

Response from COSLA President

Community Wellbeing Public Engagement

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your kind wishes to all here at COSLA. I hope that you and colleagues are also keeping well and coping in these extraordinary times. We are all safe and well and very much adapting to this new way of working. Indeed we have successfully brought our leaders' meetings online and are ensuring local democracy continues as effectively as possible. This is increasingly the case across all Councils in Scotland.

As you rightly acknowledge Local Government is playing a vital role in the COVID 19 response and I am delighted to see that we are all pulling together to protect and deliver essential services to all those in our communities. I do therefore thank you for your offer to hear our views and I know that COSLA officers will reach out.

In relation to the Committee's work on community empowerment thank you for sharing these key themes. They are very useful to reflect upon given the strong level of engagement you received. They also offer us the opportunity to consider how we can share across the Local Government family the range of good practice that is continually being developed to enhance wellbeing, tackle isolation and promote inclusiveness. All of these are at the heart of our vision to make communities better and more equal places, by empowering local decision making and enabling councils to do what works locally.

We are of course very keen to engage with the Committee however and whenever possible in these changing times. We will happily provide our views on how the powers and principles have bedded in. At an appropriate time, we will also be able to outline the role that they will very much play as we continue to review local governance with our public sector partners, communities and Scottish.