



## **Local Government and Regeneration Committee: Call for Evidence on the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill**

1. COSLA would like to offer the following observations in response to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee's call for evidence on the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill.
2. The Bill was considered by the Community Well-Being Executive Group which generally welcomed the intent and content. Several aspects of the Bill are discussed in detail below.

### **COSLA Vision**

3. The single focus of COSLA and local authorities is to improve outcomes for [communities](#). Local government is at the heart of the government's focus on prevention, service integration and "place", effective reform and strong local services are more important now than ever. National governance should enhance the ability of local government to achieve this as effectively as possible and deliver those benefits to communities through:
  - Empowering local democracy
  - Integration not centralisation led by community planning
  - Focus on outcomes not inputs
  - Local democracy needs to be at the heart of improvement and accountability

### **Civic Licensing**

#### **Taxis and Private Hire Cars**

4. COSLA welcomes the power to refuse to grant private hire car licenses on the grounds of overprovision where a local authority chooses to do so and the extension of taxi driver testing to include private hire car drivers.
5. The removal of the contract exemptions to the licensing and regulation of taxis and private hire cars has received a mixed response from local authorities. Those that support the felt that it was necessary to ensure the quality of the service and those who it provide it. However, those opposed, generally rural councils, felt that bringing contracts into the regime would disincentivise or prevent current providers from continuing to operate, leaving a gap in market or driving up costs. It is therefore requested that the Committee consider giving local authorities the flexibility to decide whether they feel contracts should be exempt within their own areas.