

Neighbourhood Partnerships under review



Tomorrow's meeting of the [Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee](#) will consider the report before them requesting further review of Neighbourhood Partnerships, but far from disbanding these organisations, the council appears set to endorse their work and encourage more devolution of real power to the bodies themselves.

These are bodies originally set up in 2007, made up of council employees, local representatives of Housing Associations, the NHS, Police and Fire Services as well as representatives from the voluntary sector and community councils. There are 12 of them in Edinburgh roughly aligned with the 17 Local Government Wards, and the community council areas. The council website introduces them as bodies which "Make your area a better place to be" and they are elsewhere described as a way of working with local people to encourage consensus based decision making.

The City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership describes itself in this way:- "The City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership is made up of Community Council members, Councillors, Lothian and Borders Police, NHS Lothian, the voluntary sector and a representative for the city's university students. The Partnership is tasked with identifying, prioritising, and planning improvements to enhance the quality of life for people who live, work, study, or visit Edinburgh's city centre." Some of the things that Neighbourhood Partnerships do are initiating projects like clean-up campaigns, and the council neighbourhood teams who form part of the Neighbourhood Partnerships have offices in each area of the city.

The Council is made up of a Labour/SNP coalition, and although it was the Labour manifesto which referred to the concept of a Cooperative Capital, this is now largely embraced by the whole city council, following the council meeting of 25 October 2012, which adopted the [Framework to Advance a Cooperative Capital here](#). The area of neighbourhood partnerships is one where cooperation among local people can actually have most impact. Neighbourhood Partnerships have finances to give small grants to local community based organisations too.



Convener of Audit
– Maureen Child

The Reporter spoke with the Communities Convenor, Councillor Maureen Child, who explained that some areas of council spending have been devolved to the Neighbourhood Partnerships, meaning for example that some money for roads and pavements has been handed over to locals to decide what it should be spent on. In her own ward, Portobello/Craigmillar, Councillor Child pointed to two examples of local spending which had been the result of devolved responsibility for the roads budget:-
“In my ward there is now a pedestrian crossing on Milton Road, and Christian Path is now a proper footpath in Joppa between Brighton Place and Windsor Place. This devolution of power has resulted in real proper action on a local level which might not have happened otherwise.”

And, according to the report to be considered tomorrow, the council seem to be set on devolving more in the way of budget responsibility and real power to the Neighbourhood Partnerships as part of the effort to realise their cooperative pledges. It appears to be the way that the Neighbourhood Partnerships work which is to be changed rather than their actual structure. The report concludes with the recommendation that there will be sounding board events in March with a view to a set of findings and options being

brought to the May meeting of the Communities and Neighbourhoods committee.

You can read more about Neighbourhood Partnerships and find out which one covers your area of the city over here on the [Neighbourhood Partnership website](#)

The report proposes that Neighbourhood Partnerships should develop their Communications and Social Media Strategy in the future. Across the city there are council led teams which manage the council run services relating to housing, community safety, environment or community engagement issues. [You can find a complete list of these here.](#)

Most Neighbourhood Teams have Twitter accounts which allows them to engage with local people and react quite quickly to urgent matters like missed rubbish collections and litter on the streets.

You can find them here:-

[North Team](#)

[South West Team](#)

[South Team](#)

[East Team](#)

[West Team](#)

City Centre and Leith have a Facebook page which [you will find here.](#)