

EDINBURGH ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITYCOUNCILS

c/o The Secretary, 2b Redford Gardens, Edinburgh EH13 0AR

Councillor Adam McVey
Council Leader
City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
EDINBURGH
EH1 1YJ

31st October 2017

Dear Councillor McVey,

Concerns about Locality governance and community council involvement

I am writing to you, as requested by the members of the Association of Community Councils (EACC), following a recent meeting of the association at which all representatives expressed concerns and criticism of the Council administration for removing the governance model before another had been approved and consulted upon. It appeared that Neighbourhood Partnerships and their sub-groups, which had done so much work over the years, were being abandoned with the subsequent loss of local democracy.

On 17th August 2017 my own Neighbourhood Partnership (Pentlands) held it's one and only meeting with only a statement that they would be moving to a Locality model with no clear statement as to how community councils were to feed community concerns and issues to the City Council. Similar confusion has been felt by those in other areas.

Indeed at the latest EACC meeting on 12th October, Council Officers were unable to provide any guidance and were apparently still awaiting the administration's instructions. Even the Chief Executive has failed to respond to my letter of 20th September 2017 with regard a Locality governance model. It seems the entire Council structure has been locked down and silenced by the administration. The EACC has always tried to work and communicate effectively with Council officers to establish a healthy business relationship. That relationship is likely to be damaged or lost completely.

The Locality Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs) make little mention of community council involvement except in very few areas and this angered many community councillors who endeavour to support their communities in every area. The likely size of the Locality Committees would make them unmanageable even without community council involvement which gives the impression they are marginalised by this Council administration.

Since publication of the Locality Report 2017 we have again consulted with some member representatives who were less than impressed with this document as it is so vague as to be virtually worthless.

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It would also appear that community councils will be sidestepped in the Scottish Government's review and the Locality Report would seem to support suspicions that the City of Edinburgh Council administration is quite happy with that situation, one which insults the very time-consuming voluntary work community councillors carry out.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 25th November 2017 and we have invited Paul Lawrence to speak about progress as Executive Director of Place and perhaps the City Region Deal which would provide a very positive theme to our meeting. We have also invited Councillor Donald Wilson as Convenor of Culture and Communities, but he has yet to reply.

The situation with regard Localities will again be an Agenda item at our AGM and it would be helpful, for all attendees, if there was a clearer view on the position of community councils within the Council administration's plans and we would expect a comprehensive explanation before then in order to allow community council representative to consider their positions.

Yours sincerely



David K R Bewsey

Secretary

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

cc: Councillor Cammy Day