

## **Public Health Reform**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

This report provides an update on progress in supporting Public Health Reform and the significant progress in delivering the reform programme. This includes the establishment of Public Health Scotland and publication of the organisation's Strategic Plan (Appendix A) which is fully alignment with COSLA's priorities and the Local Government Blueprint.

This paper invites Convention to:

- i. Note the progress in delivering the public health reform programme and the establishment of Public Health Scotland; and
- ii. Discuss Public Health Scotland's strategic plan and opportunities to strengthen collaboration with Local Government in delivering the strategic priorities

### **References**

Previous reports:

- COSLA nominations to Board of Public Health Scotland – Leaders May 2020

**Mark McAllister**  
**Public Health Policy**  
**Health and Social Care**  
**markm@cosla.gov.uk**  
**0131 474 9375**

## **Public Health Scotland**

### **Purpose**

1. Public Health Scotland launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020 as Scotland's new public health body, bringing together existing national public health functions into a single body jointly accountable to national and local government.
2. The establishment of Public Health Scotland marked a key milestone in the reform of Public Health in Scotland which is a programme jointly sponsored by Scottish Government and COSLA.
3. Public Health Scotland has developed its first strategic plan setting out its priorities for the next three years and the importance of working with Local Government to protect and improve population health in Scotland.
4. The strategic plan is fully aligned with COSLA priorities and the Local Government Blueprint and provides a focus to deliver our ambition for closer collaboration and integration between Public Health and Local Government to improve community wellbeing.

### **COSLA Position**

5. COSLA continues to work closely with Scottish Government on reform and the establishment of Public Health Scotland is a significant development in the programme.
6. We continue to be fully committed to the reform of public health in Scotland and are working to achieve the aspirations of the reform programme to build a strong and effective relationship between Public Health and Local Government to improve community wellbeing.

### **What is Changing**

#### **Public Health Scotland**

7. The reform programme set out the need for more effective collaboration on Scotland's Public Health challenges with the establishment of Public Health Scotland providing a clear leadership role, focus and purpose to this collaboration. Central to this would be a strong and meaningful relationship with Local Government in Scotland.
8. Public Health Scotland (PHS) launched on the 1st of April 2020 as Scotland's new public health body, bringing together national public health functions in one place and focusing on how it can support national and local efforts to protect and improve the nation's health. It is the first public body jointly accountable to Scottish National and Local Government. This is a unique achievement secured by COSLA.

9. As a partnership between national and local government, Public Health Scotland will be uniquely placed in the wider public sector landscape to provide leadership to enable and support local and national bodies work together to improve health and wellbeing.
10. As joint sponsor for Public Health Scotland, COSLA will exercise meaningful and proportionate oversight of Public Health Scotland's strategy, financial management, performance and risk management. We will jointly set the outcomes which the Board works to deliver and make jointly agreed and assessed appointments to the Board.
11. Our focus continues to be strengthening governance and accountability and ensuring a strong Local Government voice in decision making. The continued commitment to partnership and joint accountability is underpinned by the decision to appoint two elected Councillor members to the board of Public Health Scotland through a COSLA nomination process, reinforcing the fundamental principles of Public Health Scotland as a body which will have local delivery, partnerships and collaboration at its heart.
12. COSLA undertook an open and transparent recruitment process to secure nominations to the board of Public Health Scotland, culminating in Cllr Julie Bell (Angus Council) and Cllr Jacqueline Cameron (Renfrewshire Council) taking up positions on the board in May 2020.
13. Securing COSLA nominations to the Board ensures that a relationship with Local Government is at the heart of the new organisation and alongside the joint Governance and Sponsorship arrangements for Public Health Scotland, we will ensure that the partnership with Local Government to improve public health outcomes underpins the work of Public Health Scotland.

#### Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan

14. Public Health Scotland has developed its first strategic plan setting out its priorities for the next three years. The plan emphasises the importance of working with Local Government to protect and improve population health in Scotland. The strategic plan describes how the organisation will work in partnership with National and Local Government and communities on the following priorities
  - COVID-19: response, renewal and recovery
  - Children and Poverty
  - Mental health
  - Place and Community
15. The priorities are closely aligned with COSLA priorities and the Local Government Blueprint. We continue to be fully committed to the reform of public health in Scotland and the strategic plan provides a focus to build a strong and effective relationship between Public Health and Local Government around our shared priorities.

## **Proposed COSLA Position**

16. Members are asked to note progress in delivering the public health reform programme, the significant progress made and the opportunity through the joint sponsorship arrangements of Public Health Scotland with Scottish Government. This has been significantly strengthened by securing COSLA nominations to the Board of Public Health Scotland.
17. COSLA remains fully committed to the reform of Public Health in Scotland and to continuing the progressive and positive nature of the collaborative programme.

## **Next Steps**

18. The establishment of Public Health Scotland and publication of its strategic plan marks significant progress in delivering our ambitions for reform and a genuine opportunity to strengthen the relationship between public health and Local Government to improve population health and wellbeing.
19. Officers will continue to work with officials from Scottish Government as joint sponsors of reform and through the COSLA nominations on the Board of Public Health to ensure that the new body has a strong focus on the needs of local government and communities.
20. It will be important to develop a strategic approach to working with Local Government across our shared priorities in a way that protects our most vulnerable communities, ensures the long-term sustainability of our public services and protects and improves health and wellbeing in the long term.
21. COSLA will continue to work with Public Health Scotland to develop a collaborative approach with Local Government in implementing the Strategic Plan and identify opportunities for Public Health and Local Government to work together in local systems on these shared priorities.

**October 2020**