ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL   Council

Chief Executive   **27 September 2018**

Local Governance Review – Community Engagement Update

1.0   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   The programme for Scottish government 2017-18 set out the intention to "decentralise power to a more local level in Scotland and launch a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament". The Scottish Government's local governance review consultation was jointly launched with the Convention for Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) on 28 May 2018 and entitled 'Democracy Matters' and will close 14 December 2018.

1.2   The first phase is aimed primarily at communities to better understand how decisions and their impacts are best taken at community level. The second stage of the consultation is aimed primarily at Community Planning Partnerships and public sector organisations who are encouraged to offer proposals for improved governance arrangements at their level of place.

1.3   It is unknown at this stage what the proposed Local Democracy Bill will contain however it is anticipated that it has the potential to have a long term impact on how decisions are made affecting our communities in Argyll and Bute. It also has the potential to generate organisational or structural change or introduce the transfer of powers between or from spheres of government and communities. It is important that the Council (and any other public organisation, community group or individuals from the area) makes a full submission during this consultation phase to influence the best possible outcome for our communities.

1.4   In preparation, the Council embarked on a programme of engagement with communities across Argyll and Bute and online to inform the development of the Council's response to the Local Governance Review consultation.

1.5   This report sets out the background to our Big Listen consultation and more explicitly provides a narrative on the key themes and comments captured at our events which have been reported to the relevant area committees for their information and consideration.

1.6   A draft of the consultation response is scheduled to be presented to Council in November 2018.

1.7   It is recommended that Argyll and Bute Council:

   a. note the summary reports from each of the eleven community engagement events undertaken by the Council during the summer of 2018 have been reported to the relevant area committees for their information and consideration.

   b. consider the key themes drawn from the engagement events as outlined within this report which will be used to inform the Council's draft response to the Local Governance Review consultation; and

   c. note that a draft response to the Local Governance Review will be presented to Council in November 2018 with a view to submit to the Scottish Governments before the deadline of 14th December 2018.

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Local Governance Review – Community Engagement Update

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Programme for Government 2017-18 set out the intention to "decentralise power to a more local level in Scotland and launch a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament". The Scottish Government's local governance review consultation was jointly launched with the Convention for Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) on 28 May 2018 and entitled 'Democracy Matters' and will close 14 December 2018.

2.2 The first phase, entitled 'Democracy Matters' is aimed primarily at communities to better understand how decisions and their impacts are best taken at community level. The second phase of the consultation is aimed primarily at Community Planning Partnerships and public sector organisations who are encouraged to offer proposals for improved governance arrangements at their level of place. These phases were originally intended to run sequentially however due to the late publication of the consultation document, they effectively are running concurrently.

2.3 In preparation, the Council embarked on a programme of engagement with communities across Argyll and Bute and online to inform the development of the Council's response to the Local Governance Review consultation. This report seeks to draw together the key themes from all the engagement events that will help the Council develop a response to the consultation.

2.4 A draft of the consultation response is scheduled to be presented to Council in November 2018.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Argyll and Bute Council:

   a. note the summary reports from each of the eleven community engagement events undertaken by the Council during the summer of 2018 have been reported to the relevant area committees for their information and consideration.

b. consider the key themes drawn from the engagement events as outlined within this report which will be used to inform the Council's draft response to the Local Governance Review consultation; and

c. note that a draft response to the Local Governance Review will be presented to Council in November 2018 with a view to submit to the Scottish Governments before the deadline of 14th December 2018.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Programme for Government 2017-18 set out the intention to "decentralise power to a more local level in Scotland and launch a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament". In December 2017 the Scottish Government and COSLA jointly announced the Local Governance Review consultation and it was launched in May 2018 and will close on 14 December 2018. The review follows one of the recommendations set out in the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy report published in 2014.

4.2 The first phase of the consultation is entitled 'Democracy Matters' and is aimed primarily at communities to better understand how decisions and their impacts are best taken at community level. The second phase of the consultation is aimed primarily at Community Planning Partnerships and public sector organisations who are encouraged to offer proposals for improved governance arrangements at their level of place. Due to the late publication of the consultation document the two phases are now running concurrently.

4.3 The consultation document states that it is important to review how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, including national and regional public bodies, and with communities in the context of significant change to the governance of Scotland over the last two decades. The review is based on the principle that outcomes for citizens and communities are best when decisions are taken at the right level of place. This review reflects local and national governments' shared commitment to the principle of subsidiarity and local democracy. It builds on the joint agreement between COSLA and the Scottish Government to focus on and strengthen local and community decision making and democratic governance in ways that improve outcomes in local communities, grows Scotland's economy for everyone's benefit, support communities to focus on their priorities, and help new ideas flourish.

4.4 Community Engagement

4.5 Given the significant importance of this consultation to the future of public

services in Scotland, the Council undertook an extensive programme of engagement across Argyll and Bute with communities to inform the development of the Council response. Initially entitled the 'Future of Public Services – Your Voice', it received the additional title of 'The Big Listen' to reflect the focus on hearing the views of residents within our communities.

4.6   Between April and July 2018, Council officers hosted engagement events in Coll, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Helensburgh, Mull, Islay, Bute, Dunoon and Oban. In addition a 'webchat' event followed to allow anyone unable to attend one of the above events to participate in a session online. A final event was held on Jura at the end of July 2018.

4.7   <u>Format of Engagement Events</u>

4.8   Each event commenced with a one hour 'open doors' session where people could drop in for an introduction to the event, have an informal discussion, meet council staff and raise issues relevant to their communities. The formal events commenced immediately afterwards and lasted two hours, beginning with a short presentation to set some context before the topics were considered in detail through a series of focus groups. Each group was facilitated by council staff but the focus was on the views of attendees. At the end of each session, feedback was provided from each group so that all attendees were party to the points raised within other groups.

4.9   Although the national consultation document was delayed in publication, the Council was aware of the broad themes that would be considered and structured a question set to reflect this. Each group worked through 5 key themes aligned to the focus of the Democracy Matters consultation as follows;

1. How would you want to contribute to making decisions for your local community? And what would help you to become more involved?

2. How effective are arrangements for making decisions about your public services? What could be improved? Is it more influence over decision making by public bodies, is it the transfer of services and budgets to community control or something else?

3. Would you support community control over any services? If so, which ones? Are there any areas where community control should not be considered? If not, why not?

4. How should organisations that run public services be accountable for the decisions taken to those who reside in our communities? Who should monitor performance of those services?

5. What would you like public services to look like in Argyll and Bute in 5 years' time?

4.10 For each event, a summary of the key points and views expressed were captured in a narrative form plus a short overview of the webchat session which were submitted to the respective Area Committees for their consideration. Over 220 residents participated in an in depth consideration of the issues at the events and the following sections provides a collective summary under each of the key themes explored at the Big Listen events.

4.11 General Observations

There were a number of general observations that were evident from the community engagement events and feature in the individual event reports presented to Area Committees. In summary, these included:

i. The divergence of views – there was a divergence of opinions on a wide range of points at most events. It was impossible to report consensus on all of the main themes – often there were divergent views expressed in the same group, far less across attendees at one event. As such it was not possible to draw broad conclusions that suggested any specific community held a consistent view or that all island communities universally agreed on a specific issue.

ii. There is a sense of dissatisfaction with current arrangements leading to apathy in the traditional 'town hall' model of local democracy. Nonetheless there is a clear appetite for communities to feel better connection to decision makers and have access to decision making processes at a local level.

iii. The capacity of communities and community organisations varies across Argyll and Bute and the confidence and resilience of different communities was reflected in the feedback received.

iv. Concerns about a "one size fits all" approach to reform was a recurring theme in all events with a strong preference for permissive legislation that allows flexibility in approach reflecting local circumstances, needs and capacity. The case for additional legislation has not yet been made as the Community Empowerment Act contains provisions for most of the innovations discussed at the events. Clarity on what the purpose and scope of additional legislation will be sought through the consultation response.

v. The sheer scale and range of public sector organisations active in Argyll and Bute is daunting to communities (see appendix 2) who may only be

familiar with some of the organisations that make decisions that affect them. The Council and NHS are two of the more familiar organisations but a repeated comment was a request for a simplified public sector.

vi.   Increased local autonomy will require increased governance to protect the integrity of and support appropriate local decision making.

vii.   Influence, not control; there is a stronger sense of desire for more influence over services or decision making whereas there is less demand for direct management and control.

viii. Participation - there is a desire for more creative and inclusive opportunities for communities to participate in decision making with national, regional and more local public bodies. This needs to be supported by improved communications that engages a broader range of community sectors.

ix.   An overriding concern about the need for properly funded public services that meets the needs of communities was expressed in every event.

4.12   Theme 1; how would you want to contribute to making decisions for your local community? And what would help you to become more involved?

4.13   A common agreed principle was that 'everyone wants to improve their area'. Attendees often cited barriers to participation which can be grouped as:

a) People are interested in being involved in decision making but are very busy and traditional arrangements for participation are time consuming or don't suit their lifestyles.

b) Rurality, transport, connectivity and remoteness creating barriers to participation.

c) Existing structures (of both public sector and community) groups 'can get in the way' and are often not structured with participation in mind.

4.14   Often it was expressed there is a disconnect with regards to decision making; stated as a difference between what should happen (or what people want) compared to what actually happens. There were differences of opinion in respect of people being aware of opportunities to contribute and many who felt they were asked too often and wished public bodies would 'just get on with things'. There were various comments about the skills set of public bodies to facilitate truly inclusive participation – highlighting the predominance of certain groups within communities exercising disproportionate influence to the detriment of those for whom the engagement models didn't suit.

4.15   The greatest number of comments from participants related to accessing information and the current public sector approach to consultation with a consistent message that this needs to be more effective. Many participants suggested they did not know where to look for information and/or did not know who to contact whilst others had no difficulty at all. This often reflected how individuals are connected to existing governance structures (e.g. community councils, locality planning groups, etc) or their motivation to participate (often on single issues).

4.16   Online communications was a recurring theme of discussions and again there was mixed opinion ranging from too much emphasis on provision of information online to further extending the use of social media. This was cited as an important growth area with regards to information, communications and online tools, possibly for reporting or to increase participation. The 'traditional town hall' model of civic participation was believed to be unpopular for many, particularly with young people and that alternative forms of involvement need to be created to increase engagement. However, there was another message that social media is not enough and traditional and other non-digital forms should be further developed by the public sector. This could suggest that the issue is not whether information is available (particularly in this current period of abundant information and increasing reliance on digital technology) but as to whether individuals and communities can readily access 'real time' information that is relevant and or of interest to them.

4.17   The joining up of community engagement across public bodies was highlighted as an area for improvement and a way to avoid community consultation fatigue.

4.18   One overarching consensus is that the public sector needs to work harder at increasing accessibility to better quality engagement. There were two contrasting views on how this could be done with the first that consultations should be quick and easy and possibly reduced to single questions (referendum style) while others looked for more immersive participation experiences to ensure individuals understand the consequences of decisions and suggesting that public sector bodies should not 'dumb down' participation.

4.19   A suggested third way is to break down big issues into smaller and simpler 'chunks' to inform a wider engagement and participation process. Related to this is separate suggestions for consultations to be more local and or targeted (particularly budget consultation), be clearer about what the information is being used for, and allow an ability to observe the responses

of other community groups which will inform an understanding on how decisions are made.

4.20   Some participants felt that face to face engagement can produce 'feelings of connectedness' and was deemed a welcome approach for the Big Listen engagement exercise in an era of growing reliance on digital communication which was perceived as affecting some individuals' sense of connectedness to their community and decision makers.

4.21   It was considered that good communications can improve decision making, understanding and ultimately a sense of accountability whilst poor communications may result in the outcome being the opposite. More meaningful engagements requires relationships between the public sector and communities to be further developed. The engagement team repeatedly heard from participants that they wanted an identifiable face to the council; someone with whom communities could form relationships and would look after their interests. This opens questions as to whether it is about doing more or doing it differently and in particular in relation to the culture of the public sector (and to a lesser extent community groups) when it comes to engaging our communities.

4.22   We received a number of suggestions for the development of single points of contact for the public sector in our communities (related to the point above) at officer level although some argued that this is the role of elected members who already attend many community group meetings including community council meetings and already play a role in supporting community development.

4.23   Another theme was that communities could or should take more responsibility for decision making and that through small interventions, they can make big differences in their communities. A common view was that the key to maintaining community involvement is being able to evidence results, gain a sense of momentum and a belief they are being listened to. It was acknowledged that this takes time, commitment and that public bodies need to develop a new proactive approach to participation.

4.24   Theme 2; how effective are arrangements for making decisions about your public services? What could be improved? Is it more influence over decision making by public bodies, is it the transfer of services and budgets to community control or something else?

4.25   There was a suggestion in some focus groups that the size and geography of Argyll and Bute is too big and varied for decision making to feel local and that one can feel that decisions are 'done to us' rather than 'by us and for

us'. It was suggested that there has been a growing trend of centralisation with regards to decision making (nationally, regionally and at local authority level) and a particular theme that emerged frequently was the view that local solutions are required for local issues and therefore 'one size does not fit all'.

4.26   Many of the participants were keen for the retention of local government whose decisions can have a greater impact on people's lives than most other public bodies. It was suggested Local Government should be retained as an important objective party which plays an important role in providing structure to support local decision making whilst ensuring satisfactory governance is observed. In many areas however there were demands that local government should increasingly become 'more local' with many referring back to former town councils.

4.27   It was suggested in some groups that the public sector can be unwilling to relinquish power to allow residents with time and skills to contribute freely to improve outcomes. It was suggested that public sector employees (local, regional and national) should receive training on the unique characteristics of our communities, the provisions/ potential of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and community engagement skills. These comments were not reserved for public bodies and similar calls were made for some community organisations and groups to also improve the way they enable participation of other people in their communities.

4.28   As described under theme 1 above, residents are often keen to participate and influence but may be restricted in terms of time or the means to participate. Therefore the challenge is for new alternative models of engagement that increases public participation at a cost that is deemed affordable to all parties (financial, time, or other).

4.29   Often comments raised were less about consultation and more about pro-active sharing of information including operational matters e.g. pot hole and road repairs, ferry services, etc. Many participants recognised the financial challenges to the public sector and were keen to help via advice e.g. if community groups received prior notification of works, they can provide helpful intelligence to support the service i.e. which road sections to prioritise, best time of day/week/month/season to undertake work, encourage residents to stay off the road (small islands) etc. It is perceived that the outcome would be increased productivity, increased value for money and a feeling by the community of being listened to and the application of common sense using local knowledge.

4.30   A number of participants in the focus groups referred to the loss of the Burgh or Town Councils abolished in 1975 and the subsequent two tier Regional/

District Councils abolished in 1996 to make way for the existing unitary authorities. These comments supported a common view of a perception of increasing centralisation of decision making over time, a loss of local leadership, a loss of accessibility to people of influence and a reduction in local accountability. It was acknowledged that the scale of electoral wards or the geographic area to be covered by some agencies made decision making appear remote and difficult to engage at the level desired by some communities.

4.31   Often there was a sense of frustration with the perceived complicated and 'cluttered' landscape of the public sector within Scotland and a perception in the growth of 'quango's' or non-local government public agencies which many participants criticised as unwilling to engage or take issues raised locally on board. It was acknowledged that many public sector organisations report and are accountable only to national government and not to local residents or communities. Local government and community councils in this context continue to be accountable locally as democratically elected representative bodies.

4.32   The public sector was at times described as too process driven, bureaucratic and risk averse. More than once a frustration was cited of difficulty with influencing decisions by the public sector from a 'bottom up' perspective. The perception was often that this was easier before the creation of unitary authorities and the centralisation of powers to regional and national bodies/ government. This in part was held to explain the sense of loss of connectedness to decision makers.

4.33   A specific theme was community apathy. It was commented that in 2018 that community council elections in Argyll and Bute had become increasingly uncontested. Focus groups considering this trend had mixed views on whether this was as a result of an apathy towards participation in local democracy or whether this signaled a general satisfaction with their elected representatives. It is of note however that the 2016 Scottish Household Survey reported that only 26% of people think that they can influence decisions that affect their area – this suggests a level of dissatisfaction and powerlessness with arrangements which may support the theories of apathy in communities.

4.34   Nonetheless in some communities there appears to be a high level of motivation, engagement and passion for individuals to participate in specific (or single issues) community activities. It can be argued that much of the energy for citizenship has moved from the traditional 'town hall' model to the third/community sector and particularly where a need has been identified by a community following the reductions in resources available to public bodies

to deliver services or operate buildings and other assets.

4.35   Reflecting the comments made about the centralisation trend, a common set of proposals sought innovative decision making and participative models ranging from a town mayor, enhanced powers for Area Committees or the introduction of area general managers – with each suggestion having greater autonomy to liaise directly with communities and make local decisions much quicker. This would require enhanced autonomy from national, regional or local public bodies to increase the pace of decision making, increase local accountability and have access to delegated budgets. This was held to support a 'local solutions for local issues' approach. It was acknowledged however such arrangements would generally add cost to public bodies which could further reduce service delivery and reduce resilience across a some service areas where staff cover fairly large geographic remits.

4.36   In relation to island authorities these themes were often characterised as island councils, single public authorities covering areas smaller than Argyll and Bute, or the Inner Hebrides to become a single island authority similarly to the Western Isles. In many of these models there was an assumption that resources would be sourced from the disaggregation of resources from the previous (larger) public bodies. It should be noted there was some resistance to these ideas with concerns over the concentration of power to a selected few local residents. Nonetheless the range of models proposed demonstrated both a desire for change and the unique perspective of each area.

4.37   Community councils were a popular theme in all the Big Listen events and views were wide ranging. Some participants described community councils as ineffective whilst others viewed them more positively with an enthusiasm to play a greater role to improve outcomes for their communities. Some focus groups suggested an expanded role for community councils included delegated powers and additional resources which would rejuvenate community councils including raising their profile and add weight of authority to their opinions. A very common view expressed was that the community councils needed to be more diverse to properly represent all of their communities and to do so needed a wider range of methods to enable inclusive participation.

4.38   A further extension of this theme suggested the creation of 'public management groups' with community councillors in new roles funded by the public sector to create improved and more sustainable models of delivery and in time creating a virtuous cycle of partnership working between community, third sector and ultimately public sector bodies. It was acknowledged that this would require additional resources but would

potentially produce efficiencies over time and improve outcomes.

4.39   One theme common to almost all sessions was the view that there should be less time disagreeing about how to distribute diminishing resources and more focus on ensuring good quality public services that meet the needs of communities are adequately funded.

4.40   Theme 3; would you support community control over any services? If so, which ones? Are there any areas where community control should not be considered? If not, why not?

4.41   In every event there was discussion about the spectrum of participation ranging from having no influence over decisions through to full management and control of specific service areas. When discussing these options there were strong polarised opinions. For some, there were significant concerns about this ultimately being an unsustainable model with community groups lacking capacity and resilience to deliver over a longer period of time and individuals and groups becoming vulnerable to liabilities or excess stress. More than once there was concern about the public sector seeking to 'offload' services in a perceived continued retreat of public bodies from areas of service. A common view was that this is what they pay their tax for and the public sector needs to 'get on with it'.

4.42   Opposite views suggested this could be delivered if there is more investment in community development/capacity building and the area of activity is within acceptable levels of risk. It was suggested that new groups should start small and grow their ability to develop the capability and talents of their communities. There are examples of successful and independent community groups 'doing it for themselves' in Argyll and Bute and there was a general consensus that capability and ambition varies from area to area.

4.43   A critical area that was commonly discussed was financial resources, particularly in an era of one year budget settlements which causes significant uncertainty for community groups delivering service level agreements. Common suggestions related to any enhanced role for communities in exercising greater influence or control over services was for certainty of budget, a transition period for hand over and fail safes to guard against failure of any new model. It was acknowledged however that these certainties are not available to public bodies and it would be difficult to offer guarantees to community bodies in those circumstances.

4.44   As an alternative it was suggested that the public sector be clearer about where they would welcome interest from community groups in taking control over services and ensure staff and community groups have satisfactory

change management skills to make it happen. Issues over liabilities can be resolved through careful planning including identifying training needs, share best practice and insurance.

4.45   In more than one event there was greater enthusiasm for a third way via partnerships between the public sector and community groups where the public bodies maintain ownership and liabilities whilst residents, in partnership (or coproduction) with the public body would seek to create an improved and more cost effective models that supports the socio economic development of the community. This proposal represents changing roles for both the public sector and community organisations where there is an appetite to do so.

4.46   In the context of this discussion, the theme of maintaining existing economies of scale was repeated. Current arrangements often deliver purchasing power, capacity and resilience i.e. ability to transfer resources as and when required. These matters would need to be considered in consideration of any new models.

4.47   With the implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (i.e. community right to buy, asset transfer requests, and participation in public decision making requests) and the recent enactment of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (with regards to 'island proofing'), and the policy intent in the Programme for Government regarding participatory budgeting, there is now a range of mechanisms available to increase public participation to influence decision making.

4.48   In more specific terms, there was a measure of support expressed for increased community control over areas including school timetables, community transport, recycling, landscape works, pier maintenance, car parks, traffic management and any non-critical service. Areas where participants indicated there should not be increased community control included police, Scottish fire and rescue service, town planning and child protection. Areas where there was more mixed opinions included roads, education and health care.

4.49   Theme 4; how should organisations that run public services be accountable for the decisions taken to those who reside in our communities? Who should monitor performance of those services?

4.50   Accountability was a theme explored by participants at all the Big Listen events. Whilst there was common agreement that monitoring of performance to support scrutiny was fundamentally important, there was no consensus on how this could/should be done. A common opinion was that by and large

communities are not interested in monitoring performance data and are more interested in a certainty that services will be provided to a level of quality (e.g. pot hole fixed, care provided etc.) There were views indicating that public bodies should ensure that performance was appropriately monitored and reported but that they should involve service users in this process. Concerns were raised about scrutiny being appropriate and not taking resource away from service delivery. Commonly expressed opinions raised concerns about the accountability for services if they are transferred to community control and the need to ensure that scrutiny was robust in those circumstances.

4.51   Theme 5: what would you like public services to look in Argyll and Bute in 5 years' time?

4.52   A range of suggestions were made at all the events some of which are already covered under the 4 themes above. Some of these are emphasised here along with other suggestions received.

4.53   Information and communications featured regularly and suggestions included use of prior notifications (as described in para 4.27), development of a Council 'app' for easier and quicker access to information, central information hubs, local liaison managers, more effective explanations on how decisions are made, live streaming of public meetings, and be clearer on specific opportunities for individuals to contribute to decision making.

4.54   With specific regards to engagement, as described in this report, there were a range of suggestions from developing more immersive engagement experiences (including more 'face to face') to alternatively quick and easy consultations. Increased use of social media and non-electronic forms of engagement.

4.55   The final element related to training for public sector employees and specifically included the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, community engagement skills and change management skills.

4.56   Development of the Council's Consultation Response

4.57   The consultation will close on the 14th December 2018 and it is anticipated that a draft response will be presented to Council for consideration at its meeting in November. The response will be necessarily broad to reflect the importance of this topic to the future of public services in Argyll and Bute and will be informed by the substantial amount of evidence and opinion gathered through the Big Listen events. Elected members or groups who may wish to discuss the development of the Council response are encouraged to engage

with the Chief Executive either through the Group Leader arrangements or directly.

4.58   Subject to the outcomes from the consultation and subsequent legislation, the feedback received from communities will also contribute to the council's development of local governance reforms to improve the connection between the council and its communities and develop a deeper connection and partnership.

5   CONCLUSION

5.1   The programme for Scottish government 2017-18 set out the intention to "decentralise power to a more local level in Scotland and launch a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament".

5.2   It is unknown at this stage what the proposed Local Democracy Bill will contain however it is anticipated that it has the potential to have a long term impact on how decisions are made affecting our communities in Argyll and Bute. It also has the potential to generate organisational or structural change or introduce the transfer of powers between or from spheres of government and communities. It is important that the Council (and any other public organisation, community group or individuals from the area) makes a full submission during this consultation phase to influence the best possible outcome for our communities.

5.3   In preparation, the Council embarked on a programme of engagement with communities across Argyll and Bute and online to inform the development of the Council's response to the Local Governance Review consultation. A draft of the consultation response is scheduled to be presented to Council in November 2018

5.4   At this point, it is likely that our key message within the draft response from the Council to the Scottish Government and COSLA is that any new legislation requires to be permissive and flexible and that the Scottish Government review the role, resources and powers of all spheres of government to ensure there is an appropriate delegation of powers and resources.

6.0   IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Policy; The Council will need to develop policy to meet the provisions or duties associated with a Local Governance Act.

6.2   Financial; none at this stage.

6.3   Legal; The Scottish Government has intimated its intention to present a Local Democracy Bill to Parliament in 2019 that could contain new statutory duties or requirements for public sector organisations including local authorities. This intent will be informed by the conclusions reached through the Local Governance Review consultation.

6.4   HR; none at this stage.

6.5   Equalities; none at this stage.

6.6   Risk; There are unquantified risks to the role and function of local government and the exercise of local democracy that may arise from the Local Governance Review and related legislation.

6.7   Customer Service; none at this stage.

Cleland Sneddon, Chief Executive
03 September 2018

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APPENDICES
Appendix 1 – Democracy Matters – Your Community. Your Ideas. Your Future.
Appendix 2 - Selection of Public Sector Organisations in Argyll and Bute