

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING BOARD

COSLA Offices, Edinburgh

3rd November 2017

Present

Cllr Kelly Parry (in the Chair)	COSLA
Cllr Iris Walker (Video Conf)	Aberdeenshire
Cllr Robin Currie	Argyll and Bute
Cllr Kenny John MacLeod	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Cllr Andrew Wood*	Dumfries and Galloway
Cllr Elena Whitham	East Ayrshire
Cllr Paul Ferretti	East Dunbartonshire
Cllr Jim Goodfellow	East Lothian
Cllr Colm Merrick	East Renfrewshire
Cllr Jim Flynn	Falkirk
Cllr Judy Hamilton	Fife
Cllr Jennifer Layden	Glasgow City
Cllr Margaret Paterson	Highland
Cllr Jim Clocherty (Video Conf)	Inverclyde
Cllr Andrew Drever	Orkney Islands
Cllr Peter Barrett	Perth and Kinross
Catherine Mackereth	Public Health Directors
Cllr Alastair Cooper (Vide Conf)	Shetland Islands
Cllr Maureen Chalmers	South Lanarkshire
Cllr Chris Kane	Stirling

Apologies

Cllr Lesley Dunbar	Aberdeen City
Tony Cain	ALACHO
Cllr Colin Brown	Angus
Gary Fairley	CIPFA-Directors of Finance
Cllr Ian Campbell	City of Edinburgh
Cllr Craig Holden	Clackmannanshire
Cllr Andy Ferguson	Dumfries and Galloway
Cllr Kevin Cordell	Dundee City

Cllr Stephen Curran	Midlothian
Cllr Lorna Creswell	Moray
Cllr Louise McPhater	North Ayrshire
Cllr Meghan Gallagher	North Lanarkshire
Cllr Marie McGurk	Renfrewshire
Cllr Watson McAteer	Scottish Borders
Jane Martin	Social Work Scotland
Lilian Cringles	Social Work Scotland
Malcolm Burr	SOLACE
Sandra Black	SOLACE
Cllr Ian Davis	South Ayrshire
Cllr Diane Docherty	West Dunbartonshire
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 and substitutions were noted.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

The minute of the previous meeting held on 22nd September 2017 was agreed as an accurate record.

3. Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the consultation on the Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland and invited initial views of members on it.

The report was accompanied by a verbal presentation by Lord Bracadale who was leading the independent review. He advised that the consultation closed on 23rd November and he would be making recommendations to Scottish Ministers in the Spring of 2018. He indicated that there was a significant problem of under reporting of hate crime and the challenge of the review was to address this.

There was a wide-ranging discussion with lots of points of view expressed and questions raised which Lord Bracadale responded to.

The Board:

- i. provided initial views on the independent review of hate crime consultation;
- ii. provided comments and questions on Lord Bracadale's presentation; and
- iii. agreed COSLA's next steps in paragraph 10 of the report.

4. Destitution, Asylum and Insecure Immigration

The Board considered a report which sought views on COSLA's response to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee (EHRIC) Inquiry into Destitution, Asylum and Insecure Immigration Status and asked for input to shape future priorities and activity on the broader issue of immigration.

During discussion, the importance of this being fully funded in future was emphasised.

The Board:

- i. considered the key findings and recommendations from the EHRIC inquiry and discussed the implications for Local Government;
- ii. agreed the proposed COSLA position and next steps to take in response and advised on priorities for future work; and,

- iii. provided early views to inform COSLA's submissions to the Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence and the Scottish Affairs Committee's inquiry into 'Immigration and Scotland'.

5. Human Trafficking and Exploitation

The Board received a report which informed members that nail bars had been identified by Police Scotland and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner as an industry in which there were documented instances of trafficking and exploitation. As part of COSLA's commitment to contributing to the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy local authorities were being asked to consider whether they would pilot the licensing of nail bars under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

There was a comprehensive discussion with lots of views expressed. In particular, some members indicated that their councils could potentially be used as a pilot which officers agreed to explore with them.

The Board:

- i. considered whether nail bars could be licensed using public entertainment licences; and
- ii. indicated whether their local authority would be interested in pursuing this approach with support from COSLA and Police Scotland.

6. Universal Credit Roll Out

The Board considered a report which outlined activity and engagement with the Department for Work and Pensions on Universal Credit social security since the Board last met in September.

The meeting was informed that Leaders met on 27 October and endorsed the position taken by the Board at the last meeting and further agreed that the COSLA President should also write to David Gauke MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to call for a pause in the rollout.

During discussion, the Board reiterated its concerns at the rollout and many local examples of the difficulties being experienced were highlighted. Members requested that robust lobbying continue including that a briefing be sent to all Scottish MPs prior to the budget.

The Board:

- i. noted and approved the contents of the report; and
- ii. considered and agreed further lobbying COSLA should engage in on the delivery of Universal Credit including distributing a briefing to all Scottish MPs.

7. Housing Benefit Changes

The Board received a report which informed members of recent and pending announcements on UK Government plans on the funding through benefits of supported housing and general needs social housing. This was a complex area – but one with very significant impacts. The report offered an update but also sought members broad views.

An Addendum was also tabled at the meeting following a UK Ministerial Statement and consultations on supported accommodation were published on 31 October.

During discussion, the financial pressures this was putting on local authority housing teams was emphasised.

The Board:

- i. note and approved the contents of the report;

- ii. provided comments on the developments and their implications; and
- iii. noted that the members of the Board would receive further information and reports on these matters.

8. Consultation on Fire and Smoke Alarms

The Board was provided with a report which advised that post the Grenfell fire tragedy the Scottish Government had brought forward a consultation document that covered fire and smoke alarms in Scottish homes. For the first time, this could result in a cross tenure standard being applied which would include both the social rented and owner occupied sector. There were important questions over the extent of coverage, the timeframes and who met the costs. The report provided an opportunity to consider these issues and to inform COSLA's response.

During discussion, it was highlighted that traditional enforcement routes were not that successful and landlords should suffer financial penalty or even potentially struck off the list.

The Board:

- i. noted the publication of the consultation on the fire and smoke alarms in Scottish homes; and
- ii. considered and provided comments to inform the content of COSLA's response to the consultation appended to the report at Annex A.

9. Participatory Budgeting

The Board received a report which advised that the Scottish Government's "Programme for Government" contained a commitment to a target of 1% of local government's budgets should be subject to participatory budgeting by the end of the Scottish Parliamentary term. The report outlined the framework drafted by COSLA, the Directors of Finance and the Scottish Government and also invited comments and endorsement of the Improvement Service members' briefing on the subject.

The meeting was advised that Leaders agreed the framework at their meeting on 27 October.

Members were broadly supportive of participatory budgeting, however, some of the difficulties with implementing it and handling expectations were articulated. It was also highlighted that sharing good practice, including international examples, would be beneficial. In response, it was noted that officers were currently collating best practice and there was also a PB conference being held on 14 November in Edinburgh. COSLA had 5 spaces available if any member was interested in attending.

The Board:

- i. noted the framework for the operation of Community Choices within the 1% target for 2021;
- ii. noted the work plan of the Participatory Budgeting Development Manager;
- iii. considered and provided comment on the Elected Members briefing; and
- iv. in principle, endorsed the Elected Members briefing mandating the Spokesperson to sign off a final version.

10. Public Space CCTV

The Board considered a report which provided an update on CCTV in light of recent media coverage of potential cuts to local CCTV services.

During discussion, members indicated that the increasing strain on local government finances made it difficult to continue providing this service in its current form. It was suggested that there

could be merit in establishing a joint working group involving partners like Police Scotland, Scottish Government etc to consider this in more detail.

The Board:

- i. commented on current local CCTV arrangements;
- ii. provided views on how CCTV provision arrangements could be improved; and
- iii. agreed COSLA's next steps.

11. Legal Aid and Legal Services Reviews

The Board received a report which informed members that reviews were currently ongoing into Legal Aid and the Regulation of Legal Services. In recent years, early advice and informal resolution had become a cornerstone of the civil justice system and it was highly likely that the outcome of these reviews would reinforce the value of early, preventative action through a focus on advice services.

The Board:

- i. agree the importance of COSLA engagement in the Strategic Review of Legal Aid;
and
- ii. agreed that COSLA Officers adopt a watching brief on the Review of the Regulation of Legal Services Review.

12. AOCB

Cllr Parry advised that Cllr Elena Whitham would take on the COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson role for a short period of time in 2018 as she would be off on maternity leave.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Board noted that the date of the next meeting would be Friday 15th December.