

**Highland Community Planning Partnership
Chief Officers Group**

Note of Meeting of the Chief Officers Group held in Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness, on Monday, 22 September 2014, at 2.00 p.m.

Present:

Highland Council (HC):

Mr S Barron
Mr B Alexander
Mr S Black
Mr W Gilfillan
Ms C McDiarmid

NHS Highland:

Mrs J Baird
Dr M Somerville

**Highlands and Islands Enterprise
(HIE):**

Mr M Johnson

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI):

Ms M Wylie

Police Scotland

Ch Supt J Innes

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS):

Mr S Hay

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH):

Mr G Hogg

The Scottish Government

Mr J Pryce

**University of the Highlands and Islands
(UHI):**

Ms F Larg
Mr M Wright

In Attendance:

Mr P Craig, Senior Research Fellow, MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow (Item 3)

Ms E Johnston, Corporate Performance Manager, Highland Council (Item 6)

Mrs R Moir, Principal Committee Administrator, Highland Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence: Ms M Morris (HC) and Mrs E Mead (NHS Highland).

2. Chief Officers Group (COG) – 18 June 2014

- i. **Note of Meeting:** The circulated Note of Meeting of the COG held on 18 June 2014 was **APPROVED**.
- ii. **Matters Arising:**
 - a. **Breast-feeding-Friendly Policy** (Minutes Item 3(ii)(b)): It was **NOTED** that all partners were making progress with distribution of posters and stickers on the policy, although there were some constraints on displaying these in premises not owned by the occupying partner.
 - b. **Communities Panel** (Minutes Item 6(iii)): It was **NOTED** that all partners were invited to bring forward suggestions as to other community groups that might be included on the Panel.
 - c. **Partnership Communications Group** (Minutes Item 3(ii)(c)(5)): It was **NOTED** that:

- (i) the Communications officers of the various Highland agencies already comprised an informal group in regular email contact, which could meet 2-3 times per year; and
- (ii) there would be value in producing a basic information pack on the Partnership, for distribution as required.

3. What Works Scotland (WWS) Programme

A copy of a draft Expression of Interest in being a CPP Case Study Area, submitted to WWS on behalf of the Partnership in July 2014, had been circulated, together with a “next steps” note from WWS; whilst the Highland CPP had not been chosen as one of the four Case Study Areas, the WWS Programme was nevertheless keen to discuss engagement with the Partnership on a project basis.

Mr Peter Craig, Senior Research Fellow, MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, gave a presentation to the meeting on the work of WWS and the workstreams proposed under the current exercise. He explained that WWS was a partnership project involving the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, the Scottish Government, the Economic & Social Research Council and various other agencies/institutions in a new initiative aimed at using evidence to transform public services with a view to allowing all of Scotland’s communities to flourish. WWS would seek to work with community planning partnerships to improve the way local areas in Scotland used evidence to make decisions about public service development and reform.

He confirmed that WWS would see particular value in working on specific projects/themes with community planning partnerships not selected as full Case Studies, particularly where this could complement work going on elsewhere, and so optimise the scope for robust data collection and help to promote cross-fertilisation of different sustainable ideas/solutions. At this stage there were no preconceptions as to what such themes might be. The focus would be on using data/evidence already gathered, rather than creating new work demands.

In discussion, the opportunity to work with WWS and potentially improve measurement of the impact of working in partnership was welcomed.

The Group **AGREED** that all partners should seek to identify possible projects that might be suitable for working with WWS and pass their suggestions to the Council’s Head of Policy and Reform for collation.

4. Updates from SOA Theme Groups

Representatives of each of the Theme Groups – Economic Growth and Recovery, Employability, Early years/Children, Safer and stronger communities, Health inequalities and physical activity, Outcomes for older people, Environmental outcomes and SOA Development Plan – confirmed that they would report progress to the 13 October Community Planning Board meeting on their refreshed SOA delivery plans for 2014/15 and their performance reports for 2013/14.

Attention was drawn to the agreement reached between the Council and NHS Highland on the updated Integrated Children’s Plan, For Highland’s Children 4, and its relevance to the Early Years theme of the SOA, recognising that it also addressed the needs of a wider range of children. There was a general view that

there was a clear link to the SOA – the Equalities theme also being relevant – and that it would be appropriate to give a presentation on the Plan to the Board.

The Group also **NOTED**:

- i. that For Highland's Children 4 had now been agreed between the Council and NHS Highland and a presentation on this would be made at the next Community Planning Board meeting; and
- ii. the circulated copy of Police Scotland Quarter 1 2014/15 management information for the Highland area and the positive results being achieved.

5. Updates from CPP Strategic Priority Groups

At its meeting held on 5 June 2014, the Community Planning Board had approved re-drafted strategic priorities as priorities for improving collaboration and for the Chief Officers Group to develop. At its 18 June meeting, the Group had considered the issue of the appropriate arrangements for taking these Priorities forward, through identification of lead officers from partner bodies and the possible establishment of a specific strategic group for each theme.

a. **Prevention and joint resourcing**

The Group **NOTED** that, whilst provisional members of this strategic group had been agreed, it had not yet met as such; however, it would convene shortly and feedback would be provided to the next COG meeting.

b. **Workforce Planning and skills development**

The Group was advised that HIE had commissioned an academic economic benchmarking exercise that it was hoped would inform this strategic group's discussions. Convening of the group had accordingly been deferred pending receipt of the outcome of the study. It was anticipated that there would be feedback on this to the next COG meeting. It was also clarified that this was a separate exercise from the draft Regional Skills Development Plan, which was to be submitted to the Convention of the Highlands and Islands. It was also, however, important that partners should be able to influence this Plan.

The Group **NOTED** the position.

c. **Community empowerment, dialogue and participation:**

At its meeting held on 18 June 2014, the Group had acknowledged the potential for overlap between any specific group set up to address this Priority and the work of the new Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership, whose formation had been approved by the Community Planning Board at its 5 June meeting. This latter Partnership had now met and had started its work on the issues remitted to it, including engagement with District Partnerships; as yet no separate strategic group specifically relating to this Priority had been set up.

In discussion, the view was expressed that, rather than add further layers at this stage, the existing strand of work through the new CLD Strategic Partnership should be allowed to be developed further, achieve greater clarity and assess whether it could address the relevant issues, and so avoid duplication. There would also be value in wider mapping of public bodies and community structures to optimise coordination of effort and resource.

The Group **NOTED** the position; and **AGREED**:

- i. that no separate Strategic Priority Group be set up at this stage, pending the further development of the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership; and
- ii. that progress with District Partnerships be reviewed at the next COG meeting.

d. Tackling deprivation and inequalities

At its meeting held on 18 June 2014, the Group had acknowledged the relevance for this Priority of the existing Health Inequalities thematic group. In light of this, no separate Strategic Priority Group had been set up.

The Group **NOTED** the position; and **AGREED** that:

- i. relevant matters continue to be addressed through the existing Health Inequalities Group, whilst also recognising the cross-cutting nature of this theme across all Groups; and
- ii. progress be reviewed at the next COG meeting.

6. Supported Self-Assessment – Questionnaire Results

The circulated Report No. COG/7/14 dated 12 September 2014 by the Council's Corporate Performance Manager advised that the Community Planning Board, supported by the Improvement Service, had completed the first stage of a self-assessment process in the form of an on-line questionnaire based on the Improvement Service Partnership Checklist. The report presented the outcome of the questionnaire responses for consideration and sought direction on next steps.

The report highlighted a number of key points identified, with particularly high positive results (75%+) in relation to leadership, opportunities for challenge, outcomes focus and use of evidence; and positive results (60-75%) in relation to impact of the CPP through its partnership approach, accountability and community engagement. Only 49% had thought that clear performance management and reporting was in place, whilst only 27% had agreed that there was clarity on resources, including their integration, allocation and use. Various suggestions had been made throughout the responses on a range of potential improvement actions/opportunities.

In discussion, it was commented that some had found the approach of the questionnaire to be somewhat simplistic and to have offered limited scope to reflect properly the circumstances of the Highland CPP. There was recognition that it would be appropriate at a future date to validate the self-assessment process by surveying service consumer views, potentially working through District Partnerships, while the need to improve internal communications and so assist front-line staff to appreciate their role and contribution within the community planning process was also acknowledged.

The view was also expressed that the results provided a useful baseline for future progress and should be subjected to further review in a year's time; and that during that period the Board could be assured that the improvement/action points arising out of the analysis of the survey responses could be addressed through the existing Action Plan.

After discussion, the Group **NOTED**:

- i. the results of the Partnership Checklist Questionnaire; and

- ii. that the responsible officers for economic growth, health inequalities and physical activity and the environment would be using the IS partnership self-assessment and support available.

The Group **AGREED** that a report on the outcome of the self-assessment exercise be brought to the next meeting of the Community Planning Board.

7. Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Membership

The circulated Report No. COG/8/14 dated 14 September 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform asked the Group to agree a framework to guide the Partnership's response to bodies and groups seeking to participate, or participate further, in formal CPP structures.

The report advised that approaches seeking participation in the CPP had been made by: the Cairngorm National Park Authority, Highlife Highland, Skills Development Scotland, the Department of Work and Pensions and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The report also advised that the Community Empowerment Bill before the Scottish Parliament was expected to specify a range of bodies required to facilitate community planning and/or participate in community planning partnerships, whilst also giving flexibility to CPPs to agree whether and how partners were to comply with these requirements, in particular whether such compliance might be for particular outcomes only. This could, for example, lead to certain bodies participating in particular theme groups, but not the full Board.

The report also pointed out that, whilst this Board did not currently have a partnership approach to supporting cultural development as a formal part of the CPP structure, the existing Highland Culture Strategic Board comprised local and national partner bodies, although currently without any representation of Gaelic.

In discussion, support was expressed for the guidance framework proposed, which could form the basis of further engagement with the candidate partners. Attention was also drawn to the ongoing developments and improving partnership processes within the CPP as currently constituted, and the need to take account of all these factors, together with the pending new legislation. There was also a view that the current role and remit of the Highland Culture Strategic Board should be examined to explore the scope for its closer engagement with Gaelic representative bodies and with the CPP.

The Group **NOTED**:

- i. the requests from five bodies as detailed to participate, or participate further, in the formal structure of the CPP; and
- ii. the principles already agreed for reviewing governance in the CPP and the relevant provisions in the Community Empowerment Bill.

The Group **AGREED**:

- i. the framework for engaging partners in the CPP set out at Appendix 2 to the report;
- ii. that the bodies seeking involvement be asked to provide information regarding the benefits of their involvement to the CPP and to them, as set out in the framework, to permit further discussion at the next COG meeting, with a view to recommendations being made to the Community Planning Board at its December 2014 meeting; and

- iii. that consideration be given to revisiting the remit and membership of the Highland Culture Strategic Board as a potential means of developing and embedding the role of arts and culture and Gaelic in the CPP, with a view to achieving or supporting positive outcomes; particularly in the light of any detailed submission from Bòrd na Gàidhlig under (ii) above.

8. EU Regional Programmes

i. Funding Opportunities for Highland:

The circulated report provided a summary update of the development of the 2014-20 European regional funding programmes as they impacted on the Highland Council area. In discussion it was acknowledged that in practice these were effectively now programmes for 2015-20 only. Interest was expressed in gaining further information and understanding of the opportunities available.

The Group **NOTED** the content of the report and the actions underway, as set out at Section 7 of the report; and **AGREED** that an officer from the Council and/or HIE EU teams attend the next cycle of theme group meetings, with a view to promoting interaction and identifying opportunities for Highland bids into these funds.

ii. Highland LEADER Programme 2014-20:

The circulated report provided information on the new Highland LEADER Programme. In discussion it was acknowledged that the bureaucratic requirements of the bid process could be complex and differing views were expressed as to the efficiency of the Local Area Partnerships structure used in Highland.

The Group **NOTED** the proposals for the new Highland LEADER Programme and **AGREED** that a summary report on the Highland LEADER Local Development Strategy and Business Plan be presented to the Community Planning Board on 13 October 2014.

9. Capturing Progress in Community Planning

The Group **NOTED** that a request had been received from the National Community Planning Group for an update by 13 October 2014, describing, in terms of each CPP's development priorities what action the CPP and its partners had taken and what they had achieved, and any further development work the CPP and its partners were now undertaking or planning.

10. Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI)– Information Request

The Group **NOTED** the terms of a circulated submission, made by the Council on behalf of the Partnership by the deadline of 10 September 2014, in response to a request by COHI to all CPPs in the Highlands and Islands for information on progress since the previous COHI meeting.

11. Chief Officers Group – Future Agenda Items

The Group **AGREED** a list of agenda items proposed for the next Group meeting:

- Budget planning and savings
- Community Planning and District Partnership Structures
- Additional CPP membership
- Partners' approaches to improvement methodologies.

The Group **NOTED** that the Chief Officer, the Highland Third Sector Interface, would meet with the Procurement officers of the various partner agencies, to consider the issue of potential scope for improving business opportunities for the Third Sector, and also for small and medium local enterprises, and would report back to the Chief Officer Group as to whether any themes might emerge from those discussions that could be relevant to the COG's role and remit.

12. Community Planning Board – Future Agenda Items

The Group **AGREED**:

- a list of agenda items proposed for the next Board meeting:
 - HIE presentation on progress with the Digital Roll-Out plan
 - SOA delivery plans – annual reports 2013/14 and refreshed plans for 2014/15
 - Self-evaluation feedback and next steps
 - Public Health Annual Report
 - LEADER programme 2014-20
 - For Highland's Children 4
- to defer arranging a Skills Development Scotland presentation on the Regional Skills strategy to a later Board meeting.

13. Events

The Group **NOTED**, in relation to a range of events, that:

- **HTSI Seminars** – the Seminar on the Community Safety theme had been successful
- **Participatory Budgeting Training Event** – partners were invited to nominate representatives to attend a budgeting training event to be hosted by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Government in Dingwall on 17 October, 1000-1600
- **Scottish Leaders Forum** – partners were invited to consider taking part in The Scottish Leaders Forum - a Pioneer Site for Climate Change Leadership in the Highlands, to be held at Eden Court Theatre on 28 October, 1000-1300, with the aim of bringing together Leaders from across the Highlands from the public, private, and third sectors
- **Carbon Clever Conference** – all partners would be invited to the 2nd Carbon Clever Conference being hosted by the Council on 17 November
- **Shared calendar** – the Council was exploring how a shared events calendar could be created.

14. Chief Officers Group – Future Meeting Dates

The Group **NOTED** the remaining COG meeting date of 7 November 2014, as previously notified, and that 2015 dates would be notified in due course.

The meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.