

The Promise – Local Government Annual Report 2024

Summary and Recommendations

Since The Promise was made COSLA has published two annual reports (2022 and 2023) showcasing the work and highlighting the progress local authorities are making to Keep The Promise.

This report seeks the Board's support to develop an annual report for 2024.

This paper invites Board Members to:

- i. Agree that COSLA officers, and the Improvement Service, work collaboratively to develop a Local Government Promise Annual Report for 2024.

References

Previous reports on The Promise Annual Report

- 23-03-24 Item 07 The Promise – A Local Government Update
- 22-04-08 Item 17 The Promise Annual Report

The Promise – Local Government Annual Report 2024

Purpose

1. In 2022 and 2023 COSLA published annual reports highlighting the progress, successes and challenges as local government strives to Keep The Promise. This report seeks Board approval for an annual report in 2024; and support from Board Members to ensure all local authorities are represented in the report.

Current COSLA Position

2. COSLA has published two annual reports, '[Two Years On...Local Government's Work to #KeepThePromise](#)' in 2022, and in partnership with the Improvement Service, '[Delivering The Promise in Local Government](#)' in 2023. Both reports were positively received by local authorities and wider stakeholders.
3. In 2022 COSLA, through the Local Authority Promise Leads Network, launched a monthly campaign to highlight some of the work across local authorities. The campaign features on [COSLA's website](#) and through social media channels using #WeWillKeepThePromise. The intention of the campaign was to positively showcase some of the outstanding work happening across Scotland.

What is changing?

4. The Local Government Promise Programme Board, and the LA Promise Leads Network both highlighted the benefits of an annual report to demonstrate the excellent progress being made across the country. This year, however, it is felt that an annual report also requires to acknowledge the challenges which may be hindering progress, both locally and nationally. Challenges such as the Local Government Settlement, recruitment and retention of the workforce, a shortage of foster carers and the ongoing uncertainty around the National Care Service, to give a few examples, all impact on local progress.

Proposed COSLA Position

5. It is proposed that the report is framed thematically and uses existing information, rather than asking local authority officers to complete another survey or participate in focus groups; as have been the approach in previous years.
6. However, there may be additional information which officers wish to submit to be included in the report. This could include sharing:
 - **Relevant new or existing policies** (e.g. around Brothers & Sisters, housing, education, participation of care experienced young people in decision making. These as examples and not an exhaustive list.)

- **Promise related committee reports** (e.g. progress or update reports to committees or internal governance structures)
- **Challenges faced by the local authority in their work to keep The Promise** (national challenges facing LAs are known – budgets, workforce, for example. Are there unknown challenges which should be highlighted nationally?)
- **What is needed in the coming months & years to keep The Promise for your LA?** (e.g. We recognise this will include finance, workforce, foster carers, improved partnerships across the public sector, for example. What else, as a sector or locally, is required to Keep The Promise?)


7. Should officers or Members wish to submit additional information on behalf of their local authority, please do so by emailing thepromise@cosla.gov.uk by Friday 3rd May.

Next Steps

8. Subject to agreement from the Board, COSLA and the Improvement Service will work with Local Authority Promise Leads and The Local Government Promise Programme Board to develop a draft annual report for discussion and approval at the May meeting of the Children and Young People Board.

Date Considered: 05/04/24

Contribution to agreed COSLA Plan and Verity House Agreement:

<p>COSLA Plan 22-27</p> 	<p>Priority Areas</p> <p>Strengthen Local Democracy <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Secure Sustainable Funding <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Improve the Wellbeing of Individuals, Families and Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Enhance Education and Support for Children and Young People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Deliver a Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support the Most Vulnerable in our Communities <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Verity House Agreement</p>	<p>Shared Priorities</p> <p>Tackling Poverty <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Just transition to net zero <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sustainable Public Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>