



Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation of Governance and Community Planning Arrangements

Consultation Findings Summary report

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Executive Summary

The Edinburgh Partnership recognised that the existing community planning arrangements in the city are complex with the model comprising three levels: city, locality and neighbourhood. The Edinburgh Partnership Board agreed to undertake a review and consultation of the governance arrangements with the aim of identifying a simplified and streamlined model of working that would:

- provide a shared understanding and clarity of purpose;
- maximise stakeholder influence/participation; and
- provide greater accountability and transparency.

The work has been undertaken in two phases.

A review phase, which sought the views of stakeholders involved in the current governance structures, identified weaknesses in the current arrangements particularly in relation to transparency, connectivity and community participation.

The findings of the review phase were used to inform the questions posed in the consultation phase. This report gives a summary of the findings from the consultation phase.

There was strong support for the need to strengthen community participation, with this focused on ensuring opportunities were provided for all voices to be heard and using a mixture of methods that suited communities and individuals. Most participants agreed that a community participation strategy should be developed, with this to be co-produced with communities.

There was some support for the proposal for four Locality Community Planning Partnerships. Issues were raised about how these partnerships could meaningfully involve and represent all the diverse communities within each locality. There was also no clear view regarding the proposal for Neighbourhood Partnerships to no longer fulfil a role as part of the community planning governance arrangements. The proposal to leave arrangements at a sub locality level for local determination was seen to offer opportunities to put in place groups which would work best for different communities. However, it was also seen to present issues in terms of its workability for partners and consistency of approach.

Participants were divided on the proposal for strategic groups based on the community plan priorities. There was support for strategic groups to have oversight of the community plan priorities and fulfil the other statutory duties of the Edinburgh Partnership in respect of community justice, children's services and community learning and development. However, opinions varied on whether groups should be based on the community plan themes or on the statutory duties.

Improving communication was seen as key for increasing transparency and accountability of the Edinburgh Partnership. Participants felt this should be two-way communication which increased understanding of topics under consideration and decisions made. Inclusion of progress against actions and how the community were involved in decision making in all discussions would increase accountability.

Participants felt that resources to support the governance model should be established and then allocated out among the public bodies. Resources could be staff as well as money.

Background

This report provides a summary of the responses received during the consultation phase of the Edinburgh Partnership review and consultation of Governance and Community Planning Arrangements.

Community planning brings together public agencies, the third sector and communities to work together to plan and deliver services which make a real difference to people's lives. The Edinburgh Partnership is the forum by which these partners oversee this work for the city.

The Edinburgh Partnership recognises that community planning processes are currently complex and can be improved. In this consultation, the Edinburgh Partnership wanted to hear people's views on:

- how to make the community voice louder in decision-making processes
- how the governance arrangements can be improved to:
 - o make it clear how decisions are made and by whom
 - o make partnership working stronger
 - o make the connections between the different levels of partnership working in the city better

Review phase activity

Stakeholders from across the community planning 'family' of partnerships were engaged during the review phase. The review phase asked stakeholders to assess the effectiveness, strengths and challenges of the current arrangements and opportunities for change/improvement, together with different ideas for the future model. The findings of this phase identified weaknesses in the current arrangements particularly in relation to transparency, connectivity and community participation. The findings of the review phase were used to inform the questions posed in the consultation phase.

Consultation method

The consultation was available through the Council's Consultation Hub from the 16 July to the 9 September 2018. In recognition that some consultees would not want to use an online method, a paper based version was also made available. The consultation link and paper document was circulated widely through the community planning networks. Additional publicity was undertaken through social media messaging, and information posted on partners websites and through newsletters.

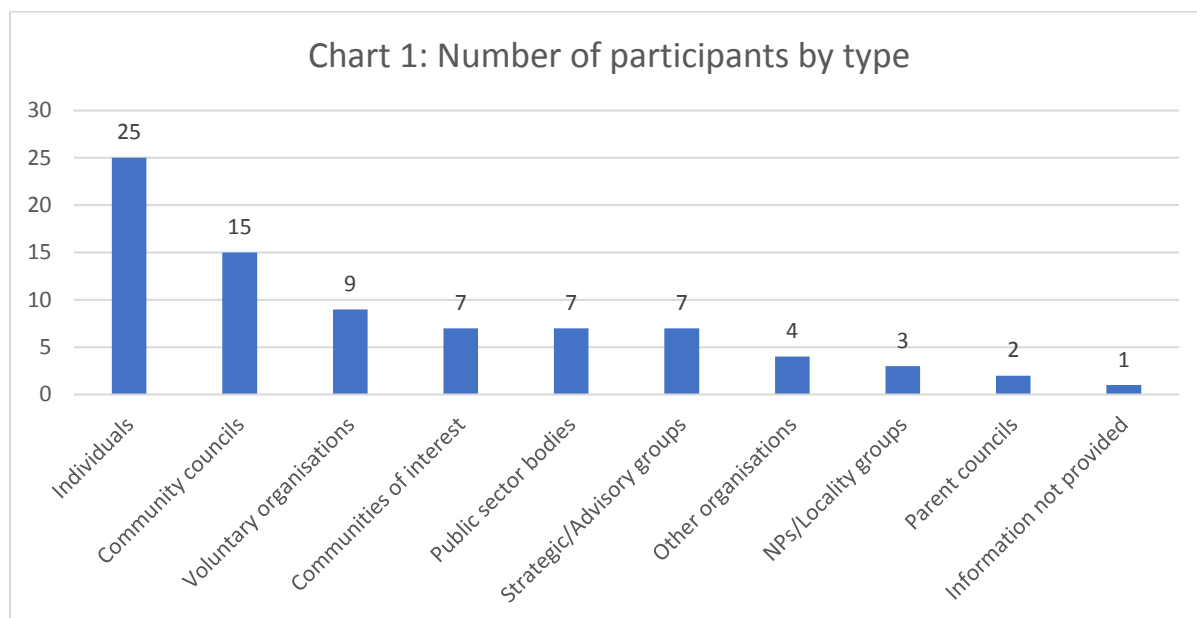
Use of this report

It is intended that this report will be used by the Edinburgh Partnership to inform their discussion on a new governance arrangement for community planning.

Responses

80 responses were received – 74 participants used the consultation document to submit their responses, a further 6 responses were submitted in other formats such as written summaries of group meeting discussions. Participants could respond to as many of the questions as appropriate. Responses were a mix of individual and group responses.

Chart 1, below, shows the groups which are represented in the responses:



After individuals, community councils were the largest group responding.

Main report

This report provides a summary of the responses received grouped under five main headings of the consultation:

- Strengthening community participation
- Locality/Neighbourhood arrangements
- Citywide/Strategic arrangements
- Edinburgh Partnership effectiveness
- Resourcing of governance arrangements

Strengthening Community Participation

Participants were clear that the new governance arrangement should strengthen community influence in community planning. However, there was concern that the removal of Neighbourhood Partnerships would reduce community influence by distancing the community voice further from where decisions were made.

98.6% of responses gave support for community representation within the new governance arrangement. However, they recognised that it is challenging for any individual to be representative of all the groups in Edinburgh. The value of real life stories as part of decision making discussions was raised as was the concern that these messages were distilled as they progressed up the current structure. Participants felt that one way to assure communities of being represented was if representatives reported on how they had consulted with the communities they are there to represent.

Participants felt that all community groups need to be given the opportunity to influence decisions and that additional effort should be made to engage with groups in areas experiencing inequality and other seldom heard groups to amplify their voices.

A flexible approach to membership was felt might be more effective with community representatives changing depending on the areas being considered and decisions being made. Clear remits for all groups would help community groups to identify and agree who should represent them at the different levels.

It was mentioned that representation will only be needed if decision making powers remain at higher levels within this structure, and some participants were supportive of devolving decision-making powers down to more local levels.

There was also support for a shift in culture to reaching out to listen to the community voice rather than communities having to attend formal meetings to be heard.

Participants felt that one way to increase community engagement was for communities to get clear messages about:

- how and what they can influence
- the purpose behind what they were being asked to be involved in

Feedback on where community have influenced decisions previously would also increase engagement from communities.

Participants felt that some community engagement can currently feel 'tick boxy' with decisions already being made rather than involving communities at a point in time where they could influence decisions.

Participants proposed that multiple methods should be used to ensure that all groups that want to engage were given the opportunity to do so in a way that was easiest for them. A variety of different methods were suggested such as posters on noticeboards, short videos rather than lengthy reports, and online debates through social media. There was also support for making better use of the links into the communities that already exist such as through community councils or through front line staff already working with communities (from voluntary sector and public bodies). Expansion of methods that are currently working, e.g. youth talk model, was also suggested.

When asked which groups should be represented at locality/strategic/EP levels, participants provided an extensive list of groups. These groups covered both communities based on geographies and groups focusing on specific themes or areas of interest but were expressed as 'all the active groups in an area'.

Participants felt that ongoing dialogue which was two way between communities and the partnerships at the various levels was important going forward and might support a shift to preventative actions as issues are identified as they emerge. It was hoped these would be open conversations with communities about how decisions are made, raising the other factors that may impact on EP ability to deliver but also allowing the space for innovative solutions to be considered and tested.

Participation strategy development

Over 80% of responses gave support for the development of a participation strategy. Many of the suggestions above for increasing community participation were felt to belong in any participation strategy. In addition, participants also felt it should include an implementation plan; a communication plan to raise understanding about community planning; clarity about what support is available to help communities to engage; and a section on how monitoring of progress and impact will be undertaken. This should be a document that all partners commit to and written in plain English.

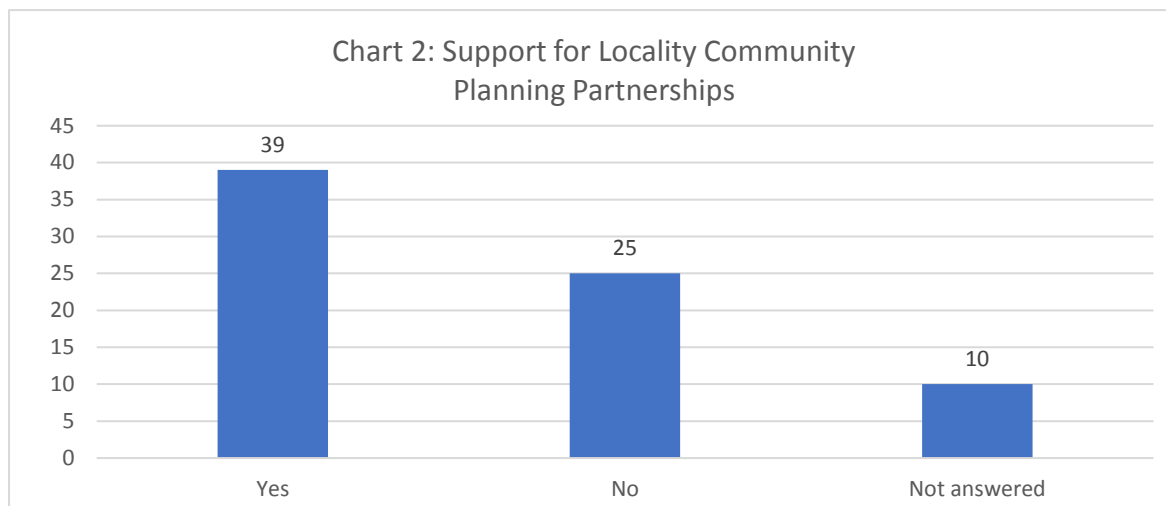
Participants thought that community groups should be involved throughout the development of this strategy.

One concern raised was that there would not be resource to implement this strategy. It was also noted that the current local democracy review may have a large impact and so delaying the development of a local strategy should be considered.

Locality/Neighbourhood Arrangements

Development of four locality community planning partnerships (LCPPs)

Participants were divided on the proposal to develop four LCPPs (see chart 2 below)



Of those who responded, just over 60% were in support of LCPPs. Participants felt that there were some issues which were relevant for all local groups that could be more effectively dealt with at a locality level.

Each locality covers many different communities and participants did not feel that this geography was meaningful for them and there was concern that some voices may be lost to stronger ones.

Participants who did not support the creation of LCPPs felt that groups based on a smaller geography are needed to link into local issues. Views were split on whether that should be at Community Council or Neighbourhood Partnership level. Participants were concerned that the development of LCPPs as well as the proposed removal of Neighbourhood Partnerships would increase the distance between communities and the decision-making.

Participants felt that the membership of LCPPs should:

- ensure all relevant local groups are represented and if they can not all be given a place on the partnership then representatives must represent them all.
- all statutory bodies need to be in these partnerships
- members are able to be agree and progress actions (particularly around the delivery of the Locality Improvement Plans) for the organisations they represent.

One barrier felt to impact on this at present was the inflexibility about allocation and apportioning of funds between services.

One concern raised was the political nature of some of the discussions held. It was felt that sometimes elected members were unable to fully reflect what their communities were telling them due to their political viewpoint. It was felt that community planning should be apolitical.

Participants felt that the links between locality/strategic groups and into the Edinburgh Partnership within the current governance structure were poor and that better communications would reduce duplication of effort and increase transparency. Furthermore, participants felt unclear about the relationship between these groups and the Council's Locality Committees.

Groups within the current structure have agendas that cover both partnership working and services provided by a single partner e.g. Council services. Participants felt this led to confusion about the purpose of the groups.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Comments about Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) were found across several sections of the consultation document. Responses were split on the proposal to remove NPs from the governance arrangements.

Some participants felt that a group based around the NP geography was essential to any governance arrangement. Participants were not clear whether the current formal set up of these groups was required. However, these groups were seen to give community groups ongoing dialogue with partners about issues, but it was acknowledged that not all community groups were involved presently.

Others felt that even more local groups would be better placed to give intelligence about local opinion than NPs which did not represent all communities within their areas. One suggestion was enhancing community councils, with support, to undertake this role.

Finally, a suggestion was made that NPs be retained until whatever is replacing them is in place so the community do not lose the community influence they currently have.

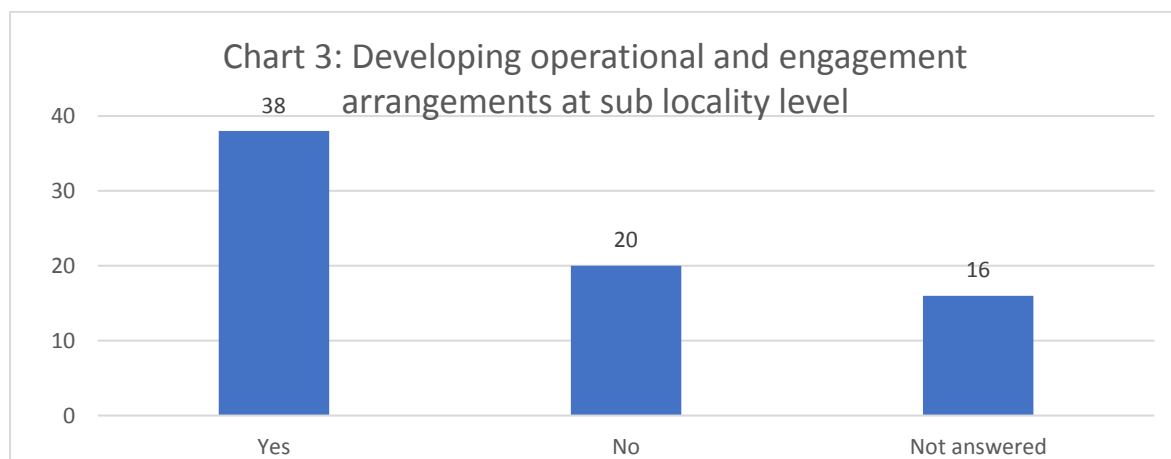
Many of the methods suggested in earlier sections, to increase community participation, were also suggestions for how LCPPS might work together which were not formal meeting-based formats. Some further suggestions given were:

- pop up sessions
- simple 1-page surveys for quick engagement
- creating community hubs
- and linking into other events already happening.

Participants felt that a mixture of methods should be used to give everyone the opportunity to be involved in ways that work for them.

Flexible sub locality group development

65% of participants supported the flexible development of sub groups under the four LCPPs (see chart 3).



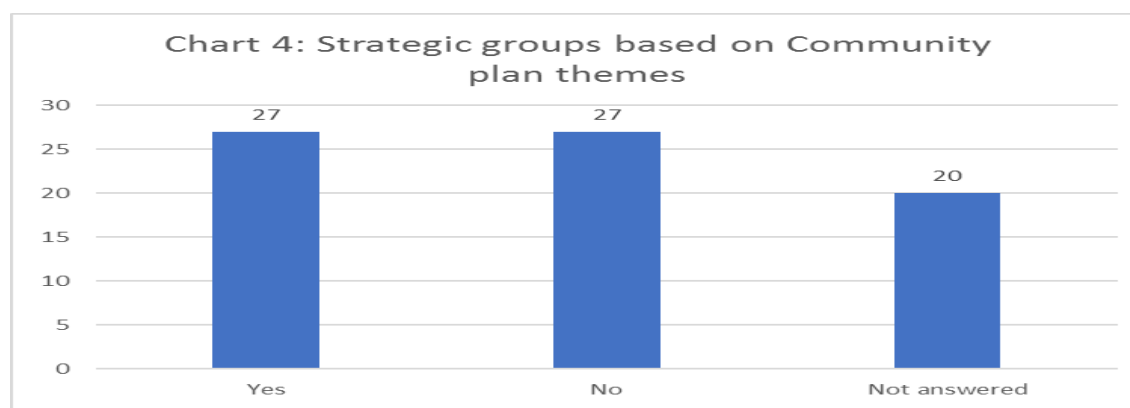
Participants felt that this flexibility could be beneficial allowing different localities to set up groups that worked best for this local groups. They did not see this as workable for citywide groups/partners/service providers.

Participants suggested that a consistent approach to how the sub level groups were agreed should be adopted which would give reassurance that groups were not excluded. However, it was noted that this might result in NPs being reformed.

A concern raised was that this approach might be agreed but not implemented.

Citywide/Strategic Arrangements

Participants were divided on the proposal that strategic groups would be based on the Community Plan priorities (see Chart 4).



Several participants wanted more details on what the community plan themes were before they gave an opinion.

Participants felt that the proposed 'form would follow function' was logical but concern was raised about other issues currently considered by the Edinburgh Partnership which did not fit under the new priorities.

One suggestion was that the current strategic groups that fulfil community planning legislative duties are retained and that a single citywide group is set up to oversee the delivery of the Community Plan priorities. Another suggestion was that the Community Plan priorities were placed under the locality structure and that the LCPPS would oversee the LIPs and the LOIP priorities.

Participants gave the following comments about retaining the existing strategic groups:

- Sustainability Partnership
This group covers a cross cutting theme that needs consideration by all the community planning groups. It is an area that also requires both a longer term and broader (national) focus which is part of the remit of the group. One suggestion is that this group remit becomes advisory for the Edinburgh Partnership and all other partnership groups.
- Community Safety Partnership
Concern was raised that if this group's remit was subsumed into a group with an issue with higher profile, then community safety might be dropped off the agenda. However, it was noted that the inclusion of community safety into a broader group may offer up chances of wider partnership working

The partnership working covered by the existing strategic partnerships are broader than community planning, a concern was raised about what would happen to this partnership discussion if these groups were disbanded.

Edinburgh Partnership - effective, accessible and transparent

Participants thought that the new governance arrangement is one way in which the Edinburgh Partnership will clarify how communities are being listened too. They also felt that the EP should provide strong leadership by committing to shared values and a common culture which they would then champion through the organisations they represent.

Participants also felt that communication was key to improving transparency and gave several suggestions to improve two-way dialogue:

- progress reports should include a section on how community have influenced decisions and what else was done to include seldom heard voices
- timeous sharing of papers would allow discussions within community groups and partners organisations to be fed into EP considerations
- Invites of EP board members into the LCPPs and strategic groups and LCPP/strategic group representation at EP meetings

Participants also gave various suggestions on different methods of communication such as webcamming of meetings, raising the profile through the media, and a more visible and active online presence. Creating opportunities to hear real stories to inform their discussions should also be created to strengthen the link between community groups and the Edinburgh Partnership.

It was acknowledged that Edinburgh Partnership members had other pressures and priorities to juggle and so a focused approach to what they commit to should allow them to deliver.

Resourcing new governance arrangements

Participants felt that if the governance arrangements are streamlined as part of this review then the resources required would be less. They also felt that some of the suggested methods of community participation, such as the use of online methods of engaging with communities, could reduce costs.

Participants felt that resources required should be calculated and then each partner should be expected to supply their part. This may not be money but could be staff instead. Allocating staff into a virtual team could be both a networking opportunity to staff as well as a learning opportunity. A further suggestion was for a rotation of roles around the partners. For example, secretariat tasks could be rotated on an annual basis.

Participants were concerned that part of the burden of resourcing support would be placed on community groups and third sector organisation.

A stocktake of all resources and tools available to the partnership should be undertaken so that the most effective way of using these could be agreed. One suggestion was that consideration be given to whether work place experience or apprenticeships might be offered to fill some of these roles.

Participants noted that resources are needed to ensure that community participation is done and as this is a legislative requirement, the Scottish Government should be providing funding for community planning.