

The Highland Community Planning Partnership

CPP Board 4.3.15

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| Agenda Item | 6ii. |
| Report No | CPB 03/15 |

Developing local community planning

Discussion Paper by Head of Policy and Reform, Highland Council

Summary

This report highlights the current drivers for localising decision-making and in a partnership context. These drivers challenge the earlier approach adopted for the CPP which focused on localising arrangements for particular themes. The evolution of District Partnerships as local community planning forums is worth exploring but there are several issues identified to date for the Board to consider.

1. Background and current arrangements

1.1 In developing the SOA and CPP the Board has agreed that a report would be prepared with proposals on how District Partnerships might be forums for local community planning and improve alignment between SOA priorities and local needs and intervention. This report highlights the current arrangements for area-based community planning, the drivers for change and some of the issues in developing District Partnerships further.

1.2 Current arrangements - area-based community planning

The fit between formal Highland-wide and local community planning arrangements are strong with the Lochaber Partnership which has a formal and comprehensive partnership structure in place. Other local partnerships exist e.g. Sutherland Partnership, Caithness Partnership but connections with the SOA and the Highland CPP are less clear¹. The CNPA seeks to have alignment with the SOA for its area-based plan, affecting the Badenoch and Strathspey area of Highland.

1.3 When the governance and accountability arrangements for the Highland CPP were reviewed in 2013, there were concerns about replicating the Lochaber model elsewhere because of a lack of capacity and it was imagined that the links could be organised thematically. Community safety was used as an illustration and the connections locally were to be through:

- Local community safety partnerships of officers – where required
- Public engagement through Ward Forums and Community Council liaison
- Local accountability through Area Committees (where elected members could scrutinise police and fire performance)
- A fit with District Partnerships – at that time not defined as these

¹ The work of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership is reflected in the SOA.

partnerships were new and focusing on integrating health and social care.

- 8 pilot areas for bottom up community planning – 4 deprived and 4 rural areas and community safety issues arising from them would be highlighted for intervention.

1.4 For community safety the arrangements have progressed over the past 12 months, e.g.

- Engagement with the public and local community representatives at a ward level has led to Ward policing plans and these discussions informed the local (regional) policing and SFRS plans and are aligned with the SOA;
- Community Council meetings continued to be attended by Police Scotland.
- Some areas have local community safety partnerships and in Inverness a co-located partnership team has been established (and reported separately to this COG meeting);
- Police Scotland and SFRS report twice a year to Area Committees (x5 see map at Appendix 1) on community safety issues and performance.
- More recently the remit of District Partnerships has been approved and this includes Police Scotland and SFRS involvement. The 9 District Partnerships areas are also shown on Appendix 1. Their up-dated remit is attached in the appendix to this hyperlinked report: http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/67265/item_13_community_learning_and_development

1.5 Arrangements for community safety are well advanced across the partnership (in terms of partnership, governance and community involvement). However there is also scope for duplication of work with reports requested at both Area Committees and District Partnerships creating inefficiency at a time when resources are reducing.

1.6 Important thematic partnerships organised on an area basis also include:

- District Partnerships - they deal with health and social care and cover the SOA themes and delivery plans relating to older people and children. Issues relating to health inequalities are also raised in these partnerships. Recent agreement is made to include community learning and development on the agenda. They offer partnership discussion to problem solve, partnership scrutiny and are held in public with groups and individuals invited to raise issues. An up-date of the matters considered by District Partnerships is available at this link http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/67403/item_11_district_partnerships
- LEADER partnerships – currently under design for the new EU funded programme (covering all of Highland apart from Inverness)

1.7 Another form of area-based community planning is the preparation of Local Development Plans (LDPs). LDPs are prepared to provide policies and site allocations that are then used to determine planning applications for

development. In Highland there is a [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#) published in 2012, and three Area Local Development Plans currently under preparation. These are the [Inner Moray Firth LDP](#) which is due to be adopted by summer 2015; the [Caithness and Sutherland LDP](#) for which a Main Issues Report was recently subject to consultation; and the [West Highland and Islands LDP](#) which is currently at the Call for Sites & Ideas stage with a Main Issues Report to be published later this year.

1.8 Local communities play a vitally important role in preparing these plans and the Highland Council uses various methods to engage people in the process. The Council also seeks to ensure that these plans reflect community priorities. One of the ways this is being done is by setting out the outcomes that each plan should achieve for people and places in the area based on the Single Outcome Agreement.

1.9 Other examples of local thematic partnerships include local employability partnerships (of agencies) and local biodiversity partnerships. These too are regarded by CPP officers as helpful.

2. Drivers for re-thinking local community planning

2.1 The CPP Board has agreed that the CPP is to engage in dialogue with communities in order to empower them to participate in service planning and delivery (SOA development plan). Such dialogue with communities of place will have to take place in local areas.

2.2 The agenda to localise further is supported by:

1. The Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy – and its call for a network of local democratic experiments, local decision-making and more participative democracy;
2. Other aspects of the Community Empowerment Legislation that require the CPP to make all reasonable efforts to secure the participation of those community bodies it considers are “likely to be able to contribute to community planning” and for community bodies to be consulted in preparation of the local outcomes improvement plan.
3. The national Audit of Community Planning highlighting good practice where the focus is local, joint and done with communities.

2.3 The agenda to prioritise and target specific areas for improvement involving all partners and by working with communities is supported by:

1. The Christie Commission – highlighting the need to target public resources more to prevention, to reduce inequalities and to grow community assets;
2. The statutory requirement to support community learning and development in partnership and to focus on areas in greatest need.

2.4 The Council is beginning a review of its Area Committees, with the approach to that to be considered at the Council meeting on 12th March 2015. Previously the Council agreed that the fit with local community planning and District Partnerships should be part of that review.

- 2.5 This localising agenda and the need to respond better to community requests raises the issue of local decision-making and governance arrangements which are not fully addressed by the thematic approach adopted so far.
- 2.6 This is challenging where the area covered by the CPP is the largest in the country and where, according to the themes of the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy, many public service decisions are centralised, services are designed top-down and some are out with local democratic scrutiny.
- 2.7 The District Partnership agenda is beginning to broaden covering not only health and social care for adults and for children but also to include health inequalities, community safety and community learning and development. Requests are being made in some to understand employability issues and local economic development. A case could be made to broaden agendas to cover all SOA themes, but this raises issues of:
- The purpose of District Partnerships – problem solving on delivery issues alone would probably be insufficient as we would also need formal scrutiny of partnership performance and it may make sense for them to have decision-making powers on e.g. participation requests and possibly asset transfers;
 - The purpose of Area Committees – elected members have particular legal duties to discharge e.g. scrutiny and engagement of police and fire services, administration of common good funds and decision-making as delegated by the Council. Yet members may be better informed in their decision-making if some of these issues are considered in a partnership setting.
 - The right geographies to use for local community planning – as Appendix 1 shows there are currently 9 District Partnerships and five Area Committees.
 - Identifying the items that need to be considered in public or in private.
 - How best to involve community groups and encourage more participation.
 - Clarity of governance arrangements - who should be involved in different types of governance e.g. decision-making, scrutiny, problem solving and informing
 - Agenda management.
 - Ensuring duplication and inefficiency is avoided locally and the streamlining of current arrangements.
- 2.8 The process of considering these issues is important. The views of those currently involved are vital not only in establishing the appetite for change but also in managing that change and learning from it. Conversations with those involved in local partnership forums to gain views will be needed. Presentations on community planning are being made to the current round of District Partnership meetings.
- 2.9 With different people involved and with different local contexts the pace of any change may also vary in different areas.

- 2.10 It may be that a transition phase of holding District Partnerships, Area Committees, other Partnerships and Ward Forums on the same day in some localities may be worth exploring.
- 2.11 Where new arrangements may be put in place locally, the former arrangements need to stop being resourced by partners.
- 2.12 The changing nature of local community planning will also affect how the Highland CPP operates and this will have to be worked through.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Community planning is about where decisions about public services are made and by whom. The Community Empowerment legislation expects more decision-making to rest with communities and this means a localising and participative agenda. This is supported by the Christie Commission and Strengthening Local Democracy Commission. An opportunity exists to link the review of the Council's Area Committees to a broader consideration of the right kind of local governance for improving local outcomes and that inevitably involves partners and the services they provide. District Partnerships are partnership forums held in public with a growing agenda, although not without challenges in making that work effectively and efficiently.
- 3.2 Re-constructing local partnership arrangements and clarifying local governance requirements needs not only support from the CPP Board but also local appetite and ideas for change and a willingness to experiment.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Board is asked to note the current arrangements for local community planning by theme and by place and the drivers for re-thinking local community planning.

4.2 The Board is asked to note that the scope of District Partnership business is expanding and in some cases this is leading to some duplication of work with the Council's Area Committees. Area Committees are to be reviewed, with the approach to that review to be considered by the Council in mid-March, with potential for that to contribute to a review of local community planning arrangements.

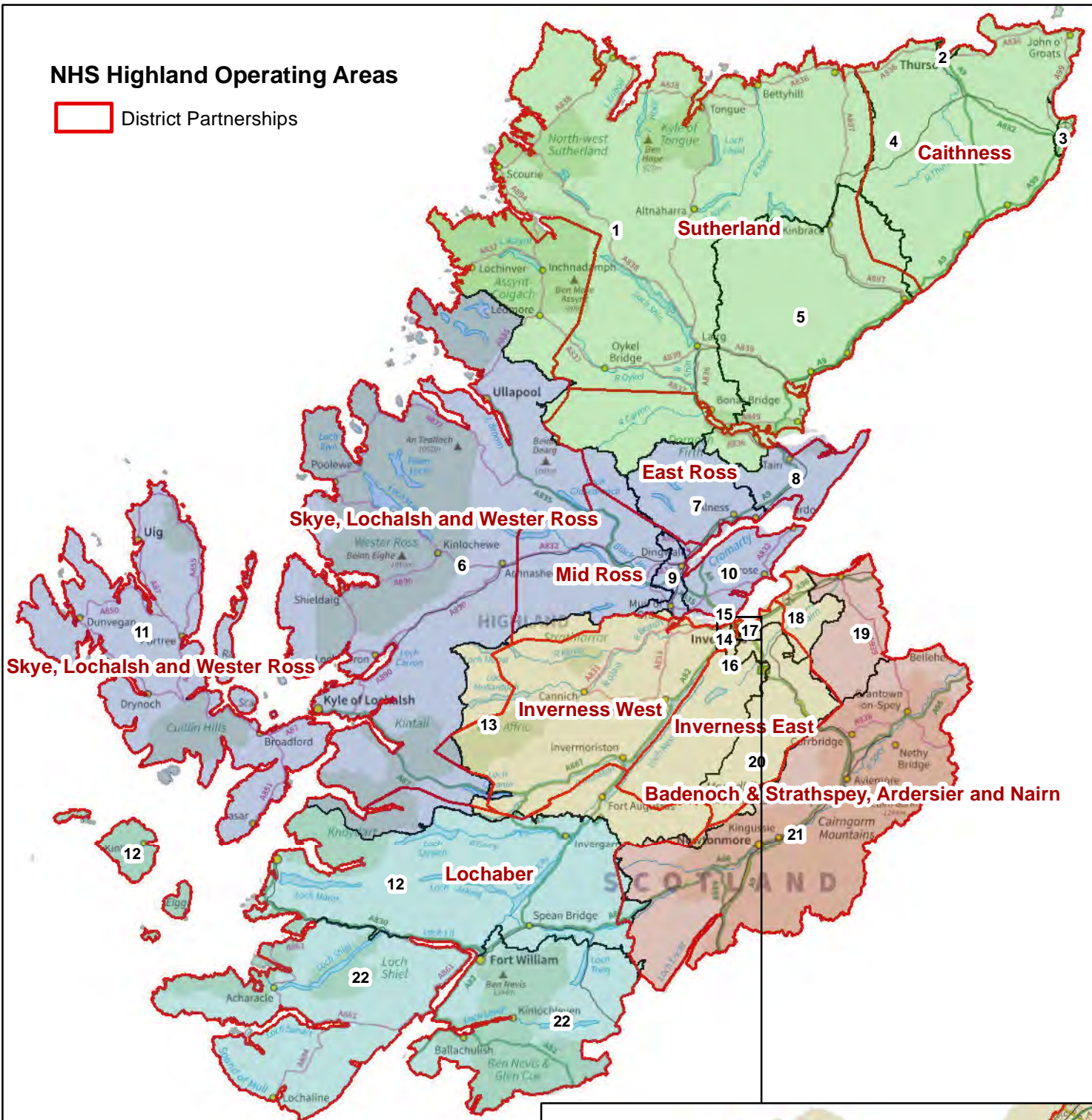
4.3 The Board is asked to enable the development of proposals locally for local community planning. It would help if these proposals could be mindful of the issues identified in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11. The Board is asked to enable staff, non-executive Board and elected members to be creative in their proposals to encourage local experiments, noting the pace of change may vary across the region. Up-dates on proposals and how they might be supported can be provided to Board meetings, with those requiring changes to governance schemes to be approved through each partners' governance arrangements.


Author: Carron McDiarmid

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NHS Highland Operating Areas

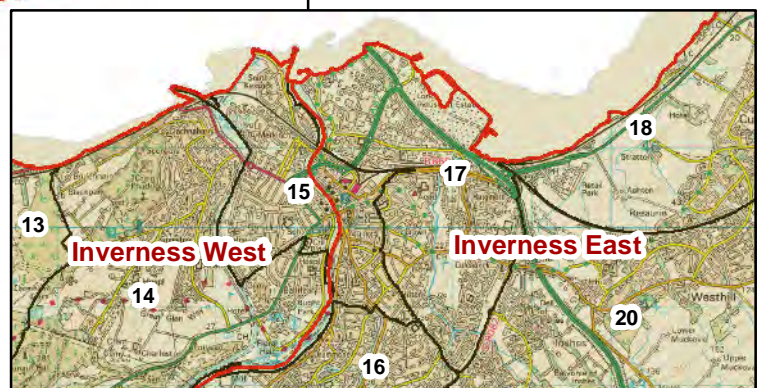
 District Partnerships



 Council Wards (numbered)

Council Area Committees

-  Caithness and Sutherland
-  City of Inverness
-  Lochaber
-  Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey
-  Skye, Ross and Cromarty



**Highland Council and NHS
Highland Administrative and
Operating Areas 2014**

c.j.t.

Date: 21/11/14

1:1,200,000

25 12.5 0 25 Kilometers



1 cm = 12,000 metres

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