

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee 13.6.13

Agenda Item	3
Report No	CPE 17/13

Continuous Improvement of the Committee

Report by the Assistant Chief Executive

Summary

This report provides feedback on the last survey of members on the operation of the committee, up-dates the actions in the improvement plan for the committee and reports that the Committee arrangements in Highland are seen as good practice nationally from the Scottish Government's pathfinder project and by the inspection bodies for police and fire services from their early review of engagement. On-going actions for improvement are linked to the review of community planning now underway and the review of Area Committees to be reported to the Council in June 2013.

1. Background

1.1 The ethos of the committee as a community safety pathfinder has been 'to learn as we go' and to seek improvements to the operation of the committee. This has been done through:

1. surveying members for their view after each committee meeting and making changes where required;
2. developing an improvement plan for the committee based on the learning from the member workshop on scrutiny of police and fire services held in January 2013;
3. taking part in the national pathfinder to find out what is happening elsewhere and sharing the practice in Highland.

1.2 This report summarises the changes made so far from member feedback, provides feedback on the last survey of members and up-dates members on the action plan. In addition feedback from the national pathfinder is provided along with information on the new inspection proposed for local police plans and local fire and rescue plans and the arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement.

2. Member views on the operation of the Committee

2.1 From the member surveys conducted following the September and December committee meetings, the majority of members responding have fed back that:

- they feel clear about their role in the committee;
- they have been either very or fairly satisfied with the community safety part of the Committee agenda, the topics covered and the presentation of reports and the response to questions;
- they feel very or quite assured that the Council would be involved in setting objectives for local police and fire services and very or quite

assured that local priorities would be influenced by feedback from the public, equalities groups and from local meetings and forums;

- they have had the opportunity for sufficient scrutiny of police and fire performance;
- good partnership working has been evidenced so far for road safety, hate incidents and violence against women;
- they have improved awareness of hate incidents and violence against women in the Highlands.

2.2 In addition the following improvements have been made to the operation of the Committee from the survey feedback:

- Developing a new style of performance report for the police;
- The inclusion of reporting from the Scottish Ambulance Service on its operations in the Highlands;
- Rotating the order of agenda across the community safety, equalities and public engagement items;
- Improved member engagement with the Police at Ward level;
- Agreement to reporting annually on hate incidents and violence against women, with this to feature in ward plans too.
- To engage with the national boards for police and fire services through the presence of board members from the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Fire Service at committee meetings.

2.3 The survey following the March Committee included responses from 10 members. The majority of responses show that:

- Formal presentations from the Scottish Fire Service Board and Scottish Police Authority are not required at this time;
- Members are keen to use the national good scrutiny statement self-assessment questions as part of their training and development (this will be passed on to the Employee Development Manager);
- Good levels of satisfaction with the presentations and explanations of performance by police, fire services and the ambulance service.

2.4 Members were asked a suite of questions regarding their scrutiny role after April 2013 when the boards for police and fire would no longer exist. This was largely positive and showed that of those responding:

- All members felt very or quite assured that area performance reports (police and fire) would be provided to Area Committee once set up.
- 9 out of 10 members felt either very or quite assured that members will be able to challenge performance reports constructively, they will believe the answers they receive to questions on performance from the local senior officers and that they will be able to raise concerns about performance to the national bodies at either the Chief Officer or Board level.
- 8 out of 10 members felt very or quite assured that members would be able to influence performance improvement locally and that changes would be made to performance reports as requested at the member workshop.
- However, some more assurance may be needed for members that any

changes driven nationally to the style of local performance reports would also take into account the performance information requested locally.

- 2.5 Members were asked if there were other community safety topics the committee should consider and how else the committee might improve. Comments fed back are listed below, along with a response:
1. Offending, re-offending, prison sentencing and community pay back schemes – these issues would be considered by the Adult and Children’s Services Committee;
 2. Cold calling and scams – on the agenda for this meeting of the committee;
 3. Road safety, especially young drivers – the next annual report is due for the September meeting of this Committee;
 4. Traffic wardens and community wardens – community wardens are included in the report on anti-social behaviour for this meeting of the committee and at this time there is no information about any changes to traffic warden arrangements.
 5. Co-location of service points and police stations and implications of either changing – this would be considered if there are further service reviews and would also be of interest to the FHR Committee.
 6. Assessment of the First Responder Scheme by the Ambulance Service – further information can be requested.
 7. As an equalities issue, how Council services will recognise the rights of the child being promoted through the Children and Young People Bill – this would be considered by the Adult and Children’s Services Committee.
 8. The role of members on local community safety partnerships – this can be explored in the current review of community planning.
 9. Impressing on local senior officers from police and fire that they do not need to attend the whole meeting where community safety items are considered last on the agenda – noted.
 10. The advantage brought from members visiting the police call handling centre and whether there is scope for members to visit the Fire Service call handling centre – this is requested.
 11. The scope for raising issues with emergency services out with the committee meeting – this can be done directly with them or through ward meetings.
 12. Whether community benefit issues should be considered at the PED committee – this topic cannot be considered at PED given the potential conflict with planning decisions but it does fit with the public engagement remit of the CPE committee.

- 2.6 Some members considered there should be additional meetings of the Committee. This will be considered in the Council’s review of the Committee remit; however current resource limits would restrict additional committee meetings.

3. The committee improvement plan

- 3.1 The improvement plan following the workshop and feedback to the committee

in March is appended. It includes an up-date on action. Some actions are complete and others are on-going including the development of local performance reports and the work to be reported to the Council on the review of Area Committees, the work underway to review community planning and the Single Outcome Agreement.

4. External feedback on the operation of the Committee

- 4.1 The committee was one of the pathfinder committees for the national scrutiny and engagement project for community safety. This involved finding out what was being done elsewhere, including the presentation made to the Committee in March 2013 from the Improvement Service, and presenting to others how the CPE committee operated.
- 4.2 Consequently Highland has been regarded as a good practice authority, using the committee model to engage with the national services and to scrutinise performance. The practice in Highland will be published and the draft focuses on the continuous improvement model used, highlighting:
- Member surveys;
 - Improving the format for performance reporting;
 - The involvement of the Scottish Ambulance Service;
 - Member training and development through the workshop; and
 - Joint reporting on the achievement of community safety outcomes.
- 4.3 As the national pathfinder project has come to an end, there is scope for learning to continue to be shared especially with the Island authorities as they share the same local senior officers. An approach has been made to them by the Chair of the Committee and it is hoped an H&I network can develop to share ideas and good practice.
- 4.4 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) supported by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland (HMFSIS) have laid before Parliament their intention to conduct a thematic inspection of the development of local police plans and local fire and rescue plans and associated arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement. This report has been published on the HMICS website and can be viewed via the following link <http://www.hmics.org/publications/thematic-inspection-development-local-police-plans-and-local-fire-and-rescue-plans-and>
- 4.5 This report states the intention to conduct a comprehensive review of arrangements early in 2014 and to work with Audit Scotland on the approach to the review and to minimise the burden of inspection on service providers. Further reports will be brought to committee as information becomes available on the inspection. Good practice indicators for local scrutiny and engagement have been developed and are likely to feature in any future inspection. These are listed at the end of the document hyperlinked and will be made available in hard copy at the meeting.
- 4.6 Early work was done by the Inspection bodies to gain an overview of emerging arrangements across Scotland. This found that progress was being made nationally, with different arrangements being pursued and some further along

than others, and that there was enthusiasm about police and fire services being taken closer to local democracy.

- 4.7 Highland was included in that early work and visited in December 2012. Highland was found to demonstrate enthusiasm for the new arrangements and for the Committee and that it demonstrated good practice in the style of reporting performance to members, running training on scrutiny and in seeking feedback from members on the committee's functions and development. In addition, the link made to the equalities part of the committee's agenda, and in particular the consultation / testimony sessions which take place after the meetings have been commended. The inspection document states:
- “ ..this.. indicates a high level of self awareness on the part of committee members and a desire to perform their new role as well as possible. We commend this approach.” (Page 15)

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no new resource, risk or legal implications arising from this report. Equalities implications relate to the reporting of hate incidents, violence against women and the equalities part of the Committee's remit as covered in this report. There are no climate change implications.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to note:

1. The changes made in the operation of the committee to date and that the committee's arrangements are regarded as good practice nationally by the Scottish Government's Pathfinder Project and from the early review of engagement with national services by HMICS supported by HMFSIS.
2. That further reports will be brought to members on the new inspection planned for early 2014 on the development of local police plans and local fire plans and the arrangements for local scrutiny and member engagement.
3. The progress being made with the Committee's improvement plan and that further work to support the actions is underway through the community planning review, the review of Area Committees and the Single Outcome Agreement all being reported to the Council.

6.2 Surveys have shown that to date members feel assured on the local development of scrutiny arrangements . Members are asked to agree that further assurance is sought from the national boards for police and fire that any changes made nationally to the style of performance reports locally will take into account the information requested by members to enable local scrutiny.

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer	Status/Update
Theme 1. Community planning structures		
1.1 Review of community planning arrangements for community safety to understand what groups exist where and how these can fit together properly.	Head of Policy and Performance	Council noted in May 2013 the review of community planning. Review due to be completed Summer 2013.
1.2 To show clearly the connections between Highland wide outcomes and local priorities and action.	Head of Policy and Performance	Under development in new Single Outcome agreement due June 2013 and in the review of community planning noted above.
1.3 An up-date report to be brought back to the Committee on the transfer of assets and finance from the Boards to the Council for either the June or September 2013 Committee meeting.	Head of Accounting	This is scheduled for December 2013 Committee to allow for the audit of accounts due 30.09.13
Theme 2. Improving partnership understanding of community safety needs		
2.1 Ensure the community safety priorities for Highland are agreed in partnership, based on evidence and reflected in the SOA.	Local Police Commander/Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue/Head of Policy & Performance	Partnership Community Safety Strategic Assessment drafted and to be considered by relevant Committees and Council by autumn 2013.
2.2 Hate incidents and crimes and violence against women to be reported annually to the Committee with future reports to enable more scrutiny of police and council performance.	Local Police Commander, Head of Policy & Performance, Head of Social Care	Standing item in December CPE Committee meetings
2.3 Identify data gaps for improving our knowledge of community safety needs,	Local Police	Data gaps to be identified in

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

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including from harder-to-reach communities, businesses and the third sector.	Commander/Head of Policy & Performance	the Community Safety Strategic Assessment, to be considered by members in the autumn 2013.
2.4 On-going development of Ward plans for Police by engaging members at the ward level. Plans and discussions to include information about hate crimes and violence against women and proposed responses to these issues.	Local Police Commander/ Corporate Manager	Police Scotland and Corporate Manager to action when Ward Plans are reviewed.
Theme 3. Improving performance reporting and scrutiny		
3.1 On-going liaison with the National Fire Board for Scotland and Police Scotland Authority with identified representatives to link with if difficult issues emerge. This would include liaison and reports on resource allocation to the Highlands for both services.	Head of Policy & Performance	National Board Members to attend CPE Committee and community planning partnership meetings.
3.2 Developing a programme of annual reports on specific strategic community safety themes for the CPE Committee for members to be aware of the issues and be involved in agreeing the planned responses.	Heads of Service in the Council, Local Police Commander & Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue	Annual reporting proposed so far for road safety, hate incidents, violence against women, anti-social behaviour and emergency planning.
3.3 Work towards providing performance reports for police and fire services at the Council's Area Committees for local scrutiny.	Local Police Commander/Local Senior Fire Officer	Being considered as part of the review of Area Committees to report to Council in June 2013.
3.4 Work towards amending the standard Police quarterly performance report as identified at the workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining why some progress is 'ragged' red, amber or green by providing information on the tolerance levels for assessing performance, • Thinking how colour coding can be changed to e.g. use symbols to avoid 	Local Police Commander	Work in progress and to include information required from Police Scotland template.

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer	Status/Update
<p>expensive colour printing and to improve some of the labelling on tables to show the financial years being referred to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing a trend over time, as in the Fire Service reports, rather than just the three year average; • To include targets and benchmarking once the national police plan is developed; • Explain why variances occur in performance in a new narrative section of the report; • Consider how to show equalities impacts. 		
<p>3.5 Work towards amending the standard Fire service quarterly performance report as identified at the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including more national context, analysis and benchmarking data; • Customer satisfaction data; • Stretching targets that are explained and clearly linked to need; • Links to be made to the outcomes to be achieved (as in SOA) • Provide analysis of why targets are not met and what has caused the variance and this would improve accountability of the local officer to the committee. 	Local Senior Fire & Rescue Officer	Work in progress and to include any information required from Scottish Fire Service templates for local reporting.
<p>3.6 To arrange further member workshops building on the learning from the workshop in January 2013, when required.</p>	Local Police Commander/Local Senior Officer for Fire /Head of Policy & Performance	Propose a workshop as part of the preparation for the Inspection planned for early 2014. Date TBC when inspection arrangements are clearer.
<p>3.7 Putting arrangements in place so that members receive police briefings on local matters timeously.</p>	Local Police Commander	Completed. Local Police briefed.
<p>3.8 Considering how best the Fire and Rescue Service can engage with Ward Forums, Business Meetings and Community Councils. Possible learning from the</p>	Local Senior Fire & Rescue Officer	This will be taken forward as part of the community planning

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

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Police approach.		review.
3.9 The Scottish Ambulance Service asked to provide quarterly performance reports to the Committee from the March 2013 meeting onwards.	Head of Policy & Performance	Completed.
Theme 4. Other areas for development		
4.1 Consider how community development approaches could be used to improve community safety locally.	Head of Policy & Performance	This will be taken forward as part of the community planning review.
4.2 Consider further shared services opportunities.	Assistant Chief Executive Depute Chief Executive.	On-going - examples of good practice exist and integrated into existing approach to service reviews. Development also through the CPP Property group.