
MAY. 2019, ISSUE 3

Inside COSLA

The Local Government Monthly Communication



for
**Inclusive
Growth**



to
**Tackle
Inequalities**



for
**Prosperous
Communities**

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President's Welcome

Welcome to our third edition of our elected members' communication - Inside COSLA.

Thank you for reading our update to all elected members. This communication is an opportunity for COSLA to showcase the varied and extensive work we carry out on behalf of Local Government.



Last week I had a productive and informative meeting with **Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy**. This is an exciting time for Local Government as it aims to implement digital strategies across councils, communities and our wider public services.

Spokesperson **Councillor Kelly Parry** and I also attended the launch of **Monica Lennon MSP's** Bill tackling period poverty. COSLA and our member councils were greatly praised for the leadership we have jointly given to this issue across Scotland.

As our expected date of departure from the **European Union** has been delayed until October 31st, the weekly **Scottish Government Resilience Room** meetings, which I attend, have been stepped down. COSLA continues to stand up for Local Government within the **Brexit** process and will keep Councils informed.

As I mentioned in the last edition, applications for the **2019 COSLA Excellence Awards** are now open. Each year these awards highlight the new ways that councils are transforming local services, improving outcomes and reducing inequalities. If you know a project in your local authority that is doing this, then please encourage them to apply.

As always our task as the representative voice of Local Government is to communicate our work to you as often and as best as we can. I hope you enjoy this edition of **Inside COSLA**.

COSLA President Councillor Alison Evison



Vice President's Update

Thank you for taking the time to read our Local Government monthly communication. This is a welcome opportunity for elected members to hear about the work that **COSLA** carries out.



As **Vice President** I am one of COSLA's office bearers and part of the Presidential Team.

Part of my role involves co-chairing, alongside **David Martin – Chief Executive of Dundee City Council**, the **Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Steering Board**. The LGBF is a high-level benchmarking tool designed to support senior management teams and elected members to ask questions about key council services. This role allows me to actively contribute from the perspective of an elected member.

Another part of my role is as a member of the **Open Government Partnership Steering Group** alongside my colleague **Councillor Kelly Parry**. The Steering Group provides governance and a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between civil society and government representatives. It is essential that the views of elected members are communicated in this forum as local authorities form an essential link to Scotland's communities, including to those who are most vulnerable, and are key in realising the ambitions of open government.

I look forward to making you all aware of the successes we can achieve on behalf of Scotland's councillors on the above two groups. My role as **COSLA Vice President** is to represent the views of elected members throughout the country and I hope you enjoy reading our third edition of **Inside COSLA**.

Leaders' Recap

Scotland's council Leaders met in Edinburgh on Friday 26th April to discuss COSLA's direction and provide a political mandate for the work carried out by COSLA officers.

Fiscal Empowerment and Local Taxation

Following a series of commitments on Local Government Finance made by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work. As part of the 2019/20 Scottish budget process a COSLA paper updated Leaders, with a focus on discretionary taxation. Leaders agreed that further reports brought to Leaders and the Board as work develops.



Distribution

Leaders considered and agreed the recommendations from the Settlement and Distribution Group in relation to 2 specific distribution areas:

- Pupil Equity Funding targeted at care experienced children and young people will continue to be distributed based on local authority share of looked after children (aged 5-15) in 2019/20 and 2020/21 when the commitment for funding comes to an end.
- The Scottish Government's policy intervention in the teachers' pay offer will be distributed using the December 2018 Teacher Numbers figures.

Early Learning and Childcare expansion - Guidance

Following approval at COSLA Leaders 'Funding follows the child' model was published in December 2018. Local authorities have therefore committed to delivering 1140 hours of funded early learning childcare. This model means families will be able to access high quality funded ELC with the provider of their choice, if it meets obligations set out in the model. To support this, Leaders agreed to approve supporting guidance developed by Scotland Excel for local authorities on Transition Options, setting Sustainable Rates and assessing Business Sustainability.

Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning

Leaders approved a strategy covering the entire learning estate for approval by the Deputy First Minister. Leaders commented that during the accompanying investment programme, discussions need to take account of issues such as affordability and capacity.

Living Wage in Adult Social Care

COSLA Leaders have been committed to the shared policy of paying the Living Wage to everyone involved in delivering adult social care on the basis that there is additional funding in the Spending Review to meet this. Leaders agreed to recommit to the policy of ensuring all staff delivering adult social care services receive a Living Wage with recognition of the challenges that exist in implementation.

Barriers to Elected Office Special Interest Group (SIG) Update

Leaders also endorsed the draft actions of the Barriers to Elected Office Special Interest Group (SIG) over the coming months. The group, chaired by the COSLA President, aims to promote local politics as an opportunity to influence how communities are run, improve Councillor terms and conditions and improve councillors' day to day working experience within councils. It also plans to aid the development of support networks for elected members.

Councillors' Code of Conduct Review

Leaders noted that the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning has asked COSLA to participate fully in a review that he intends to undertake of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Leaders agreed to note the intention by the Scottish Government to undertake the review and also agreed that COSLA participates on the basis that the Review of the Councillors Code of Conduct is undertaken alongside the Review of the MSPs Code.

Our next meeting will take place on **Friday 31 May 2019** at the COSLA headquarters in Edinburgh.



Spokespersons' Update

Community Wellbeing

COSLA Spokesperson (Job-Share)

Councillor Kelly Parry

Universal Credit

COSLA has provided a written submission to the Scottish Parliament Social Security Committee enquiry on Social Security Support for Housing, highlighting the impact of Universal Credit, the operation of Local Housing Allowance rates and other welfare changes on rent arrears and access to housing.



Scottish Welfare Fund

COSLA's spokesperson for Community Wellbeing met with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People on 24 April to share positions on the need to review funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund. This is a critical but pressured local authority service that has not seen a funding uplift since its inception in 2013. There is now a shared commitment for officers to work together across the two spheres of government to make a robust case for review to the UK Government.

COSLA Spokesperson (Job-Share)

Councillor Elena Whitham

Gypsy/Travellers

COSLA has been pressing the Scottish Government for more support for councils to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers as part of national action plan to be considered by Leaders later this year. This involved securing a joint review, with the Scottish Government, over the funding and delivery of Gypsy/Traveller accommodation.



Environment and Economy

**COSLA Spokesperson Councillor
Steven Heddle**



The Transport Bill

The Board discussed the Transport Bill which is currently being debated in Parliament. The Board focused on the practical and financial implication of proposals to ban double and pavement parking and to help Councils deliver more bus services.

Work Place Parking Levy

The Transport Bill will soon start stage 2 where it can be amended by both Government and the opposition parties. We expect the Bill to be amended to give Local Authorities the power to introduce a work place parking levy. The Board refined COSLA's position of in principle support for the levy as a discretionary power to reflect the different views held by Local Authorities.

Waste Management

The Board discussed a range of waste management issues, including the ban on biodegradable waste to landfill in 2021 and the developing Scottish Deposit Return Scheme. The Board also agreed that COSLA should submit a response to the UK Government's consultation on extended producer responsibility which will eventually generate new funding to help reduce waste.



Health and Social Care

Interim COSLA Spokesperson Councillor Stuart Currie

Health and Care Staffing (Scotland) Bill

COSLA's Health and Social Care Board have provided a clear mandate for officers that COSLA do not support a statutory requirement for workforce and workload planning in the care sector. The position the Board mandated officers is to work constructively with Scottish Government through the legislative process. COSLA has continued to make clear the views of our member councils, in discussions with parliamentarians ahead of Stage 3 reading of the Bill.



Adult Social Care Reform

COSLA and Scottish Government have been engaging with stakeholders on a programme of reform for Adult Social Care. The governance and priorities for reform are being developed for the programme ahead of approval at the Health and Social Care Board and Ministerial Strategic Group at the end of May 2019. The programme will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary and Councillor Currie in June.

National Care Home Contract (NCHC)

After months of hard work with and some testing negotiations with the sector, COSLA representatives and Scottish Care agreed a settlement for the National Care Home Contract for 2019/20. This was a particularly significant agreement which saw us all but finalise the NCHC 'Cost Model' which will move us towards a more sustainable and evidence-based method for setting the national rate in future. Moving forward COSLA will continue to lead on strategic policy engagement with providers.



Resources

COSLA Spokesperson

Councillor Gail Macgregor

Teachers Pay Deal

COSLA, alongside representatives from the Scottish Government and teaching unions, have reached a formal agreement on

Teachers Pay. This follows more than 12

months of negotiations, and all sides of the SNCT are pleased that a final agreement has now been reached. All parties also agreed that the pay element of the agreement will be implemented as soon as is practicable.



Learning Estates Strategy Financial Model

The Learning Estates Strategy agreed by COSLA Leaders will require a financial model to support the new strategy. COSLA brought together Directors of Finance, Heads of Planning, Directors of Education, Economic Development leads and others to discuss and influence the new model. This session was an early opportunity to ensure the financial model will work for Councils across Scotland.

Parliamentary Engagement

COSLA officers took part in an informal session bringing together the Local Government and Communities Committee and Council Directors of Finance to give the Committee a better understanding of the role of a S95 Officer and the challenges being faced in the budget setting process. This Session was facilitated by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) and was very positive session with great opportunity for discussion.



Children and Young People

COSLA Spokesperson
Councillor Stephen McCabe



Early Learning Childcare National Guidance

COSLA officers were instrumental in developing guidance, which will be used by local authorities to support the delivery of the 1,140 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare by August 2020. This was approved at the COSLA Leaders meeting in April. COSLA will continue to monitor progress towards implementation through the ELC Joint Delivery Board jointly chaired by Cllr McCabe and Maree Todd, Minister for Children.

Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy

COSLA, alongside the Scottish Government, have produced a draft Learning Estate Strategy for Scotland's schools, colleges and universities. This strategy will place the whole learning estate at the heart of meeting the needs of Scotland's communities and adopting a more integrated approach. This strategy was subsequently adopted by Leaders and discussion on the investment to support the strategy will continue in coming weeks with papers to COSLA Leaders to follow.

Young Scot Seminars

In collaboration with Young Scot, COSLA officers are running collaborative seminars across Scotland for local authorities on how to utilise the smart technology of the Young Scot National Entitlement Card. Through these sessions Young Scot and COSLA will demonstrate how services have evolved in partnership with local authorities.



Public Health Reform- A Scotland where everybody thrives

COSLA officers are working to develop a new body – Public Health Scotland – which will be jointly accountable to both COSLA and the Scottish Government.

Scotland's councils improve and protect the public's health every day. Education, social work, and economic development all have an impact on the health of our citizens.

Together with the Scottish Government and other key stakeholders, we have put together the priorities for Scotland's public health.

Our priorities are:

- A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.
- A Scotland where we flourish in our early years.
- A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.
- A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.
- A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.



These are a foundation for the systemic change needed to achieve real and tangible improvements in the nation's health.

The scope of local authority business is vast, councillors make a significant contribution in protecting and improving the public's health. That is why we wholeheartedly welcome the future of public health in Scotland, with Local Government at the centre.

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