of supportive views articulated. In particular, it was requested that the six week delay people were experiencing in receiving their first payment of Universal Credit along with the knock-on effect this was having on the cycle of debt caused in part by loan sharks and the impact of arrears on other council services should be incorporated to the letter to the UK Government. Officers agreed to work proactively with credit unions to try and tackle some of the challenges and people were experiencing. The difficulties associated with Universal Credit being 'digitally exclusive', particularly for rural and remote areas, were also emphasised. It was highlighted that approximately 40% of the local government workforce were on Universal Credit and, as employers, this was an issue for local government to address.

The Board:

- i. noted the emerging evidence from members on the impacts of Universal Credit rollout; and
- ii. approved the Spokesperson writing jointly with Scottish Government to David Gauke MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions highlighting the further evidence of adverse impacts from Universal Credit rollout in its current state of development and calling again for a pause to expansion until further developments are in place and are showing demonstrable improvements.

## **8. Refugee Resettlement**

The Board considered a report which provided an update on progress made by local authorities to support refugees through the UK Government's resettlement schemes and sought agreement that councils' support for the schemes should continue going forward.

The Board:

- i. noted the excellent progress that had been made across Scotland in resettling refugees through the SRP and the VCRS;
- ii. noted that COSLA had published an Elected Member Briefing which provided further details on the role that local authorities were playing in relation to humanitarian protection; and
- iii. agreed that councils continue their future involvement in resettlement.

## **9. Human Trafficking and Exploitation**

The Board was provided with a report which informed members of the publication and implications of the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy and the current awareness raising campaign.

A short video clip from the public awareness raising campaign was played to members.

During discussion, it was agreed to circulate campaign material following the meeting so elected members could circulate these locally. It was also suggested that members should check their local policing plans to ensure that human trafficking was included within these.

The Board:

- i. considered and commented on the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy; and
- ii. supported the awareness raising campaign currently live and in the future.

## **10. Police Scotland's 2026 Draft Implementation Plan – Presentation from PS**

The Board received a report which invited members to comment on Police Scotland's Draft 2026 Implementation Plan. A presentation on the Draft Plan was also provided from Police Scotland by Neil Dickson and Superintendent Lesley Clark.

There were a number of views expressed and suggestions put forward about the Plan being written in plainer English which Police Scotland agreed to try and incorporate into the plan going forward. There was agreement that closer work was needed between the Police and Local Government to ensure that the Local Police Plans were better tailored to local need and worked better with Community Planning Partnerships on crime prevention and community safety. Concern was also expressed about the relationship between the Scottish Police Authority and Local Government over our respective accountability roles.

The Board:

- i. commented on Police Scotland's Draft 2026 Implementation Plan;
- ii. provided views on the key activities outlined in the Draft Plan; and
- iii. agreed COSLA's next steps.

#### **11. Business Case for COSLA Police Scrutiny Conveners' Forum**

The Board received a report which outlined a business case for the re-establishment of the COSLA Police Scrutiny Forum that was originally set up in 2016. Some felt that there was a need to consider how Councils' scrutiny role of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would be carried forward and how this would tie in with the COSLA Police Scrutiny Forum.

The business case for the establishment of the COSLA Police Scrutiny Forum was unanimously agreed. It was also agreed that the business case document should be amended to reflect that local government should have a 'defined role', rather than just a 'meaningful role' in the oversight of policing.

The Board:

- i. provided comments on the business case to re-establish COSLA's Police Scrutiny Forum set out in Annex 1; and
- ii. agreed the Forum should be re-established as a special interest group to support local government's oversight of policing.

#### **12. Community Justice Scotland – draft corporate plan**

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of Community Justice Scotland's consultation on their Corporate Plan 2017-2020 and invited members to provide their initial views on it.

A presentation was also provided by Laura Hoskins and Bill Fitzpatrick of Community Justice Scotland.

The Board:

- i. commented on Community Justice Scotland's Corporate Plan;
- ii. provided views on Community Justice Scotland's proposed direction and noted the content of their presentation; and
- iii. agreed COSLA's next steps.

#### **13. Fire Safety – Domestic properties**

The Board considered a report which detailed a range of issues in relation to domestic fire safety and sought agreement on a proposed position on a number of specific areas.

The Board:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Grenfell Tower tragedy;

- ii. endorsed the outline of a fire safety campaign to be undertaken with partners including Scottish Government and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
- iii. supported COSLA's submission to the Local Government Committee on fire safety aspects of building standards; and,
- iv. provided an early steer on COSLA's response to proposals to consult on standards for smoke and fire alarms in domestic properties.

#### **14. Homelessness**

The Board received a report which sought views from members in light of recent developments in Homelessness policy in Scotland.

During discussion, the importance of COSLA having a seat on the Rough Sleeping Action Group was emphasised and it was asked that COSLA make representations to the Minister in this regard. It was noted that COSLA had negotiated the maintenance of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group and would continue to chair this.

The Board:

- i. welcomed the measures outlined within the Programme for Government in relation to Homelessness and agreed the broader position set out at paragraph 8 of the report;
- ii. agreed that the Scottish Government must work with Local Government in determining the use of the £10m per year 'Ending Homelessness Together' fund;
- iii. provided further views on homelessness members wished COSLA to reflect in discussions with the Scottish Government or at the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Communities Committee's evidence session on 4 October.

#### **15. Call Blocking Devices**

The Board considered a report which advised members of Scottish Government's Nuisance Calls Commission and the subsequent funding for 500 call blockers which Trading Standards Scotland would be disseminating to vulnerable individuals in Scotland.

The Board:

- i. noted the Scottish Government's Work Plan in response to the Nuisance Calls Commission;
- ii. noted the rollout of call blockers to vulnerable people by Trading Standards Scotland in partnership with organisations that work with vulnerable groups; and
- iii. noted that a full evaluation of the call blocker project including a cost benefit analysis would be presented to the Board following the conclusion of the project.

#### **16. External Appointments**

The Board received a report which notified members about COSLA's representation on two external bodies and sought agreement over how these were handled.

The Board:

- i. agreed the continuation of the most recent nominees (Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute, and Donald Crichton, Western Isles) to the Crofting Stakeholders; and
- ii. noted that the Community Wellbeing Spokesperson would attend the BBFC Consultative Council, with adhoc substitute arrangements being potentially needed from time to time.

#### **17. AOCB**

There was no other business. It was noted that dates of future meetings would be circulated.