

### Initial consultation response submitted to the Review July 2018

**Q. Has your authority prepared a position on reform, identified key issues for reform or engaged in any other preparatory work related to the local governance reform? Can you briefly outline what has been done, if anything, to date?**

**A.** The position of Perth and Kinross Council is that we welcome this Review and will actively contribute to proposals which strengthen and revitalize local democracy. We are already initiating our own measures to achieve this aim. At the heart of our position is the desire to see an appropriate balance of representative and participative democracy. Both are important, and how they are applied in different measures will always be context-specific. So far we have:

- Implemented local Community Planning in line with the Community Empowerment Act and new statutory duties on CPPs. This is being carried out by 5 Local Action Partnerships across Perth and Kinross using Stories of Place – wikibased data and evidence stores, which inform local priorities and needs.
- Helped establish national best practice in Participatory Budgeting, with over 7,000 local participants in our 2017/18 PB round and £221,000 distributed to local communities; and set out our approach for allocating 1% of Council funding for PB/Community Choices.
- Established a Community Investment Fund of £1.2M over two years, for expenditure decisions by communities via the Local Action Partnerships, Community Councils and other constituted community bodies.
- Started scoping a governance review of our Community Planning Partnership structure in preparation for the outcomes of the Local Governance Review and the ongoing shift to subsidiarity in local decision making.
- Continued to develop the skills and knowledge of our elected members and wider CP partners in community empowerment including Participatory Budgeting, with further training and development scheduled for November 2018.

**Q. What, if any, plans, does you have to inform the process of reform?**

**A** We will inform and influence the reform process through:

- Political participation in COSLA discussion
- Policy making through SOLACE and other key fora
- Development of specific policy proposals for consideration by the Council and the Community Planning Partnership – for example the further evolution of our Local Action Partnerships to include sub-groups to work in smaller localities within the wider LAP geography

We welcome the objective of the Review to be open in Strand 1, the information gathering stage. More clarity about vision and success measures in the next stage is welcomed, as is the chance to shape these. What is the vision for reform of local democracy in Scotland? What are the anticipated outcomes? What does success look like – i.e. what are characteristics of vibrant local democracy?

**Q. Can you provide a list of the key themes/issues/reforms, and offer these in order of priority, that you want placed on the reform agenda?**

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1. Local government – or local administration?
  2. The role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Councillor – fundamentally different from 5-10 years ago, but there has been no meaningful national debate about this in recent years.
  3. Maintaining public assurance of local public service quality and performance. What is the role of communities ('citizen auditors') in achieving that alongside the statutory roles of Councils and other public bodies particularly regulatory bodies?
  4. Achieving the balance between local decision-making and strategic allocation of shrinking public resources at area/regional/national level. How do we find the equilibrium?