Local Government and Communities Committee

Consultation of the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Government’s Revised National Outcomes

Submission from the City of Edinburgh Council

Context

The National Outcomes are the Scottish Government’s broad policy aims. They are part of the National Performance Framework which sets out the Scottish Government’s overarching single purpose. National Outcomes must be reviewed at least every five years. The current National Outcomes were set in 2007, with one further Outcome added in 2011. There are 11 National Outcomes but the Local Government and Communities Committee will be considering the following three:

- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
- We grow up loved, safe and respected, so that we realise our full potential

The City of Edinburgh Council views

The City of Edinburgh Council believes that performance reporting should as a principle be light touch and for improvement and oversight purposes. The National Outcomes should provide an overarching framework where the establishment of local priorities, local decision making and accountability can be situated.

What do you think about the changes to the National Outcomes?

It is important that the Framework continues to be compatible with the outcomes, ambitions, and goals that local authorities have for their local areas/communities. We therefore welcome the new Outcomes on Poverty, Fair Work and Culture.

Broadly, the outcomes appear worthy of support, although there will always be debate about the best indicators to demonstrate progress towards these. Despite this we expect that evidencing progress towards outcomes can be challenging and, in our view, “we grow up loved” may present a challenge. This merits further work in terms of developing evidence chains.

What do you think of any new Outcomes?

The new National Outcomes that the Local Government and Communities Committee will be considering, align easily with the Edinburgh Council Business Plan aims and outcomes. The Edinburgh Council Strategic Planning and Performance Framework includes aims and outcomes set out for the services in the Council Business Plan. The aims and outcomes ensure a reasonable fit with emerging
Council wide strategies and service implementation plans and ensure alignment with the Locality Improvement Plans.

A key component of any Planning and Performance framework is a well-defined suite of performance indicators which are used to measure success at each level of the strategic framework. The national indicators in the National Performance Framework are described as high-level measures. However, it is not clear how Local Authorities will be required to provide specific indicators and data for these measures and how performance monitoring will be carried out. More clarity on the performance monitoring of these measures is required if the Local Authorities are being asked to report progress against these measures.

**What do you think about the Scottish Government’s consultation on these changes?**

Edinburgh Council Officers attended one workshop in February 2017, the City of Edinburgh Council has participated in the review of the National Performance Framework’s National Outcomes. The Council provided views that led to the development of the National Outcomes which reflect the values and aspirations of the people of Scotland and the aim to create a meaningful, accessible and appealing framework.

Council Leaders have also had the opportunity to discuss at political level the content and composition of the Framework at a COSLA leaders meeting on 23 February 2018. Despite the long planned and coordinated consultation phase we found the final timescales for approval to be exceptionally short.