



Scottish Government and COSLA Local Governance Review – SPT response

Date of meeting 14 December 2018

Date of report 19 November 2018

Report by Senior Director

1. Object of report

To recommend approval of SPT's response to the Scottish Government and COSLA's Local Governance Review. The draft response is attached at Appendix 1 and the closing date for submissions is 14 December 2018.

2. Background

- 2.1 In December 2017, the Scottish Government, jointly with COSLA¹, launched a Local Governance Review² to consider devolving powers to more local levels. The review will look at how responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities.
- 2.2 The review has two strands: Community Decision-making, and Public Sector Governance. The first strand focuses on engaging with people and communities across Scotland to understand more about how they participate in decision-making; what works well, areas for improvement, and how it should be done in future. The second strand looks at public sector partners to consider how they could change to improve outcomes for the people and communities of Scotland.
- 2.3 On 22 June 2018, a joint letter³ in relation to the second strand was sent to all public sector leaders in Scotland by Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities; John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; and Councillor Alison Evison, President of COSLA. The letter elaborated further on the thinking behind the review, and highlighted that there was to be a Local Democracy Bill later in the current session of the Scottish Parliament, to which the outcomes of the Local Governance Review would be a key input. Furthermore, the letter asked public sector leaders to come forward with proposals that highlight good practice, areas for improvement, and innovative ideas, with a view to improving local decision-making, driving inclusive growth, tackling inequality, and improving public service delivery.

3. Outline of proposals

Given the wide ranging nature of the Local Governance Review, SPT's draft response at Appendix 1 focuses on five key, high-level points which we believe should guide the review process with regard to transport.

¹ Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (www.cosla.gov.uk)

² <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/local-governance-review/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-governance-review-letter-22-june-2018/>

These are summarised below:

1. There is a case for change.
 2. Change should enhance the regional model.
 3. Improve the integration of policy, planning and practice at regional level across sectors such as transport, economic development, strategic land-use planning, and healthcare.
 4. Public authorities must have the ability to access appropriate levels of funding and empowered to deliver.
 5. Greater recognition should be given to the role of democratically-elected, publicly accountable regional and local authorities in representing the views of people and communities.
- 3.1 The response also takes the opportunity to highlight some of SPT's successes over recent years, including Subway Modernisation and smartcard ticketing, while also noting that there are collective areas for improvement in transport which require addressing, potentially through the Local Governance Review, and the new Regional Transport Strategy.

4. Conclusion

The Scottish Government and COSLA's Local Governance Review is likely to be the first stage in a lengthy debate about how to improve the public sector in Scotland, and how local communities can be more involved in decision-making. The announcement of a potential Local Democracy Bill within the current parliamentary session provides the likely output for any results of the Local Governance Review. Officers will continue to engage with the Scottish Government, COSLA, councils and other partners in relation to the review and will keep the Partnership updated on progress.

5. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to approve SPT's draft response to the Local Governance Review consultation at Appendix 1.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Governance may be identified as an issue to be addressed in current work on new RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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