

ANGUS COUNCIL

20 JUNE 2024

A FRAMEWORK APPROACH TO PLACE BASED WORKING

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

1. ABSTRACT

This Report seeks approval for the implementation and delivery of a Framework Approach to Place Based Working and also seeks agreement to progress with Brechin and Montrose as the initial focus.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

The approach is fully aligned with the priorities of the Council Plan 2023 – 2028 and will help to support their delivery. It will assist with the aspirations set out under Collaboration, Targeting Finite Resources and Local Democracy. It directly aligns to the following priorities:

**Caring for our Place**

- Coordinate activity and develop a vision for our places, through relevant plans and strategies; and
- Engage with communities to support their ambitions to deliver on local aspirations through a place framework.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

- (i) Approves the implementation and delivery of the Framework Approach as set out in Section 6 of this Report;
- (ii) Approves the initial programme for the Framework Approach as set out in paragraphs 6.11 and 6.14 of this Report;
- (iii) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, Director of Legal Governance and Change and the Director of Finance to establish, implement and move forward with the internal and local governance arrangements and partnership working agreement, in line with paragraphs 6.8 and 6.9 and Appendix 1 of this Report;
- (iv) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive and the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to develop with our communities an agreement to local governance and the Framework Approach as set out in paragraph 6.10 and Appendix 1 of this Report;
- (v) Approves and authorises the integration of the Framework Approach within the preparation of the next Local Development Plan for Angus; and
- (vi) Agrees the programme to progress with Brechin and Montrose as the initial focus.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2011, the Christie Commission published its report which looked at the future of the delivery of public services in Scotland. The Report prioritised a number of areas where action was required: *“recognising that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities”* and to maximise scarce resources by bringing together *“the resources public, private and third sectors, individuals, groups and communities”*. The report also emphasised the

importance of closer working with individuals and communities to understand their needs, maximise their talents and resource, and *'support self-reliance and build capacity'*. Fundamentally, the Commission recognised the added value that such an approach could provide to help public services implement better long-term strategic planning around resources and budgets.

- 4.2 The recommendations of the Christie Commission led to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which saw a shift towards more partnership work and a drive for communities to have more say in decision making which directly affects them. This was further reflected in the Local Governance Review which is a joint review between Scottish Governance and COSLA to look at the reforms required to provide greater governance and control to communities. Work continues on the review which will underpin a new fiscal framework.
- 4.3 Placemaking and the drive towards place-based solutions has been introduced into policy making in Scotland over the last several years. The implementation of the Place Principle, Place Standard, and the place narrative are now established priorities at a Scottish Government level and a number of funding streams have been provided to reflect this. The objective of these approaches is to tie investment programmes to places and involving communities in the decision-making and to shape services around their needs. This can be best illustrated through Scottish Government Place Based Investment Funds, Regeneration Capital Grant Capital Funding, and most recently, through the UK Government's Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 4.4 Another part of the drive towards place-based solutions, are the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, which were developed by the Place and Wellbeing Collaborative (this Collaborative consists of representatives from the Improvement Service, Public Health Scotland, Directors of Public Health, Heads of Planning Scotland, COSLA and Health Improvement Managers). These Outcomes are aimed at improving the lives of people whilst protecting the planet and supporting inclusive economies. The Outcomes also draw on the principles recommended by the Christie Commission and are proposed to be embedded as part of a joined-up approach to placemaking and decision making to improve the wellbeing of people and address climate change. The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes are also embedded throughout National Planning Framework 4.
- 4.5 Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is also important within this context as it states that *"every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously"*. This right extends to those making decisions about areas that involve children and young people and also to placemaking and the community empowerment agenda. The UNCRC was enshrined in Scottish Legislation through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, which received Royal Assent on 16 January 2024.
- 4.6 The new planning system, implemented by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) [hereafter referred to as 'The Act'] and its secondary legislation, requires the Council to extensively engage, collaborate and consult with its communities, and sets out specific requirements to engage and consult with identified demographic groups, such as children and young people and older people. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which forms part of the Development Plan for Angus, requires the Council to engage, collaborate and consult on a wide range of topics within the development of its next Local Development Plan, which moves past physical planning and into community planning and health and wellbeing. As part of the enhanced engagement for communities, the Act and its corresponding secondary legislation on Local Place Plans, provides the opportunity for constituted community groups to prepare proposals for the physical use and development of land and aspirations for the future development of its area. These Local Place Plans require to be registered and as a Council we require to give them due consideration in the LDP.
- 4.7 As Members will be aware, COSLA produced a new Blueprint for Scottish Local Government in September 2020. The blueprint's vision for the future of Scotland is one based on the empowerment of people and communities and recognises that a place-based approach using local knowledge and experience is required to achieve the vision. The blueprint consists of six priorities for the Local Government and our Communities, which can be viewed [here](#).
- 4.8 Within the priority for strengthening local democracy, the blueprint states that decisions about the future of our communities should be made by the people most affected by them and decisions taken as close as possible to the lowest level, and that countries with truly empowered Council's and communities have been shown to produce better outcomes. Under the children, young people and education priority, the document also acknowledges that the participation of children

and young people is to be at the forefront of not only recovery and renewal, but how as a Council we design and deliver services moving forward.

- 4.9 The Council Plan 2023 -2028 recognises the principles of the blueprint and that we require to be committed to working even more closely with all our partners, stakeholders and communities, especially in developing our role as an enabler rather than a sole provider of some services. The Council Plan also requires greater emphasis to be given to collaboration at national, regional and local levels; targeting our finite resources to those most in need or for issues which are most important, so that we may continue to work within budget and deliver a sustainable service; and states that at the heart of delivering local priorities, is the need to continue to encourage local democracy in our communities and the work we do to support our Community Councils.
- 4.10 As we look to respond to all of the above and our commitment to working closer and much more collaboratively with our communities on things that matter to them the most, it requires an innovative, partnership and co-ordinated approach, embracing greater local democracy as a result. Consequently, the development and integration of a Framework Approach has been progressing as an innovative, practical and collaborative approach to undertake place-based working; developing place based plans in true partnership with and for our communities whilst embracing greater local democracy; committing to community led Local Development Planning; and for long term financial and resource planning which was at the heart of some of the recommendations of the Christie Commission. The Framework Approach for Place Based Working and what it incorporates is detailed further in Section 6 of this report.

## **5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 As a Council, we have made some strides towards place-based working, place-based plans; and collaborative and partnership working with our communities. However, as a Council we do have some way to go to fulfil the Christie Commission's recommendations and those recently agreed by COSLA within the Blueprint for Local Government.
- 5.2 Furthermore, the challenging financial situation we are in and the significant gap in funding in the next few years that we need to address as a Council, will require a different approach to providing some services, developing and addressing the priorities of our communities as identified by them within their own plans. We need to also get better at being ready for and targeting external funding. Simply put, we need to enhance local democracy and work in collaboration and partnership to develop place-based plans and to also work in partnership. In the medium to long term, this may alleviate some of the financial and resource pressures on the Council to deliver services and priorities in a new way, and for communities to be empowered to undertake some of those priorities themselves.
- 5.3 Place based working requires a sound evidence base and therefore work is underway on a Strategic Needs Assessment. This assessment will present the overall needs and priorities of the local people residing in and visiting Angus and offer a comprehensive overview, drawing from national and local datasets, key insights from our people, place-based, and economic profiles and other joint strategic, partnership and service specific plans. This will give valuable insights in terms of evidence and data for informed decision-making and resource allocation to improve the well-being and quality of life for our communities and citizens across Angus. It will also complement other ongoing work on the evidence report for the next Local Development Plan and provide a strong data and evidence-based foundation to build upon for the Framework approach to Place.
- 5.4 As Members will note, the Report to Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 ([Report 360/23](#)) provided an update on the progress of the next Local Development Plan and noted the changes to the Planning System requiring the scope and remit of LDP's to also address community planning, health and well-being and other non-physical requirements. This provides a significant opportunity for an LDP to provide a dual function and embrace fully the recommendations of the Christie Commission, COSLA Blueprint for Local Government, Place Principle, Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, Community Empowerment and provide the blueprint for place which reflects a joint vision and drives the opportunities for development and future investment in our places, rather than another layer of plans and strategy. By undertaking a Framework approach for Place, we can comply with legislative requirements by the Act and achieve greater and more meaningful engagement, collaboration, and consultation with a range of stakeholders, partners, communities, and members of the public is required.

## 6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 Shifting our approach to focus in and around our places in Angus will enable us to embrace systemic change to how:
- We operate as a Council;
  - Deliver our statutory requirements;
  - Continue to deliver the services that mean the most to our communities in challenging circumstances; and
  - Take the lead on systemic change at a community level and work in true partnership and collaboration with our communities, and to set up them and ourselves up for success and build on opportunities coming out of this work.
- 6.2 This shift will also help to demonstrate what activity has been undertaken within a place through our monitoring and performance reporting (e.g. reflecting activity and investment in a particular Place), better coordinate activity and target internal and external resources to deliver on an agreed vision and delivery plan.
- 6.3 This way of working is different from how place-based work is generally undertaken and can be broken down into 4 key components:
- It fully integrates Community Empowerment, the Place Principle, the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, the recommendations of the Christie Commission and the Blueprint for Local Government into one comprehensive approach to delivering for and with our communities.
  - Devolves local decision making even further and embeds local democratic governance into each place and community.
  - Deliverability of priorities, actions, projects is fully emersed from the outset.
  - Finally, it uses a more granular evidence and data base and a more relatable and understandable approach to the definition of a community's place and what goes on within it.
- 6.4 By embracing a Framework for Place, it will better connect the myriad of plans and strategies across the Council and Community Planning Partners; translate/reflect these locally into a coordinated approach that is better understood by our communities; and result in a more joined up approach, thus avoiding duplication of existing work, and resulting in a more efficient, empowered, and integrated approach for all. The outputs will form a physical and digital plan/report for each Place, which will be reviewed and updated as required (agreed through the governance process) and in line with available resource. The accompanying delivery programme will be linked to reporting and performance management.
- 6.5 Underpinning this is the development of a long-term working partnership and relationship with our communities through engagement and collaboration on a range of factors. This will enable community-led decision making and plans to be embedded into statutory documents, and clearly sets out how the vision, aspirations, time frame and responsibilities (including those of the local community) based on the priorities and needs of our communities that are decided by and delivered in partnership.
- 6.6 There are clear principles that must form the basis of this fundamental change in how we work. In relation to Governance below, an illustrative diagram of the internal and local governance arrangement is set out in Appendix 1.
- 6.7 Authority: Council are required to authorise and commit to this Framework Approach to Place Based Working which will devolve greater local democracy to our communities and implement the priorities of the Council and Community Plan. A similar commitment and endorsement of fully integrating this approach is also required from the Community Planning Partnership.
- 6.8 Governance: Internal and Local Governance is required to fully embed, implement, monitor deliver and ensure accountability. Appendix 1, to this report sets out what Internal and Local Governance will contain and look like in a diagrammatic format. Delegated authority is sought from Council to the Chief Executive, Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, Director of Legal Governance and Change and the Director of Finance to establish, implement and move forward with the internal and local governance arrangements.
- 6.9 Agreement with Partners: An agreement will also be required with our Community Planning Partners and external agencies and organisations where relevant and appropriate. This is an important stage as delivery of some of the priorities of our communities from their own place-

based plans will be best delivered by the Council, Community Planning Partners or other agencies, either individually, collaboratively and/or in partnership with our communities, especially where it relates to our legislative and statutory requirements and Service Delivery.

- 6.10 Agreement with Communities: An agreement will also be required with our communities to clearly set out what the Framework Approach for Place Based Working is, what the ask is of our communities, what we will do as a Council and Community Planning Partnership, Local Governance Arrangements, and clearly setting out the roles and responsibilities for the Council, the community and other partners and stakeholders. The development of this agreement requires to be an equal collaboration between all parties involved in it.
- 6.11 Programme: A stepped approach to working with our various communities will need to be established to align with available resources to ensure effective delivery. Council is requested to agree the initial focus of this work on Brechin and Montrose for the reasons as outlined below:
- 6.12 Recent experience in dealing with the aftermath of Storm Babet with the community, businesses, and residents in Brechin, demonstrated the challenges of our existing approach but also highlighted the added value of understanding and working closely in partnership and collaboration with our communities. There is a need to move quickly on the recovery activity but adopting this approach for Brechin will provide us with the impetus to work in partnership to build a more resilient place, take a strategic look and develop a long-term vision for the town.
- 6.13 Montrose has an existing strong community and business network. The town is a significant focus of recent and ongoing investment activity, linked to offshore renewables, and also through the Tay Cities Deal. There are also complex issues in relation to coastal erosion and the short and long term solutions for the town. It is therefore important to capitalise on these investment opportunities now and therefore is also identified for initial work. There is commitment from community groups and businesses to work together to develop and deliver long term ambitions for the town – e.g. Port masterplan and high street proposals.
- 6.14 It will not be possible to practicably follow this approach for every single place across Angus at the same time, and not every place in Angus will be suitable for a Framework for Place (due to population size, facilities, and so on). This is where Local Place Plans will have an important role in ensuring that every community in Angus has the ability to produce their own place based plan. Indicatively, 12 places have been identified for the first tranche of Frameworks (Arbroath, Birkhill & Muirhead, Brechin, Carnoustie, Edzell, Forfar, Friockheim, Kirriemuir, Letham, Monifieth, Montrose, Newtyle) where we would envisage specific outputs and arrangements being in place. Further Framework areas may be identified in the future. Careful consideration will also require to be given to our approach to the rural areas and how we address the strategic issues pertinent to them.
- 6.15 This ties in with the ambition to integrate these Frameworks/ community led plans into the Local Development Plan where practicable and appropriate, and the timeframe agreed for the development of the new Local Development Plan has factored the anticipated timeframe to undertake the approach for the settlements into its overall project management. That timeframe was agreed by Council on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 ([Report 360/23](#)) and the Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement is subject to a yearly review, of which the next one will be in December 2024, along with a progress report on the development of the next Local Development Plan. As the Local Development Plan can be updated at more frequent intervals, any future Frameworks will be integrated into the Local Development Plan and its Delivery Programme at that point.
- 6.16 Delivery: A corresponding delivery programme will set out the aspirations, priorities, actions and proposals for each Place. This will allow for seamless integration into the Local Development Plan's Delivery Programme, the Council's Capital Programme, and also will allow the Council, Community Planning Partners, and other appropriate external agencies and stakeholders, to integrate the agreed partnership delivery of those community aspirations, priorities, actions and proposals into their own delivery and reporting arrangements; thus, providing strategic and long term financial and resource planning based on the needs and priorities of the communities of Angus. It will set out a clear rationale of where funding exists at the moment and where applying for external funding will be required.
- 6.17 Communication Strategy: A clear communication plan will be required to communicate what it will do; why we need our communities help and what it ultimately will do for them; how the process works; and how it is different from the previous approaches we have involved our communities within.

- 6.18 Engagement: We also need to further develop our approach to engagement, building on the current policy and strategy that is in place to add more detail on how we will engage with our communities and how they would wish to be engaged. This approach will help to implement the existing policy in a more practical and understandable way for the entire Council and also for communities to ensure they are working with cross representative groups. Operational plans for each place will coordinate activity at that level reflecting local characteristics and appetite.
- 6.19 In line with our current approach engagement and consultation events will be coordinated as far as possible and the results recorded and inputted into a database organised around place-based themes. This will also help us to reduce engagement and consultation fatigue and improving our data and evidence base as a result on the needs and priorities of our communities.
- 6.20 Organisation Development and Change: As this approach will shift the way we function as a Council and how we engage and work with our communities to develop and deliver local governance and decision-making; it will require new ways of working, project management and reporting, file structures, training and support. This links closely with the work of the Governance, Change and Strategic Policy service and officers are already working closely to align work programmes. Organisation Development and Digital Enablement and IT will also be required to help develop, deliver, and implement these requirements.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. This framework approach is about working in a more collaborative way, pulling our resources together, and finding medium to long term solutions to help reduce the impending difficult financial and service delivery issues we will face in the next few years and capitalise on external funding opportunities. Through partnership working the Council and Partners will be better placed to seek the commitment and willingness of our communities to assist us in delivering our joint priorities and needs.
- 7.2 Existing resource within the Planning and Sustainable Growth Service will help to co-ordinate and to deliver this Framework approach for Place.
- 7.3 In the future there may be financial implications on the Council to deliver certain priorities or actions that communities wish to deliver as part of their Place Framework; however these will require to closely align with our budget, resources and statutory requirements.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 There is risk of moving to increased local democracy (which involves the whole community beyond community councils) and decision making, but as a Council, we are already facing significant challenging times, and the risk of not changing our approach is of a significantly higher risk than taking a low risk or no risk approach to working with our communities. This is reflected through our Corporate Risk Management and links to those risks on Transforming for the Future and Financial Sustainability.

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

- 10.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the Report does not impact on people as it is technical and procedural.

## **11. CONSULTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 11.1 The Director of Finance and Director of Legal, Governance and Change were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Governance Diagram