

**Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation of Governance and Community Planning Arrangements**

**July 2018**

**Introduction**

Community planning brings together public agencies, the third sector and communities to work together to plan and deliver services which make a real difference to people's lives. The Edinburgh Partnership involves these partners in overseeing this work for the city.

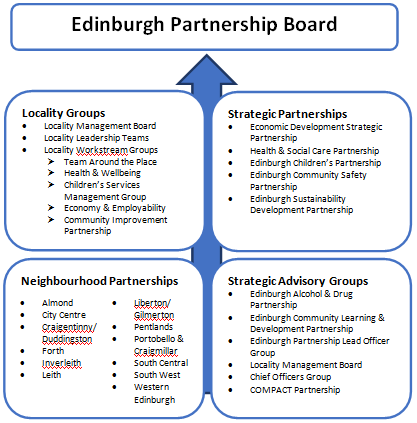
The Edinburgh Partnership recognises that we can improve community planning processes. In this consultation, the Edinburgh Partnership would like to hear people’s views on:

* how communities and community groups can more effectively influence decisions about their community
* how the governance arrangements can be improved to:
  + make it clear how decisions are made, and who is making them, by improving the groups and structures involved
  + make partnership working stronger
  + make better connections between the different levels of partnership working in the city.

**Context**

In Scotland, the law says a range of public bodies must take part in community planning. This is set out in the Scottish Government’s Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Act was designed to strengthen the influence communities have in making decisions about their area – this is known as community planning.

Below is the current governance structure in Edinburgh, which forms the basis of this consultation. It shows many partnership and advisory groups feed into and from the Edinburgh Partnership.



There are other bodies in the city which link to and/or have a role in these arrangements but they are not part of the governance structure. These include community councils, Council committees, the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils and the Equality and Rights Network. They provide the city-wide perspective for community and interest groups. These are not included in the consultation.

To help develop the consultation, the Edinburgh Partnership carried out a review with the people involved in the current partnerships and groups shown in the governance structure on page 2. Their views on what is working well and what could be better have shaped the proposals and questions in this consultation.

We would now like to hear your views as we recognise that this consultation is relevant in different ways to a wide range of organisations.

**Timescales**

You can let us know your views between Monday 16th July 2018 to Sunday 9th September 2018.

**Ways to respond**

Let us know your views

* using the online questionnaire at consultationhub@edinburgh.gov.uk
* fill in this document and send it by email to [community.planning@edinburgh.gov.uk](file:///C:\Users\3518594\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\XVCZ7CJB\community.planning@edinburgh.gov.uk’) or post it to us at:

Community Strategies Team

The City of Edinburgh Council

Business Centre 2.1, Waverley Court

4 East Market Street

Edinburgh

EH4 7BG

**Your Details**

**What is your name? (optional)**

Steve Gregory

**What is your email address? (optional)**

secretary@morningside.org.uk

**Which of these best describes you? (please tick)**

Community Group

Voluntary Sector Organisation

✓

Public Sector Body

Other organisation

Individual

**What is the name of your organisation?**

Morningside Community Council

**The review**

In the review, we asked people about their views on what a new governance structure might look like.

**Proposed structure**

During the review, we asked people to consider different governance structures ranging from a streamline version to one which included a wider range of partnerships and groups.

**The review told us**

There was strong agreement that we need to develop a streamlined and simple structure for community planning governance at all levels in the city. The proposal for this has the Edinburgh Partnership with two groups linking to it. The two groups are Locality Community Planning Partnerships and City-wide/Strategic Partnership or Partnerships.

With this structure, the Edinburgh Partnership, as the legal group, will remain although views on how it works and who is involved forms part of the consultation.

The neighbourhood/local and city-wide/strategic levels have the greatest potential for change. We would like your views on how these levels could be made better for all involved.

Making sure communities can meaningfully participate and influence community planning in the city is crucial. Given this, we have specific questions about how this might be improved.

This proposed structure reflects feedback from the review. However, you can of course tell us about your ideas for other structures which you feel might work.

**Section 1 - Community Participation**

Currently, communities and interest groups are represented in the community planning governance arrangements by community councils on Neighbourhood Partnerships. They are also represented on the Edinburgh Partnership by the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils and the Equality and Rights Network. Communities are also more widely engaged in community planning in other ways such as through participation in surveys and workshops on particular issues.

**What the review told us**

The review identified that there was not meaningful community participation in the current structure and we need new ways of working.

**Questions:**

Q1.1 Should community bodies continue to have a representative role in the new governance arrangements?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | ✓ | No |  |

If no, please explain why?

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| --- |
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Q1.2 If you agree to community bodies being represented, which groups should be involved at each level, please identify and explain why?

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| --- |
| Locality level -  Community Councils because they have a statutory responsibility to represent communities  Edinburgh Tenants’ Federation because it can speak for a large group of citizens on issues related to housing  Parent Councils because they represent a crucial sector of service recipients who may not be well represented on other local bodies  Equality and Rights Network because it can represent minority groups that are, sadly, not well represented on other local bodies  Strategic/city-wide level -  Edinburgh Association of Community Councils as the collective body speaking for Community Councils  Edinburgh Tenants’ Federation for the same reason as above  Equality and Rights network for the same reason as above  Edinburgh Partnership –  Edinburgh Association of Community Councils for the same reason as above  Edinburgh Tenants’ Federation for the same reason as above  Equality and Rights network for the same reason as above |

Q1.3 Looking wider than a representative role, how do we ensure communities are involved and influence community planning in the city?

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| We find it difficult to envisage how this can be “ensured” other than by providing a structure for community representation with a remit stating that community views must be considered. Beyond that it would seem largely the responsibility of all participants not only to make their own views known constructively and openly but also to hear and respect the views of others.  Perhaps there could be a place for an independent “Community Ombudsman” to whom community bodies could refer cases where they believe that they have been overlooked or ignored. |

Q1.4 Do we need a community participation strategy to support the meaningful engagement in community planning?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes |  | No | ✓ |

If yes, what might this include?

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**Section 2 - Locality Level**

The current community planning arrangements in the four localities in the city are complex and include:

* a Locality Management Board which oversees and supports locality working. It is chaired by a senior officer of the Council and involves senior officers from a range of public and voluntary sector bodies.
* four Locality Leadership Teams which bring together the same organisations as the Locality Management Board at a locality level. These teams co-ordinate local partnership working and oversee the development and delivery of the Locality Improvement Plan. Their work is supported by working groups which focus on the themes which are set out in the Locality Improvement Plans.
* twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships which were formally created as advisory committees of the Council. They aim to improve the quality of life in their areas and members include elected members, community councils and officers from the public and voluntary sectors.

There is no legal requirement to have community planning governance arrangements at this level.

**What the review told us**

The review identified that groups and partnerships were not well-connected at the local level, and that it was not clear how they related to the city-wide/strategic level. The current arrangements were also considered complex, with areas of duplication, and costly to support and maintain.

The review identified mixed views on whether Neighbourhood Partnerships should continue. Under the proposed structure, the Neighbourhood partnerships would not continue to form part of the community planning governance arrangements. However, they are advisory committees of the Council and so the City of Edinburgh Council would need to take a separate decision about their status as part of its governance structure.

**Proposal**

Based on these views, the proposal is to establish a new Community Planning Partnership for each of the four localities. These would be responsible for developing and delivering Locality Improvement Plans. Members must have the authority to make decisions for and on behalf of the organisation they represent.

As these partnerships would develop the Locality Improvement Plan and agree delivery of the actions, we would need additional operational arrangements and engagement processes. Each partnership would need to decide what is needed based on resource, service and community requirements. During the review, people raised concerns about the size of localities and how to address the varying needs and circumstances of the different communities. We would need flexibility in each locality to decide what arrangements and processes would work best.

**Questions:**

Q2.1 Do you agree that there should be four Locality Community Planning Partnerships?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | ✓ | Go to Question 2.2 | No |  |  |

If no, what should be established instead?

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| --- |
| Your comments |

Q2.2 If you agree to the establishment of Locality Community Planning Partnerships, which bodies/groups should be represented?

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| Your comments  In addition to the community groups identified in Q1.2, Locality Leadership Team, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue, voluntary sector and business sector.  We agree that the size of Localities is a potential problem and therefore we suggest that community groups should have multiple representatives, perhaps based on the current Neighbourhood Partnership areas. It would be up to the groups concerned how their representatives would be chosen. |

Q2.3 Thinking wider than the Locality Improvement Plans, are there other areas of responsibility the locality partnership should oversee?

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| Your comments  We think that a locality partnership should provide a forum in which service delivery can be discussed by communities with the service providers. Currently there is no such forum other than the very limited scope of the NPs. While we accept the importance of LIPs, we suggest that they do not resonate with communities, which are often more exercised over day-to-day matters like waste management, road repairs and policing. It seems to us that it would be a wasted opportunity to convene a group like the proposed Locality Partnership merely to discuss a document that is unknown to most residents.  We are also concerned that one of the main preoccupations for many Community Councils and the communities they represent is physical planning. Although the Planning Service engages with Community Councils to a considerable (and increasing) degree, we would like to propose some breaking down of the artificial barrier between physical planning and community planning. |

Q2.4 The proposal is to no longer retain Neighbourhood Partnerships as part of the community planning governance structures, how do we ensure that all views and needs are meaningfully represented in a community planning partnership at a locality level?

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| Your comments  We do not think that this can be fully achieved. However, as suggested in our comments to Q 2.2, the geographic structure of the Neighbourhoods could be preserved as constituencies for the selection of community representatives.  We understand that the primary function of NPs was to develop, and monitor delivery of, Local Community Plans. As these no longer exist (and were, in any event, largely unknown to most residents), we accept the logic of disbanding NPs within the community planning governance structure. However we would like to emphasise that, in practice, the NPs provided a useful forum for Community Councils to engage directly with local Council officials, police officers and members of Scottish Fire & Rescue. |

Q2.5 The existing partnerships have a traditional meeting-based format, are there innovative and more accessible ways the Locality Community Planning Partnership might work?

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| Your comments  In our opinion, no. We have thought about online forums but our experience with them is not encouraging. |

Q2.6 This proposal allows for the Locality Community Planning Partnership to develop its own operational and engagement arrangements within the locality. Do you agree that the Locality Community Planning Partnership should do this?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | ✓ | No |  |

If no, please explain why?

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| --- |
| Your comments |

Q2.7 How could this new arrangement better link with the Edinburgh Partnership and its strategic partnership groups e.g. representation across the various partnerships?

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| --- |
| Your comments  Our current involvement with the EP is minimal so it is difficult to comment. We imagine that the most effective linkage would be through Locality Managers who will, we assume, serve at all levels. From the perspective of Community Councils, we believe that linkage should be established through the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils and that the onus would be on CC representatives to report back through EACC. |

**Section 3 - Strategic Level**

Currently, we have a mixture of strategic partnerships and advisory groups in the city. You can find details of this in a supporting document (see Appendix 1 – Governance Existing Arrangements).

**What the review told us**

The review identified that the current arrangements are complex with duplication and evidence of partnerships working in isolation. There was little or no community participation at this level and it was unclear how communities influenced the partnerships/groups. There was a strong view that we need to streamline this level and make better connections with community planning arrangements in localities.

There is no legal requirement to have partnership/group(s) at this level. However, within the community planning duties, the Edinburgh Partnership must have oversight of the delivery of outcomes which relate to the Children’s’ Services Plan, Community Learning and Development Plan and Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan. These currently form part of the remit of existing partnerships/groups.

**Proposal**

Based on the views expressed, the proposal is to reduce the number of city-wide strategic partnerships/groups which will support the Edinburgh Partnership to develop and deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the community plan for the city. The new partnership(s) would also provide the governance route for the other legal community planning requirements described above.

**Questions**:

Q3.1 Do you agree that strategic partnerships are created in line with the themes in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | ✓ | No |  |

If no, what should be established instead and why?

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| Your comments |

Q3.2 What, if any, of the existing strategic partnerships are needed and why?

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| Your comments  From our perspective, none. We have little or no engagement with them so we have no reason to argue for their survival. We accept that other communities may feel differently. |

Q3.3 How would we best take account of the legal duties in relation to other plans within the proposed structure?

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| Your comments  Although we are unfamiliar with the specific plans mentioned above, we have enough experience with other plans and strategies to suspect that they are prepared by CEC officials and based on their own professional knowledge with input from other relevant bodies as necessary. If that is correct, the process does not, in our opinion, require an elaborate and expensive sub-partnership structure. We believe that the main EP Board could delegate preparation to small groups of key officials and sign off the results. |

**Section 4 - Edinburgh Partnership**

The Edinburgh Partnership is the city's community planning partnership. It brings together public agencies, third sector and communities to work together to plan and deliver services which make a real difference to people's lives.

By law, the Edinburgh Partnership must provide the strategic leadership and oversight of community planning in the city. The structure needs to provide a way of making strategic decisions. The partnership must involve senior representatives from partner bodies, who have high levels of authority, and can hold senior executives to account. The Edinburgh Partnership is responsible for putting in place effective structures which:

* will deliver joint action
* make sure there is a clear role for the community in making decisions and
* provide clear lines of accountability between partners and to the community.

**What the review told us**

The review identified the need for the Edinburgh Partnership to be more effective in meeting these requirements with the membership and remit to be revised on this basis.

**Questions:**

Q4.1 What do we need to do to make sure the Edinburgh Partnership can effectively meet its legal duties?

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| Your comments  We assume that appointment of EP members is conditional on their taking up the required legal duties. Because they are senior officials of their respective organisations, they can surely be trusted to discharge their duties to the best of their ability. We can’t envisage any mechanism that could compel this beyond a robust system for dismissing members who fail.  We recognise that for senior officials with demanding jobs outside the EP, the extra responsibilities of EP membership will be taxing. Therefore we would suggest that there are strict limits on what the EP takes on beyond its statutory remit. |

Q4.2 What would make the Edinburgh Partnership more accessible and transparent?

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| --- |
| Your comments  We have so little to do with the EP that accessibility and transparency are not features that we can usefully comment on. |

**Section 5 - Resourcing**

For community planning to be effective, partners must take joint action and share resources.

The legal guidance identifies that statutory community planning partners must contribute funds, staff and other resources which are considered appropriate to make sure community groups take part in community planning.

**What the review told us**

A key issue arising from the review is that the current administrative and support arrangements are costly and largely met by the Council. The Council cannot maintain this level of support in the longer-term.

**Question:**

Q5.1 How should partners jointly resource the administration, support and participation of community bodies in the new community planning arrangements?

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| Your comments  This is a matter for the statutory partners and not one on which we can usefully comment. |

**Section 6 – Any Other Feedback**

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| --- |
| Your comments  The preamble to section 5 identifies the problem of costs for the partnership structure. In the foregoing we have given our support for 4 strategic partnerships to cover the community plan and a further 4 locality partnerships. We recognise that this will be costly. We are also well aware that the delivery of basic services is being eroded by chronic under-resourcing of providers. We have supported the proposed partnership structure, despite its cost, in the hope that it will prove to be a more community-focussed model than the current one. However, this decision is finely balanced because we see a strong case for stripping back the structure to the legal minimum, the EP, and putting the resources saved into basic services. |