

EDINBURGH ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

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 its 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

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of David K R Bewsey.

David K R Bewsey

Secretary

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

cc: Councillor Cammy Day

EACC Secretary

From: Jane Campbell <Jane.Campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk> on behalf of Adam McVey <Adam.McVey@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 November 2017 15:54
To: 'secretary@edinburghcommunitycouncils.org.uk'
Subject: FW: concerns about Locality governance and community council involvement
Importance: High

Dear David,

Thanks for getting in touch about localities and neighbourhood partnerships.

I can assure you that the Council has not been silenced, nor has the new system of local decision-making been locked in.

There will be a report to Council this month which will establish locality committees. This will only setup the new Council committee which will be similar to a neighbourhood partnership in its relation with the council. The difference with these is that in order to allow these committees to make decisions (rather than recommend decisions to locality/Neighbourhood managers), these have only appointed local Councillors as members.

The new partnership arrangements, of how to involve Community Councils and other stakeholders like the police, will be subject to a consultation which will be set out at a communities and culture committee as soon as possible.

It is crucial that our communities feel they have a route to achieve change locally. We believe that locality committees offer the opportunity to bring decision-making closer to people and local stakeholders like community councils and therefore enhance their involvement. Through the consultation you'll be able to articulate the best way you believe community councils can best play their part in that effort.

Kind regards,

Adam

Adam McVey
SNP Councillor for Leith
Leader of Edinburgh City Council
0131 529 3279

Surgery: 6pm, third Wednesday each month in Leith Library

Appointments: any time and place convenient for you



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