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Dear Open Government Partnership

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP LOCAL PROGRAMME: LETTER OF SUPPORT

As Leader of Glasgow City Council, I am delighted to support our application to join the Open Government Partnership's Local Programme. Glasgow City Council are committed to embracing an Open Government agenda, recognising the OGP values and principles of openness, transparency, accountability and participation are essential to improving public services.

Glasgow is Scotland's largest city, with just over 600,000 citizens. It is a city with a great history and heritage, and local, regional, national and international profile and impact - built on the strength of its people and their pride in the city. We are Scotland's only metropolitan region and the economic powerhouse of Scotland. Glasgow is resourceful and creative and we have used collective leadership both locally and nationally, our scale and capacity to reimagine ourselves - our vision is to have a world class city with a thriving, inclusive, economy where everyone can flourish and benefit from the city's success.

Our partnerships and stakeholder collaboration are well established and formalised through governance structures such as [Glasgow Economic Leadership](#), [Sustainable Glasgow](#), and [Glasgow Community Planning Partnership](#) (GCPP). Glasgow also mobilises around collective tasks and challenges, bringing together experts and advisors with a capacity for collaboration and innovation, for example the establishment of [Glasgow's Economic Recovery Group](#), the Social Recovery Taskforce, and the [Glasgow Connectivity Commission](#).

We are committed to applying this partnership, collaborative approach to our Open Government activities. Our Open Government agenda will be progressed through GCPP, which brings together key city governmental as well as non-governmental partners including NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow Colleges Regional Board, Police Scotland, voluntary and community sector representatives, and Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, who partnered our Expression of Interest. GCPP plays an essential role in driving the community and citizen empowerment agenda in Glasgow and will provide strategic oversight of our Open Government Plan. GCPP have discussed and strongly endorsed our application and proposed membership of the OGP - and all partners will provide support to the development of the Open Government Plan. Glasgow City Council's Chief Executive's Department will continue to drive the policy development and ensure partner and stakeholder relationships.

Glasgow has delivered social and economic improvement before against a background of recession, Covid-19 risks setting back this progress. We wish to accelerate Open Government in Glasgow's recovery from the global pandemic, as economic and social recovery can only succeed by working with our communities and partners, involving them more in decision-making and governance of their local place and city. This is currently demonstrated by our Social Recovery Taskforce who are reviewing how we co-produce services with the Third Sector and improving outcomes for disabled and black and ethnic minority communities. These priorities focus on our marginalised communities, and are led by representatives of these sectors, to develop recovery proposals in consultation with communities.

Glasgow City Council is committed to Open Government principles as essential to our ambitions to be world class in city governance and built on the strength of our people. Our ambitions and future direction are set out within our [Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#), which has at its heart delivering a step change in how we embed social justice in our policy making and empowering our citizens, giving them a stake in what happens in their communities and communities of interest.

Our City Government committed as an early priority to reform decision-making arrangements to improve transparency and accountability and opportunities for citizens to take part in decisions. We appointed an independent adviser to undertake a [Review of Governance and Accountability Arrangements in Glasgow City Council](#) with Open Government featuring as a key recommendation linked to the Council's ambitions to be world class in city governance. The Council is committed to delivering a step change in empowering our citizens and improving our ways of working. Our Open Government track record includes:

- Extending Participatory Budgeting: Glasgow City Council committed £1million to develop PB pilots in 2018, focused on geographical areas and key thematic issues including youth and disability. The pilots were developed in partnership with communities and local organisations and the [Evaluation](#) published in October 2019 confirmed Glasgow has demonstrated a strong commitment and clear vision for inclusive, accessible and inequalities-focused PB.
- Introducing a City Charter: co-produced with citizens and staff, the [City Charter](#) is an informal agreement between the council and citizens that lists our shared commitments, aims and standards, and commits to values of being an open, transparent and easily accessible organisation.
- Ensuring citizens are more involved in local and citywide decision making: engaging with our citizens at the earliest stage on policy and service design is essential. We held a series of Summits during 2017 to address key priorities and challenges in the City such as Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, Transport and Connectivity, and Community Empowerment and the Third Sector.
- Addressing Climate Change: our [Climate Emergency Working Group](#) brought together the Council with a range of partners, stakeholders, citizen and activist groups. Its recommendations aim to achieve a carbon neutral Glasgow by 2030 and include; city engagement with residents in climate conversations, growing local action in partnership with communities on climate issues, and exercising community leadership.

We want to take these principles and actions further, and Open Government Partnership Local Programme membership represents an opportunity for Glasgow to collaborate with those with international expertise and accelerate our progress. Our membership brings mutual benefits for Glasgow and the Open Government Partnership including:

- Accelerate the Open Government ambition in Glasgow: City partners have committed to an Open Government agenda and we wish to accelerate and elevate Open Government in our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be driven through the Social Recovery Taskforce which will engage with citizens about recovery, key workstreams will be led by non-governmental partners from our marginalised communities. This will also provide an opportunity to inform a new City Vision based on achieving improved outcomes for our citizens and reshaping how we use our collective public service resources in Glasgow.
- Glasgow's contribution to international learning, exchange and expertise: further building on our track record in working globally to help achieve Open Government commitments in Glasgow. Glasgow would welcome the opportunity to participate in peer exchange activities and work collaboratively to enhance skills and develop best practice. It will enhance our contribution to advance Open Government policy and principles at a Scottish

Local Government level and assist in shaping local government actions for Scotland's National Open Government Plan.

- Established city collaborative leadership and track record of innovation: Glasgow brings a strong track record of partnership working and stakeholder collaboration to co-create and deliver the City's ambitions. We have a well-established 'Team Glasgow' approach in the city involving a range of partners and stakeholders focussed on building a better Glasgow. We will bring our willingness to use innovative practices to build a wealthier, more sustainable and empowered future for the people of Glasgow to our OGP Local membership.
- Tackling Inequality: as Scotland largest and most diverse city, our "People make Glasgow" brand reflects the resilience and pride of our people. Improving outcomes for all and tackling inequality is at the heart of everything we do.
- Scale and significance of Glasgow: Glasgow provides a significant platform for Open Government as a city with regional, national and international profile and impact. We are Scotland's only metropolitan region and the economic powerhouse of Scotland, our urban scale and momentum continues to bring opportunities to add value at a Scottish level.

We look forward to having the opportunity to learn from other OGP Local members and participate in peer exchange activities, and we will actively participate, helping to build the global community of practice. Glasgow is an international city with a reputation for working globally in implementing policies and ensuring collective knowledge and learning through our networks. We have recently reviewed our membership of international networks to ensure we are active participants and are clear on the purpose and value of our connections. We have experience in key open government policy themes such as public service delivery, marginalised communities, digital governance, and climate change - and are eager to learn from international experience, approaches, and initiatives.

The expertise and support provided through the OGP Local Programme will help us deliver an innovative and impactful Open Government Action Plan in Glasgow to accelerate progress - helping us improve citizen involvement in democratic decision making, accelerate citizen led redesign, improve access to services using technology, and improve the quality and responsiveness of local place-based decisions and services.

We will share our learning and experience of co-creating and implementing our Plan with the [Convention of Scottish Local Authorities](#) and Scottish Local Authorities, as this is essential to the development of Open Government principles and practice in Scottish Local Government. Our active participation in international networks such as EUROCITIES, UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Inclusive Cities, Global Resilient Cities Network, and ICLEI provides potential to further promote the principles of open government and OGP.

Glasgow would welcome the opportunity to work with the Open Government Partnership to take forward Open Government commitments and ambitions for the City, while advancing Open Government policy and principles with Scottish Local Government and the Scottish Government. I look forward to your response, but if I can provide any further information meantime, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Susan Aitken
Leader of the Council