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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 31 MARCH 2021**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL RECOVERY THROUGH LOCALITY PLANNING**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report asks Committee to consider how locality planning can contribute to social recovery in Moray, taking account of the strategic aims set out in the Moray Council Corporate Plan and the Strategic Framework for Recovery and Renewal in Moray, the learning from the pilot Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Locality Plans, and the strengthening of Community Anchor Organisations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that the Committee;**

- (i) notes the emerging data on the impact of Covid-19 nationally and on the people of Moray, and the updated outcome statistics for communities in Moray;**
- (ii) agrees to identify Forbes, Lossiemouth and Keith as the communities for priority action in the next phase of locality planning work led by the local authority, while continuing to support existing partnership locality plan work in Elgin and Buckie;**
- (iii) agrees that engagement work is developed using the approach set out in Appendix 1, working in partnership with community Anchor Organisations to enhance and accelerate the work where possible leading to production of community/Locality plans for our communities; and**

- (iv) **notes that the approach to locality planning set out in this report will support the development of a corporate action plan for social recovery and renewal by facilitating the identification of cross-cutting themes from communities across Moray.**

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 places duties on local authorities to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning including consulting and co-operating with communities.
- 3.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires that public bodies across the UK consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy and delivering services. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
- 3.3 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 outlined the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting communities to do things for themselves and to make their voices heard in the planning and delivery of services. This legislation included a section on Community Planning and the requirement for CPPs to produce Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) which cover the whole local authority area, and Locality Plans which cover communities within the CPP area, focusing on areas that will benefit most from targeted support.
- 3.4 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 set four statutory income targets for 2030 and placed a duty on local authorities and health boards to produce annual reports on the actions they are taking to reduce child poverty.
- 3.5 The Fairer Scotland Duty, introduced in April 2018, places a duty on certain public bodies in Scotland to consider how to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage. In practice this means ensuring that any decisions taken are informed by consideration of socio-economic disadvantage in the local area and the inequalities of outcome experienced by those living in socio-economic disadvantage.
- 3.6 The Moray Council Corporate Plan 2019-24 focusses on 'Our People' (Provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong, sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination) and 'Our Place' (Empower and support communities to build capacity). Our corporate Community Engagement Proposal included community action planning as a key step in developing engagement with the public on the future of council services and enhancing community influence.
- 3.7 The Coronavirus pandemic brought inequality across Scotland into sharp relief and reinforced the importance of the above duties and plans in establishing a framework for our Social Recovery and Renewal, with a focus

on tackling poverty and mitigating socio-economic disadvantage across the communities of Moray.

- 3.8 In addition to the above duties The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires that before preparing a local development plan, a planning authority should publish an invitation to local communities to prepare a local place plan in order to be taken account of in the preparation of the local development plan. The Act also introduces a statutory requirement to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people. The proposals in this report will support the delivery of this statutory duty by building the strong community links to enable meaningful engagement with all members of our communities, including the seldom heard.

### **Community Planning (Locality Plans)**

- 3.9 At the Community Planning Board meeting of 26 September 2017 the Board noted seven areas in Moray experiencing inequality of outcomes for consideration for locality plans. These seven areas were based on intermediate data zones evidence showing areas of greatest inequality in Moray. Based on the data New Elgin East and Buckie Central East were chosen as the areas for two Locality Plan pilots.
- 3.10 The locality pilots have been led and developed by the Council's Community Support Unit (CSU) but resources were identified from across the Community Planning Partnership to support the work. A 10-stage locality plan process was developed and delivery started mid 2018 with a series of engagements in the two areas. The two Locality Plans have now been published and subgroups created to lead on the different priorities identified through the engagement work.
- 3.11 In June 2019 a further paper to the CPP Board highlighted the latest combined Community Planning Partnership data to show where the greatest inequality of outcomes was being experienced. It was recognised that the two next most vulnerable communities in terms of data were Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove and Pinefield and Elgin Bishopmill East and Ladyhill, however it was also highlighted that locality plan work to tackle inequality of outcomes should be targeted across Moray in a range of communities and addressing a range of outcome inequalities.
- 3.12 Using the most up to date data available at the time, it was recommended that the Board support development of two further locality plans to cover Forres South West & Mannachie and Keith and Fife Keith. The report recommended the use of the agreed 10-step locality planning process, but recognised that there would be resource implications across the partnership in developing work in two further areas, while also continuing to support the monitoring and evaluation of the two pilot locality plans. However, it was also noted that the established locality planning process was consistent with community work that seeks to build community capacity and self-sufficiency, and that we could therefore expect to see a reduction in reliance on partnership resources in Buckie and New Elgin as the plans developed.
- 3.13 At their meeting in June 2019 the Community Planning Board decided not to proceed with the proposed additional locality plans in Forres and Keith until

the existing plans in New Elgin and Buckie had been monitored for a longer period of time. There were also concerns raised about the capacity of partnership staff to work in a further two localities.

- 3.14 Locality planning work continued in New Elgin East and Buckie Central East until March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Because of the lockdown restrictions face-to-face events, activities and meetings were cancelled and key community planning partners responsible for actions within the plans were redeployed to other duties. However, the locality work completed in the two areas ensured that the local communities were well placed to respond quickly and effectively to the developing needs of their communities as a result of Covid. The CSU has continued to support the locality planning groups over the past year and will continue to provide support through the recovery phase.

### **Corporate Plan (2019-2024)**

- 3.15 The Council's Corporate Plan 2019 to 2024 recognises our statutory responsibilities and duties to work together with our communities to reduce inequalities of outcome. The Corporate Plan commits us to prioritising our work to ensure we improve things for those who experience poorer outcomes, and to collaborating, engaging and involving others, including our local communities, so that council services can be shaped to better meet their needs. The Corporate Plan also recognises the need to build on the learning from the Locality Planning pilots, and to further develop work with targeted communities across Moray so that we can better understand how our limited resources should be focussed to achieve the greatest impact for those individuals and groups who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination.
- 3.16 The Corporate Plan Delivery Framework originally set targets for engagement with the public on the future of Council services (April 2020) and the development of community action plans for two communities (April 2021) to enable the council to develop a shared understanding between the council and the communities it serves so that we can design a better future together. These original corporate plan targets have not been met due to Covid-19 and the refocussing of council efforts onto pandemic response and recovery.

### **Social Recovery and Renewal**

- 3.17 The Council's Strategic Framework for Recovery and Renewal recognises that the context in which the Corporate Plan and other strategic plans were developed has shifted considerably because of the Covid-19 pandemic and that strategies and approaches need to be reviewed and reimagined in light of the impact of, and learning from, the pandemic.
- 3.18 The Strategic Framework sets out a transitional vision for recovery and renewal focussing on a 'strong, agile and inclusive recovery' and with the common aims across all services as follows:
- **Understand** the impact of Covid-19 in Moray;
  - **Support** the ongoing impact of living with Covid-19 as far as possible;
  - **Learn** from the positive changes so that they are captured and built upon for the future;

- **Reengineer** the strategic policies and actions needed to ensure we will deliver our outcomes in the new environment.

The intention is to work with our communities so that Moray emerges from the current crisis in a better position to deliver our corporate priorities as set out in our corporate plan.

- 3.19 Our Strategic Framework recognises that community groups across Moray played a pivotal role in the response to the pandemic, rapidly assessing their local community needs, and developing supports to meet those needs. It also recognises that the community response work, including the strengthening of Community Anchor Organisations (Community Councils, Community Associations, Development Trusts), needs to be supported and built upon to further develop community capacity and resilience, and to support greater partnership working between the council and the communities of Moray.
- 3.20 The Strategic Framework also recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has created new vulnerabilities across our communities. The impacts of the crisis are not felt equally and some areas of Moray, and some groups of people, are facing a higher risk of poverty, inequality and other social harms as a result of the pandemic. We therefore need to target our future community-based work where we are seeing the greatest inequalities of outcomes caused by the pandemic.
- 3.21 A refocussed approach to community engagement and collaboration based on the learning from the pandemic response, and a renewed understanding of the inequalities in our communities, is further supported by the recommendations from the national Social Renewal and Advisory Board. The Board published their final report on 21 January 2021 and recommended three key principles for recovery including '**Communities and Collective Endeavour**' – 'We believe that we need to work together to deliver a fairer society and we need to give more power to people and communities and empower frontline teams'. The recommended actions under this principle are as follows:
- Further shift the balance of power so individuals and communities have more control over decisions that affect their lives.
  - Improve service delivery and design by empowering frontline teams and the people and communities they serve.
  - Build on new ways of working, based on what has worked well during the pandemic, and develop new arrangements for local governance
  - Focus all and everyone's activities on building more resilient, fairer, healthier and stronger communities and places.
  - Co-design how we assess progress towards renewal, incorporating deeper engagement with those people and communities who have first-hand experience of poverty, inequality and restricted life chances.

COSLA is currently considering the Local Government Response to these recommendations.

- 3.22 The approach to locality planning set out in this report will support the council's and partner's strategic response to Social Recovery and Renewal by

supporting communities to articulate their needs in relation to recovery, with cross-cutting themes feeding into our single and multi-agency action plans for social recovery and renewal, alongside national developments and priorities.

### **Impact of Covid**

3.23 In December 2020 the Scottish Government and COSLA published a joint report '[Scotland's Wellbeing: the impact of Covid-19](#)' setting out a wide-ranging analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's health, economy and society. The main findings include:

- The pandemic is impacting disproportionately on people in poverty, low-paid workers, children and young people, older people, minority ethnic groups and women;
- Lower earners have seen steeper falls in income as a result of the pandemic and a range of evidence suggests income inequalities are widening;
- Isolation and loneliness have increased but there is also evidence of positive impacts on community cohesion and empowerment. It is these positive impacts that we are looking to harness and build on.

3.24 Our understanding of the social and economic impact of Covid-19 in Moray communities is still developing, however we are gathering data from a number of sources, including a survey conducted by TSI Moray and our Renewal and Recovery engagement work (including the Moray Council Corporate Recovery Plan Consultation). The key themes regarding the impact of Covid-19 in Moray reflect the national findings and include the following:

- The pandemic has impacted most on those who were 'just managing' prior to Covid-19;
- There are concerns about the impact of isolation;
- Relationships of trust have been built in our communities and these need be supported and developed

3.25 Our Recovery Planning consultation sessions also highlighted that communities with well-established Community Anchor Organisations were able to respond more quickly to the crisis, highlighting that community resilience is dependent on strong community networks.

### **Communities for Priority Action and Support**

3.26 While our understanding of Covid specific impacts is still developing, recent analysis of updated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data and Community Planning outcomes data has helped us to understand where the greatest inequality of outcomes was being experienced immediately prior to the pandemic, and therefore where the effects of the crisis are likely to be felt the most.

3.27 The latest update of the SIMD data was published on 28 January 2020 and highlighted that the overall picture of deprivation in Moray has deteriorated (although Moray remains the second least deprived mainland authority in Scotland). In 2016 Moray had one datazone (New Elgin East) in the 20% most deprived. In 2020 Moray has three datazones in the 20% most deprived (New Elgin East, Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove and Pinefield and Forres Central

East). Further analysis of the SIMD data has indicated that the changes are not sufficiently significant to raise concerns and the most recent data continues to support previous analysis regarding areas where support should be prioritised.

- 3.28 The Improvement Service Community Planning Outcomes Profile (CPOP) data tool was updated for Moray in August 2020. The data provides evidence for maintaining the Locality Plan focus on New Elgin East and Buckie Central East where our most vulnerable communities are located, but highlights that further support should be targeted towards Keith, parts of Forres and other areas within Elgin.
- 3.29 The data also highlights that the most vulnerable community in Moray is now Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove and Pinefield, with residents in this area now experiencing the highest rates of child poverty, the highest early mortality rate and the highest rate of 16-64 year olds claiming out of work benefits. Expanding work to address this is proposed below.

### **Building on Experience of Locality Work – Proposed Way Forward**

- 3.30 Reflecting on our pre Covid-19 Corporate Plan strategic commitments, our agreed approach to Social Recovery and Renewal in Moray, our learning from working in communities during the pandemic, and our understanding of the local data, it is proposed that we use our Community Support Officer resources to develop and implement a revised approach to locality planning work to support Social Recovery.
- 3.31 Community Support Officers were active in our communities during the emergency response and have built strong links with Community Anchor Organisations in two of our priority communities (Forres and Keith), and in Lossiemouth over this period. While Lossiemouth does not appear as a priority area in terms of the SIMD and CPOP data, the Covid response work identified vulnerable communities within the town requiring ongoing support. In Lossiemouth and Forres the Community Development Trusts are particularly strong and active and are currently at an early stage of carrying out community consultation work to identify economic, social and environmental priorities for the future that will lead to the development of community plans.
- 3.32 There is an opportunity to adapt the agreed 10-stage process for locality planning to support the two Development Trusts to develop their plans and further enhance community and council partnership working that will support the priorities set out in our Corporate Plan and Strategic Framework for Recovery and Renewal. The proposed approach builds on the process used to develop the pilot locality plans in New Elgin East and Buckie Central East but with the advantage of having an existing Community Anchor Organisation already in place with strong links to the community to lead the process (leading to a reduction in the number of steps required from 10 to 8).  
**(Appendix 1).**
- 3.33 Community Support Officers would focus initially on supporting well-established Community Anchor Organisations in Forres and Lossiemouth, but would then look to take their learning to support a Community Anchor

Organisation in Keith to develop a locality plan for our third priority area (from Autumn 2021 onwards). Support will also continue in the two pilot locality planning areas, with consideration given to supporting the established groups to extend their reach beyond the initial intermediate datazones, so that the plans encompass a wider area in Buckie, and the Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove and Pinefield datazone in Elgin.

- 3.34 This approach takes on board the learning themes from the interim report produced by SCDC (Scottish Community Development Centre) in May 2019 on the development of the locality plans in New Elgin and Buckie. The learning themes from the report highlighted the need for local ownership of locality plans and relationship building at a local level being key to delivering robust engagement processes.
- 3.35 This approach is further recommended as it allows us to maximise the use of our council resources and accelerate our approach to locality planning across Moray. It will also be more empowering for communities and allow Community Planning Partners to target their resources more efficiently and effectively. While this activity will be resourced predominantly by the CSU, for greatest impact, and to ensure the locality work can support a number of council priorities, there will be input required from across a range of council services. Partner support would also be beneficial to the communities and the partner organisations in terms of planning for recovery and the proposed approach would help to mitigate some of the Community Planning Board concerns around staff capacity to support additional locality plans.

#### **Resources and Investment**

- 3.36 Recommendations in this report are based on prioritising existing resources and budgets. Community development to address inequalities and the impacts of poverty, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, has been proposed as an investment opportunity for budget setting in March. A decision to allocate additional investment to this area of work would enhance the approaches set out in this paper.

## **4 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

This report supports the LOIP outcomes:

- A thriving and well connected place, where people live well in their communities.
- Confident, skilled and self-reliant communities where expectations and aspirations are raised, and achieved.

And the Aims of the Corporate Plan to:

- Provide Opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination;
- Empower and support communities to build capacity.



**(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no policy or legal implications arising from this report.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The proposed approach will be achieved using existing resources, and will ensure resources are maximised to achieve the greatest impact.

**(d) Risk Implications**

Council support for the development of locality plans is likely to lead to a longer-term support requirement for the identified actions to deliver the community priority outcomes. There is a risk that we will be unable to resource this longer-term support, however this would be mitigated through the inclusive, partnership based approach that we intend to adopt throughout this process, and which would also extend to delivery of the plans.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

The work will be led by the CSU, but there will be input and integrated working across a number of services, for example Planning and Economic Development when considering Local Place plans and Economic Recovery plans. We would also expect to be working closely with Community Planning Partners in the identified communities.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The approach as set out will help to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and the The Fairer Scotland Duty by helping the authority to better understand and work to eliminate discrimination and inequalities of outcome experienced by those living in socio-economic disadvantage in our local communities. The work proposed would not disadvantage any individual with protected characteristics.

**(h) Consultations**

The Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Planning & Development Manager, the Head of Education, the Senior Solicitor (Litigation and Social Care), Tracey Sutherland (Committee Services Officer), Paul Connor, Principal Accountant and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 There are no immediate plans by the CPP Board to progress CPP Locality plans in additional areas.**

**5.2 Post COVID-19 community engagement exercises are being planned in Forres and Lossiemouth Community Development Trusts.**

- 5.3 There is an opportunity to support the Community Anchor Organisations leading these engagements, maximising resources and avoiding duplication of effort, and developing a renewed approach to locality planning work in Moray, which can support the development of a corporate action plan for recovery and renewal in Moray.**

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Background Papers: SIMD 2020 update/Community Planning Outcomes Profile Tool 2020 Update.  
Ref: Report SPMAN-1315769894-33  
Appendix 1 SPMAN-1315769894-25