

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee - 26 March 2014

Agenda Item	4
Report No	CPE 1/14

Improvement Plan for Member Scrutiny and Engagement

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report provides information from the member workshop in December on readiness for the anticipated inspection of local police and fire services and member engagement with them. Most improvement action identified previously has been completed and should be closed at the next meeting of the Committee.

1. Background

1.1 Members have agreed an improvement plan for the Committee which focuses on the following areas:

1. Community planning structures;
2. Improving the partnership understanding of community safety needs;
3. Improving performance reporting and scrutiny; and
4. Other areas for development.

The actions were identified largely from the member seminar in January 2013, with new actions included following each CPE Committee meeting. Nearly all are completed or nearing completion as set out in Appendix 1. At the next Committee meeting the Improvement Plan should be closed.

1.2 The Council's programme was amended in December 2013. It has a commitment that we will effectively engage with and scrutinise the national services for police, fire and rescue and Scottish Ambulance Service. We will do this through our community planning arrangements, the scrutiny committee and a programme of self-evaluation.

2. Member workshop December 2013

2.1 Thirteen members from the CPE and A&CS Committee attended the workshop in December 2013. The workshop was designed to help members prepare for the anticipated inspection of local police and fire and rescue services, including the engagement members have with them. The inspection framework was reported at the last Committee meeting. The workshop was attended by the Local Police Commander and the Local Senior Officer for SFRS, their supporting staff and Council staff. The Improvement Service observed.

2.2 In advance of the workshop members were asked to complete an on-line survey. This asked for member views on the extent to which local police and fire services met the inspection criteria on the themes below:

- Community engagement;
- Performance management and improvement; and
- Local scrutiny and challenge.

With 10 members responding, overall the response was very positive, particularly for members on the CPE Committee. This was feedback at the workshop.

- 2.3 Presentations were made to members on the new partnership arrangements at officer level as part of the review of community planning structures. They also received presentations on the development of the local plans for police and for fire and rescue services. Following the presentations members were asked: What more would you need to respond positively to the inspection questions on local plans? The inspection questions relate to:
- How far the plans are aligned with the SOA, partner plans, national plans and encourage partnership;
 - Whether the plans are focused on short, medium and long term objectives;
 - Whether plans identify strategic priorities and are reviewed by members so that they remain relevant; and
 - Whether plans have taken equality issues into account and demonstrate a clear commitment to improving equality outcomes.
- 2.4 The key points fed back were:
1. The need for the experience of vulnerable groups to be reflected in the plans (using equality impact assessment, attending the meetings after CPE Committee and listening to views of the Community Advisory Group set up by the police for example);
 2. The need for plans to include targets that can be measured, not just high level outcomes;
 3. The usefulness of reporting to Area Committees on community safety trends and performance;
 4. Finding positive ways to engage with the public including improving press releases to show what is being achieved and making use of social media;
 5. The need to share premises and services wherever possible.
- Other improvements identified on the day are noted below.
- 2.5 The benefit of more information sharing with members on police and fire issues outwith the CPE Committee meetings, with a request for more briefings for members. In response members noted that: reports would be provided to Area Committees; Ward Forums would be attended by police and fire where relevant; and arrangements for local community planning are under development. Further workshops for members can be arranged when the inspection date is known.
- 2.6 Members sought assurance that priorities in the local plans would take into account local views. In response the range of information the plans would draw on included: Community Council views, feedback from Ward Forums, any local surveys (Police Scotland conducted 75 interviews in each ward); views from Highland Youth Voice, the Citizens' Panel results and information from local equality groups.

- 2.7 Members sought assurance that all public services were working well enough together to improve community safety. The quarterly performance report from the SFRS will include this information for members.
- 2.8 Members could see the benefit of sharing the community safety reports from the CPE Committee with those members on the Adult and Children Services Committee (now Education, Children and Adult Services Committee). This is done by email when the agenda and papers are circulated.
- 2.9 The workshop focused on new community planning arrangements and the development of local plans. The inspection is expected to cover community engagement, partnership working and community leadership, performance management and improvement, use of resources and local scrutiny and challenge. When the timing of the Highland inspection is known, further workshop(s) can be arranged.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource implications

New actions arising from the report include holding further workshop(s) for members. These will be met from within current budgets.

3.2 Legal implications

Under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 the Council has a duty to engage with national services on setting priorities for the area and on the local policing plan and local fire and rescue plan and respond to performance and other reports including Council recommendations for improvement. By running workshops for members with local senior officers from police and fire services, the Council's engagement will help meet the duties placed on the Council.

3.3 Equalities implications

The needs of vulnerable people were raised in the workshop for inclusion in the local plans. Vulnerable people often have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Raising their profile for services can help the Council to meet its legal duties.

3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

There are few carbon implications arising from this report, other than having arranged the workshop at a time and venue to avoid additional member travel.

3.5 Risk implications

The member workshop and improvement plan reduces the risk of the Council's engagement being ineffective with the national services.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Members are asked to note:

1. the progress made with the improvement plan appended;
2. the positive response from the on-line survey about police and fire engagement in advance of the workshop;
3. that drafts of the local plans for police and fire and rescue are considered as separate items at this meeting, and that the focus on the inspection questions on local plans at the workshop will help to develop the Council's feedback on them;
4. that Members of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee will continue to have access via email to the community safety reports for this Committee.

4.2 Members are asked to agree that further workshop(s) can be arranged when the timing of the inspection is clearer.

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Date 14.3.14

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 Reform Nearing completion	Safer Highland structure for partnership working at Highland level is agreed and in place. This was presented at member workshop in December 2013. A commitment was given to produce a directory of staff to accompany the CP structure. The fit with local area arrangements is being considered including the scope for linking to District Partnership agendas.
1.2 To show clearly the connections between Highland wide outcomes and local priorities and action.	Head of Policy and Reform, Local Senior Officer (SFRS) Local Commander (Police Scotland) Progressing well	Highland wide outcomes agreed through SOA and at Council end June 2013 and reported to CPE committee September 2013. Top 3 community concerns included in SOA. Ward plans for Police and Fire developed December 2013. Local plans for police and fire under development. See 1.1. above regarding local community planning.
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 Complete in December	This was reported through the Annual Audit of Accounts.
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 and Fire leads/Head of Policy & Performance Complete	Completed for SOA 2013, approved at Council and CPP Board June 2013.

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer /Status	Update
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 & Reform, Head of Social Care Complete	Standing item in December CPE Committee meetings.
2.3 Identify data gaps for improving our knowledge of community safety needs, including from harder-to-reach communities, businesses and the third sector.	Local Police Commander/Head of Policy & Reform Progressing well	To be included in the work of the new CPP theme group on community safety. Gaps were identified through the joint strategic assessment in April 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 Complete	Police Scotland and Corporate Manager arranging this through ward forums from September 2013. This is being done with SFRS as well.
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 & Reform Complete	National Board Members attend CPE Committee and community planning partnership meetings. In August officers from the Highland CPP met with Scottish Policy Authority staff. Liaison with SFRS Board members over control rooms from November 2013 to March 2014.
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 Complete	Completed. Annual reporting is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September committee – road safety • December committee – hate incidents and violence against women • March or June committee – anti social behaviour, 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	Agreement reached that performance reports for areas to be provided by police and fire services for all Area committees twice a year.

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer /Status	Update
	Agreed and will begin in 2014	
<p>3.4 Work towards amending the standard Police quarterly performance report as identified at the workshop:</p> <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 expensive colour printing and to improve some of the labelling on tables to show the financial years being referred to. • 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>Local Police Commander</p> <p>Reports provided at each Committee meeting</p>	<p>Work in progress and to include information required from Police Scotland template.</p> <p>Fit to be found as well with new local police plan for 2014 onwards.</p>
<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. 	<p>Local Senior Fire & Rescue Officer</p> <p>Reports provided at each Committee meeting</p>	<p>Work in progress and to include any information required from Scottish Fire Service templates for local reporting.</p> <p>Fit to be found as well with new local fire and rescue plan for 2014 onwards.</p>
<p>3.6 To arrange further member workshops building on the learning</p>	<p>Local Police</p>	<p>Workshop held on 11.12.13. Further workshop to be</p>

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer /Status	Update
from the workshop in January 2013, when required.	Commander/Local Senior Officer for Fire /Head of Policy & Reform Progressing well	planned when inspection date is known.
3.7 Putting arrangements in place so that members receive police briefings on local matters timeously.	Local Police Commander Complete.	Completed. Local Police briefed.
3.8 Considering how best the Fire and Rescue Service can engage with Ward Forums, Business Meetings and Community Councils. Possible learning from the Police approach.	Local Senior Fire & Rescue Officer Complete	Completed. SFRS consulting through Ward Forums on local plans from September 2013.
3.9 The Scottish Ambulance Service asked to provide quarterly performance reports to the Committee from the March 2013 meeting onwards.	Head of Policy & Reform Complete	Completed. SAS has agreed to provide reports.
3.10 Share practice with the island authorities on member engagement and scrutiny.	Chair of Committee and Local Police and Fire lead officers. Progressing well	Chairs network established. 2 meetings a year held. Meetings to date have been in Inverness June 2013, Shetland September 2013 and Orkney February 2014.
3.11 To provide information on Police complaints.	Local Police Commander Complete by March 2014	Requested at December 2013 meeting and to be included in performance report from March 2014.
Theme 4. Other areas for development		
4.1 Consider how community development approaches could be used to improve community safety locally.	Head of Policy & Reform Progressing well	To be taken forward through the new community planning arrangements, in particular through the partnership group exploring how to join up community development with 8 test sites (4 areas of multiple deprivation and 4 areas of rural fragility).

CPE Committee Improvement Plan

Actions	Lead Officer /Status	Update
4.2 Consider further shared services opportunities.	Depute Chief Executive Ongoing	On-going - examples of good practice exist. New community planning structure is considering a partnership group to press on with shared services. This will include the work of the CPP Property group.