

Note- Principles of Community Empowerment- Strategic Scrutiny Group

Appendix 2

The Strategic Scrutiny Group is made up of 10 national public scrutiny bodies which monitor the accounts and performance of Scotland's public bodies. The Group reviewed progress in the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 as well as the broader community empowerment agenda.

Key messages from report

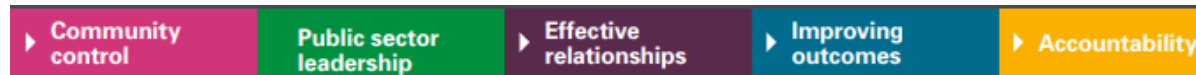
- Community empowerment has created different expectations of how public bodies should work with communities, but at the same time there are fewer resources available to support these new ways of working.
- Community empowerment needs to include all departments of an organisation and should not be seen only as the business of staff who work directly with the community.
- Empowering staff to make decisions is key to delivering community empowerment.
- Community empowerment is not an 'add on,' it has to be embedded into a new way of working.
- Public bodies need to invest capacity building activity in the poorest communities to make an impact on inequality
- Community empowerment is as a key pillar of public service reform to improve outcomes for communities and advance human rights.
- Community empowerment is a gradual process and building trust and working relationships between public bodies and communities takes time.

Range of Empowerment

- **Community anchors** (community led organisations) can provide support and opportunities for communities to feel confident and valued to participate and influence local decisions.
- **Community activism** brings people together around a particular issue.
- **Buying property or land** requires the community to put together a plan to improve economic development, regeneration, health, social and environmental wellbeing.
- **Participation Requests** are an opportunity for a community to be involved in a process where they believe they can improve an outcome.
- **Participatory Budgeting** (PB) gives people the chance to deliberate on how small grants or mainstream budgets are spent. The PB Charter sets out best practice for PB.
- **Co-production** involved public bodies and communities working together to define local priorities and designing ways on how to co-deliver services using available local assets and resources.

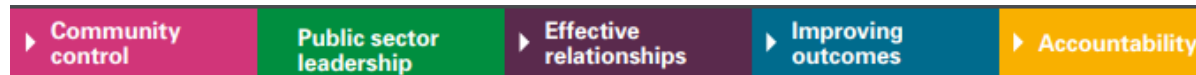
Benefits and Challenges in implementing Community Empowerment

Benefits of Community Empowerment	Challenges/ risks in implementing Community Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are able to express their priorities so resources can be targeted to where they are most needed. • Increases confidence and skills among citizens. • Mobilises individuals to make improvements in their local area. • Can lead to better more efficient services. • Greater accountability of public services • Can increase trust between public bodies and the communities they serve. • Can improve the quality of life for people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public bodies fail to recognise communities are varied, diverse and rarely speak with one voice. • Public bodies lack the necessary resources to support community empowerment properly. • Communities that are under resourced might not have the capabilities to take part in community empowerment processes. • There can be a lack of trust between public bodies and communities which limits people's willingness to take part. • Leadership might not demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors to make the cultural change relevant. • Public bodies might fail to identify the underlying causes of poverty and make a limited impact on addressing inequalities.



Principles of Community Empowerment

Community control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities to take a stepped approach to taking greater control, for example delivering services or taking on management, lease or ownership of public assets. • As greater control is shifted to communities, put in place effective governance structures to support a strong and sustainable approach. • Be clear about the level of influence communities have over decisions and managing expectations where there are genuine constraints.
Public sector leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community empowerment is at the heart of key corporate and service level decisions. • Community empowerment should feature in key corporate strategies. • Community empowerment is a tool to tackle inequalities • Recognise there will be risks in implementing new approaches, but being measured and learning from unsuccessful approaches. • Build community leadership in areas which are usually not heard from
Effective relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community empowerment needs to go at the pace of the community. Recognising it can take time and investment in financial, practical and emotional support for members of the community who are engaging, particularly the most vulnerable. • Working effectively with community planning partners, the third sector, social sector and volunteer partners to empower communities with a clear focus on preventative work.



Improving outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve communities in the evaluation of our community empowerment processes • Evidence how community empowerment has had an impact on improving shared outcomes/ tackled inequalities. • Consider how our approaches to CE have empowered groups that are typically less involved in decision making • Demonstrate how the organisations is adapting Community Empowerment processes from experience.
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents are jargon free and written in plain English. • LOIP and other policies easy to understand. • Open and honest dialogue with communities about what can be achieved. • Report in a transparent way about how the council is promoting community empowerment. • Evidence how community views have been taken into consideration in decision making.

Key Points for Perth and Kinross Council and Community Planning Partnership

- Consider how best to evaluate our approaches to community empowerment in key performance reports
- Consider using the Principles as a checklist as part of our evaluation of services which support community empowerment
- Ensure the Perth & Kinross offer strengthens public agencies working relationships with communities.
- The 'Think Yes' approach to leadership empowers staff to work effectively with communities.
- The LOIP and Local Action Plans should focus on how community empowerment will meaningfully improve equality.
- Use the Consultation Hub as a portal to evidence how community input has informed decisions.

Example Checklist for Community Empowerment

Section	Checklist	✓
Community control	Communities are being supported to own/ take on assets.	
	Governance arrangements have been adapted to reflect community empowerment (e.g. budget process includes mainstream PB elements).	
	As an organisation we have set clear parameters about what decisions community must be involved in.	
	We are making resources (financial and non-financial) available to support to support citizens/ groups to improve outcomes for their communities.	
Public sector leadership	There is a clear commitment to community empowerment in key strategies, which is reflected in organisational culture	
	The CPP has identified how community empowerment improves equality.	
	Evaluations of how we support community empowerment are shared across our organisation.	
	CLD resources are concentrated in those communities with the greatest need	
	Staff across partners have a sufficient level of awareness and understanding of community empowerment awareness	
Effective relationships	Communications about community empowerment are jargon free and in plain English	
	Public agencies are supporting communities to drive the pace of community-led initiatives	
	All partners are contributing and working together to building community capacity	
Improving outcomes	Communities involved in empowerment process are involved in evaluation and learning	
	Public agencies are assessing the appetite within communities for greater control of decisions and adjusting accordingly	
	We are continuing to evaluate and adapt our approach to community empowerment.	
Accountability	Opportunities for communities to get involved in empowerment processes (e.g. asset transfer and participation request) are clearly communicated	
	We have strong evidence in performance reports on how community empowerment is being supported and delivered	
	Consultation Hub clearly shows how community engagement has influenced decisions	

Potential Performance Measures

- Number of community owned properties are increasing.
- Number of community managed buildings are increasing.
- Proportion of budget decided on using PB methods is increasing
- Key indications monitoring deprivation are improving in our most deprived communities.
- Proportion of capacity building activity delivered in most deprived areas
- Number of documents going through 'speaking like humans'.
- More decisions being made by the council are going through a consultation process.
- Increase in social media posts and other campaigns around empowerment process.